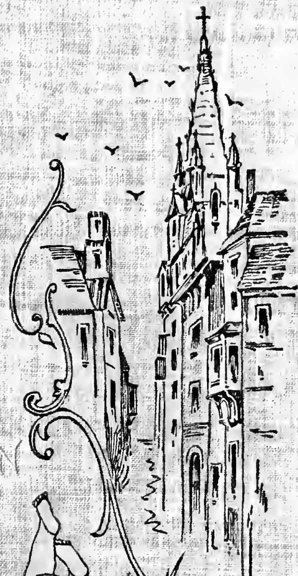

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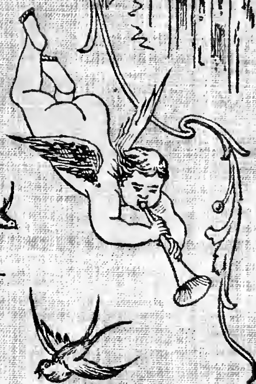

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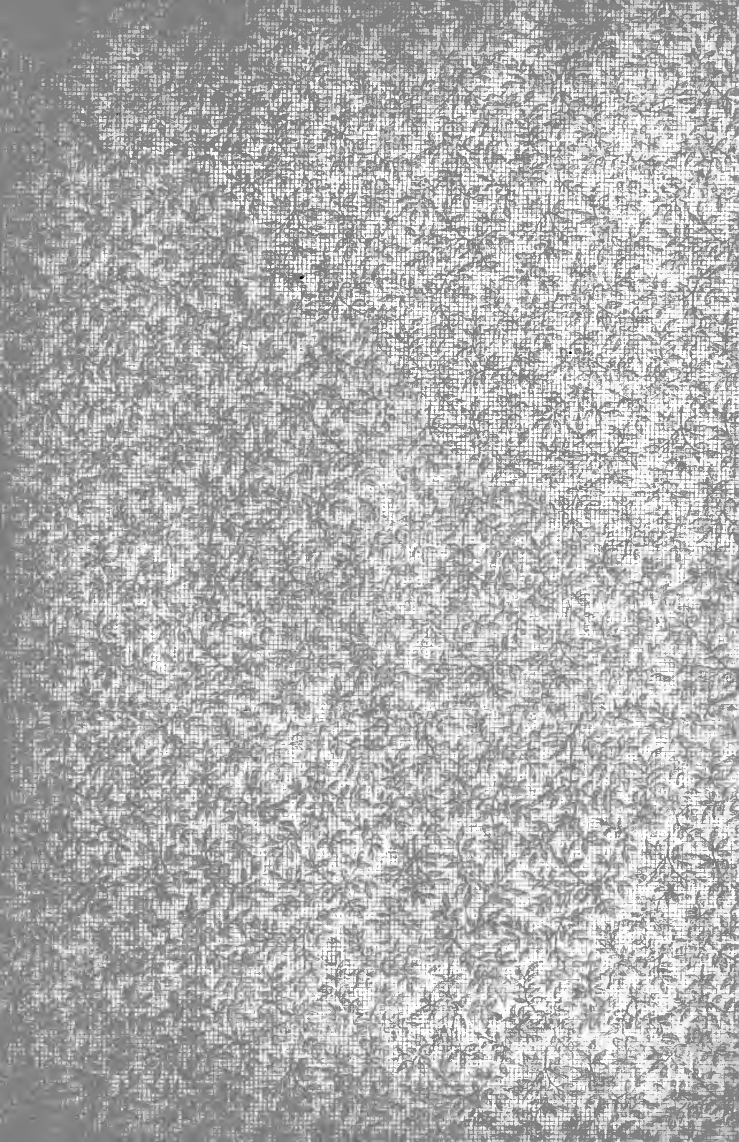

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"THEN I CLAIM THE HAND OF PACIFICA."

Page 159.

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STORIES FOR CHILDREN.

BY

LOUISA DE LA RAMÉ.
(OUIDA.)

ILLUSTRATED BY
EDMUND H. GARRETT.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.
1893.

GIFT

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THE NÜRNBERG STOVE.

August lived in a little town called Hall. Hall is a favorite name for several towns in Austria and in Germany; but this one especial little Hall, in the Upper Innthal, is one of the most charming Old-World places that I know, and August for his part did not know any other. It has the green meadows and the great mountains all about it, and the gray-green glacier-fed water rushes by it. It has paved streets and enchanting little shops that have all latticed panes and iron gratings to them; it has a very grand old Gothic church, that has the noblest blendings of light and shadow, and marble tombs of dead knights, and a look of infinite strength and repose as a church should have. Then there is the Muntze Tower, black and white, rising out of greenery and looking down on a long wooden bridge and the broad rapid river; and there is an old schloss which has been made into a guard-house, with battlements and frescos and heraldic devices in gold and colors, and a man-at-arms carved in stone standing life-size in his niche and bearing his date 1530. A little farther on, but close at hand, is a cloister with beautiful marble columns and tombs, and a colossal wood-carved Calvary, and beside that a small and very rich chapel: indeed, so

full is the little town of the undisturbed past, that to walk in it is like opening a missal of the Middle Ages, all emblazoned and illuminated with saints and warriors, and it is so clean, and so still, and so noble, by reason of its monuments and its historic color, that I marvel much no one has ever cared to sing its praises. The old pious heroic life of an age at once more restful and more brave than ours still leaves its spirit there, and then there is the girdle of the mountains all around, and that alone means strength, peace, majesty.

In this little town a few years ago August Strehla lived with his people in the stone-paved irregular square where the grand church stands.

He was a small boy of nine years at that time,—a chubby-faced little man with rosy cheeks, big hazel eyes, and clusters of curls the brown of ripe nuts. His mother was dead, his father was poor, and there were many mouths at home to feed. In this country the winters are long and very cold, the whole land lies wrapped in snow for many months, and this night that he was trotting home, with a jug of beer in his numb red hands, was terribly cold and dreary. The good burghers of Hall had shut their double shutters, and the few lamps there were flickered dully behind their quaint, old-fashioned iron casings. The mountains indeed were beautiful, all snow-white under the stars that are so big in frost. Hardly any one was astir; a few good souls wending home from vespers, a tired post-boy who blew a shrill blast from his tasselled horn as he pulled up his sledge before a hostelry, and little August hugging his jug of beer to his ragged sheepskin coat, were all who were abroad, for the snow

fell heavily and the good folks of Hall go early to their beds. He could not run, or he would have spilled the beer; he was half frozen and a little frightened, but he kept up his courage by saying over and over again to himself, "I shall soon be at home with dear Hirschvogel."

He went on through the streets, past the stone man-at-arms of the guard-house, and so into the place where the great church was, and where near it stood his father Karl Strehla's house, with a sculptured Bethlehem over the door-way, and the Pilgrimage of the Three Kings painted on its wall. He had been sent on a long errand outside the gates in the afternoon, over the frozen fields and the broad white snow, and had been belated, and had thought he had heard the wolves behind him at every step, and had reached the town in a great state of terror, thankful with all his little panting heart to see the oil-lamp burning under the first house-shrine. But he had not forgotten to call for the beer, and he carried it carefully now, though his hands were so numb that he was afraid they would let the jug down every moment.

The snow outlined with white every gable and cornice of the beautiful old wooden houses; the moonlight shone on the gilded signs, the lambs, the grapes, the eagles, and all the quaint devices that hung before the doors; covered lamps burned before the Nativities and Crucifixions painted on the walls or let into the wood-work; here and there, where a shutter had not been closed, a ruddy fire-light lit up a homely interior, with the noisy band of children clustering round the house-mother and a big brown loaf, or some gossips

spinning and listening to the cobbler's or the barber's story of a neighbor, while the oil-wicks glimmered, and the hearth-logs blazed, and the chestnuts sputtered in their iron roasting-pot. Little August saw all these things, as he saw everything with his two big bright eyes that had such curious lights and shadows in them; but he went heedfully on his way for the sake of the beer which a single slip of the foot would make him spill. At his knock and call the solid oak door, four centuries old if one, flew open, and the boy darted in with his beer, and shouted, with all the force of mirthful lungs, "Oh, dear Hirschvogel, but for the thought of you I should have died!"

It was a large barren room into which he rushed with so much pleasure, and the bricks were bare and uneven. It had a walnut-wood press, handsome and very old, a broad deal table, and several wooden stools for all its furniture; but at the top of the chamber, sending out warmth and color together as the lamp shed its rays upon it, was a tower of porcelain, burnished with all the hues of a king's peacock and a queen's jewels, and surmounted with armed figures, and shields, and flowers of heraldry, and a great golden crown upon the highest summit of all.

It was a stove of 1532, and on it were the letters H. R. H., for it was in every portion the handwork of the great potter of Nürnberg, Augustin Hirschvogel, who put his mark thus, as all the world knows.

The stove no doubt had stood in palaces and been made for princes, had warmed the crimson stockings of cardinals and the gold-broidered shoes of archduchesses, had glowed in presence-chambers and lent its carbon

to help kindle sharp brains in anxious councils of state; no one knew what it had seen or done or been fashioned for; but it was a right royal thing. Yet perhaps it had never been more useful than it was now in this poor desolate room, sending down heat and comfort into the troop of children tumbled together on a wolf-skin at its feet, who received frozen August among them with loud shouts of joy.

"Oh, dear Hirschvogel, I am so cold, so cold!" said August, kissing its gilded lion's claws. "Is father not in, Dorothea?"

"No, dear. He is late."

Dorothea was a girl of seventeen, dark-haired and serious, and with a sweet sad face, for she had had many cares laid on her shoulders, even whilst still a mere baby. She was the eldest of the Strehla family; and there were ten of them in all. Next to her there came Jan and Karl and Otho, big lads, gaining a little for their own living; and then came August, who went up in the summer to the high alps with the farmers' cattle, but in winter could do nothing to fill his own little platter and pot; and then all the little ones, who could only open their mouths to be fed like young birds,—Albrecht and Hilda, and Waldo and Christof, and last of all little three-year-old Ermengilda, with eyes like forget-me-nots, whose birth had cost them the life of their mother.

They were of that mixed race, half Austrian, half Italian, so common in the Tyrol; some of the children were white and golden as lilies, others were brown and brilliant as fresh-fallen chestnuts. The father was a good man, but weak and weary with so many to find

2

for and so little to do it with. He worked at the salt-furnaces, and by that gained a few florins; people said he would have worked better and kept his family more easily if he had not loved his pipe and a draught of ale too well; but this had only been said of him after his wife's death, when trouble and perplexity had begun to dull a brain never too vigorous, and to enfeeble further a character already too yielding. As it was, the wolf often bayed at the door of the Strehla household, without a wolf from the mountains coming down. Dorothea was one of those maidens who almost work miracles, so far can their industry and care and intelligence make a home sweet and wholesome and a single loaf seem to swell into twenty. The children were always clean and happy, and the table was seldom without its big pot of soup once a day. Still, very poor they were, and Dorothea's heart ached with shame, for she knew that their father's debts were many for flour and meat and clothing. Of fuel to feed the big stove they had always enough without cost, for their mother's father was alive, and sold wood and fir cones and coke, and never grudged them to his grandchildren, though he grumbled at Strehla's improvidence and hapless, dreamy ways.

"Father says we are never to wait for him: we will have supper, now you have come home, dear," said Dorothea, who, however she might fret her soul in secret as she knitted their hose and mended their shirts, never let her anxieties cast a gloom on the children; only to August she did speak a little sometimes, because he was so thoughtful and so tender of her always, and knew as well as she did that there were

troubles about money,—though these troubles were vague to them both, and the debtors were patient and kindly, being neighbors all in the old twisting streets between the guard-house and the river.

Supper was a huge bowl of soup, with big slices of brown bread swimming in it and some onions bobbing up and down: the bowl was soon emptied by ten wooden spoons, and then the three eldest boys slipped off to bed, being tired with their rough bodily labor in the snow all day, and Dorothea drew her spinning-wheel by the stove and set it whirring, and the little ones got August down upon the old worn wolf-skin and clamored to him for a picture or a story. For August was the artist of the family.

He had a piece of planed deal that his father had given him, and some sticks of charcoal, and he would draw a hundred things he had seen in the day, sweeping each out with his elbow when the children had seen enough of it and sketching another in its stead,—faces and dogs' heads, and men in sledges, and old women in their furs, and pine-trees, and cocks and hens, and all sorts of animals, and now and then—very reverently—a Madonna and Child. It was all very rough, for there was no one to teach him anything. But it was all life-like, and kept the whole troop of children shrieking with laughter, or watching breathless, with wide open, wondering, awed eyes.

They were all so happy: what did they care for the snow outside? Their little bodies were warm, and their hearts merry; even Dorothea, troubled about the bread for the morrow, laughed as she spun; and August, with all his soul in his work, and little rosy Er-

mengilda's cheek on his shoulder, glowing after his frozen afternoon, cried out loud, smiling, as he looked up at the stove that was shedding its heat down on them all,—

"Oh, dear Hirschvogel! you are almost as great and good as the sun! No; you are greater and better, I think, because he goes away nobody knows where all these long, dark, cold hours, and does not care how people die for want of him; but you—you are always ready: just a little bit of wood to feed you, and you will make a summer for us all the winter through!"

The grand old stove seemed to smile through all its iridescent surface at the praises of the child. No doubt the stove, though it had known three centuries and more, had known but very little gratitude.

It was one of those magnificent stoves in enamelled faïence which so excited the jealousy of the other potters of Nürnberg that in a body they demanded of the magistracy that Augustin Hirschvogel should be forbidden to make any more of them,—the magistracy, happily, proving of a broader mind, and having no sympathy with the wish of the artisans to cripple their greater fellow.

It was of great height and breadth, with all the majolica lustre which Hirschvogel learned to give to his enamels when he was making love to the young Venetian girl whom he afterwards married. There was the statue of a king at each corner, modelled with as much force and splendor as his friend Albrecht Dürer could have given unto them on copperplate or canvas. The body of the stove itself was divided into panels, which had the Ages of Man painted on them

in polychrome; the borders of the panels had roses and holly and laurel and other foliage, and German mottoes in black letter of odd Old-World moralizing, such as the old Teutons, and the Dutch after them, love to have on their chimney-places and their drinking-cups, their dishes and flagons. The whole was burnished with gilding in many parts, and was radiant everywhere with that brilliant coloring of which the Hirschvogel family, painters on glass and great in chemistry as they were, were all masters.

The stove was a very grand thing, as I say: possibly Hirschvogel had made it for some mighty lord of the Tyrol at that time when he was an imperial guest at Innspruck and fashioned so many things for the Schloss Amras and beautiful Philippine Welser, the burgher's daughter, who gained an archduke's heart by her beauty and the right to wear his honors by her wit. Nothing was known of the stove at this latter day in Hall. The grandfather Strehla, who had been a master-mason, had dug it up out of some ruins where he was building, and, finding it without a flaw, had taken it home, and only thought it worth finding because it was such a good one to burn. That was now sixty years past, and ever since then the stove had stood in the big desolate empty room, warming three generations of the Strehla family, and having seen nothing prettier perhaps in all its many years than the children tumbled now in a cluster like gathered flowers at its feet. For the Strehla children, born to nothing else, were all born with beauty: white or brown, they were equally lovely to look upon, and when they went into the church to mass, with their

curling locks and their clasped hands, they stood under the grim statues like cherubs flown down off some fresco.

"Tell us a story, August," they cried, in chorus, when they had seen charcoal pictures till they were tired; and August did as he did every night pretty nearly,—looked up at the stove and told them what he imagined of the many adventures and joys and sorrows of the human being who figured on the panels from his cradle to his grave.

To the children the stove was a household god. In summer they laid a mat of fresh moss all round it, and dressed it up with green boughs and the numberless beautiful wild flowers of the Tyrol country. In winter all their joys centred in it, and scampering home from school over the ice and snow they were happy, knowing that they would soon be cracking nuts or roasting chestnuts in the broad ardent glow of its noble tower, which rose eight feet high above them with all its spires and pinnacles and crowns.

Once a travelling peddler had told them that the letters on it meant Augustin Hirschvogel, and that Hirschvogel had been a great German potter and painter, like his father before him, in the art-sanctified city of Nürnberg, and had made many such stoves, that were all miracles of beauty and of workmanship, putting all his heart and his soul and his faith into his labors, as the men of those earlier ages did, and thinking but little of gold or praise.

An old trader, too, who sold curiosities not far from the church, had told August a little more about the brave family of Hirschvogel, whose houses can be seen

in Nürnberg to this day; of old Veit, the first of them, who painted the Gothic windows of St. Sebald with the marriage of the Margravine; of his sons and of his grandsons, potters, painters, engravers all, and chief of them great Augustin, the Luca della Robbia of the North. And August's imagination, always quick, had made a living personage out of these few records, and saw Hirschvogel as though he were in the flesh walking up and down the Maximilian-Strass in his visit to Innspruck, and maturing beautiful things in his brain as he stood on the bridge and gazed on the emerald-green flood of the Inn.

So the stove had got to be called Hirschvogel in the family, as if it were a living creature, and little August was very proud because he had been named after that famous old dead German who had had the genius to make so glorious a thing. All the children loved the stove, but with August the love of it was a passion; and in his secret heart he used to say to himself, "When I am a man, I will make just such things too, and then I will set Hirschvogel in a beautiful room in a house that I will build myself in Innspruck just outside the gates, where the chestnuts are, by the river: that is what I will do when I am a man."

For August, a salt-baker's son and a little cow-keeper when he was anything, was a dreamer of dreams, and when he was upon the high alps with his cattle, with the stillness and the sky around him, was quite certain that he would live for greater things than driving the herds up when the spring-tide came among the blue sea of gentians, or toiling down in the town with wood and with timber as his father and grand-

father did every day of their lives. He was a strong and healthy little fellow, fed on the free mountain-air, and he was very happy, and loved his family devotedly, and was as active as a squirrel and as playful as a hare; but he kept his thoughts to himself, and some of them went a very long way for a little boy who was only one among many, and to whom nobody had ever paid any attention except to teach him his letters and tell him to fear God. August in winter was only a little, hungry school-boy, trotting to be catechised by the priest, or to bring the loaves from the bake-house, or to carry his father's boots to the cobbler; and in summer he was only one of hundreds of cow-boys, who drove the poor, half-blind, blinking, stumbling cattle, ringing their throat-bells, out into the sweet intoxication of the sudden sunlight, and lived up with them in the heights among the Alpine roses, with only the clouds and the snow-summits near. But he was always thinking, thinking, thinking, for all that; and under his little sheepskin winter coat and his rough hempen summer shirt his heart had as much courage in it as Hofer's ever had,—great Hofer, who is a household word in all the Innthal, and whom August always reverently remembered when he went to the city of Innspruck and ran out by the foaming water-mill and under the wooded height of Berg Isel.

August lay now in the warmth of the stove and told the children stories, his own little brown face growing red with excitement as his imagination glowed to fever-heat. That human being on the panels, who was drawn there as a baby in a cradle, as a boy playing among flowers, as a lover sighing under a casement, as

a soldier in the midst of strife, as a father with children round him, as a weary, old, blind man on crutches, and, lastly, as a ransomed soul raised up by angels, had always had the most intense interest for August, and he had made, not one history for him, but a thousand; he seldom told them the same tale twice. He had never seen a story-book in his life; his primer and his mass-book were all the volumes he had. But nature had given him Fancy, and she is a good fairy that makes up for the want of very many things! only, alas! her wings are so very soon broken, poor thing, and then she is of no use at all.

"It is time for you all to go to bed, children," said Dorothea, looking up from her spinning. "Father is very late to-night; you must not sit up for him."

"Oh, five minutes more, dear Dorothea!" they pleaded; and little rosy and golden Ermengilda climbed up into her lap. "Hirschvogel is so warm, the beds are never so warm as he. Cannot you tell us another tale, August?"

"No," cried August, whose face had lost its light, now that his story had come to an end, and who sat serious, with his hands clasped on his knees, gazing on to the luminous arabesques of the stove.

"It is only a week to Christmas," he said, suddenly.

"Grandmother's big cakes!" chuckled little Christof, who was five years old, and thought Christmas meant a big cake and nothing else.

"What will Santa Claus find for 'Gilda if she be good?" murmured Dorothea over the child's sunny head; for, however hard poverty might pinch, it could never pinch so tightly that Dorothea would not find

some wooden toy and some rosy apples to put in her little sister's socks.

"Father Max has promised me a big goose, because I saved the calf's life in June," said August; it was the twentieth time he had told them so that month, he was so proud of it.

"And Aunt Maïla will be sure to send us wine and honey and a barrel of flour; she always does," said Albrecht. Their aunt Maïla had a chalet and a little farm over on the green slopes towards Dorp Ampas.

"I shall go up into the woods and get Hirschvogel's crown," said August; they always crowned Hirschvogel for Christmas with pine boughs and ivy and mountain-berries. The heat soon withered the crown; but it was part of the religion of the day to them, as much so as it was to cross themselves in church and raise their voices in the "O Salutaris Hostia."

And they fell chatting of all they would do on the Christ-night, and one little voice piped loud against another's, and they were as happy as though their stockings would be full of golden purses and jewelled toys, and the big goose in the soup-pot seemed to them such a meal as kings would envy.

In the midst of their chatter and laughter a blast of frozen air and a spray of driven snow struck like ice through the room, and reached them even in the warmth of the old wolf-skins and the great stove. It was the door which had opened and let in the cold; it was their father who had come home.

The younger children ran joyous to meet him. Dorothea pushed the one wooden arm-chair of the room to the stove, and August flew to set the jug of

beer on a little round table, and fill a long clay pipe; for their father was good to them all, and seldom raised his voice in anger, and they had been trained by the mother they had loved to dutifulness and obedience and a watchful affection.

To-night Karl Strehla responded very wearily to the young ones' welcome, and came to the wooden chair with a tired step and sat down heavily, not noticing either pipe or beer.

"Are you not well, dear father?" his daughter asked him.

"I am well enough," he answered, dully, and sat there with his head bent, letting the lighted pipe grow cold.

He was a fair, tall man, gray before his time, and bowed with labor.

"Take the children to bed," he said, suddenly, at last, and Dorothea obeyed. August stayed behind, curled before the stove; at nine years old, and when one earns money in the summer from the farmers, one is not altogether a child any more, at least in one's own estimation.

August did not heed his father's silence: he was used to it. Karl Strehla was a man of few words, and, being of weakly health, was usually too tired at the end of the day to do more than drink his beer and sleep. August lay on the wolf-skin, dreamy and comfortable, looking up through his drooping eyelids at the golden coronets on the crest of the great stove, and wondering for the millionth time whom it had been made for, and what grand places and scenes it had known.

Dorothea came down from putting the little ones in their beds; the cuckoo-clock in the corner struck eight; she looked to her father and the untouched pipe, then sat down to her spinning, saying nothing. She thought he had been drinking in some tavern; it had been often so with him of late.

There was a long silence; the cuckoo called the quarter twice; August dropped asleep, his curls falling over his face; Dorothea's wheel hummed like a cat.

Suddenly Karl Strehla struck his hand on the table, sending the pipe on the ground.

"I have sold Hirschvogel," he said; and his voice was husky and ashamed in his throat. The spinning-wheel stopped. August sprang erect out of his sleep.

"Sold Hirschvogel!" If their father had dashed the holy crucifix on the floor at their feet and spat on it, they could not have shuddered under the horror of a greater blasphemy.

"I have sold Hirschvogel!" said Karl Strehla, in the same husky, dogged voice. "I have sold it to a travelling trader in such things for two hundred florins. What would you?—I owe double that. He saw it this morning when you were all out. He will pack it and take it to Munich to-morrow."

Dorothea gave a low shrill cry:

"Oh, father!—the children—in mid-winter!"

She turned white as the snow without; her words died away in her throat.

August stood, half blind with sleep, staring with dazed eyes as his cattle stared at the sun when they came out from their winter's prison.

"It is not true! It is not true!" he muttered. "You are jesting, father?"

Strehla broke into a dreary laugh.

"It is true. Would you like to know what is true too?—that the bread you eat, and the meat you put in this pot, and the roof you have over your heads, are none of them paid for, have been none of them paid for for months and months: if it had not been for your grandfather I should have been in prison all summer and autumn, and he is out of patience and will do no more now. There is no work to be had; the masters go to younger men: they say I work ill; it may be so. Who can keep his head above water with ten hungry children dragging him down? When your mother lived, it was different. Boy, you stare at me as if I were a mad dog! You have made a god of yon china thing. Well—it goes: goes to-morrow. Two hundred florins, that is something. It will keep me out of prison for a little, and with the spring things may turn——"

August stood like a creature paralyzed. His eyes were wide open, fastened on his father's with terror and incredulous horror; his face had grown as white as his sister's; his chest heaved with tearless sobs.

"It is not true! It is not true!" he echoed, stupidly. It seemed to him that the very skies must fall, and the earth perish, if they could take away Hirschvogel. They might as soon talk of tearing down God's sun out of the heavens.

"You will find it true," said his father, doggedly, and angered because he was in his own soul bitterly ashamed to have bartered away the heirloom and treas-

ure of his race and the comfort and health-giver of his young children. "You will find it true. The dealer has paid me half the money to-night, and will pay me the other half to-morrow when he packs it up and takes it away to Munich. No doubt it is worth a great deal more,—at least I suppose so, as he gives that,—but beggars cannot be choosers. The little black stove in the kitchen will warm you all just as well. Who would keep a gilded, painted thing in a poor house like this, when one can make two hundred florins by it? Dorothea, you never sobbed more when your mother died. What is it, when all is said?—a bit of hardware much too grand-looking for such a room as this. If all the Strehlas had not been born fools it would have been sold a century ago, when it was dug up out of the ground. 'It is a stove for a museum,' the trader said when he saw it. To a museum let it go."

August gave a shrill shriek like a hare's when it is caught for its death, and threw himself on his knees at his father's feet.

"Oh, father, father!" he cried, convulsively, his hands closing on Strehla's knees, and his uplifted face blanched and distorted with terror. "Oh, father, dear father, you cannot mean what you say? Send *it* away—our life, our sun, our joy, our comfort? We shall all die in the dark and the cold. Sell *me* rather. Sell me to any trade or any pain you like; I will not mind. But Hirschvogel!—it is like selling the very cross off the altar! You must be in jest. You could not do such a thing—you could not!—you who have always been gentle and good, and who have sat in the warmth

here year after year with our mother. It is not a piece of hardware, as you say; it is a living thing, for a great man's thoughts and fancies have put life into it, and it loves us though we are only poor little children, and we love it with all our hearts and souls, and up in heaven I am sure the dead Hirschvogel knows! Oh, listen; I will go and try and get work to-morrow! I will ask them to let me cut ice or make the paths through the snow. There must be something I could do, and I will beg the people we owe money to to wait; they are all neighbors, they will be patient. But sell Hirschvogel!—oh, never! never! never! Give the florins back to the vile man. Tell him it would be like selling the shroud out of mother's coffin, or the golden curls off Ermengilda's head! Oh, father, dear father! do hear me, for pity's sake!"

Strehla was moved by the boy's anguish. He loved his children, though he was often weary of them, and their pain was pain to him. But besides emotion, and stronger than emotion, was the anger that August roused in him: he hated and despised himself for the barter of the heirloom of his race, and every word of the child stung him with a stinging sense of shame.

And he spoke in his wrath rather than in his sorrow.

"You are a little fool," he said, harshly, as they had never heard him speak. "You rave like a play-actor. Get up and go to bed. The stove is sold. There is no more to be said. Children like you have nothing to do with such matters. The stove is sold, and goes to Munich to-morrow. What is it to you? Be thankful I can get bread for you. Get on your legs, I say, and go to bed."

Strehla took up the jug of ale as he paused, and drained it slowly as a man who had no cares.

August sprang to his feet and threw his hair back off his face; the blood rushed into his cheeks, making them scarlet; his great soft eyes flamed alight with furious passion.

"You *dare* not!" he cried, aloud, "you dare not sell it, I say! It is not yours alone; it is ours——"

Strehla flung the emptied jug on the bricks with a force that shivered it to atoms, and, rising to his feet, struck his son a blow that felled him to the floor. It was the first time in all his life that he had ever raised his hand against any one of his children.

Then he took the oil-lamp that stood at his elbow and stumbled off to his own chamber with a cloud before his eyes.

"What has happened?" said August, a little while later, as he opened his eyes and saw Dorothea weeping above him on the wolf-skin before the stove. He had been struck backward, and his head had fallen on the hard bricks where the wolf-skin did not reach. He sat up a moment, with his face bent upon his hands.

"I remember now," he said, very low, under his breath.

Dorothea showered kisses on him, while her tears fell like rain.

"But, oh, dear, how could you speak so to father?" she murmured. "It was very wrong."

"No, I was right," said August, and his little mouth, that hitherto had only curled in laughter, curved downward with a fixed and bitter seriousness. "How dare he? How dare he?' he muttered, with his head sunk

in his hands. "It is not his alone. It belongs to us all. It is as much yours and mine as it is his."

Dorothea could only sob in answer. She was too frightened to speak. The authority of their parents in the house had never in her remembrance been questioned.

"Are you hurt by the fall, dear August?" she murmured, at length, for he looked to her so pale and strange.

"Yes—no. I do not know. What does it matter?"

He sat up upon the wolf-skin with passionate pain upon his face; all his soul was in rebellion, and he was only a child and was powerless.

"It is a sin; it is a theft; it is an infamy," he said, slowly, his eyes fastened on the gilded feet of Hirschvogel.

"Oh, August, do not say such things of father!" sobbed his sister. "Whatever he does, *we* ought to think it right."

August laughed aloud.

"Is it right that he should spend his money in drink?—that he should let orders lie unexecuted?—that he should do his work so ill that no one cares to employ him?—that he should live on grandfather's charity, and then dare sell a thing that is ours every whit as much as it is his? To sell Hirschvogel! Oh, dear God! I would sooner sell my soul!"

"August!" cried Dorothea, with piteous entreaty. He terrified her, she could not recognize her little, gay, gentle brother in those fierce and blasphemous words.

August laughed aloud again; then all at once his laughter broke down into bitterest weeping. He threw

himself forward on the stove, covering it with kisses, and sobbing as though his heart would burst from his bosom.

What could he do? Nothing, nothing, nothing!

"August, dear August," whispered Dorothea, piteously, and trembling all over,—for she was a very gentle girl, and fierce feeling terrified her,—"August, do not lie there. Come to bed: it is quite late. In the morning you will be calmer. It is horrible indeed, and we shall die of cold, at least the little ones; but if it be father's will——"

"Let me alone," said August, through his teeth, striving to still the storm of sobs that shook him from head to foot. "Let me alone. In the morning!—how can you speak of the morning?"

"Come to bed, dear," sighed his sister. "Oh, August, do not lie and look like that! you frighten me. Do come to bed."

"I shall stay here."

"Here! all night!"

"They might take it in the night. Besides, to leave it *now!*"

"But it is cold! the fire is out."

"It will never be warm any more, nor shall we."

All his childhood had gone out of him, all his gleeful, careless, sunny temper had gone with it; he spoke sullenly and wearily, choking down the great sobs in his chest. To him it was as if the end of the world had come.

His sister lingered by him while striving to persuade him to go to his place in the little crowded bedchamber with Albrecht and Waldo and Christof. But it was

in vain. "I shall stay here," was all he answered her. And he stayed,—all the night long.

The lamps went out; the rats came and ran across the floor; as the hours crept on through midnight and past, the cold intensified and the air of the room grew like ice. August did not move; he lay with his face downward on the golden and rainbow-hued pedestal of the household treasure, which henceforth was to be cold for evermore, an exiled thing in a foreign city in a far-off land.

Whilst yet it was dark his three elder brothers came down the stairs and let themselves out, each bearing his lantern and going to his work in stone-yard and timber-yard and at the salt-works. They did not notice him; they did not know what had happened.

A little later his sister came down with a light in her hand to make ready the house ere morning should break.

She stole up to him and laid her hand on his shoulder timidly.

"Dear August, you must be frozen. August, do look up! do speak!"

August raised his eyes with a wild, feverish, sullen look in them that she had never seen there. His face was ashen white: his lips were like fire. He had not slept all night; but his passionate sobs had given way to delirious waking dreams and numb senseless trances, which had alternated one on another all through the freezing, lonely, horrible hours.

"It will never be warm again," he muttered, "never again!"

Dorothea clasped him with trembling hands.

"August! do you not know me?" she cried, in an agony. "I am Dorothea. Wake up, dear—wake up! It is morning, only so dark!"

August shuddered all over.

"The morning!" he echoed.

He slowly rose up on to his feet.

"I will go to grandfather," he said, very low. "He is always good: perhaps he could save it."

Loud blows with the heavy iron knocker of the house-door drowned his words. A strange voice called aloud through the keyhole,—

"Let me in! Quick!—there is no time to lose! More snow like this, and the roads will all be blocked. Let me in! Do you hear? I am come to take the great stove."

August sprang erect, his fists doubled, his eyes blazing.

"You shall never touch it!" he screamed; "you shall never touch it!"

"Who shall prevent us?" laughed a big man, who was a Bavarian, amused at the fierce little figure fronting him.

"I!" said August. "You shall never have it! you shall kill me first!"

"Strehla," said the big man, as August's father entered the room, "you have got a little mad dog here: muzzle him."

One way and another they did muzzle him. He fought like a little demon, and hit out right and left, and one of his blows gave the Bavarian a black eye. But he was soon mastered by four grown men, and his father flung him with no light hand out from the door

of the back entrance, and the buyers of the stately and beautiful stove set to work to pack it heedfully and carry it away.

When Dorothea stole out to look for August, he was nowhere in sight. She went back to little 'Gilda, who was ailing, and sobbed over the child, whilst the others stood looking on, dimly understanding that with Hirschvogel was going all the warmth of their bodies, all the light of their hearth.

Even their father now was sorry and ashamed; but two hundred florins seemed a big sum to him, and, after all, he thought the children could warm themselves quite as well at the black iron stove in the kitchen. Besides, whether he regretted it now or not, the work of the Nürnberg potter was sold irrevocably, and he had to stand still and see the men from Munich wrap it in manifold wrappings and bear it out into the snowy air to where an ox-cart stood in waiting for it.

In another moment Hirschvogel was gone,—gone forever and aye.

August had stood still for a time, leaning, sick and faint from the violence that had been used to him, against the back wall of the house. The wall looked on a court where a well was, and the backs of other houses, and beyond them the spire of the Muntze Tower and the peaks of the mountains.

Into the court an old neighbor hobbled for water, and, seeing the boy, said to him,—

"Child, is it true your father is selling the big painted stove?"

August nodded his head, then burst into a passion of tears.

"Well, for sure he is a fool," said the neighbor. "Heaven forgive me for calling him so before his own child! but the stove was worth a mint of money. I do remember in my young days, in old Anton's time (that was your great-grandfather, my lad), a stranger from Vienna saw it, and said that it was worth its weight in gold."

August's sobs went on their broken, impetuous course.

"I loved it! I loved it!" he moaned. "I do not care what its value was. I loved it! *I loved it!*"

"You little simpleton!" said the old man, kindly. "But you are wiser than your father, when all's said. If sell it he must, he should have taken it to good Herr Steiner over at Sprüz, who would have given him honest value. But no doubt they took him over his beer,—ay, ay! but if I were you I would do better than cry. I would go after it."

August raised his head, the tears raining down his cheeks.

"Go after it when you are bigger," said the neighbor, with a good-natured wish to cheer him up a little. "The world is a small thing after all: I was a travelling clockmaker once upon a time, and I know that your stove will be safe enough whoever gets it; anything that can be sold for a round sum is always wrapped up in cotton wool by everybody. Ay, ay, don't cry so much; you will see your stove again some day."

Then the old man hobbled away to draw his brazen pail full of water at the well.

August remained leaning against the wall; his head

was buzzing and his heart fluttering with the new idea which had presented itself to his mind. "Go after it," had said the old man. He thought, "Why not go with it?" He loved it better than any one, even better than Dorothea; and he shrank from the thought of meeting his father again, his father who had sold Hirschvogel.

He was by this time in that state of exaltation in which the impossible looks quite natural and commonplace. His tears were still wet on his pale cheeks, but they had ceased to fall. He ran out of the court-yard by a little gate, and across to the huge Gothic porch of the church. From there he could watch unseen his father's house-door, at which were always hanging some blue-and-gray pitchers, such as are common and so picturesque in Austria, for a part of the house was let to a man who dealt in pottery.

He hid himself in the grand portico, which he had so often passed through to go to mass or complin within, and presently his heart gave a great leap, for he saw the straw-enwrapped stove brought out and laid with infinite care on the bullock-dray. Two of the Bavarian men mounted beside it, and the sleigh-wagon slowly crept over the snow of the place,—snow crisp and hard as stone. The noble old minster looked its grandest and most solemn, with its dark-gray stone and its vast archways, and its porch that was itself as big as many a church, and its strange gargoyles and lamp-irons black against the snow on its roof and on the pavement; but for once August had no eyes for it: he only watched for his old friend. Then he, a little unnoticeable figure enough, like a score

of other boys in Hall, crept, unseen by any of his brothers or sisters, out of the porch and over the shelving uneven square, and followed in the wake of the dray.

Its course lay towards the station of the railway, which is close to the salt-works, whose smoke at times sullies this part of clean little Hall, though it does not do very much damage. From Hall the iron road runs northward through glorious country to Salzburg, Vienna, Prague, Buda, and southward over the Brenner into Italy. Was Hirschvogel going north or south? This at least he would soon know.

August had often hung about the little station, watching the trains come and go and dive into the heart of the hills and vanish. No one said anything to him for idling about; people are kind-hearted and easy of temper in this pleasant land, and children and dogs are both happy there. He heard the Bavarians arguing and vociferating a great deal, and learned that they meant to go too and wanted to go with the great stove itself. But this they could not do, for neither could the stove go by a passenger-train nor they themselves go in a goods-train. So at length they insured their precious burden for a large sum, and consented to send it by a luggage-train which was to pass through Hall in half an hour. The swift trains seldom deign to notice the existence of Hall at all.

August heard, and a desperate resolve made itself up in his little mind. Where Hirschvogel went would he go. He gave one terrible thought to Dorothea—poor, gentle Dorothea!—sitting in the cold at home, then set to work to execute his project. How he man-

aged it he never knew very clearly himself, but certain it is that when the goods-train from the north, that had come all the way from Linz on the Danube, moved out of Hall, August was hidden behind the stove in the great covered truck, and wedged, unseen and undreamt of by any human creature, amidst the cases of wood-carving, of clocks and clock-work, of Vienna toys, of Turkish carpets, of Russian skins, of Hungarian wines, which shared the same abode as did his swathed and bound Hirschvogel. No doubt he was very naughty, but it never occurred to him that he was so: his whole mind and soul were absorbed in the one entrancing idea, to follow his beloved friend and fire-king.

It was very dark in the closed truck, which had only a little window above the door; and it was crowded, and had a strong smell in it from the Russian hides and the hams that were in it. But August was not frightened; he was close to Hirschvogel, and presently he meant to be closer still; for he meant to do nothing less than get inside Hirschvogel itself. Being a shrewd little boy, and having had by great luck two silver groschen in his breeches-pocket, which he had earned the day before by chopping wood, he had bought some bread and sausage at the station of a woman there who knew him, and who thought he was going out to his uncle Joachim's chalet above Jenbach. This he had with him, and this he ate in the darkness and the lumbering, pounding, thundering noise which made him giddy, as never had he been in a train of any kind before. Still he ate, having had no breakfast, and being a child, and half a German,

and not knowing at all how or when he ever would eat again.

When he had eaten, not as much as he wanted, but as much as he thought was prudent (for who could say when he would be able to buy anything more?), he set to work like a little mouse to make a hole in the withes of straw and hay which enveloped the stove. If it had been put in a packing-case he would have been defeated at the onset. As it was, he gnawed, and nibbled, and pulled, and pushed, just as a mouse would have done, making his hole where he guessed that the opening of the stove was,—the opening through which he had so often thrust the big oak logs to feed it. No one disturbed him; the heavy train went lumbering on and on, and he saw nothing at all of the beautiful mountains, and shining waters, and great forests through which he was being carried. He was hard at work getting through the straw and hay and twisted ropes; and get through them at last he did, and found the door of the stove, which he knew so well, and which was quite large enough for a child of his age to slip through, and it was this which he had counted upon doing. Slip through he did, as he had often done at home for fun, and curled himself up there to see if he could anyhow remain during many hours. He found that he could; air came in through the brass fret-work of the stove; and with admirable caution in such a little fellow he leaned out, drew the hay and straw together, and rearranged the ropes, so that no one could ever have dreamed a little mouse had been at them. Then he curled himself up again, this time more like a dormouse than anything else; and, being safe inside

his dear Hirschvogel and intensely cold, he went fast asleep as if he were in his own bed at home with Albrecht and Christof on either side of him. The train lumbered on, stopping often and long, as the habit of goods-trains is, sweeping the snow away with its cow-switcher, and rumbling through the deep heart of the mountains, with its lamps aglow like the eyes of a dog in a night of frost.

The train rolled on in its heavy, slow fashion, and the child slept soundly for a long while. When he did awake, it was quite dark outside in the land; he could not see, and of course he was in absolute darkness; and for a while he was sorely frightened, and trembled terribly, and sobbed in a quiet heart-broken fashion, thinking of them all at home. Poor Dorothea! how anxious she would be! How she would run over the town and walk up to grandfather's at Dorf Ampas, and perhaps even send over to Jenbach, thinking he had taken refuge with Uncle Joachim! His conscience smote him for the sorrow he must be even then causing to his gentle sister; but it never occurred to him to try and go back. If he once were to lose sight of Hirschvogel how could he ever hope to find it again? how could he ever know whither it had gone,—north, south, east, or west? The old neighbor had said that the world was small; but August knew at least that it must have a great many places in it: that he had seen himself on the maps on his school-house walls. Almost any other little boy would, I think, have been frightened out of his wits at the position in which he found himself; but August was brave, and he had a firm belief that God and Hirsch-

vogel would take care of him. The master-potter of Nürnberg was always present to his mind, a kindly, benign, and gracious spirit, dwelling manifestly in that porcelain tower whereof he had been the maker.

A droll fancy, you say? But every child with a soul in him has quite as quaint fancies as this one was of August's.

So he got over his terror and his sobbing both, though he was so utterly in the dark. He did not feel cramped at all, because the stove was so large, and air he had in plenty, as it came through the fret-work running round the top. He was hungry again, and again nibbled with prudence at his loaf and his sausage. He could not at all tell the hour. Every time the train stopped and he heard the banging, stamping, shouting, and jangling of chains that went on, his heart seemed to jump up into his mouth. If they should find him out! Sometimes porters came and took away this case and the other, a sack here, a bale there, now a big bag, now a dead chamois. Every time the men trampled near him, and swore at each other, and banged this and that to and fro, he was so frightened that his very breath seemed to stop. When they came to lift the stove out, would they find him? and if they did find him, would they kill him? That was what he kept thinking of all the way, all through the dark hours, which seemed without end. The goods-trains are usually very slow, and are many days doing what a quick train does in a few hours. This one was quicker than most, because it was bearing goods to the King of Bavaria; still, it took all the short winter's day and the long winter's night and half another day to go

over ground that the mail-trains cover in a forenoon. It passed great armored Kuffstein standing across the beautiful and solemn gorge, denying the right of way to all the foes of Austria. It passed twelve hours later, after lying by in out-of-the-way stations, pretty Rosenheim, that marks the border of Bavaria. And here the Nürnberg stove, with August inside it, was lifted out heedfully and set under a covered way. When it was lifted out, the boy had hard work to keep in his screams; he was tossed to and fro as the men lifted the huge thing, and the earthenware walls of his beloved fire-king were not cushions of down. However, though they swore and grumbled at the weight of it, they never suspected that a living child was inside it, and they carried it out on to the platform and set it down under the roof of the goods-shed. There it passed the rest of the night and all the next morning, and August was all the while within it.

The winds of early winter sweep bitterly over Rosenheim, and all the vast Bavarian plain was one white sheet of snow. If there had not been whole armies of men at work always clearing the iron rails of the snow, no trains could ever have run at all. Happily for August, the thick wrappings in which the stove was enveloped and the stoutness of its own make screened him from the cold, of which, else, he must have died,—frozen. He had still some of his loaf, and a little—a very little—of his sausage. What he did begin to suffer from was thirst; and this frightened him almost more than anything else, for Dorothea had read aloud to them one night a story of the tortures some wrecked men had endured because they could not find any water

but the salt sea. It was many hours since he had last taken a drink from the wooden spout of their old pump, which brought them the sparkling, ice-cold water of the hills.

But, fortunately for him, the stove, having been marked and registered as "fragile and valuable," was not treated quite like a mere bale of goods, and the Rosenheim station-master, who knew its consignees, resolved to send it on by a passenger-train that would leave there at daybreak. And when this train went out, in it, among piles of luggage belonging to other travellers, to Vienna, Prague, Buda-Pest, Salzburg, was August, still undiscovered, still doubled up like a mole in the winter under the grass. Those words, "fragile and valuable," had made the men lift Hirschvogel gently and with care. He had begun to get used to his prison, and a little used to the incessant pounding and jumbling and rattling and shaking with which modern travel is always accompanied, though modern invention does deem itself so mightily clever. All in the dark he was, and he was terribly thirsty; but he kept feeling the earthenware sides of the Nürnberg giant and saying, softly, "Take care of me; oh, take care of me, dear Hirschvogel!"

He did not say, "Take me back;" for, now that he was fairly out in the world, he wished to see a little of it. He began to think that they must have been all over the world in all this time that the rolling and roaring and hissing and jangling had been about his ears; shut up in the dark, he began to remember all the tales that had been told in Yule round the fire at his grandfather's good house at Dorf, of gnomes and

elves and subterranean terrors, and the Erl King riding on the black horse of night, and—and—and he began to sob and to tremble again, and this time did scream outright. But the steam was screaming itself so loudly that no one, had there been any one nigh, would have heard him; and in another minute or so the train stopped with a jar and a jerk, and he in his cage could hear men crying aloud, "München! München!"

Then he knew enough of geography to know that he was in the heart of Bavaria. He had had an uncle killed in the Bayerischenwald by the Bavarian forest guards, when in the excitement of hunting a black bear he had overpassed the limits of the Tyrol frontier.

That fate of his kinsman, a gallant young chamois-hunter who had taught him to handle a trigger and load a muzzle, made the very name of Bavaria a terror to August.

"It is Bavaria! It is Bavaria!" he sobbed to the stove; but the stove said nothing to him; it had no fire in it. A stove can no more speak without fire than a man can see without light. Give it fire, and it will sing to you, tell tales to you, offer you in return all the sympathy you ask.

"It is Bavaria!" sobbed August; for it is always a name of dread augury to the Tyroleans, by reason of those bitter struggles and midnight shots and untimely deaths which come from those meetings of jäger and hunter in the Bayerischenwald. But the train stopped; Munich was reached, and August, hot and cold by turns, and shaking like a little aspen-leaf, felt himself

once more carried out on the shoulders of men, rolled along on a truck, and finally set down, where he knew not, only he knew he was thirsty,—so thirsty! If only he could have reached his hand out and scooped up a little snow!

He thought he had been moved on this truck many miles, but in truth the stove had been only taken from the railway-station to a shop in the Marienplatz. Fortunately, the stove was always set upright on its four gilded feet, an injunction to that effect having been affixed to its written label, and on its gilded feet it stood now in the small dark curiosity-shop of one Hans Rhilfer.

"I shall not unpack it till Anton comes," he heard a man's voice say; and then he heard a key grate in a lock, and by the unbroken stillness that ensued he concluded he was alone, and ventured to peep through the straw and hay. What he saw was a small square room filled with pots and pans, pictures, carvings, old blue jugs, old steel armor, shields, daggers, Chinese idols, Vienna china, Turkish rugs, and all the art lumber and fabricated rubbish of a *bric-à-brac* dealer's. It seemed a wonderful place to him; but, oh! was there one drop of water in it all? That was his single thought; for his tongue was parching, and his throat felt on fire, and his chest began to be dry and choked as with dust. There was not a drop of water, but there was a lattice window grated, and beyond the window was a wide stone ledge covered with snow. August cast one look at the locked door, darted out of his hiding-place, ran and opened the window, crammed the snow into his mouth again and again, and then

flew back into the stove, drew the hay and straw over the place he entered by, tied the cords, and shut the brass door down on himself. He had brought some big icicles in with him, and by them his thirst was finally, if only temporarily, quenched. Then he sat still in the bottom of the stove, listening intently, wide awake, and once more recovering his natural boldness.

The thought of Dorothea kept nipping his heart and his conscience with a hard squeeze now and then; but he thought to himself, "If I can take her back Hirschvogel, then how pleased she will be, and how little 'Gilda will clap her hands!" He was not at all selfish in his love for Hirschvogel: he wanted it for them all at home quite as much as for himself. There was at the bottom of his mind a kind of ache of shame that his father—his own father—should have stripped their hearth and sold their honor thus.

A robin had been perched upon a stone griffin sculptured on a house-eave near. August had felt for the crumbs of his loaf in his pocket, and had thrown them to the little bird sitting so easily on the frozen snow.

In the darkness where he was he now heard a little song, made faint by the stove-wall and the window-glass that was between him and it, but still distinct and exquisitely sweet. It was the robin, singing after feeding on the crumbs. August, as he heard, burst into tears. He thought of Dorothea, who every morning threw out some grain or some bread on the snow before the church. "What use is it going *there*," she said, "if we forget the sweetest creatures God has

made?" Poor Dorothea! Poor, good, tender, much-burdened little soul! He thought of her till his tears ran like rain.

Yet it never once occurred to him to dream of going home. Hirschvogel was here.

Presently the key turned in the lock of the door, he heard heavy footsteps and the voice of the man who had said to his father, "You have a little mad dog; muzzle him!" The voice said, "Ay, ay, you have called me a fool many times. Now you shall see what I have gotten for two hundred dirty florins. *Potztausend!* never did *you* do such a stroke of work."

Then the other voice grumbled and swore, and the steps of the two men approached more closely, and the heart of the child went pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat, as a mouse's does when it is on the top of a cheese and hears a housemaid's broom sweeping near. They began to strip the stove of its wrappings: that he could tell by the noise they made with the hay and the straw. Soon they had stripped it wholly: that, too, he knew by the oaths and exclamations of wonder and surprise and rapture which broke from the man who had not seen it before.

"A right royal thing! A wonderful and never-to-be-rivalled thing! Grander than the great stove of Hohen-Salzburg! Sublime! magnificent! matchless!"

So the epithets ran on in thick guttural voices, diffusing a smell of lager-beer so strong as they spoke that it reached August crouching in his stronghold. If they should open the door of the stove! That was his frantic fear. If they should open it, it would be all over with him. They would drag him out; most

likely they would kill him, he thought, as his mother's young brother had been killed in the Wald.

The perspiration rolled off his forehead in his agony; but he had control enough over himself to keep quiet, and after standing by the Nürnberg master's work for nigh an hour, praising, marvelling, expatiating in the lengthy German tongue, the men moved to a little distance and began talking of sums of money and divided profits, of which discourse he could make out no meaning. All he could make out was that the name of the king—the king—the king came over very often in their arguments. He fancied at times they quarrelled, for they swore lustily and their voices rose hoarse and high; but after a while they seemed to pacify each other and agree to something, and were in great glee, and so in these merry spirits came and slapped the luminous sides of stately Hirschvogel, and shouted to it,—

"Old Mumchance, you have brought us rare good luck! To think you were smoking in a silly fool of a salt-baker's kitchen all these years!"

Then inside the stove August jumped up, with flaming cheeks and clinching hands, and was almost on the point of shouting out to them that they were the thieves and should say no evil of his father, when he remembered, just in time, that to breathe a word or make a sound was to bring ruin on himself and sever him forever from Hirschvogel. So he kept quite still, and the men barred the shutters of the little lattice and went out by the door, double-locking it after them. He had made out from their talk that they were going to show Hirschvogel to some great person: therefore he kept quite still and dared not move.

Muffled sounds came to him through the shutters from the streets below,—the rolling of wheels, the clanging of church-bells, and bursts of that military music which is so seldom silent in the streets of Munich. An hour perhaps passed by; sounds of steps on the stairs kept him in perpetual apprehension. In the intensity of his anxiety, he forgot that he was hungry and many miles away from cheerful, Old World little Hall, lying by the clear gray river-water, with the ramparts of the mountains all around.

Presently the door opened again sharply. He could hear the two dealers' voices murmuring unctuous words, in which "honor," "gratitude," and many fine long noble titles played the chief parts. The voice of another person, more clear and refined than theirs, answered them curtly, and then, close by the Nürnberg stove and the boy's ear, ejaculated a single "*Wunderschön!*" August almost lost his terror for himself in his thrill of pride at his beloved Hirschvogel being thus admired in the great city. He thought the master-potter must be glad too.

"*Wunderschön!*" ejaculated the stranger a second time, and then examined the stove in all its parts, read all its mottoes, gazed long on all its devices.

"It must have been made for the Emperor Maximilian," he said at last; and the poor little boy, meanwhile, within, was "hugged up into nothing," as you children say, dreading that every moment he would open the stove. And open it truly he did, and examined the brass-work of the door; but inside it was so dark that crouching August passed unnoticed, screwed up into a ball like a hedgehog as he was.

The gentleman shut to the door at length, without having seen anything strange inside it; and then he talked long and low with the tradesmen, and, as his accent was different from that which August was used to, the child could distinguish little that he said, except the name of the king and the word "gulden" again and again. After a while he went away, one of the dealers accompanying him, one of them lingering behind to bar up the shutters. Then this one also withdrew again, double-locking the door.

The poor little hedgehog uncurled itself and dared to breathe aloud.

What time was it?

Late in the day, he thought, for to accompany the stranger they had lighted a lamp; he had heard the scratch of the match, and through the brass fret-work had seen the lines of light.

He would have to pass the night here, that was certain. He and Hirschvogel were locked in, but at least they were together. If only he could have had something to eat! He thought with a pang of how at this hour at home they ate the sweet soup, sometimes with apples in it from Aunt Maïla's farm orchard, and sang together, and listened to Dorothea's reading of little tales, and basked in the glow and delight that had beamed on them from the great Nürnberg fire-king.

"Oh, poor, poor little 'Gilda! What is she doing without the dear Hirschvogel?" he thought. Poor little 'Gilda! she had only now the black iron stove of the ugly little kitchen. Oh, how cruel of father!

August could not bear to hear the dealers blame or laugh at his father, but he did feel that it had been so,

so cruel to sell Hirschvogel. The mere memory of all those long winter evenings, when they had all closed round it, and roasted chestnuts or crab-apples in it, and listened to the howling of the wind and the deep sound of the church-bells, and tried very much to make each other believe that the wolves still came down from the mountains into the streets of Hall, and were that very minute growling at the house door,—all this memory coming on him with the sound of the city bells, and the knowledge that night drew near upon him so completely, being added to his hunger and his fear, so overcame him that he burst out crying for the fiftieth time since he had been inside the stove, and felt that he would starve to death, and wondered dreamily if Hirschvogel would care. Yes, he was sure Hirschvogel would care. Had he not decked it all summer long with alpine roses and edelweiss and heaths and made it sweet with thyme and honeysuckle and great garden-lilies? Had he ever forgotten when Santa Claus came to make it its crown of holly and ivy and wreathe it all around?

"Oh, shelter me; save me; take care of me!" he prayed to the old fire-king, and forgot, poor little man, that he had come on this wild-goose chase northward to save and take care of Hirschvogel!

After a time he dropped asleep, as children can do when they weep, and little robust hill-born boys most surely do, be they where they may. It was not very cold in this lumber-room; it was tightly shut up, and very full of things, and at the back of it were the hot pipes of an adjacent house, where a great deal of fuel was burnt. Moreover, August's clothes were warm

ones, and his blood was young. So he was not cold, though Munich is terribly cold in the nights of December; and he slept on and on,—which was a comfort to him, for he forgot his woes, and his perils, and his hunger, for a time.

Midnight was once more chiming from all the brazen tongues of the city when he awoke, and, all being still around him, ventured to put his head out of the brass door of the stove to see why such a strange bright light was round him.

It was a very strange and brilliant light indeed; and yet, what is perhaps still stranger, it did not frighten or amaze him, nor did what he saw alarm him either, and yet I think it would have done you or me. For what he saw was nothing less than all the *bric-à-brac* in motion.

A big jug, an Apostel-Krug, of Kruessen, was solemnly dancing a minuet with a plump Faenza jar; a tall Dutch clock was going through a gavotte with a spindle-legged ancient chair; a very droll porcelain figure of Littenhausen was bowing to a very stiff soldier in *terre cuite* of Ulm; an old violin of Cremona was playing itself, and a queer little shrill plaintive music that thought itself merry came from a painted spinnet covered with faded roses; some gilt Spanish leather had got up on the wall and laughed; a Dresden mirror was tripping about, crowned with flowers, and a Japanese bonze was riding along on a griffin; a slim Venetian rapier had come to blows with a stout Ferrara sabre, all about a little pale-faced chit of a damsel in white Nymphenburg china; and a portly Franconian pitcher in *grès gris* was calling aloud, "Oh, these Ital-

ians! always at feud!" But nobody listened to him at all. A great number of little Dresden cups and saucers were all skipping and waltzing; the teapots, with their broad round faces, were spinning their own lids like teetotums; the high-backed gilded chairs were having a game of cards together; and a little Saxe poodle, with a blue ribbon at its throat, was running from one to another, whilst a yellow cat of Cornelis Lachtleven's rode about on a Delft horse in blue pottery of 1489. Meanwhile the brilliant light shed on the scene came from three silver candelabra, though they had no candles set up in them; and, what is the greatest miracle of all, August looked on at these mad freaks and felt no sensation of wonder! He only, as he heard the violin and the spinnet playing, felt an irresistible desire to dance too.

No doubt his face said what he wished; for a lovely little lady, all in pink and gold and white, with powdered hair, and high-heeled shoes, and all made of the very finest and fairest Meissen china, tripped up to him, and smiled, and gave him her hand, and led him out to a minuet. And he danced it perfectly,—poor little August in his thick, clumsy shoes, and his thick, clumsy sheepskin jacket, and his rough homespun linen, and his broad Tyrolean hat! He must have danced it perfectly, this dance of kings and queens in days when crowns were duly honored, for the lovely lady always smiled benignly and never scolded him at all, and danced so divinely herself to the stately measures the spinnet was playing that August could not take his eyes off her till, their minuet ended, she sat down on her own white-and-gold bracket.

"I am the Princess of Saxe-Royale," she said to him, with a benignant smile; "and you have got through that minuet very fairly."

Then he ventured to say to her,—

"Madame my princess, could you tell me kindly why some of the figures and furniture dance and speak. and some lie up in a corner like lumber? It does make me curious. Is it rude to ask?"

For it greatly puzzled him why, when some of the *bric-à-brac* was all full of life and motion, some was quite still and had not a single thrill in it.

"My dear child," said the powdered lady, "is it possible that you do not know the reason? Why, those silent, dull things are *imitation!*"

This she said with so much decision that she evidently considered it a condensed but complete answer.

"Imitation?" repeated August, timidly, not understanding.

"Of course! Lies, falsehoods, fabrications!" said the princess in pink shoes, very vivaciously. "They only *pretend* to be what we *are!* They never wake up: how can they? No imitation ever had any soul in it yet."

"Oh!" said August, humbly, not even sure that he understood entirely yet. He looked at Hirschvogel: surely it had a royal soul within it: would it not wake up and speak? Oh dear! how he longed to hear the voice of his fire-king! And he began to forget that he stood by a lady who sat upon a pedestal of gold-and-white china, with the year 1746 cut on it, and the Meissen mark.

"What will you be when you are a man?" said the

little lady, sharply, for her black eyes were quick though her red lips were smiling. "Will you work for the *Königliche Porcellan-Manufactur*, like my great dead Kandler?"

"I have never thought," said August, stammering; "at least—that is—I do wish—I do hope to be a painter, as was Master Augustin Hirschvogel at Nürnberg."

"Bravo!" said all the real *bric-à-brac* in one breath, and the two Italian rapiers left off fighting to cry, "*Benone!*" For there is not a bit of true *bric-à-brac* in all Europe that does not know the names of the mighty masters.

August felt quite pleased to have won so much applause, and grew as red as the lady's shoes with bashful contentment.

"I knew all the Hirschvögel, from old Veit downwards," said a fat *grès de Flandre* beer-jug: "I myself was made at Nürnberg." And he bowed to the great stove very politely, taking off his own silver hat—I mean lid—with a courtly sweep that he could scarcely have learned from burgomasters. The stove, however, was silent, and a sickening suspicion (for what is such heart-break as a suspicion of what we love?) came through the mind of August: *Was Hirschvogel only imitation?*

"No, no, no, no!" he said to himself, stoutly: though Hirschvogel never stirred, never spoke, yet would he keep all faith in it! After all their happy years together, after all the nights of warmth and joy he owed it, should he doubt his own friend and hero, whose gilt lion's feet he had kissed in his babyhood? No,

no, no, no!" he said, again, with so much emphasis that the Lady of Meissen looked sharply again at him.

"No," she said, with pretty disdain; "no, believe me, they may 'pretend' forever. They can never look like us! They imitate even our marks, but never can they look like the real thing, never can they *chassent de race.*"

"How should they?" said a bronze statuette of Vischer's. "They daub themselves green with verdigris, or sit out in the rain to get rusted; but green and rust are not *patina;* only the ages can give that!"

"And *my* imitations are all in primary colors, staring colors, hot as the colors of a hostelry's sign-board!" said the Lady of Meissen, with a shiver.

"Well, there is a *grès de Flandre* over there, who pretends to be a Hans Kraut, as I am," said the jug with the silver hat, pointing with his handle to a jug that lay prone on its side in a corner. "He has copied me as exactly as it is given to moderns to copy us. Almost he might be mistaken for me. But yet what a difference there is! How crude are his blues! how evidently done over the glaze are his black letters! He has tried to give himself my very twist; but what a lamentable exaggeration of that playful deviation in my lines which in his becomes actual deformity!"

"And look at that," said the gilt Cordovan leather, with a contemptuous glance at a broad piece of gilded leather spread out on a table. "They will sell him cheek by jowl with me, and give him my name; but look! *I* am overlaid with pure gold beaten thin as a film and laid on me in absolute honesty by worthy Diego de las Gorgias, worker in leather of lovely Cor-

dova in the blessed reign of Ferdinand the Most Christian. *His* gilding is one part gold to eleven other parts of brass and rubbish, and it has been laid on him with a brush—*a brush!*—pah! of course he will be as black as a crock in a few years' time, whilst I am as bright as when I first was made, and, unless I am burnt as my Cordova burnt its heretics, I shall shine on forever."

"They carve pear-wood because it is so soft, and dye it brown, and call it *me!*" said an old oak cabinet, with a chuckle.

"That is not so painful; it does not vulgarize you so much as the cups they paint to-day and christen after *me!*" said a Carl Theodor cup subdued in hue, yet gorgeous as a jewel.

"Nothing can be so annoying as to see common gimcracks aping *me!*" interposed the princess in the pink shoes.

"They even steal my motto, though it is Scripture," said a *Trauerkrug* of Regensburg in black-and-white.

"And my own dots they put on plain English china creatures!" sighed the little white maid of Nymphenburg.

"And they sell hundreds and thousands of common china plates, calling them after me, and baking my saints and my legends in a muffle of to-day; it is blasphemy!" said a stout plate of Gubbio, which in its year of birth had seen the face of Maestro Giorgio.

"That is what is so terrible in these *bric-à-brac* places," said the princess of Meissen. "It brings one in contact with such low, imitative creatures; one really

is safe nowhere nowadays unless under glass at the Louvre or South Kensington."

"And they get even there," sighed the *grès de Flandre.* "A terrible thing happened to a dear friend of mine, a *terre cuite* of Blasius (you know the *terres cuites* of Blasius date from 1560). Well, he was put under glass in a museum that shall be nameless, and he found himself set next to his own imitation born and baked yesterday at Frankfort, and what think you the miserable creature said to him, with a grin? 'Old Pipeclay,'—that is what he called my friend,—'the fellow that bought *me* got just as much commission on me as the fellow that bought *you*, and that was all that *he* thought about. You know it is only the public money that goes!' And the horrid creature grinned again till he actually cracked himself. There is a Providence above all things, even museums."

"Providence might have interfered before, and saved the public money," said the little Meissen lady with the pink shoes.

"After all, does it matter?" said a Dutch jar of Haarlem. "All the shamming in the world will not *make* them us!"

"One does not like to be vulgarized," said the Lady of Meissen, angrily.

"My maker, the Krabbetje,* did not trouble his head about that," said the Haarlem jar, proudly. "The Krabbetje made me for the kitchen, the bright, clean, snow-white Dutch kitchen, wellnigh three centuries

* Jan Asselyn, called Krabbetje, the Little Crab, born 1610, master-potter of Delft and Haarlem.

ago, and now I am thought worthy the palace; yet I wish I were at home; yes, I wish I could see the good Dutch vrouw, and the shining canals, and the great green meadows dotted with the kine."

"Ah! if we could all go back to our makers!" sighed the Gubbio plate, thinking of Giorgio Andreoli and the glad and gracious days of the Renaissance: and somehow the words touched the frolicsome souls of the dancing jars, the spinning teapots, the chairs that were playing cards; and the violin stopped its merry music with a sob, and the spinnet sighed,—thinking of dead hands.

Even the little Saxe poodle howled for a master forever lost; and only the swords went on quarrelling, and made such a clattering noise that the Japanese bonze rode at them on his monster and knocked them both right over, and they lay straight and still, looking foolish, and the little Nymphenburg maid, though she was crying, smiled and almost laughed.

Then from where the great stove stood there came a solemn voice.

All eyes turned upon Hirschvogel, and the heart of its little human comrade gave a great jump of joy.

"My friends," said that clear voice from the turret of Nürnberg faïence, "I have listened to all you have said. There is too much talking among the Mortalities whom one of themselves has called the Windbags. Let not us be like them. I hear among men so much vain speech, so much precious breath and precious time wasted in empty boasts, foolish anger, useless reiteration, blatant argument, ignoble mouthings, that I have learned to deem speech a curse, laid on man to weaken

and envenom all his undertakings. For over two hundred years I have never spoken myself: you, I hear, are not so reticent. I only speak now because one of you said a beautiful thing that touched me. If we all might but go back to our makers! Ah, yes! if we might! We were made in days when even men were true creatures, and so we, the work of their hands, were true too. We, the begotten of ancient days, derive all the value in us from the fact that our makers wrought at us with zeal, with piety, with integrity, with faith,—not to win fortunes or to glut a market, but to do nobly an honest thing and create for the honor of the Arts and God. I see amidst you a little human thing who loves me, and in his own ignorant childish way loves Art. Now, I want him forever to remember this night and these words; to remember that we are what we are, and precious in the eyes of the world, because centuries ago those who were of single mind and of pure hand so created us, scorning sham and haste and counterfeit. Well do I recollect my master, Augustin Hirschvogel. He led a wise and blameless life, and wrought in loyalty and love, and made his time beautiful thereby, like one of his own rich, many-colored church casements, that told holy tales as the sun streamed through them. Ah, yes, my friends, to go back to our masters!—that would be the best that could befall us. But they are gone, and even the perishable labors of their lives outlive them. For many, many years I, once honored of emperors, dwelt in a humble house and warmed in successive winters three generations of little, cold, hungry children. When I warmed them they forgot that they were

hungry; they laughed and told tales, and slept at last about my feet. Then I knew that humble as had become my lot it was one that my master would have wished for me, and I was content. Sometimes a tired woman would creep up to me, and smile because she was near me, and point out my golden crown or my ruddy fruit to a baby in her arms. That was better than to stand in a great hall of a great city, cold and empty, even though wise men came to gaze and throngs of fools gaped, passing with flattering words. Where I go now I know not; but since I go from that humble house where they loved me, I shall be sad and alone. They pass so soon,—those fleeting mortal lives! Only we endure,—we, the things that the human brain creates. We can but bless them a little as they glide by: if we have done that, we have done what our masters wished. So in us our masters, being dead, yet may speak and live."

Then the voice sank away in silence, and a strange golden light that had shone on the great stove faded away; so also the light died down in the silver candelabra. A soft, pathetic melody stole gently through the room. It came from the old, old spinnet that was covered with the faded roses.

Then that sad, sighing music of a bygone day died too; the clocks of the city struck six of the morning; day was rising over the Bayerischenwald. August awoke with a great start, and found himself lying on the bare bricks of the floor of the chamber, and all the *bric-à-brac* was lying quite still all around. The pretty Lady of Meissen was motionless on her porcelain bracket, and the little Saxe poodle was quiet at her side.

He rose slowly to his feet. He was very cold, but he was not sensible of it or of the hunger that was gnawing his little empty entrails. He was absorbed in the wondrous sight, in the wondrous sounds, that he had seen and heard.

All was dark around him. Was it still midnight or had morning come? Morning, surely; for against the barred shutters he heard the tiny song of the robin.

Tramp, tramp, too, came a heavy step up the stair. He had but a moment in which to scramble back into the interior of the great stove, when the door opened and the two dealers entered, bringing burning candles with them to see their way.

August was scarcely conscious of danger more than he was of cold or hunger. A marvellous sense of courage, of security, of happiness, was about him, like strong and gentle arms enfolding him and lifting him upwards—upwards—upwards! Hirschvogel would defend him.

The dealers undid the shutters, scaring the redbreast away, and then tramped about in their heavy boots and chattered in contented voices, and began to wrap up the stove once more in all its straw and hay and cordage.

It never once occurred to them to glance inside. Why should they look inside a stove that they had bought and were about to sell again for all its glorious beauty of exterior?

The child still did not feel afraid. A great exaltation had come to him: he was like one lifted up by his angels.

Presently the two traders called up their porters,

and the stove, heedfully swathed and wrapped and tended as though it were some sick prince going on a journey, was borne on the shoulders of six stout Bavarians down the stairs and out of the door into the Marienplatz. Even behind all those wrappings August felt the icy bite of the intense cold of the outer air at dawn of a winter's day in Munich. The men moved the stove with exceeding gentleness and care, so that he had often been far more roughly shaken in his big brothers' arms than he was in his journey now; and though both hunger and thirst made themselves felt, being foes that will take no denial, he was still in that state of nervous exaltation which deadens all physical suffering and is at once a cordial and an opiate. He had heard Hirschvogel speak; that was enough.

The stout carriers tramped through the city, six of them, with the Nürnberg fire-castle on their brawny shoulders, and went right across Munich to the railway-station, and August in the dark recognized all the ugly, jangling, pounding, roaring, hissing railway-noises, and thought, despite his courage and excitement, "Will it be a *very* long journey?" For his stomach had at times an odd sinking sensation, and his head sadly often felt light and swimming. If it was a very, very long journey he felt half afraid that he would be dead or something bad before the end, and Hirschvogel would be so lonely: that was what he thought most about; not much about himself, and not much about Dorothea and the house at home. He was "high strung to high emprise," and could not look behind him.

Whether for a long or a short journey, whether for

weal or woe, the stove with August still within it was once more hoisted up into a great van; but this time it was not all alone, and the two dealers as well as the six porters were all with it.

He in his darkness knew that; for he heard their voices. The train glided away over the Bavarian plain southward; and he heard the men say something of Berg and the Wurm-See, but their German was strange to him, and he could not make out what these names meant.

The train rolled on, with all its fume and fuss, and roar of steam, and stench of oil and burning coal. It had to go quietly and slowly on account of the snow which was falling, and which had fallen all night.

"He might have waited till he came to the city," grumbled one man to another. "What weather to stay on at Berg!"

But who he was that stayed on at Berg, August could not make out at all.

Though the men grumbled about the state of the roads and the season, they were hilarious and well content, for they laughed often, and, when they swore, did so good-humoredly, and promised their porters fine presents at New-Year; and August, like a shrewd little boy as he was, who even in the secluded Innthal had learned that money is the chief mover of men's mirth, thought to himself, with a terrible pang,—

"They have sold Hirschvogel for some great sum! They have sold him already!"

Then his heart grew faint and sick within him, for he knew very well that he must soon die, shut up without food and water thus; and what new owner of

the great fire-palace would ever permit him to dwell in it?

"Never mind; I *will* die," thought he; "and Hirschvogel will know it."

Perhaps you think him a very foolish little fellow; but I do not.

It is always good to be loyal and ready to endure to the end.

It is but an hour and a quarter that the train usually takes to pass from Munich to the Wurm-See or Lake of Starnberg; but this morning the journey was much slower, because the way was encumbered by snow. When it did reach Possenhofen and stop, and the Nürnberg stove was lifted out once more, August could see through the fret-work of the brass door, as the stove stood upright facing the lake, that this Wurm-See was a calm and noble piece of water, of great width, with low wooded banks and distant mountains, a peaceful, serene place, full of rest.

It was now near ten o'clock. The sun had come forth; there was a clear gray sky hereabouts; the snow was not falling, though it lay white and smooth everywhere, down to the edge of the water, which before long would itself be ice.

Before he had time to get more than a glimpse of the green gliding surface, the stove was again lifted up and placed on a large boat that was in waiting,—one of those very long and huge boats which the women in these parts use as laundries, and the men as timber-rafts. The stove, with much labor and much expenditure of time and care, was hoisted into this, and August would have grown sick and giddy with

the heaving and falling if his big brothers had not long used him to such tossing about, so that he was as much at ease head, as feet, downward. The stove once in it safely with its guardians, the big boat moved across the lake to Leoni. How a little hamlet on a Bavarian lake got that Tuscan-sounding name I cannot tell; but Leoni it is. The big boat was a long time crossing: the lake here is about three miles broad, and these heavy barges are unwieldy and heavy to move, even though they are towed and tugged at from the shore.

"If we should be too late!" the two dealers muttered to each other, in agitation and alarm. "He said eleven o'clock."

"Who was he?" thought August; "the buyer, of course, of Hirschvogel." The slow passage across the Wurm-See was accomplished at length: the lake was placid; there was a sweet calm in the air and on the water; there was a great deal of snow in the sky, though the sun was shining and gave a solemn hush to the atmosphere. Boats and one little steamer were going up and down; in the clear frosty light the distant mountains of Zillerthal and the Algau Alps were visible; market-people, cloaked and furred, went by on the water or on the banks; the deep woods of the shores were black and gray and brown. Poor August could see nothing of a scene that would have delighted him; as the stove was now set, he could only see the old worm-eaten wood of the huge barge.

Presently they touched the pier at Leoni.

"Now, men, for a stout mile and half! You shall drink your reward at Christmas-time," said one of the

dealers to his porters, who, stout, strong men as they were, showed a disposition to grumble at their task. Encouraged by large promises, they shouldered sullenly the Nürnberg stove, grumbling again at its preposterous weight, but little dreaming that they carried within it a small, panting, trembling boy; for August began to tremble now that he was about to see the future owner of Hirschvogel.

"If he look a good, kind man," he thought, "I will beg him to let me stay with it."

The porters began their toilsome journey, and moved off from the village pier. He could see nothing, for the brass door was over his head, and all that gleamed through it was the clear gray sky. He had been tilted on to his back, and if he had not been a little mountaineer, used to hanging head-downwards over crevasses, and, moreover, seasoned to rough treatment by the hunters and guides of the hills and the salt-workers in the town, he would have been made ill and sick by the bruising and shaking and many changes of position to which he had been subjected.

The way the men took was a mile and a half in length, but the road was heavy with snow, and the burden they bore was heavier still. The dealers cheered them on, swore at them and praised them in one breath; besought them and reiterated their splendid promises, for a clock was striking eleven, and they had been ordered to reach their destination at that hour, and, though the air was so cold, the heat-drops rolled off their foreheads as they walked, they were so frightened at being late. But the porters would not budge a foot quicker than they chose, and as they were

not poor four-footed carriers their employers dared not thrash them, though most willingly would they have done so.

The road seemed terribly long to the anxious tradesmen, to the plodding porters, to the poor little man inside the stove, as he kept sinking and rising, sinking and rising, with each of their steps.

Where they were going he had no idea, only after a very long time he lost the sense of the fresh icy wind blowing on his face through the brass-work above, and felt by their movements beneath him that they were mounting steps or stairs. Then he heard a great many different voices, but he could not understand what was being said. He felt that his bearers paused some time, then moved on and on again. Their feet went so softly he thought they must be moving on carpet, and as he felt a warm air come to him he concluded that he was in some heated chambers, for he was a clever little fellow, and could put two and two together, though he was so hungry and so thirsty and his empty stomach felt so strangely. They must have gone, he thought, through some very great number of rooms, for they walked so long on and on, on and on. At last the stove was set down again, and, happily for him, set so that his feet were downward.

What he fancied was that he was in some museum, like that which he had seen in the city of Innspruck.

The voices he heard were very hushed, and the steps seemed to go away, far away, leaving him alone with Hirschvogel. He dared not look out, but he peeped through the brass-work, and all he could see was a big carved lion's head in ivory, with a gold crown atop. It

belonged to a velvet fauteuil, but he could not see the chair, only the ivory lion.

There was a delicious fragrance in the air,—a fragrance as of flowers. "Only how can it be flowers?" thought August. "It is November!"

From afar off, as it seemed, there came a dreamy, exquisite music, as sweet as the spinnet's had been, but so much fuller, so much richer, seeming as though a chorus of angels were singing all together. August ceased to think of the museum: he thought of heaven. "Are we gone to the Master?" he thought, remembering the words of Hirschvogel.

All was so still around him; there was no sound anywhere except the sound of the far-off choral music.

He did not know it, but he was in the royal castle of Berg, and the music he heard was the music of Wagner, who was playing in a distant room some of the motives of "Parsival."

Presently he heard a fresh step near him, and he heard a low voice say, close behind him, "So!" An exclamation no doubt, he thought, of admiration and wonder at the beauty of Hirschvogel.

Then the same voice said, after a long pause, during which no doubt, as August thought, this new-comer was examining all the details of the wondrous fire-tower, "It was well bought; it is exceedingly beautiful! It is most undoubtedly the work of Augustin Hirschvogel."

Then the hand of the speaker turned the round handle of the brass door, and the fainting soul of the poor little prisoner within grew sick with fear.

The handle turned, the door was slowly drawn open,

some one bent down and looked in, and the same voice that he had heard in praise of its beauty called aloud, in surprise, "What is this in it? A live child!"

Then August, terrified beyond all self-control, and dominated by one master-passion, sprang out of the body of the stove and fell at the feet of the speaker.

"Oh, let me stay! Pray, meinherr, let me stay!" he sobbed. "I have come all the way with Hirschvogel!"

Some gentlemen's hands seized him, not gently by any means, and their lips angrily muttered in his ear, "Little knave, peace! be quiet! hold your tongue! It is the king!"

They were about to drag him out of the august atmosphere as if he had been some venomous, dangerous beast come there to slay, but the voice he had heard speak of the stove said, in kind accents, "Poor little child! he is very young. Let him go: let him speak to me."

The word of a king is law to his courtiers: so, sorely against their wish, the angry and astonished chamberlains let August slide out of their grasp, and he stood there in his little rough sheepskin coat and his thick, mud-covered boots, with his curling hair all in a tangle, in the midst of the most beautiful chamber he had ever dreamed of, and in the presence of a young man with a beautiful dark face, and eyes full of dreams and fire; and the young man said to him,—

"My child, how came you here, hidden in this stove? Be not afraid: tell me the truth. I am the king."

August in an instinct of homage cast his great

battered black hat with the tarnished gold tassels down on the floor of the room, and folded his little brown hands in supplication. He was too intensely in earnest to be in any way abashed; he was too lifted out of himself by his love for Hirschvogel to be conscious of any awe before any earthly majesty. He was only so glad—so glad it was the king. Kings were always kind; so the Tyrolese think, who love their lords.

"Oh, dear king!" he said, with trembling entreaty in his faint little voice, "Hirschvogel was ours, and we have loved it all our lives; and father sold it. And when I saw that it did really go from us, then I said to myself I would go with it; and I have come all the way inside it. And last night it spoke and said beautiful things. And I do pray you to let me live with it, and I will go out every morning and cut wood for it and you, if only you will let me stay beside it. No one ever has fed it with fuel but me since I grew big enough, and it loves me;—it does indeed; it said so last night; and it said that it had been happier with us than if it were in any palace——"

And then his breath failed him, and, as he lifted his little, eager, pale face to the young king's, great tears were falling down his cheeks.

Now, the king likes all poetic and uncommon things, and there was that in the child's face which pleased and touched him. He motioned to his gentlemen to leave the little boy alone.

"What is your name?" he asked him.

"I am August Strehla. My father is Hans Strehla. We live in Hall, in the Innthal; and Hirschvogel has been ours so long,—so long!"

His lips quivered with a broken sob.

"And have you truly travelled inside this stove all the way from Tyrol?"

"Yes," said August; "no one thought to look inside till you did.

The king laughed; then another view of the matter occurred to him.

"Who bought the stove of your father?" he inquired.

"Traders of Munich," said August, who did not know that he ought not to have spoken to the king as to a simple citizen, and whose little brain was whirling and spinning dizzily round its one central idea.

"What sum did they pay your father, do you know?" asked the sovereign.

"Two hundred florins," said August, with a great sigh of shame. "It was so much money, and he is so poor, and there are so many of us."

The king turned to his gentlemen-in-waiting. "Did these dealers of Munich come with the stove."

He was answered in the affirmative. He desired them to be sought for and brought before him. As one of his chamberlains hastened on the errand, the monarch looked at August with compassion.

"You are very pale, little fellow: when did you eat last?"

"I had some bread and sausage with me; yesterday afternoon I finished it."

"You would like to eat now?"

"If I might have a little water I would be glad; my throat is very dry."

The king had water and wine brought for him, and

cake also; but August, though he drank eagerly, could not swallow anything. His mind was in too great a tumult.

"May I stay with Hirschvogel?—may I stay?" he said, with feverish agitation.

"Wait a little," said the king, and asked, abruptly, "What do you wish to be when you are a man?"

"A painter. I wish to be what Hirschvogel was,—I mean the master that made *my* Hirschvogel."

"I understand," said the king.

Then the two dealers were brought into their sovereign's presence. They were so terribly alarmed, not being either so innocent or so ignorant as August was, that they were trembling as though they were being led to the slaughter, and they were so utterly astonished too at a child having come all the way from Tyrol in the stove, as a gentleman of the court had just told them this child had done, that they could not tell what to say or where to look, and presented a very foolish aspect indeed.

"Did you buy this Nürnberg stove of this little boy's father for two hundred florins?" the king asked them; and his voice was no longer soft and kind as it had been when addressing the child, but very stern.

"Yes, your majesty," murmured the trembling traders.

"And how much did the gentleman who purchased it for me give to you?"

"Two thousand ducats, your majesty," muttered the dealers, frightened out of their wits, and telling the truth in their fright.

The gentleman was not present: he was a trusted

counsellor in art matters of the king's, and often made purchases for him.

The king smiled a little, and said nothing. The gentleman had made out the price to him as eleven thousand ducats.

"You will give at once to this boy's father the two thousand gold ducats that you received, less the two hundred Austrian florins that you paid him," said the king to his humiliated and abject subjects. "You are great rogues. Be thankful you are not more greatly punished."

He dismissed them by a sign to his courtiers, and to one of these gave the mission of making the dealers of the Marienplatz disgorge their ill-gotten gains.

August heard, and felt dazzled yet miserable. Two thousand gold Bavarian ducats for his father! Why, his father would never need to go any more to the salt-baking! And yet, whether for ducats or for florins, Hirschvogel was sold just the same, and would the king let him stay with it?—would he?

"Oh, do! oh, please do!" he murmured, joining his little brown weather-stained hands, and kneeling down before the young monarch, who himself stood absorbed in painful thought, for the deception so basely practised for the greedy sake of gain on him by a trusted counsellor was bitter to him.

He looked down on the child, and as he did so smiled once more.

"Rise up, my little man," he said, in a kind voice; "kneel only to your God. Will I let you stay with your Hirschvogel? Yes, I will; you shall stay at my court, and you shall be taught to be a painter,—in oils

or on porcelain as you will,—and you must grow up worthily, and win all the laurels at our Schools of Art, and if when you are twenty-one years old you have done well and bravely, then I will give you your Nürnberg stove, or, if I am no more living, then those who reign after me shall do so. And now go away with this gentleman, and be not afraid, and you shall light a fire every morning in Hirschvogel, but you will not need to go out and cut the wood."

Then he smiled and stretched out his hand; the courtiers tried to make August understand that he ought to bow and touch it with his lips, but August could not understand that anyhow; he was too happy. He threw his two arms about the king's knees, and kissed his feet passionately; then he lost all sense of where he was, and fainted away from hunger, and tire, and emotion, and wondrous joy.

As the darkness of his swoon closed in on him, he heard in his fancy the voice from Hirschvogel saying,—

"Let us be worthy our maker!"

He is only a scholar yet, but he is a happy scholar, and promises to be a great man. Sometimes he goes back for a few days to Hall, where the gold ducats have made his father prosperous. In the old house-room there is a large white porcelain stove of Munich, the king's gift to Dorothea and 'Gilda.

And August never goes home without going into the great church and saying his thanks to God, who blessed his strange winter's journey in the Nürnberg stove. As for his dream in the dealers' room that night, he will never admit that he did dream it; he

THE NÜRNBERG STOVE.

still declares that he saw it all, and heard the voice of Hirschvogel. And who shall say that he did not? for what is the gift of the poet and the artist except to see the sights which others cannot see and to hear the sounds that others cannot hear?

THE AMBITIOUS ROSE-TREE.

SHE was a Quatre Saison Rose-tree.

She lived in a beautiful old garden with some charming magnolias for neighbors: they rather overshadowed her, certainly, because they were so very great and grand; but then such shadow as that is preferable, as every one knows, to a mere vulgar enjoyment of common daylight, and then the beetles went most to the magnolia-blossoms, for being so great and grand of course they got very much preyed upon, and this was a vast gain for the rose that was near them. She herself leaned against the wall of an orange-house, in company with a Banksia, a buoyant, active, simple-minded thing, for whom Rosa Damascena, who thought herself much better born than these climbers, had a natural contempt. Banksiæ will flourish and be content anywhere, they are such easily-pleased creatures; and when you cut them they thrive on it, which shows a very plebeian and pachydermatous temper; and they laugh all over in the face of an April day, shaking their little golden clusters of blossom in such a merry way that the Rose-tree, who was herself very reserved and thorny, had really scruples about speaking to them.

For she was by nature extremely proud,—much prouder than her lineage warranted,—and a hard fate

had fixed her to the wall of an orangery, where hardly anybody ever came, except the gardener and his men to carry the oranges in in winter and out in spring, or water and tend them while they were housed there.

She was a handsome rose, and she knew it. But the garden was so crowded—like the world—that she could not get herself noticed in it. In vain was she radiant and red close on to Christmas-time as in the fullest heats of midsummer. Nobody thought about her or praised her. She pined and was very unhappy.

The Banksiæ, who are little, frank, honest-hearted creatures, and say out what they think, as such plebeian people will, used to tell her roundly she was thankless for the supreme excellence of her lot.

"You have everything the soul of a rose can wish for: a splendid old wall with no nasty chinks in it; a careful gardener, who nips all the larvæ in the bud before they can do you any damage; sun, water, care; above all, nobody ever cuts a single blossom off you! What more can you wish for? This orangery is paradise!"

She did not answer.

What wounded her pride so deeply was just this fact, that they never *did* cut off any of her blossoms. When day after day, year after year, she crowned herself with her rich crimson glory and no one ever came nigh to behold or to gather it, she could have died with vexation and humiliation.

Would nobody see she was worth anything?

The truth was that in this garden there was such an abundance of very rare roses that a common though beautiful one like Rosa Damascena remained unthought

of; she was lovely, but then there were so many lovelier still, or, at least, much more *à la mode.*

In the secluded garden-corner she suffered all the agonies of a pretty woman in the great world, who is only a pretty woman, and no more. It needs so *very* much more to be "somebody." To be somebody was what Rosa Damascena sighed for, from rosy dawn to rosier sunset.

From her wall she could see across the green lawns, the great parterre which spread before the house terrace, and all the great roses that bloomed there,—Her Majesty Gloire de Dijon, who was a reigning sovereign born, the royally-born Niphétos, the Princesse Adelaïde, the Comtesse Ouvaroff, the Vicomtesse de Cazes all in gold, Madame de Sombreuil in snowy white, the beautiful Louise de Savoie, the exquisite Duchess of Devoniensis,—all the roses that were great ladies in their own right, and as far off her as were the stars that hung in heaven. Rosa Damascena would have given all her brilliant carnation hues to be pale and yellow like the Princesse Adelaïde, or delicately colorless like Her Grace of Devoniensis.

She tried all she could to lose her own warm blushes, and prayed that bees might sting her and so change her hues; but the bees were of low taste, and kept their pearl-powder and rouge and other pigments for the use of common flowers, like the evening primrose or the buttercup and borage, and never came near to do her any good in arts of toilet.

One day the gardener approached and stood and looked at her: then all at once she felt a sharp stab

in her from his knife, and a vivid pain ran downward through her stem.

She did not know it, but gardeners and gods "this way grant prayer."

"Has not something happened to me?" she asked of the little Banksiæ; for she felt very odd all over her; and when you are unwell you cannot be very haughty.

The saucy Banksiæ laughed, running over their wires that they cling to like little children.

"You have got your wish," they said. "You are going to be a great lady; they have made you into a Rosa Indica!"

A tea-rose! Was it possible?

Was she going to belong at last to that grand and graceful order, which she had envied so long and vainly from afar?

Was she, indeed, no more mere simple Rosa Damascena? She felt so happy she could hardly breathe. She thought it was her happiness that stifled her; in real matter of fact it was the tight bands in which the gardener had bound her.

"Oh, what joy!" she thought, though she still felt very uncomfortable, but not for the world would she ever have admitted it to the Banksiæ.

The gardener had tied a tin tube on to her, and it was heavy and cumbersome; but no doubt, she said, to herself, the thing was fashionable, so she bore the burden of it very cheerfully.

The Banksiæ asked her how she felt; but she would not deign even to reply; and when a friendly blackbird, who had often picked grubs off her leaves, came

and sang to her, she kept silent: a Rosa Indica was far above a blackbird.

"Next time you want a caterpillar taken away, he may eat you for *me!*" said the blackbird, and flew off in a huff.

She was very ungrateful to hate the blackbird so, for he had been most useful to her in doing to death all the larvæ of worms and beetles and caterpillars and other destroyers which were laid treacherously within her leaves. The good blackbird, with many another feathered friend, was forever at work in some good deed of the kind, and all the good, grateful flowers loved him and his race. But to this terribly proud and discontented Rosa Damascena he had been a bore, a common creature, a nuisance, a monster,—any one of these things by turns, and sometimes all of them altogether. She used to long for the cat to get him.

"You ought to be such a happy rose!" the merle had said to her, one day. "There is no rose so strong and healthy as you are, except the briers."

And from that day she had hated him. The idea of naming those hedgerow brier roses in the same breath with her!

You would have seen in that moment of her rage a very funny sight had you been there; nothing less funny than a rose-tree trying to box a blackbird's ears!

But, to be sure, you would only have thought the wind was blowing about the rose, so you would have seen nothing really of the drollery of it all, which was not droll at all to Rosa Damascena, for a wound in one's vanity is as long healing as a wound from a conical bullet in one's body. The blackbird had not

gone near her after that, nor any of his relations and friends, and she had had a great many shooting and flying pains for months together, in consequence of aphides' eggs having been laid inside her stem,—eggs of which the birds would have eased her long before if they had not been driven away by her haughty rage.

However, she had been almost glad to have some ailment. She had called it aneurism, and believed it made her look refined and interesting. If it would only have made her pale! But it had not done that: she had remained of the richest rose color.

When the winter had passed and the summer had come round again, the grafting had done its work: she was really a Rosa Indica, and timidly put forth the first blossom in her new estate. It was a small, rather puny yellowish thing, not to be compared to her own natural red clusters, but she thought it far finer.

Scarcely had it been put forth by her than the gardener whipped it off with his knife, and bore it away in proof of his success in such transmogrifications.

She had never felt the knife before, when she had been only Rosa Damascena: it hurt her very much, and her heart bled.

"Il faut souffrir pour être belle," said the Banksiæ in a good-natured effort at consolation. She was not going to answer them, and she made believe that her tears were only dew, though it was high noon and all the dew-drops had been drunk by the sun, who by noon-time gets tired of climbing and grows thirsty.

Her next essay was much finer, and the knife whipped that off also. That summer she bore more and more blossoms, and always the knife cut them

away, for she had been made one of the great race of Rosa Indica.

Now, a rose-tree, when a blossom is chopped or broken off, suffers precisely as we human mortals do if we lose a finger; but the rose-tree, being a much more perfect and delicate handiwork of nature than any human being, has a faculty we have not: it lives and has a sentient soul in every one of its roses, and whatever one of these endures the tree entire endures also by sympathy. You think this very wonderful? Not at all. It is no whit more wonderful than that a lizard's tail chopped off runs about by itself, or that a dog can scent a foe or a thief whilst the foe or the thief is yet miles away. All these things are most wonderful, or not at all so,—just as you like.

In a little while she bore another child: this time it was a fine fair creature, quite perfect in its hues and shapes. "I never saw a prettier!" said an emperor butterfly, pausing near for a moment; at that moment the knife of the gardener severed the rosebud's stalk.

"The lady wants one for her bouquet de corsage: she goes to the opera to-night," the man said to another man, as he took the young tea-rose.

"What is the opera?" asked the mother-rose wearily of the butterfly. He did not know; but his cousin the death's-head moth, asleep under a magnolia-leaf, looked down with a grim smile on his quaint face.

"It is where everything dies in ten seconds," he answered. "It is a circle of fire; many friends of mine have flown in, none ever returned: your daughter will shrivel up and perish miserably. One pays for glory."

The rose-tree shivered through all her stalks; but she was still proud, and tried to think that all this was said only out of envy. What should an old death's-head moth know, whose eyes were so weak that a farthing rushlight blinded them?

So she lifted herself a little higher, and would not even see that the Banksiæ were nodding to her; and as for her old friend the blackbird, how vulgar he looked, bobbing up and down hunting worms and woodlice! could anything be more outrageously vulgar than that staring yellow beak of his? She twisted herself round not to see him, and felt quite annoyed that he went on and sang just the same, unconscious of, or indifferent to, her coldness.

With each successive summer Rosa Damascena became more integrally and absolutely a Rosa Indica, and suffered in proportion to her fashion and fame.

True, people came continually to look at her, and especially in May-time would cry aloud, "What a beautiful Niphêtos!" But then she was bereaved of all her offspring, for, being of the race of Niphêtos, they were precious, and one would go to die in an hour in a hot ball-room, and another to perish in a Sèvres vase, where the china indeed was exquisite but the water was foul, and others went to be suffocated in the vicious gases of what the mortals call an opera-box, and others were pressed to death behind hard diamonds in a woman's bosom; in one way or another they each and all perished miserably. She herself also lost many of her once luxuriant leaves, and had a little scanty foliage, red-brown in summer, instead of the thick, dark-green clothing that she had worn when a

rustic maiden. Not a day passed but the knife stabbed her; when the knife had nothing to take she was barren and chilly, for she had lost the happy power of looking beautiful all the year round, which once she had possessed.

One day came when she was taken up out of the ground and borne into a glass house, placed in a large pot, and lifted up on to a pedestal, and left in a delicious atmosphere, with patrician plants all around her with long Latin names, and strange, rare beauties of their own. She bore bud after bud in this crystal temple, and became a very crown of blossom; and her spirit grew so elated, and her vanity so supreme, that she ceased to remember she had ever been a simple Rosa Damascena, except that she was always saying to herself, "How great I am! how great I am!" which she might have noticed that those born ladies, the Devoniensis and the Louise de Savoie, never did. But she noticed nothing except her own beauty, which she could see in a mirror that was let into the opposite wall of the greenhouse. Her blossoms were many and all quite perfect, and no knife touched them; and though to be sure she was still very scantily clothed so far as foliage went, yet she was all the more fashionable for that, so what did it matter?

One day, when her beauty was at its fullest perfection, she heard all the flowers about her bending and whispering with rustling and murmuring, saying, "Who will be chosen? who will be chosen?"

Chosen for what?

They did not talk much to her, because she was but a new-comer and a parvenue, but she gathered from

them in a little time that there was to be a ball for a marriage festivity at the house to which the greenhouse was attached. Each flower wondered if it would be chosen to go to it. The azaleas knew they would go, because they were in their pink or rose ball-dresses all ready; but no one else was sure. The rose-tree grew quite sick and faint with hope and fear Unless she went, she felt that life was not worth the living. She had no idea what a ball might be, but she knew that it was another form of greatness, when she was all ready, too, and so beautiful!

The gardener came and sauntered down the glass house, glancing from one to another. The hearts of all beat high. The azaleas only never changed color: they were quite sure of themselves. Who could do without them in February?

"Oh, take me! take me! take me!" prayed the rose-tree, in her foolish, longing, arrogant heart.

Her wish was given her. The lord of their fates smiled when he came to where she stood.

"This shall be for the place of honor," he murmured, and he lifted her out of the large vase she lived in on to a trestle and summoned his boys to bear her away. The very azaleas themselves grew pale with envy.

As for the rose-tree herself, she would not look at any one; she was carried through the old garden straight past the Banksiæ, but she would make them no sign; and as for the blackbird, she hoped a cat had eaten him! Had he not known her as Rosa Damascena?

She was borne bodily, roots and all, carefully

wrapped up in soft matting, and taken into the great house.

It was a very great house, a very grand house, and there was to be a marvellous feast in it, and a prince and princess from over the seas were that night to honor the mistress of it by their presence. All this Rosa Indica had gathered from the chatter of the flowers, and when she came into the big palace she saw many signs of excitement and confusion: servants out of livery were running up against one another in their hurry-scurry; miles and miles, it seemed, of crimson carpeting were being unrolled all along the terrace and down the terrace steps, since by some peculiar but general impression royal personages are supposed not to like to walk upon anything else, though myself I think they must get quite sick of red carpet, seeing so very much of it spread for them wherever they go. To Rosa Indica, however, the bright scarlet carpeting looked very handsome, and seemed, indeed, a foretaste of heaven.

Soon she was carried quite inside the house, into an immense room with a beautiful dome-shaped ceiling, painted in fresco three centuries before, and fresh as though it had been painted yesterday. At the end of the room was a great chair, gilded and painted, too, three centuries before, and covered with velvet, gold-fringed and powdered with golden grasshoppers. "That common insect here!" thought Rosa, in surprise, for she did not know that the chief of the house, long, long, long ago, when sleeping in the heat of noon in Palestine in the first crusade, had been awakened by a grasshopper lighting on his eyelids, and so had been

aroused in time to put on his armor and do battle with a troop attacking Saracen cavalry, and beat them; wherefore, in gratitude, he had taken the humble field-creature as his badge for evermore.

They set the roots of Rosa Indica now into a vase,—such a vase! the royal blue of Sèvres, if you please, and with border and scroll work and all kinds of wonders and glories painted on it and gilded on it, and standing four feet high if it stood one inch! I could never tell you the feelings of Rosa if I wrote a thousand pages. Her heart thrilled so with ecstasy that she almost dropped all her petals, only her vanity came to her aid, and helped her to control in a measure her emotions. The gardeners broke off a good deal of mould about her roots, and they muttered one to another something about her dying of it. But Rosa thought no more of that than a pretty lady does when her physician tells her she will die of tight lacing; not she! She was going to be put into that Sèvres vase.

This was enough for her, as it is enough for the lady that she is going to be put into a hundred-guinea ball-gown.

In she went. It was certainly a tight fit, as the gown often is, and Rosa felt nipped, strained, bruised, suffocated. But an old proverb has settled long ago that pride feels no pain, and perhaps the more foolish the pride the less is the pain that is felt—for the moment.

They set her well into the vase, putting green moss over her roots, and then they stretched her branches out over a gilded trellis-work at the back of the vase. And very beautiful she looked; and she was at the

head of the room, and a huge mirror down at the farther end opposite to her showed her own reflection. She was in paradise!

"At last," she thought to herself, "at last they have done me justice!"

The azaleas were all crowded round underneath her, like so many kneeling courtiers, but they were not taken out of their pots; they were only shrouded in moss. They had no Sèvres vases. And they had always thought so much of themselves and given themselves such airs, for there is nothing so vain as an azalea,—except, indeed, a camellia, which is the most conceited flower in the world, though, to do it justice, it is also the most industrious, for it is busy getting ready its next winter buds whilst the summer is still hot and broad on the land, which is very wise and prudent in it and much to be commended.

Well, there was Rosa Indica at the head of the room in the Sèvres vase, and very proud and triumphant she felt throned there, and the azaleas, of course, were whispering enviously underneath her, "Well, after all, she was only Rosa Damascena not so *very* long ago."

Yes, *they knew!* What a pity it was! They knew she had once been Rosa Damascena and never would wash it out of their minds,—the tiresome, spiteful, malignant creatures!

Even aloft in the vase, in all her glory, the rose could have shed tears of mortification, and was ready to cry, like Themistocles, "Can nobody give us oblivion?"

Nobody could give that, for the azaleas, who were

"PRETTY POLL! OH, SUCH A PRETTY POLL!"

so irritated at being below her, were not at all likely to hold their tongues. But she had great consolations and triumphs, and began to believe that, let them say what they chose, she had never been a common garden-wall rose. The ladies of the house came in and praised her to the skies; the children ran up to her and clapped their hands and shouted for joy at her beauty; a wonderful big green bird came in and hopped before her, cocked his head on one side, and said to her, "Pretty Poll! oh, *such* a pretty Poll!"

"Even the birds adore me here!" she thought, not dreaming he was only talking of himself; for when you are as vain as was this poor dear Rosa, creation is pervaded with your own perfections, and even when other people say only "Poll!" you feel sure they are saying "You!" or they ought to be if they are not.

So there she stood in her grand Sèvres pot, and she was ready to cry with the poet, "The world may end to-night!" Alas! it was not the world which was to end. Let me hasten to close this true heart-rending history.

There was a great dinner as the sun began to set, and the mistress of the house came in on the arm of the great foreign prince; and what did the foreign prince do but look up at Rosa, straight up at her, and over the heads of the azaleas, and say to his hostess, "What a beautiful rose you have there! A Niphétos, is it not?"

And her mistress, who had known her long as simple Rosa Damascena, answered, "Yes, sir; it is a Niphétos."

Oh to have lived for that hour! The silly thing

thought it worth all her suffering from the gardener's knife, all the loss of her robust health and delightful power of flowering in all four seasons. She was a Niphétos, really and truly a Niphétos! and not one syllable hinted as to her origin! She began to believe she had been *born* a tea-rose!

The dinner was long and gorgeous; the guests were dazzling in jewels and in decorations; the table was loaded with old plate and rare china; the prince made a speech and used her as a simile of love and joy and purity and peace. The rose felt giddy with triumph and with the fumes of the wines around her. Her vase was of purple and gold, and all the voices round her said, "Oh, the beautiful rose!" No one noticed the azaleas. How she wished that the blackbird could see for a minute, if the cat would gobble him up the next!

The day sped on; the châtelaine and her guests went away; the table was rearranged; the rose-tree was left in its place of honor; the lights were lit; there was the sound of music near at hand; they were dancing in other chambers.

Above her hung a chandelier,—a circle of innumerable little flames and drops that looked like dew or diamonds. She thought it was the sun come very close. After it had been there a little while it grew very hot, and its rays hurt her.

"Can you not go a little farther away, O Sun?" she said to it. It was flattered at being taken for the sun, but answered her, "I am fixed in my place. Do you not understand astronomy?"

She did not know what astronomy was, so was

silent, and the heat hurt her. Still, she was in the place of honor: so she was happy.

People came and went; but nobody noticed her. They ate and drank, they laughed and made love, and then went away to dance again, and the music went on all night long, and all night long the heat of the chandelier poured down on her.

"I am in the place of honor," she said to herself a thousand times in each hour.

But the heat scorched her, and the fumes of the wines made her faint. She thought of the sweet fresh air of the old garden where the Banksiæ were. The garden was quite near, but the windows were closed, and there were the walls now between her and it. She was in the place of honor. But she grew sick and waxed faint as the burning rays of the artificial light shining above her seemed to pierce through and through her like lances of steel. The night seemed very long. She was tired.

She was erect there on her Sèvres throne, with the light thrilling and throbbing upon her in every point. But she thought of the sweet, dark, fresh nights in the old home where the blackbird had slept, and she longed for them.

The dancers came and went, the music thrummed and screamed, the laughter was both near and far; the rose-tree was amidst it all. Yet she felt alone,—all alone! as travellers may feel in a desert. Hour succeeded hour; the night wore on apace; the dancers ceased to come; the music ceased, too; the light still burned down upon her, and the scorching fever of it consumed her like fire.

Then there came silence,—entire silence. Servants came round and put out all the lights—hundreds and hundreds of lights—quickly one by one. Other servants went to the windows and threw them wide open to let out the fumes of wine. Without, the night was changing into the gray that tells of earliest dawn. But it was a bitter frost; the grass was white with it; the air was ice. In the great darkness that had now fallen on all the scene this deadly cold came around the rose-tree and wrapped her in it as in a shroud.

She shivered from head to foot.

The cruel glacial coldness crept into the hot banqueting-chamber, and moved round it in white, misty circles, like steam, like ghosts of the gay guests that had gone. All was dark and chill,—dark and chill as any grave!

What worth was the place of honor now?

Was this the place of honor?

The rose-tree swooned and drooped! A servant's rough hand shook down its worn beauty into a heap of fallen leaves. When they carried her out dead in the morning, the little Banksia-buds, safe hidden from the frost within their stems, waiting to come forth when the summer should come, murmured to one another,—

"She had her wish; she was great. This way the gods grant foolish prayers, and punish discontent!"

MOUFFLOU.

MOUFFLOU'S masters were some boys and girls. They were very poor, but they were very merry. They lived in an old, dark, tumble-down place, and their father had been dead five years; their mother's care was all they knew; and Tasso was the eldest of them all, a lad of nearly twenty, and he was so kind, so good, so laborious, so cheerful, and so gentle, that the children all younger than he adored him. Tasso was a gardener. Tasso, however, though the eldest and mainly the bread-winner, was not so much Moufflou's master as was little Romolo, who was only ten, and a cripple. Romolo, called generally Lolo, had taught Moufflou all he knew; and that all was a very great deal, for nothing cleverer than was Moufflou had ever walked upon four legs.

Why Moufflou?

Well, when the poodle had been given to them by a soldier who was going back to his home in Piedmont, he had been a white woolly creature of a year old, and the children's mother, who was a Corsican by birth, had said that he was just like a *moufflon*, as they call sheep in Corsica. White and woolly this dog remained, and he became the handsomest and biggest poodle in all the city, and the corruption of Moufflou

from Moufflon remained the name by which he was known; it was silly, perhaps, but it suited him and the children, and Moufflou he was.

They lived in an old quarter of Florence, in that picturesque zigzag which goes round the grand church of Or San Michele, and which is almost more Venetian than Tuscan in its mingling of color, charm, stateliness, popular confusion, and architectural majesty. The tall old houses are weather-beaten into the most delicious hues; the pavement is enchantingly encumbered with peddlers and stalls and all kinds of trades going on in the open air, in that bright, merry, beautiful Italian custom which, alas, alas! is being driven away by new-fangled laws which deem it better for the people to be stuffed up in close, stewing rooms without air, and would fain do away with all the good-tempered politics and the sensible philosophies and the wholesome chatter which the open-street trades and street gossipry encourage, for it is good for the populace to *sfogare*, and in no other way can it do so one-half so innocently. Drive it back into musty shops, and it is driven at once to mutter sedition. . . . But you want to hear about Moufflou.

Well, Moufflou lived here in that high house with the sign of the lamb in wrought iron, which shows it was once a warehouse of the old guild of the Arte della Lana. They are all old houses here, drawn round about that grand church which I called once, and will call again, like a mighty casket of oxidized silver. A mighty casket indeed, holding the Holy Spirit within it; and with the vermilion and the blue and the orange glowing in its niches and its lunettes like enamels, and

its statues of the apostles strong and noble, like the times in which they were created,—St. Peter with his keys, and St. Mark with his open book, and St. George leaning on his sword, and others also, solemn and austere as they, austere though benign, for do they not guard the White Tabernacle of Orcagna within?

The church stands firm as a rock, square as a fortress of stone, and the winds and the waters of the skies may beat about it as they will, they have no power to disturb its sublime repose. Sometimes I think of all the noble things in all our Italy Or San Michele is the noblest, standing there in its stern magnificence, amidst people's hurrying feet and noisy laughter, a memory of God.

The little masters of Moufflou lived right in its shadow, where the bridge of stone spans the space between the houses and the church high in mid-air: and little Lolo loved the church with a great love. He loved it in the morning-time, when the sunbeams turned it into dusky gold and jasper; he loved it in the evening-time, when the lights of its altars glimmered in the dark, and the scent of its incense came out into the street; he loved it in the great feasts, when the huge clusters of lilies were borne inside it; he loved it in the solemn nights of winter; the flickering gleam of the dull lamps shone on the robes of an apostle, or the sculpture of a shield, or the glow of a casement-moulding in majolica. He loved it always, and, without knowing why, he called it *la mia chiesa.*

Lolo, being lame and of delicate health, was not enabled to go to school or to work, though he wove the straw covering of wine-flasks and plaited the cane

matting with busy fingers. But for the most part he did as he liked, and spent most of his time sitting on the parapet of Or San Michele, watching the venders of earthenware at their trucks, or trotting with his crutch (and he could trot a good many miles when he chose) out with Moufflou down a bit of the Stocking-makers' Street, along under the arcades of the Uffizi, and so over the Jewellers' Bridge, and out by byways that he knew into the fields on the hill-side upon the other bank of Arno. Moufflou and he would spend half the day—all the day—out there in daffodil-time; and Lolo would come home with great bundles and sheaves of golden flowers, and he and Moufflou were happy.

His mother never liked to say a harsh word to Lolo, for he was lame through her fault: she had let him fall in his babyhood, and the mischief had been done to his hip never again to be undone. So she never raised her voice to him, though she did often to the others,—to curly-pated Cecco, and pretty black-eyed Dina, and saucy Bice, and sturdy Beppo, and even to the good, manly, hard-working Tasso. Tasso was the mainstay of the whole, though he was but a gardener's lad, working in the green Cascine at small wages. But all he earned he brought home to his mother; and he alone kept in order the lazy, high-tempered Sandro, and he alone kept in check Bice's love of finery, and he alone could with shrewdness and care make both ends meet and put *minestra* always in the pot and bread always in the cupboard.

When his mother thought, as she thought indeed almost ceaselessly, that with a few months he would

be of the age to draw his number, and might draw a high one and be taken from her for three years, the poor soul believed her very heart would burst and break; and many a day at twilight she would start out unperceived and creep into the great church and pour her soul forth in supplication before the White Tabernacle.

Yet, pray as she would, no miracle could happen to make Tasso free of military service: if he drew a fatal number, go he must, even though he take all the lives of them to their ruin with him.

One morning Lolo sat as usual on the parapet of the church, Moufflou beside him. It was a brilliant morning in September. The men at the hand-barrows and at the stalls were selling the crockery, the silk handkerchiefs, and the straw hats which form the staple of the commerce that goes on round about Or San Michele,—very blithe, good-natured, gay commerce, for the most part, not got through, however, of course, without bawling and screaming, and shouting and gesticulating, as if the sale of a penny pipkin or a twopenny pie-pan were the occasion for the exchange of many thousands of pounds sterling and cause for the whole world's commotion. It was about eleven o'clock; the poor petitioners were going in for alms to the house of the fraternity of San Giovanni Battista; the barber at the corner was shaving a big man with a cloth tucked about his chin, and his chair set well out on the pavement; the sellers of the pipkins and pie-pans were screaming till they were hoarse, "*Un soldo l'uno, due soldi tre!*" big bronze bells were booming till they seemed to clang right up to the deep-blue sky; some

brethren of the Misericordia went by bearing a black bier; a large sheaf of glowing flowers—dahlias, zinnias, asters, and daturas—was borne through the huge arched door of the church near St. Mark and his open book. Lolo looked on at it all, and so did Moufflou, and a stranger looked at them as he left the church.

"You have a handsome poodle there, my little man," he said to Lolo, in a foreigner's too distinct and careful Italian.

"Moufflou is beautiful," said Lolo, with pride. "You should see him when he is just washed; but we can only wash him on Sundays, because then Tasso is at home."

"How old is your dog?"

"Three years old."

"Does he do any tricks?"

"Does he!" said Lolo, with a very derisive laugh: "why, Moufflou can do anything! He can walk on two legs ever so long; make ready, present, and fire; die; waltz; beg, of course; shut a door; make a wheelbarrow of himself: there is nothing he will not do. Would you like to see him do something?"

"Very much," said the foreigner.

To Moufflou and to Lolo the street was the same thing as home; this cheery *piazzetta* by the church, so utterly empty sometimes, and sometimes so noisy and crowded, was but the wider threshold of their home to both the poodle and the child.

So there, under the lofty and stately walls of the old church, Lolo put Moufflou through his exercises. They were second nature to Moufflou, as to most

poodles. He had inherited his address at them from clever parents, and, as he had never been frightened or coerced, all his lessons and acquirements were but play to him. He acquitted himself admirably, and the crockery-venders came and looked on, and a sacristan came out of the church and smiled, and the barber left his customer's chin all in a lather while he laughed, for the good folk of the quarter were all proud of Moufflou and never tired of him, and the pleasant, easy-going, good-humored disposition of the Tuscan populace is so far removed from the stupid buckram and whalebone in which the new-fangled democracy wants to imprison it.

The stranger also was much diverted by Moufflou's talents, and said, half aloud, "How this clever dog would amuse poor Victor! Would you bring your poodle to please a sick child I have at home!" he said, quite aloud, to Lolo, who smiled and answered that he would. Where was the sick child?

"At the Gran Bretagna; not far off," said the gentleman. "Come this afternoon, and ask for me by this name."

He dropped his card and a couple of francs into Lolo's hand, and went his way. Lolo, with Moufflou scampering after him, dashed into his own house, and stumped up the stairs, his crutch making a terrible noise on the stone.

"Mother, mother! see what I have got because Moufflou did his tricks," he shouted. "And now you can buy those shoes you want so much, and the coffee that you miss so of a morning, and the new linen for Tasso, and the shirts for Sandro."

For to the mind of Lolo two francs was as two millions,—source unfathomable of riches inexhaustible!

With the afternoon he and Moufflou trotted down the arcades of the Uffizi and down the Lung' Arno to the hotel of the stranger, and, showing the stranger's card, which Lolo could not read, they were shown at once into a great chamber, all gilding and fresco and velvet furniture.

But Lolo, being a little Florentine, was never troubled by externals, or daunted by mere sofas and chairs: he stood and looked around him with perfect composure; and Moufflou, whose attitude, when he was not romping, was always one of magisterial gravity, sat on his haunches and did the same.

Soon the foreigner he had seen in the forenoon entered and spoke to him, and led him into another chamber, where stretched on a couch was a little wan-faced boy about seven years old; a pretty boy, but so pallid, so wasted, so helpless. This poor little boy was heir to a great name and a great fortune, but all the science in the world could not make him strong enough to run about among the daisies, or able to draw a single breath without pain. A feeble smile lit up his face as he saw Moufflou and Lolo; then a shadow chased it away.

"Little boy is lame like me," he said, in a tongue Lolo did not understand.

"Yes, but he is a strong little boy, and can move about, as perhaps the suns of his country will make you do," said the gentleman, who was the poor little boy's father. "He has brought you his poodle to amuse you. What a handsome dog! is it not?"

MOUFFLOU ACQUITTED HIMSELF ABLY AS EVER.

"Oh, *bufflins!*" said the poor little fellow, stretching out his wasted hands to Moufflou, who submitted his leonine crest to the caress.

Then Lolo went through the performance, and Moufflou acquitted himself ably as ever; and the little invalid laughed and shouted with his tiny thin voice, and enjoyed it all immensely, and rained cakes and biscuits on both the poodle and its master. Lolo crumped the pastries with willing white teeth, and Moufflou did no less. Then they got up to go, and the sick child on the couch burst into fretful lamentations and outcries.

"I want the dog! I will have the dog!" was all he kept repeating.

But Lolo did not know what he said, and was only sorry to see him so unhappy.

"You shall have the dog to-morrow," said the gentleman, to pacify his little son; and he hurried Lolo and Moufflou out of the room, and consigned them to a servant, having given Lolo five francs this time.

"Why, Moufflou," said Lolo, with a chuckle of delight, "if we could find a foreigner every day, we could eat meat at supper, Moufflou, and go to the theatre every evening!"

And he and his crutch clattered home with great eagerness and excitement, and Moufflou trotted on his four frilled feet, the blue bow with which B ce had tied up his curls on the top of his head, fluttering in the wind. But, alas! even his five francs could bring no comfort at home. He found his whole family wailing and mourning in utterly inconsolable distress.

Tasso had drawn his number that morning, and the number was seven, and he must go and be a conscript for three years.

The poor young man stood in the midst of his weeping brothers and sisters, with his mother leaning against his shoulder, and down his own brown cheeks the tears were falling. He must go, and lose his place in the public gardens, and leave his people to starve as they might, and be put in a tomfool's jacket, and drafted off among cursing and swearing and strange faces, friendless, homeless, miserable! And the mother,—what would become of the mother?

Tasso was the best of lads and the mildest. He was quite happy sweeping up the leaves in the long alleys of the Cascine, or mowing the green lawns under the ilex avenues, and coming home at supper-time among the merry little people and the good woman that he loved. He was quite contented; he wanted nothing, only to be let alone; and they would not let him alone. They would haul him away to put a heavy musket in his hand and a heavy knapsack on his back, and drill him, and curse him, and make him into a human target, a live popinjay.

No one had any heed for Lolo and his five francs, and Moufflou, understanding that some great sorrow had fallen on his friends, sat down and lifted up his voice and howled.

Tasso must go away!—that was all they understood. For three long years they must go without the sight of his face, the aid of his strength, the pleasure of his smile: Tasso must go! When Lolo understood the calamity that had befallen them, he gathered Moufflou

up against his breast, and sat down too on the floor beside him and cried as if he would never stop crying.

There was no help for it: it was one of those misfortunes which are, as we say in Italian, like a tile tumbled on the head. The tile drops from a height, and the poor head bows under the unseen blow. That is all.

"What is the use of that?" said the mother, passionately, when Lolo showed her his five francs. "It will not buy Tasso's discharge."

Lolo felt that his mother was cruel and unjust, and crept to bed with Moufflou. Moufflou always slept on Lolo's feet.

The next morning Lolo got up before sunrise, and he and Moufflou accompanied Tasso to his work in the Cascine.

Lolo loved his brother, and clung to every moment whilst they could still be together.

"Can nothing keep you, Tasso?" he said, despairingly, as they went down the leafy aisles, whilst the Arno water was growing golden as the sun rose.

Tasso sighed.

"Nothing, dear. Unless Gesú would send me a thousand francs to buy a substitute."

And he knew he might as well have said, "If one could coin gold ducats out of the sunbeams on Arno water."

Lolo was very sorrowful as he lay on the grass in the meadow where Tasso was at work, and the poodle lay stretched beside him.

When Lolo went home to dinner (Tasso took his wrapped in a handkerchief) he found his mother very

agitated and excited. She was laughing one moment, crying the next. She was passionate and peevish, tender and jocose by turns; there was something forced and feverish about her which the children felt but did not comprehend. She was a woman of not very much intelligence, and she had a secret, and she carried it ill, and knew not what to do with it; but they could not tell that. They only felt a vague sense of disturbance and timidity at her unwonted manner.

The meal over (it was only bean-soup, and that is soon eaten), the mother said sharply to Lolo, "Your aunt Anita wants you this afternoon. She has to go out, and you are needed to stay with the children: be off with you."

Lolo was an obedient child; he took his hat and jumped up as quickly as his halting hip would let him. He called Moufflou, who was asleep.

"Leave the dog," said his mother, sharply. "'Nita will not have him messing and carrying mud about her nice clean rooms. She told me so. Leave him, I say."

"Leave Moufflou!" echoed Lolo, for never in all Moufflou's life had Lolo parted from him. Leave Moufflou! He stared open-eyed and open-mouthed at his mother. What could have come to her?

"Leave him, I say," she repeated, more sharply than ever. "Must I speak twice to my own children? Be off with you, and leave the dog, I say."

And she clutched Moufflou by his long silky mane and dragged him backwards, whilst with the other hand she thrust out of the door Lolo and Bice.

Lolo began to hammer with his crutch at the door

thus closed on him; but Bice coaxed and entreated him.

"Poor mother has been so worried about Tasso," she pleaded. "And what harm can come to Moufflou? And I do think he was tired, Lolo; the Cascine is a long way; and it is quite true that Aunt 'Nita never liked him."

So by one means and another she coaxed her brother away; and they went almost in silence to where their aunt Anita dwelt, which was across the river, near the dark-red bell-shaped dome of Santa Spirito.

It was true that her aunt had wanted them to mind her room and her babies whilst she was away carrying home some lace to a villa outside the Roman gate, for she was a lace-washer and clear-starcher by trade. There they had to stay in the little dark room with the two babies, with nothing to amuse the time except the clang of the bells of the church of the Holy Spirit, and the voices of the lemonade-sellers shouting in the street below. Aunt Anita did not get back till it was more than dusk, and the two children trotted homeward hand in hand, Lolo's leg dragging itself painfully along, for without Moufflou's white figure dancing on before him he felt very tired indeed. It was pitch dark when they got to Or San Michele, and the lamps burned dully.

Lolo stumped up the stairs wearily, with a vague, dull fear at his small heart.

"Moufflou, Moufflou!" he called. Where was Moufflou? Always at the first sound of his crutch the poodle came flying towards him. "Moufflou, Moufflou!" he called all the way up the long, dark,

twisting stone stair. He pushed open the door, and he called again, " Moufflou, Moufflou !"

But no dog answered to his call.

" Mother, where is Moufflou ?" he asked, staring with blinking, dazzled eyes into the oil-lit room where his mother sat knitting. Tasso was not then home from work. His mother went on with her knitting; there was an uneasy look on her face.

" Mother, what have you done with Moufflou, *my* Moufflou ?" said Lolo, with a look that was almost stern on his ten-year-old face.

Then his mother, without looking up and moving her knitting-needles very rapidly, said,—

" Moufflou is sold !"

And little Dina, who was a quick, pert child, cried, with a shrill voice,—

" Mother has sold him for a thousand francs to the foreign gentleman."

" Sold him !"

Lolo grew white and grew cold as ice; he stammered, threw up his hands over his head, gasped a little for breath, then fell down in a dead swoon, his poor useless limb doubled under him.

When Tasso came home that sad night and found his little brother shivering, moaning, and half delirious, and when he heard what had been done, he was sorely grieved.

" Oh, mother, how could you do it ?" he cried. " Poor, poor Moufflou ! and Lolo loves him so !"

" I have got the money," said his mother, feverishly, " and you will not need to go for a soldier : we can buy your substitute. What is a poodle, that you

mourn about it? We can get another poodle for Lolo."

"Another will not be Moufflou," said Tasso, and yet was seized with such a frantic happiness himself at the knowledge that he would not need go to the army, that he too felt as if he were drunk on new wine, and had not the heart to rebuke his mother.

"A thousand francs!" he muttered; "a thousand francs! *Dio mio!* Who could ever have fancied anybody would have given such a price for a common white poodle? One would think the gentleman had bought the church and the tabernacle!"

"Fools and their money are soon parted," said his mother, with cross contempt.

It was true: she had sold Moufflou.

The English gentleman had called on her while Lolo and the dog had been in the Cascine, and had said that he was desirous of buying the poodle, which had so diverted his sick child that the little invalid would not be comforted unless he possessed it. Now, at any other time the good woman would have sturdily refused any idea of selling Moufflou; but that morning the thousand francs which would buy Tasso's substitute were forever in her mind and before her eyes. When she heard the foreigner her heart gave a great leap, and her head swam giddily, and she thought, in a spasm of longing—if she could get those thousand francs! But though she was so dizzy and so upset she retained her grip on her native Florentine shrewdness. She said nothing of her need of the money; not a syllable of her sore distress. On the contrary, she was coy and wary, affected great reluctance to part with her pet.

invented a great offer made for him by a director of a circus, and finally let fall a hint that less than a thousand francs she could never take for poor Moufflou.

The gentleman assented with so much willingness to the price that she instantly regretted not having asked double. He told her that if she would take the poodle that afternoon to his hotel the money should be paid to her; so she despatched her children after their noonday meal in various directions, and herself took Moufflou to his doom. She could not believe her senses when ten hundred-franc notes were put into her hand. She scrawled her signature, Rosina Calabucci, to a formal receipt, and went away, leaving Moufflou in his new owner's rooms, and hearing his howls and moans pursue her all the way down the staircase and out into the air.

She was not easy at what she had done.

"It seemed," she said to herself, "like selling a Christian."

But then to keep her eldest son at home,—what a joy that was! On the whole, she cried so and laughed so as she went down the Lung' Arno that once or twice people looked at her, thinking her out of her senses, and a guard spoke to her angrily.

Meanwhile, Lolo was sick and delirious with grief. Twenty times he got out of his bed and screamed to be allowed to go with Moufflou, and twenty times his mother and his brothers put him back again and held him down and tried in vain to quiet him.

The child was beside himself with misery. "Moufflou! Moufflou!" he sobbed at every moment; and by

night he was in a raging fever, and when his mother, frightened, ran in and called in the doctor of the quarter, that worthy shook his head and said something as to a shock of the nervous system, and muttered a long word,—"meningitis."

Lolo took a hatred to the sight of Tasso, and thrust him away, and his mother too.

"It is for you Moufflou is sold," he said, with his little teeth and hands tight clinched.

After a day or two Tasso felt as if he could not bear his life, and went down to the hotel to see if the foreign gentleman would allow him to have Moufflou back for half an hour to quiet his little brother by a sight of him. But at the hotel he was told that the *Milord Inglese* who had bought the dog of Rosina Calabucci had gone that same night of the purchase to Rome, to Naples, to Palermo, *chi sa?*

"And Moufflou with him?" asked Tasso.

"The *barbone* he had bought went with him," said the porter of the hotel. "Such a beast! Howling, shrieking, raging all the day, and all the paint scratched off the *salon* door."

Poor Moufflou! Tasso's heart was heavy as he heard of that sad helpless misery of their bartered favorite and friend.

"What matter?" said his mother, fiercely, when he told her. "A dog is a dog. They will feed him better than we could. In a week he will have forgotten—*chè!*"

But Tasso feared that Moufflou would not forget. Lolo certainly would not. The doctor came to the bedside twice a day, and ice and water were kept on

the aching hot little head that had got the malady with the long name, and for the chief part of the time Lolo lay quiet, dull, and stupid, breathing heavily, and then at intervals cried and sobbed and shrieked hysterically for Moufflou.

"Can you not get what he calls for to quiet him with a sight of it?" said the doctor. But that was not possible, and poor Rosina covered her head with her apron and felt a guilty creature.

"Still, you will not go to the army," she said to Tasso, clinging to that immense joy for her consolation. "Only think! we can pay Guido Squarcione to go for you. He always said he would go if anybody would pay him. Oh, my Tasso, surely to keep you is worth a dog's life!"

"And Lolo's?" said Tasso, gloomily. "Nay, mother, it works ill to meddle too much with fate. I drew my number; I was bound to go. Heaven would have made it up to you somehow."

"Heaven sent me the foreigner; the Madonna's own self sent him to ease a mother's pain," said Rosina, rapidly and angrily. "There are the thousand francs safe to hand in the *cassone*, and what, pray, is it we miss? Only a dog like a sheep, that brought gallons of mud in with him every time it rained, and ate as much as any one of you."

"But Lolo?" said Tasso, under his breath.

His mother was so irritated and so tormented by her own conscience that she upset all the cabbage broth into the burning charcoal.

"Lolo was always a little fool, thinking of nothing but the church and the dog and nasty field-flowers,"

she said, angrily. "I humored him ever too much because of the hurt to his hip, and so—and so——"

Then the poor soul made matters worse by dropping her tears into the saucepan, and fanning the charcoal so furiously that the flame caught her fan of cane-leaves, and would have burned her arm had not Tasso been there.

"You are my prop and safety always. Who would not have done what I did? Not Santa Felicita herself," she said, with a great sob.

But all this did not cure poor Lolo.

The days and the weeks of the golden autumn weather passed away, and he was always in danger, and the small close room where he slept with Sandro and Beppo and Tasso was not one to cure such an illness as had now beset him. Tasso went to his work with a sick heart in the Cascine, where the colchicum was all lilac among the meadow grass, and the ashes and elms were taking their first flush of the coming autumnal change. He did not think Lolo would ever get well, and the good lad felt as if he had been the murderer of his little brother.

True, he had had no hand or voice in the sale of Moufflou, but Moufflou had been sold for his sake. It made him feel half guilty, very unhappy, quite unworthy all the sacrifice that had been made for him. "Nobody should meddle with fate," thought Tasso, who knew his grandfather had died in San Bonifazio because he had driven himself mad over the dream-book trying to get lucky numbers for the lottery and become a rich man at a stroke.

It was rapture, indeed, to know that he was free of

the army for a time at least, that he might go on undisturbed at his healthful labor, and get a rise in wages as time went on, and dwell in peace with his family, and perhaps—perhaps in time earn enough to marry pretty flaxen-haired Biondina, the daughter of the barber in the piazzetta. It was rapture indeed; but then poor Moufflou!—and poor, poor Lolo! Tasso felt as if he had bought his own exemption by seeing his little brother and the good dog torn in pieces and buried alive for his service.

And where was poor Moufflou?

Gone far away somewhere south in the hurrying, screeching, vomiting, braying train that it made Tasso giddy only to look at as it rushed by the green meadows beyond the Cascine on its way to the sea.

"If he could see the dog he cries so for, it might save him," said the doctor, who stood with a grave face watching Lolo.

But that was beyond any one's power. No one could tell where Moufflou was. He might be carried away to England, to France, to Russia, to America,—who could say? They did not know where his purchaser had gone. Moufflou even might be dead.

The poor mother, when the doctor said that, went and looked at the ten hundred-franc notes that were once like angels' faces to her, and said to them,—

"Oh, you children of Satan, why did you tempt me? I sold the poor, innocent, trustful beast to get you, and now my child is dying!"

Her eldest son would stay at home, indeed; but if this little lame one died! Rosina Calabucci would have given up the notes and consented never to own

five francs in her life if only she could have gone back over the time and kept Moufflou, and seen his little master running out with him into the sunshine.

More than a month went by, and Lolo lay in the same state, his yellow hair shorn, his eyes dilated and yet stupid, life kept in him by a spoonful of milk, a lump of ice, a drink of lemon-water; always muttering, when he spoke at all, "Moufflou, Moufflou, *dov' è* Moufflou?" and lying for days together in somnolence and unconsciousness, with the fire eating at his brain and the weight lying on it like a stone.

The neighbors were kind, and brought fruit and the like, and sat up with him, and chattered so all at once in one continuous brawl that they were enough in themselves to kill him, for such is ever the Italian fashion of sympathy in all illness.

But Lolo did not get well, did not even seem to see the light at all, or to distinguish any sounds around him; and the doctor in plain words told Rosina Calabucci that her little boy must die. Die, and the church so near? She could not believe it. Could St. Mark, and St. George, and the rest that he had loved so do nothing for him? No, said the doctor, they could do nothing; the dog might do something, since the brain had so fastened on that one idea; but then they had sold the dog.

"Yes; I sold him!" said the poor mother, breaking into floods of remorseful tears.

So at last the end drew so nigh that one twilight time the priest came out of the great arched door that is next St. Mark, with the Host uplifted, and a little acolyte ringing the bell before it, and passed across the

piazzetta, and went up the dark staircase of Rosina's dwelling, and passed through the weeping, terrified children, and went to the bedside of Lolo.

Lolo was unconscious, but the holy man touched his little body and limbs with the sacred oil, and prayed over him, and then stood sorrowful with bowed head.

Lolo had had his first communion in the summer, and in his preparation for it had shown an intelligence and devoutness that had won the priest's gentle heart.

Standing there, the holy man commended the innocent soul to God. It was the last service to be rendered to him save that very last of all when the funeral office should be read above his little grave among the millions of nameless dead at the sepulchres of the poor at Trebbiano.

All was still as the priest's voice ceased; only the sobs of the mother and of the children broke the stillness as they kneeled; the hand of Biondina had stolen into Tasso's.

Suddenly, there was a loud scuffling noise; hurrying feet came patter, patter, patter up the stairs, a ball of mud and dust flew over the heads of the kneeling figures, fleet as the wind Moufflou dashed through the room and leaped upon the bed.

Lolo opened his heavy eyes, and a sudden light of consciousness gleamed in them like a sunbeam. "Moufflou!" he murmured, in his little thin faint voice. The dog pressed close to his breast and kissed his wasted face.

Moufflou was come home!

And Lolo came home too, for death let go its hold upon him. Little by little, very faintly and flicker-

ingly and very uncertainly at the first, life returned to the poor little body, and reason to the tormented, heated little brain. Moufflou was his physician; Moufflou, who, himself a skeleton under his matted curls, would not stir from his side and looked at him all day long with two beaming brown eyes full of unutterable love.

Lolo was happy; he asked no questions,—was too weak, indeed, even to wonder. He had Moufflou; that was enough.

Alas! though they dared not say so in his hearing, it was not enough for his elders. His mother and Tasso knew that the poodle had been sold and paid for; that they could lay no claim to keep him; and that almost certainly his purchaser would seek him out and assert his indisputable right to him. And then how would Lolo ever bear that second parting?—Lolo, so weak that he weighed no more than if he had been a little bird.

Moufflou had, no doubt, travelled a long distance and suffered much. He was but skin and bone; he bore the marks of blows and kicks; his once silken hair was all discolored and matted; he had, no doubt, travelled far. But then his purchaser would be sure to ask for him, soon or late, at his old home; and then? Well, then if they did not give him up themselves, the law would make them.

Rosina Calabucci and Tasso, though they dared say nothing before any of the children, felt their hearts in their mouths at every step on the stair, and the first interrogation of Tasso every evening when he came from his work was, "Has any one come for Moufflou?"

For ten days no one came, and their first terrors lulled a little.

On the eleventh morning, a feast-day, on which Tasso was not going to his labors in the Cascine, there came a person, with a foreign look, who said the words they so much dreaded to hear: "Has the poodle that you sold to an English gentleman come back to you?"

Yes: his English master claimed him!

The servant said that they had missed the dog in Rome a few days after buying him and taking him there; that he had been searched for in vain, and that his master had thought it possible the animal might have found his way back to his old home: there had been stories of such wonderful sagacity in dogs: anyhow, he had sent for him on the chance; he was himself back on the Lung' Arno. The servant pulled from his pocket a chain, and said his orders were to take the poodle away at once: the little sick gentleman had fretted very much about his loss.

Tasso heard in a very agony of despair. To take Moufflou away now would be to kill Lolo,—Lolo so feeble still, so unable to understand, so passionately alive to every sight and sound of Moufflou, lying for hours together motionless with his hand buried in the poodle's curls, saying nothing, only smiling now and then, and murmuring a word or two in Moufflou's ear.

"The dog did come home," said Tasso, at length, in a low voice; "angels must have shown him the road, poor beast! From Rome! Only to think of it, from Rome! And he a dumb thing! I tell you he is here, honestly: so will you not trust me just so far as this? Will you let me go with you and speak to the English

lord before you take the dog away? I have a little brother sorely ill——"

He could not speak more, for tears that choked his voice.

At last the messenger agreed so far as this. Tasso might go first and see the master, but he would stay here and have a care they did not spirit the dog away, —"for a thousand francs were paid for him," added the man, "and a dog that can come all the way from Rome by itself must be an uncanny creature."

Tasso thanked him, went up-stairs, was thankful that his mother was at mass and could not dispute with him, took the ten hundred-franc notes from the old oak *cassone*, and with them in his breast-pocket walked out into the air. He was but a poor working lad, but he had made up his mind to do an heroic deed, for self-sacrifice is always heroic. He went straightway to the hotel where the English *milord* was, and when he had got there remembered that still he did not know the name of Moufflou's owner; but the people of the hotel knew him as Rosina Calabucci's son, and guessed what he wanted, and said the gentleman who had lost the poodle was within up-stairs and they would tell him.

Tasso waited some half-hour with his heart beating sorely against the packet of hundred-franc notes. At last he was beckoned up-stairs, and there he saw a foreigner with a mild fair face, and a very lovely lady, and a delicate child who was lying on a couch. "Moufflou! Where is Moufflou?" cried the little child, impatiently, as he saw the youth enter.

Tasso took his hat off, and stood in the door-way,

an embrowned, healthy, not ungraceful figure, in his working-clothes of rough blue stuff.

"If you please, most illustrious," he stammered, "poor Moufflou has come home."

The child gave a cry of delight; the gentleman and lady one of wonder. Come home! All the way from Rome!

"Yes, he has, most illustrious," said Tasso, gaining courage and eloquence; "and now I want to beg something of you. We are poor, and I drew a bad number, and it was for that my mother sold Moufflou. For myself, I did not know anything of it; but she thought she would buy my substitute, and of course she could; but Moufflou is come home, and my little brother Lolo, the little boy your most illustrious first saw playing with the poodle, fell ill of the grief of losing Moufflou, and for a month has lain saying nothing sensible, but only calling for the dog, and my old grandfather died of worrying himself mad over the lottery numbers, and Lolo was so near dying that the Blessed Host had been brought, and the holy oil had been put on him, when all at once there rushes in Moufflou, skin and bone, and covered with mud, and at the sight of him Lolo comes back to his senses, and that is now ten days ago, and though Lolo is still as weak as a new-born thing, he is always sensible, and takes what we give him to eat, and lies always looking at Moufflou, and smiling, and saying, 'Moufflou! Moufflou!' and, most illustrious, I know well you have bought the dog, and the law is with you, and by the law you claim it; but I thought perhaps, as Lolo loves him so, you would let us keep the dog, and would take back

the thousand francs, and myself I will go and be a soldier, and heaven will take care of them all somehow."

Then Tasso, having said all this in one breathless, monotonous recitative, took the thousand francs out of his breast-pocket and held them out timidly towards the foreign gentleman, who motioned them aside and stood silent.

"Did you understand, Victor," he said, at last, to his little son.

The child hid his face in his cushions.

"Yes, I did understand something: let Lolo keep him; Moufflou was not happy with me."

But he burst out crying as he said it.

Moufflou had run away from him.

Moufflou had never loved him, for all his sweet cakes and fond caresses and platefuls of delicate savory meats. Moufflou had run away and found his own road over two hundred miles and more to go back to some little hungry children, who never had enough to eat themselves, and so, certainly, could never give enough to eat to the dog. Poor little boy! He was so rich and so pampered and so powerful, and yet he could never make Moufflou love him!

Tasso, who understood nothing that was said, laid the ten hundred-franc notes down on a table near him.

"If you would take them, most illustrious, and give me back what my mother wrote when she sold Moufflou," he said, timidly, "I would pray for you night and day, and Lolo would too; and as for the dog, we will get a puppy and train him for your little *signorino;* they can all do tricks, more or less, it comes by nature;

and as for me, I will go to the army willingly; it is not right to interfere with fate; my old grandfather died mad because he would try to be a rich man, by dreaming about it and pulling destiny by the ears, as if she were a kicking mule; only, I do pray of you, do not take away Moufflou. And to think he trotted all those miles and miles, and you carried him by train too, and he never could have seen the road, and he has no power of speech to ask——"

Tasso broke down again in his eloquence, and drew the back of his hand across his wet eyelashes.

The English gentleman was not altogether unmoved.

"Poor faithful dog!" he said, with a sigh. "I am afraid we were very cruel to him, meaning to be kind. No; we will not claim him, and I do not think you should go for a soldier; you seem so good a lad, and your mother must need you. Keep the money, my boy, and in payment you shall train up the puppy you talk of, and bring him to my little boy. I will come and see your mother and Lolo to-morrow. All the way from Rome! What wonderful sagacity! what matchless fidelity!"

You can imagine, without any telling of mine, the joy that reigned in Moufflou's home when Tasso returned thither with the money and the good tidings both. His substitute was bought without a day's delay, and Lolo rapidly recovered. As for Moufflou, he could never tell them his troubles, his wanderings, his difficulties, his perils; he could never tell them by what miraculous knowledge he had found his way across Italy, from the gates of Rome to the gates of Florence.

But he soon grew plump again, and merry, and his love for Lolo was yet greater than before.

By the winter all the family went to live on an estate near Spezia that the English gentleman had purchased, and there Moufflou was happier than ever. The little English boy is gaining strength in the soft air, and he and Lolo are great friends, and play with Moufflou and the poodle puppy half the day upon the sunny terraces and under the green orange boughs. Tasso is one of the gardeners there; he will have to serve as a soldier probably in some category or another, but he is safe for the time, and is happy. Lolo, whose lameness will always exempt him from military service, when he grows to be a man means to be a florist, and a great one. He has learned to read, as the first step on the road of his ambition.

"But oh, Moufflou, how *did* you find your way home?" he asks the dog a hundred times a week.

How indeed!

No one ever knew how Moufflou had made that long journey on foot, so many weary miles; but beyond a doubt he had done it alone and unaided, for if any one had helped him they would have come home with him to claim the reward.

And that you may not wonder too greatly at Moufflou's miraculous journey on his four bare feet, I will add here two facts known to friends of mine, of whose truthfulness there can be no doubt.

One concerns a French poodle who was purchased in Paris by the friend of my friend, and brought all the way from Paris to Milan by train. In a few days after his arrival in Milan the poodle was missing; and

nothing more was heard or known of him until many weeks later his quondam owner in Paris, on opening his door one morning, found the dog stretched dying on the threshold of his old home.

That is one fact; not a story, mind you, *a fact.*

The other is related to me by an Italian nobleman, who in his youth belonged to the Guardia Nobile of Tuscany. That brilliant corps of elegant gentlemen owned a regimental pet, a poodle also, a fine merry and handsome dog of its kind; and the officers all loved and made much of him, except, alas! the commandant of the regiment, who hated him, because when the officers were on parade or riding in escort the poodle was sure to be jumping and frisking about in front of them. It is difficult to see where the harm of this was, but this odious old martinet vowed vengeance against the dog, and, being of course all powerful in his own corps, ordered the exile from Florence of the poor fellow. He was sent to a farm at Prato, twenty miles off, along the hills; but very soon he found his way back to Florence. He was then sent to Leghorn, forty miles off, but in a week's time had returned to his old comrades. He was then, by order of his unrelenting foe, shipped to the island of Sardinia. How he did it no one ever could tell, for he was carried safely to Sardinia and placed inland there in kind custody, but in some wonderful way the poor dog must have found out the sea and hidden himself on board a returning vessel, for in a month's time from his exile to the island he was back again among his comrades in Florence. Now, what I have to tell you almost breaks my heart to say, and will, I think,

quite break yours to hear: alas! the brute of a commandant, untouched by such marvellous cleverness and faithfulness, was his enemy to the bitter end, and, in inexorable hatred, *had him shot!* Oh, when you grow to manhood and have power, use it with tenderness!

LAMPBLACK.

A POOR black paint lay very unhappy in its tube one day alone, having tumbled out of an artist's color-box and lying quite unnoticed for a year. "I am only Lampblack," he said to himself. "The master never looks at me: he says I am heavy, dull, lustreless, useless. I wish I could cake and dry up and die, as poor Flakewhite did when he thought she turned yellow and deserted her."

But Lampblack could not die; he could only lie in his tin tube and pine, like a silly, sorrowful thing as he was, in company with some broken bits of charcoal and a rusty palette-knife. The master never touched him; month after month passed by, and he was never thought of; the other paints had all their turn of fair fortune, and went out into the world to great academies and mighty palaces, transfigured and rejoicing in a thousand beautiful shapes and services. But Lampblack was always passed over as dull and coarse, which indeed he was, and knew himself to be so, poor fellow, which made it all the worse. "You are only a deposit!" said the other colors to him; and he felt that it was disgraceful to be a deposit, though he was not quite sure what it meant.

"If only I were happy like the others!" thought

poor, sooty Lampblack, sorrowful in his corner. "There is Bistre, now, he is not so very much better-looking than I am, and yet they can do nothing without him, whether it is a girl's face or a wimple in a river!"

The others were all so happy in this beautiful, bright studio, whose open casements were hung with myrtle and passion-flower, and whose silence was filled with the singing of nightingales. Cobalt, with a touch or two, became the loveliness of summer skies at morning; the Lakes and Carmines bloomed in a thousand exquisite flowers and fancies; the Chromes and Ochres (mere dull earths) were allowed to spread themselves in sheets of gold that took the shine of the sun into the darkest places; Umber, a sombre and gloomy thing, could lurk yet in a child's curls and laugh in a child's smiles; whilst all the families of the Vermilions, the Blues, the Greens, lived in a perpetual glory of sunset or sunrise, of ocean waves or autumn woods, of kingly pageant or of martial pomp.

It was very hard. Poor Lampblack felt as if his very heart would break, above all when he thought of pretty little Rose Madder, whom he loved dearly, and who never would even look at him, because she was so very proud, being herself always placed in nothing less than rosy clouds, or the hearts of roses, or something as fair and spiritual.

"I am only a wretched deposit!" sighed Lampblack, and the rusty palette-knife grumbled back, "My own life has been ruined in cleaning dirty brushes, and see what the gratitude of men and brushes is!"

"But at least you have been of use once; but I

never am,—never!" said Lampblack, wearily; and indeed he had been there so long that the spiders had spun their silver fleeces all about him, and he was growing as gray as an old bottle does in a dark cellar.

At that moment the door of the studio opened, and there came a flood of light, and the step of a man was heard: the hearts of all the colors jumped for joy, because the step was that of their magician, who out of mere common clays and ground ores could raise them at a touch into splendors of the gods and divinities immortal.

Only the heart of poor dusty Lampblack could not beat a throb the more, because he was always left alone and never was thought worthy even of a glance. He could not believe his senses when this afternoon—oh, miracle and ecstasy!—the step of the master crossed the floor to the obscured corner where he lay under his spiders' webs, and the hand of the master touched him. Lampblack felt sick and faint with rapture. Had recognition come at last?

The master took him up: "You will do for this work," he said; and Lampblack was borne trembling to an easel. The colors, for once in their turn neglected, crowded together to watch, looking in their bright tin tubes like rows of little soldiers in armor.

"It is the old dull Deposit," they murmured to one another, and felt contemptuous, yet were curious, as scornful people often will be.

"But I am going to be glorious and great," thought Lampblack, and his heart swelled high; for never more would they be able to hurl the name of Deposit at him,

"OLD DEPOSIT IS GOING TO BE A SIGN POST."

a name which hurt him none the less, but all the more indeed, because it was unintelligible.

"You will do for this work," said the master, and let Lampblack out of his metal prison-house into the light and touched him with the brush that was the wand of magic.

"What am I going to be?" wondered Lampblack, as he felt himself taken on to a large piece of deal board, so large that he felt he must be going to make the outline of an athlete or the shadows of a tempest at the least.

Himself he could not tell what he was becoming: he was happy enough and grand enough only to be employed, and, as he was being used, began to dream a thousand things of all the scenes he would be in, and all the hues that he would wear, and all the praise that he would hear when he went out into that wonderful great world of which his master was an idol. From his secret dreams he was harshly roused; all the colors were laughing and tittering round him till the little tin helmets they wore shook with their merriment.

"Old Deposit is going to be a sign-post," they cried to one another so merrily that the spiders, who are not companionable creatures, felt themselves compelled to come to the doors of their dens and chuckle too. A sign-post! Lampblack, stretched out in an ecstasy upon the board, roused himself shivering from his dreams, and gazed at his own metamorphosis. He had been made into seven letters, thus:

B A N D I T A.

This word in the Italian country, where the English

painter's studio was, means, Do not trespass, do not shoot, do not show yourself here: anything, indeed, that is peremptory and uncivil to all trespassers. In these seven letters, outspread upon the board, was Lampblack crucified!

Farewell, ambitious hopes and happy dreams! He had been employed to paint a sign-board, a thing stoned by the boys, blown on by the winds, gnawed by the rats, and drenched with the winter's rains. Better the dust and the cobwebs of his old corner than such shame as this!

But help was there none. His fate was fixed. He was dried with a drench of turpentine, hastily clothed in a coat of copal, and, ere he yet was fully aware of all his misery, was being borne away upon the great board out of doors and handed to the gardener. For the master was a hasty and ardent man, and had been stung into impatience by the slaughter of some favorite blue thrushes in his ilex-trees that day, and so in his haste had chosen to do journeyman's work himself. Lampblack was carried out of the studio for the last time, and as the door closed on him he heard all the colors laughing, and the laugh of little Rose Madder was highest of all as she cried to Naples Yellow, who was a dandy and made court to her, "Poor old ugly Deposit! He will grumble to the owls and the bats now!"

The door shut, shutting him out forever from all that joyous company and palace of fair visions, and the rough hands of the gardener grasped him and carried him to the edge of the great garden, where the wall overlooked the public road, and there fastened

him up on high with a band of iron round the trunk of a tree.

That night it rained heavily, and the north wind blew, and there was thunder also. Lampblack, out in the storm without his tin house to shelter him, felt that of all creatures wretched on the face of the earth there was not one so miserable as he.

A sign-board! Nothing but a sign-board!

The degradation of a color, created for art and artists, could not be deeper or more grievous anywhere. Oh, how he sighed for his tin tube and the quiet nook with the charcoal and the palette-knife!

He had been unhappy there indeed, but still had had always some sort of hope to solace him,—some chance still remaining that one day fortune might smile and he be allowed to be at least the lowest stratum of some immortal work.

But now hope was there none. His doom, his end, were fixed and changeless. Nevermore could he be anything but what he was; and change there could be none till weather and time should have done their work on him, and he be rotting on the wet earth, a shattered and worm-eaten wreck.

Day broke,—a gloomy, misty morning.

From where he was crucified upon the tree-trunk he could no longer even see his beloved home the studio: he could only see a dusky, intricate tangle of branches all about him, and below the wall of flint, with the Banksia that grew on it, and the hard muddy highway, drenched from the storm of the night.

A man passed in a miller's cart, and stood up and swore at him, because the people had liked to come

and shoot and trap the birds of the master's wooded gardens, and knew that they must not do it now.

A slug crawled over him, and a snail also. A woodpecker hammered at him with its strong beak. A boy went by under the wall and threw stones at him, and called him names. The rain poured down again heavily. He thought of the happy painting-room, where it had seemed always summer and always sunshine, and where now in the forenoon all the colors were marshalling in the pageantry of the Arts, as he had seen them do hundreds of times from his lone corner. All the misery of the past looked happiness now.

"If I were only dead, like Flakewhite," he thought; but the stones only bruised, they did not kill him: and the iron band only hurt, it did not stifle him. For whatever suffers very much, has always so much strength to continue to exist. And almost his loyal heart blasphemed and cursed the master who had brought him to such a fate as this.

The day grew apace, and noon went by, and with it the rain passed. The sun shone out once more, and Lampblack, even imprisoned and wretched as he was, could not but see how beautiful the wet leaves looked, and the gossamers all hung with rain-drops, and the blue sky that shone through the boughs; for he had not lived with a great artist all his days to be blind, even in pain, to the loveliness of nature. The sun came out, and with it some little brown birds tripped out too,—very simple and plain in their costumes and ways, but which Lampblack knew were the loves of the poets, for he had heard the master call them so

many times in summer nights. The little brown birds came tripping and pecking about on the grass underneath his tree-trunk, and then flew on the top of the wall, which was covered with Banksia and many other creepers. The brown birds sang a little song, for though they sing most in the moonlight they do sing by day too, and sometimes all day long. And what they sung was this:

"Oh, how happy we are, how happy! No nets dare now be spread for us, no cruel boys dare climb, and no cruel shooters fire. We are safe, quite safe, and the sweet summer has begun!"

Lampblack listened, and even in his misery was touched and soothed by the tender liquid sounds that these little throats poured out among the light-yellow bloom of the Banksia flowers. And when one of the brown birds came and sat on a branch by him, swaying itself and drinking the rain-drops off a leaf, he ventured to ask, as well as he could for the iron that strangled him, why they were so safe, and what made them so happy.

The bird looked at him in surprise.

"Do you not know?" he said. "It is *you!*"

"I!" echoed Lampblack, and could say no more, for he feared that the bird was mocking him, a poor, silly, rusty black paint, only spread out to rot in fair weather and foul. What good could he do to any creature?

"You," repeated the nightingale. "Did you not see that man under the wall? He had a gun; we should have been dead but for you. We will come and sing to you all night long, since you like it; and

when we go to bed at dawn, I will tell my cousins the thrushes and merles to take our places, so that you shall hear somebody singing near you all the day long."

Lampblack was silent.

His heart was too full to speak.

Was it possible that he was of use, after all?

"Can it be true?" he said, timidly.

"Quite true," said the nightingale.

"Then the master knew best," thought Lampblack.

Never would he adorn a palace or be adored upon an altar. His high hopes were all dead, like last year's leaves. The colors in the studio had all the glories of the world, but he was of use in it, after all; he could save these little lives. He was poor and despised, bruised by stones and drenched by storms; yet was he content, nailed there upon his tree, for he had not been made quite in vain.

The sunset poured its red and golden splendors through the darkness of the boughs, and the birds sang all together, shouting for joy and praising God.

THE CHILD OF URBINO.

It was in the year of grace 1490, in the reign of Guidobaldo, Lord of Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino,—the year, by the way, of the birth of that most illustrious and gracious lady Vittoria Colonna.

It was in the spring of the year, in that mountain-eyrie beloved of the Muses and coveted of the Borgia, that a little boy stood looking out of a grated casement into the calm sunshiny day. He was a pretty boy, with hazel eyes, and fair hair cut straight above his brows; he wore a little blue tunic with some embroidery about the throat of it, and had in his hand a little round flat cap of the same color. He was sad of heart this merry morning, for a dear friend of his, a friend ten years older than himself, had gone the night before on a journey over the mountains to Maestro Francesco at Bologna, there to be bound apprentice to that gentle artist. This friend, Timoteo della Vita, had been very dear to the child, had played with him and jested with him, made him toys and told him stories, and he was very full of pain at Timoteo's loss. Yet he told himself not to mind, for had not Timoteo said to him, "I go as goldsmith's 'prentice to the best of men; but I mean to become a painter"? And the child understood that to be a painter was to be the

greatest and wisest the world held; he quite understood that, for he was Raffaelle, the seven-year-old son of Signor Giovanni Sanzio.

He was a very happy little boy here in this stately yet homely and kindly Urbino, where his people had come for refuge when the lances of Malatesta had ravaged and ruined their homestead. He had the dearest old grandfather in all the world; he had a loving mother, and he had a father who was very tender to him, and painted him among the angels of heaven, and was always full of pleasant conceits and admirable learning, and such true love of art that the child breathed it with every breath, as he could breathe the sweetness of a cowslip-bell when he held one in his hands up to his nostrils.

It was good in those days to live in old Urbino. It was not, indeed, so brilliant a place as it became in a later day, when Ariosto came there, and Bembo and Castiglione and many another witty and learned gentleman, and the Courts of Love were held with ingenious rhyme and pretty sentiment, sad only for wantonness. But, if not so brilliant, it was homelier, simpler, full of virtue, with a wise peace and tranquillity that joined hands with a stout courage. The burgher was good friends with his prince, and knew that in any trouble or perplexity he could go up to the palace, or stop the duke in the market-place, and be sure of sympathy and good counsel. There were a genuine love of beautiful things, a sense of public duty and of public spirit, a loyal temper and a sage contentment, among the good people of that time, which made them happy and prosperous.

All work was solidly and thoroughly done, living was cheap, and food good and plentiful, much better and more plentiful than it is now; in the fine old houses every stone was sound, every bit of ornament well wrought, men made their nests to live in and to pass to their children and children's children after them, and had their own fancies and their own traditions recorded in the iron-work of their casements and in the wood-work of their doors. They had their happy day of honest toil from matins bell to evensong, and then walked out or sat about in the calm evening air and looked down on the plains below that were rich with grain and fruit and woodland, and talked and laughed among each other, and were content with their own pleasant, useful lives, not burnt up with envy of desire to be some one else, as in our sickly, hurrying time most people are.

Yes, life must have been very good in those old days in old Urbino, better than it is anywhere in ours.

Can you not picture to yourself good, shrewd, wise Giovanni Sanzio, with his old father by his side, and his little son running before him, in the holy evening time of a feast-day, with the deep church-bells swaying above-head, and the last sun-rays smiting the frescoed walls, the stone bastions, the blazoned standard on the castle roof, the steep city rocks shelving down into the greenery of cherry-orchard and of pear-tree? I can, whenever I shut my eyes and recall Urbino as it was; and would it had been mine to live then in that mountain-home, and meet that divine child going along his happy smiling way, garnering unconsciously in his in-

fant soul all the beautiful sights and sounds around him, to give them in his manhood to the world.

"Let him alone: he will paint all this some day," said his wise father, who loved to think that his brushes and his colors would pass in time to Raffaelle, whose hands would be stronger to hold them than his own had been. And, whether he would ever paint it or not, the child never tired of thus looking from his eyrie on the rocks and counting all that passed below through the blowing corn under the leafy orchard boughs.

There were so many things to see in Urbino in that time, looking so over the vast green valley below: a clump of spears, most likely, as men-at-arms rode through the trees; a string of market-folk bringing in the produce of the orchards or the fields; perchance a red-robed cardinal on a white mule with glittering housings, behind him a sumpter train rich with baggage, furniture, gold and silver plate; maybe the duke's hunting-party going out or coming homeward with caracoling steeds, beautiful hounds straining at their leash, hunting-horns sounding merrily over the green country; maybe a band of free lances, with plumes tossing, steel glancing, bannerets fluttering against the sky; or maybe a quiet gray-robed string of monks or pilgrims singing the hymn sung before Jerusalem, treading the long lush grass with sandalled feet, coming towards the city, to crowd slowly and gladly up its rocky height. Do you not wish with me you could stand in the window with Raffaelle to see the earth as it was then?

No doubt the good folks of Urbino laughed at him often for a little moonstruck dreamer, so many hours

did he stand looking, looking,—only looking,—as eyes have a right to do that see well and not altogether as others see.

Happily for him, the days of his childhood were times of peace, and he did not behold, as his father had done, the torches light up the street and the flames devour the homesteads.

At this time Urbino was growing into fame for its pottery-work: those big dishes and bowls, those marriage-plates and pharmacy-jars, which it made, were beginning to rival the products of its neighbor Gubbio, and when its duke wished to send a bridal gift, or a present on other festal occasions, he oftenest chose some service or some rare platter of his own Urbino ware. Now, pottery had not then taken the high place among the arts of Italy that it was destined very soon to do. As you will learn when you are older, after the Greeks and the Christians had exhausted all that was beautiful in shape and substance of clay vases, the art seemed to die out, and the potters and the pottery-painters died with it, or at any rate went to sleep for a great many centuries, whilst soldiers and prelates, nobles and mercenaries, were trampling to and fro all over the land and disputing it, and carrying fire and torch, steel and desolation, with them in their quarrels and covetousness. But now, the reign of the late good duke, great Federigo, having been favorable to the Marches (as we call his province now), the potters and pottery-painters, with other gentle craftsmen, had begun to look up again, and the beneficent fires of their humble ovens had begun to burn in Castel Durante, in Pesaro, in Faenza, in Gubbio, and in Urbino itself. The great days had

not yet come: Maestro Giorgio was but a youngster, and Orazio Fontane not born, nor the clever baker Prestino either, nor the famous Fra Xanto; but there was a Don Giorgio even then in Gubbio, of whose work, alas! one plate now at the Louvre is all we have; and here in the ducal city on the hill rich and noble things were already being made in the stout and lustrous majolica that was destined to acquire later on so wide a ceramic fame. Jars and bowls and platters, oval dishes and ewers and basins, and big-bodied, metal-welded pharmacy-vases were all made and painted at Urbino whilst Raffaelle Sanzio was running about on rosy infantine feet. There was a master-potter of the Montefeltro at that time, one Maestro Benedetto Ronconi, whose name had not become world-renowned as Orazio Fontane's and Maestro Giorgio's did in the following century, yet who in that day enjoyed the honor of all the duchy, and did things very rare and fine in the Urbino ware. He lived within a stone's throw of Giovanni Sanzio, and was a gray-haired, handsome, somewhat stern and pompous man, now more than middle-aged, who had one beauteous daughter, by name Pacifica. He cherished Pacifica well, but not so well as he cherished the things he wrought,—the deep round nuptial plates and oval massive dishes that he painted with Scriptural stories and strange devices, and landscapes such as those he saw around, and flowing scrolls with Latin mottoes in black letters, and which, when thus painted, he consigned with an anxiously-beating heart to the trial of the ovens, and which sometimes came forth from the trial all cracked and blurred and marred, and sometimes emerged in

triumph and came into his trembling hands iridescent and lovely with those lustrous and opaline hues which we admire in them to this day as the especial glory of maj lica.

Maestro Benedetto was an ambitious and vain man, and had had a hard, laborious manhood, working at his potter's wheel and painter's brush before Urbino ware was prized in Italy or even in the duchy. Now, indeed, he was esteemed at his due worth, and his work was so also, and he was passably rich, and known as a good artist beyond the Marches; but there was a younger man over at Gubbio, the Don Giorgio who was precursor of unequalled Maestro Giorgio Andreoli, who surpassed him, and made him sleep o' nights on thorns, as envy makes all those to do who take her as their bedfellow.

The house of Maestro Benedetto was a long stone building, with a loggia at the back all overclimbed by hardy rose-trees, and looking on a garden that was more than half an orchard, and in which grew abundantly pear-trees, plum-trees, and wood strawberries. The lancet windows of his workshop looked on all this quiet greenery. There were so many such pleasant workshops then in the land,—calm, godly, homelike places, filled from without with song of birds and scent of herbs and blossoms. Nowadays men work in crowded, stinking cities, in close factory chambers; and their work is barren as their lives are.

The little son of neighbor Sanzio ran in and out this bigger, wider house and garden of Maestro Benedetto at his pleasure, for the maiden Pacifica was always glad to see him, and even the sombre master-potter

would unbend to him and show him how to lay the color on to the tremulous fugitive unbaked biscuit.

Pacifica was a lovely young woman of some seventeen or eighteen summers; and perhaps Raffaelle was but remembering her when he painted in his after-years the face of his Madonna di San Sisto. He loved her as he loved everything that was beautiful and every one who was kind; and almost better than his own beloved father's studio, almost better than his dear old grandsire's cheerful little shop, did he love this grave, silent, sweet-smelling, sun-pierced, shadowy old house of Maestro Benedetto.

Maestro Benedetto had four apprentices or pupils in that time learning to become *figuli*, but the one whom Raffaelle liked the most (and Pacifica too) was one Luca Torelli, of a village above in the mountains, —a youth with a noble dark pensive beauty of his own, and a fearless gait, and a supple, tall, slender figure that would have looked well in the light coat of mail and silken doublet of a man-at-arms. In sooth, the spirit of Messer Luca was more made for war and its risks and glories than for the wheel and the brush of the bottega; but he had loved Pacifica ever since he had come down one careless holy-day into Urbino, and had bound himself to her father's service in a heedless moment of eagerness to breathe the same air and dwell under the same roof as she did. He had gained little for his pains: to see her at mass and at meal-times, now and then to be allowed to bring water from the well for her or feed her pigeons, to see her gray gown go down between the orchard trees and catch the sunlight, to hear the hum of her spinning-

wheel, the thrum of her viol,—this was the uttermost he got of joy in two long years; and how he envied Raffaelle running along the stone floor of the loggia to leap into her arms, to hang upon her skirts, to pick the summer fruit with her, and sort with her the autumn herbs for drying!

"I love Pacifica!" he would say, with a groan, to Raffaelle; and Raffaelle would say, with a smile, "Ah, Luca, so do I!"

"It is not the same thing, my dear," sighed Luca; "I want her for my wife."

"I shall have no wife; I shall marry myself to painting," said Raffaelle, with a little grave wise face looking out from under the golden roof of his fair hair. For he was never tired of watching his father painting the saints with their branch of palm on their ground of blue or of gold, or Maestro Benedetto making the dull clay glow with angels' wings and prophets' robes and holy legends told in color.

Now, one day as Raffaelle was standing and looking thus at his favorite window in the potter's house, his friend the handsome, black-browed Luca, who was also standing there, did sigh so deeply and so deplorably that the child was startled from his dreams.

"Good Luca, what ails you?" he murmured, winding his arms about the young man's knees.

"Oh, 'Faello!" mourned the apprentice, woefully. "Here is such a chance to win the hand of Pacifica if only I had talent,—such talent as that Giorgio of Gubbio has! If the good Lord had only gifted me with a master's skill, instead of all this bodily strength

and sinew, like a wild hog of the woods, which avails me nothing here!"

"What chance is it?" asked Raffaelle, "and what is there new about Pacifica? She told me nothing, and I was with her an hour."

"Dear simple one, she knows nothing of it," said Luca, heaving another tremendous sigh from his heart's deepest depths. "You must know that a new order has come in this very forenoon from the duke; he wishes a dish and a jar of the very finest and firmest majolica to be painted with the story of Esther, and made ready in three months from this date, to then go as his gifts to his cousins of Gonzaga. He has ordered that no cost be spared in the work, but that the painting thereof be of the best that can be produced, and the prize he will give is fifty scudi. Now, Maestro Benedetto, having known some time, it seems, of this order, has had made in readiness several large oval dishes and beautiful big-bellied jars: he gives one of each to each of his pupils,—to myself, to Berengario, to Tito, and Zenone. The master is sorely distraught that his eyesight permits him not himself to execute the duke's commands; but it is no secret that should one of us be so fortunate as to win the duke's approbation, the painter who does so shall become his partner here and shall have the hand of Pacifica. Some say that he has only put forth this promise as a stimulus to get the best work done of which his bottega is capable; but I know Maestro Benedetto too well to deem him guilty of any such evasion. What he has said he will carry out; if the vase and the dish win the duke's praise, they will also win Pacifica. Now you see, 'Faello mine, why I

am so bitterly sad of heart, for I am a good craftsman enough at the wheel and the furnace, and I like not ill the handling and the moulding of the clay, but at the painting of the clay I am but a tyro, and Berengario or even the little Zenone will beat me; of that I am sure."

Raffaelle heard all this in silence, leaning his elbows on his friend's knee, and his chin on the palms of his own hands. He knew that the other pupils were better painters by far than his Luca, though not one of them was such a good-hearted or noble-looking youth, and for none of them did the maiden Pacifica care.

"How long a time is given for the jar and the dish to be ready?" he asked, at length.

"Three months, my dear," said Luca, with a sigh sadder than ever. "But if it were three years, what difference would it make? You cannot cudgel the divine grace of art into a man with blows as you cudgel speed into a mule, and I shall be a dolt at the end of the time as I am now. What said your good father to me but yesternight?—and he *is* good to me and does not despise me. He said, 'Luca, my son, it is of no more avail for you to sigh for Pacifica than for the moon. Were she mine I would give her to you, for you have a heart of gold, but Signor Benedetto will not; for never, I fear me, will you be able to decorate anything more than an apothecary's mortar or a barber's basin. If I hurt you, take it not ill; I mean kindness, and were I a stalwart youth like you I would go try my fortunes in the Free Companies in France or Spain, or down in Rome, for you are made for a soldier.' That was the best even your father could say for me, 'Faello."

"But Pacifica," said the child,—"Pacifica would not wish you to join the Free Companies?"

"God knows," said Luca, hopelessly. "Perhaps she would not care."

"I am sure she would," said Raffaelle, "for she does love you, Luca, though she cannot say so, being but a girl, and Signor Benedetto against you. But that red-cap you tamed for her, how she loves it, how she caresses it, and half is for you, Luca, half for the bird!"

Luca kissed him.

But the tears rolled down the poor youth's face, for he was much in earnest and filled with despair.

"Even if she did, if she do," he murmured, hopelessly, "she never will let me know it, since her father forbids a thought of me; and now here is this trial of skill at the duke's order come to make things worse, and if that swaggering Berengario of Fano win her, then truly will I join the free lances and pray heaven send me swift shrive and shroud."

Raffaelle was very pensive for a while; then he raised his head and said,—

"I have thought of something, Luca. But I do not know whether you will let me try it."

"You angel child! What would your old Luca deny to you? But as for helping me, my dear, put that thought out of your little mind forever, for no one can help me, 'Faello, not the saints themselves, since I was born a dolt!"

Raffaelle kissed him, and said, "Now listen!"

A few days later Signor Benedetto informed his pupils in ceremonious audience of the duke's command and of his own intentions; he did not pronounce his

daughter's name to the youths, but he spoke in terms that were clear enough to assure them that whoever had the good fortune and high merit to gain the duke's choice of his pottery should have the honor of becoming associate in his own famous bottega. Now, it had been known in Urbino ever since Pacifica had gone to her first communion that whoever pleased her father well enough to become his partner would have also to please her as her husband. Not much attention was given to maidens' wishes in those times, and no one thought the master-potter either unjust or cruel in thus suiting himself before he suited his daughter. And what made the hearts of all the young men quake and sink the lowest was the fact that Signor Benedetto offered the competition not only to his own apprentices but to any native of the duchy of Urbino. For who could tell what hero might not step forth from obscurity and gain the great prize of this fair hand of Pacifica's? And with her hand would go many a broad gold ducat, and heritage of the wide old gray stone house, and many an old jewel and old brocade that were kept there in dusky sweet-smelling cabinets, and also more than one good piece of land, smiling with corn and fruit-trees, outside the gates in the lower pastures to the westward.

Luca, indeed, never thought of these things, but the other three pupils did, and other youths as well. Had it not been for the limitation as to birth within the duchy, many a gallant young painter from the other side of the Apennines, many a lusty *vasalino* or *boccalino* from the workshops of fair Florence herself, or from the Lombard cities, might have travelled there

in hot haste as fast as horses could carry them, and come to paint the clay for the sake of so precious a recompense. But Urbino men they had to be; and poor Luca, who was so full of despair that he could almost have thrown himself headlong from the rocks, was thankful to destiny for even so much slender mercy as this,—that the number of his rivals was limited.

"Had I been you," Giovanni Sanzia ventured once to say respectfully to Signor Benedetto, "I think I should have picked out for my son-in-law the best youth that I knew, not the best painter; for be it said in all reverence, my friend, the greatest artist is not always the truest man, and by the hearthstone humble virtues have sometimes high claim."

Then Signor Benedetto had set his stern face like a flint, knowing very well what youth Messer Giovanni would have liked to name to him.

"I have need of a good artist in my bottega to keep up its fame," he had said, stiffly. "My vision is not what it was, and I should be loath to see Urbino ware fall back, whilst Pesaro and Gubbio and Castel-Durante gain ground every day. Pacifica must pay the penalty, if penalty there be, for being the daughter of a great artist."

Mirthful, keen-witted Sanzio smiled to himself, and went his way in silence; for he who loved Andrea Mantegna did not bow down in homage before the old master-potter's estimation of himself, which was in truth somewhat overweening in its vanity.

"Poor Pacifica!" he thought: "if only my 'Faello were but some decade older!"

He, who could not foresee the future, the splendid, wondrous, unequalled future that awaited his young son, wished nothing better for him than a peaceful painter's life here in old Urbino, under the friendly shadow of the Montefeltro's palace-walls.

Meanwhile, where think you was Raffaelle? Half the day, or all the day, and every day whenever he could? Where think you was he? Well, in the attic of Luca, before a bowl and a dish almost as big as himself. The attic was a breezy, naked place, underneath the arches supporting the roof of Maestro Benedetto's dwelling. Each pupil had one of these garrets to himself,—a rare boon, for which Luca came to be very thankful, for without it he could not have sheltered his angel; and the secret that Raffaelle had whispered to him that day of the first conference had been, "Let *me* try and paint it!"

For a long time Luca had been afraid to comply, had only forborne indeed from utter laughter at the idea from his love and reverence for the little speaker. Baby Sanzio, who was only just seven years old as the April tulips reddened the corn, painting a majolica dish and vase to go to the Gonzaga of Mantua! The good fellow could scarcely restrain his shouts of mirth at the audacious fancy; and nothing had kept him grave but the sight of that most serious face of Raffaelle, looking up to his with serene, sublime self-confidence, nay, perhaps, rather, confidence in heaven and in heaven's gifts.

"Let me try!" said the child a hundred times. He would tell no one, only Luca would know; and if he failed—well, there would only be the spoiled pottery

to pay for, and had he not two whole ducats that the duke had given him when the court had come to behold his father's designs for the altar-frescoes at San Dominico di Cagli?

So utterly in earnest was he, and so intense and blank was Luca's absolute despair, that the young man had in turn given way to his entreaties. "Never can I do aught," he thought, bitterly, looking at his own clumsy designs. "And sometimes by the help of cherubs the saints work miracles."

"It will be no miracle," said Raffaelle, hearing him murmur this: "it will be myself, and that which the dear God has put into me."

From that hour Luca let him do what he would, and through all these lovely early summer days the child came and shut himself up in the garret, and studied, and thought, and worked, and knitted his pretty fair brows, and smiled in tranquil satisfaction, according to the mood he was in and the progress of his labors.

Giovanni Sanzio went away at that time to paint an altar-piece over at Città di Castello, and his little son for once was glad he was absent. Messer Giovanni would surely have remarked the long and frequent visits of Raffaelle to the attic, and would, in all likelihood, have obliged him to pore over his Latin or to take exercise in the open fields; but his mother said nothing, content that he should be amused and safe, and knowing well that Pacifica loved him and would let him come to no harm under her roof. Pacifica herself did wonder that he deserted her so perpetually for the garret. But one day when she questioned him the sweet-faced rogue clung to her and murmured, "Oh

Pacifica, I do want Luca to win you, because he loves you so; and I do love you both!" And she grew pale, and answered him, "Ah, dear, if he could!" and then said never a word more, but went to her distaff; and Raffaelle saw great tears fall off her lashes down among the flax.

She thought he went to the attic to watch how Luca painted, and loved him more than ever for that, but knew in the hopelessness of her heart—as Luca also knew it in his—that the good and gallant youth would never be able to create anything that would go as the duke's gifts to the Gonzaga of Mantua. And she did care for Luca! She had spoken to him but rarely indeed, yet passing in and out of the same doors, and going to the same church offices, and dwelling always beneath the same roof, he had found means of late for a word, a flower, a serenade. And he was so handsome and so brave, and so gentle, too, and so full of deference. Poor Pacifica cared not in the least whether he could paint or not. He could have made her happy.

In the attic Raffaelle passed the most anxious hours of all his sunny little life. He would not allow Luca even to look at what he did. He barred the door and worked; when he went away he locked his work up in a wardrobe. The swallows came in and out of the unglazed window, and fluttered all around him; the morning sunbeams came in too, and made a nimbus round his golden head, like that which his father gilded above the heads of saints. Raffaelle worked on, not looking off, though clang of trumpet, or fanfare of cymbal, often told him there was much going on worth

looking at down below. He was only seven years old, but he labored as earnestly as if he were a man grown, his little rosy fingers gripping that pencil which was to make him in life and death famous as kings are not famous, and let his tender body lie in its last sleep in the Pantheon of Rome.

He had covered hundreds of sheets with designs before he had succeeded in getting embodied the ideas that haunted him. When he had pleased himself at last, he set to work to transfer his imaginations to the clay in color in the subtile luminous metallic enamel that characterizes Urbino majolica.

Ah, how glad he was now that his father had let him draw from the time he was two years old, and that of late Messer Benedetto had shown him something of the mysteries of painting on biscuit and producing the metallic lustre which was the especial glory of the pottery of the duchy!

How glad he was, and how his little heart bounded and seemed to sing in this his first enjoyment of the joyous liberties and powers of creative work!

A well-known writer has said that genius is the power of taking pains; he should have said rather that genius *has* this power also, but that first and foremost it possesses the power of spontaneous and exquisite production without effort and with delight.

Luca looked at him (not at his work, for the child had made him promise not to do so) and began to marvel at his absorption, his intentness, the evident facility with which he worked: the little figure, leaning over the great dish on the bare board of the table, with the oval opening of the window and the blue sky

beyond it, began to grow sacred to him with more than the sanctity of childhood. Raffaelle's face grew very serious, too, and lost its color, and his large hazel eyes looked very big and grave and dark.

"Perhaps Signor Giovanni will be angry with me if ever he know," thought poor Luca; but it was too late to alter anything now. The child Sanzio had become his master.

So Raffaelle, unknown to any one else, worked on and on there in the attic while the tulips bloomed and withered, and the honeysuckle was in flower in the hedges, and the wheat and barley were being cut in the quiet fields lying far down below in the sunshine. For midsummer was come; the three months all but a week had passed by. It was known that every one was ready to compete for the duke's choice.

One afternoon Raffaelle took Luca by the hand and said to him, "Come."

He led the young man up to the table, beneath the unglazed window, where he had passed so many of these ninety days of the spring and summer.

Luca gave a great cry, and stood gazing, gazing, gazing. Then he fell on his knees and embraced the little feet of the child: it was the first homage that he, whose life became one beautiful song of praise, received from man.

"Dear Luca," he said, softly, "do not do that. If it be indeed good, let us thank God."

What his friend saw were the great oval dish and the great jar or vase standing with the sunbeams full upon them, and the brushes and the tools and the colors all strewn around. And they shone with lustrous

opaline hues and wondrous flame-like glories and gleaming iridescence, like melted jewels, and there were all manner of graceful symbols and classic designs wrought upon them; and their borders were garlanded with cherubs and flowers, bearing the arms of Montefeltro, and the landscapes were the tender, homely landscapes round about Urbino; and the mountains had the solemn radiance that the Apennines wore at evening-time, and amidst the figures there was one supreme, white-robed, golden-crowned Esther, to whom the child painter had given the face of Pacifica. And this wondrous creation, wrought by a baby's hand, had safely and secretly passed the ordeal of the furnace, and had come forth without spot or flaw.

Luca ceased not from kneeling at the feet of Raffaelle, as ever since has kneeled the world.

"Oh, wondrous boy! Oh, angel sent unto men!" sighed the poor 'prentice, as he gazed; and his heart was so full that he burst into tears.

"Let us thank God," said little Raffaelle, again; and he joined his small hands that had wrought this miracle, and said his Laus Domini.

When the precious jar and the great platter were removed to the wardrobe and shut up in safety behind the steel wards of the locker, Luca said, timidly, feeling twenty years in age behind the wisdom of this divine child, "But, dearest boy, I do not see how your marvellous and most exquisite accomplishment can advantage me. Even if you would allow it to pass as mine, I could not accept such a thing: it would be a fraud, a shame: not even to win Pacifica could I consent."

"Be not so hasty, good friend," said Raffaelle.

"Wait just a little longer yet and see. I have my own idea. Do trust in me."

"Heaven speaks in you, that I believe," said Luca, humbly.

Raffaelle answered not, but ran down-stairs, and passing Pacifica, threw his arms about her in more than his usual affectionate caresses.

"Pacifica, be of good heart," he murmured, and would not be questioned, but ran homeward to his mother.

"Can it be that Luca has done well," thought Pacifica; but she feared the child's wishes had outrun his wisdom. He could not be any judge, a child of seven years, even though he were the son of that good and honest painter and poet, Giovanni Sanzio.

The next morning was midsummer day. Now, the pottery was all to be placed on this forenoon in the bottega of Signor Benedetto; and the Duke Guidobaldo was then to come and make his choice from amidst them; and the master-potter, a little because he was a courtier, and more because he liked to affect a mighty indifference and to show he had no favoritism, had declared that he would not himself see the competing works of art until the eyes of the Lord of Montefeltro also fell upon them.

As for Pacifica, she had locked herself in her chamber, alone with her intense agitation. The young men were swaggering about, and taunting each other, and boasting. Luca alone sat apart, thrumming an old lute. Giovanni Sanzio, who had ridden home at evening from Città di Castello, came in from his own house and put his hand on the youth's shoulder.

"I hear the Pesaro men have brought fine things. Take courage, my lad. Maybe we can entreat the duke to dissuade Pacifica's father from this tyrannous disposal of her hand."

Luca shook his head wearily.

There would be one beautiful thing there, indeed, he knew; but what use would that be to him?

"The child—the child——" he stammered, and then remembered that he must not disclose Raffaelle's secret.

"My child?" said Signor Giovanni. "Oh, he will be here; he will be sure to be here: wherever there is a painted thing to be seen, there always, be sure, is Raffaelle."

Then the good man sauntered within from the loggia, to exchange salutations with Ser Benedetto, who, in a suit of fine crimson with doublet of sad-colored velvet, was standing ready to advance bare-headed into the street as soon as the hoofs of the duke's charger should strike on the stones.

"You must be anxious in your thoughts," said Signor Giovanni to him. "They say a youth from Pesaro brings something fine: if you should find yourself bound to take a stranger into your work-room and your home——"

"If he be a man of genius he will be welcome," answered Messer Ronconi, pompously. "Be he of Pesaro, or of Fano, or of Castel-Durante, I go not back from my word: I keep my word, to my own hindrance even, ever."

"Let us hope it will bring you only joy and triumph here," said his neighbor, who knew him to be an honest

man and a true, if over-obstinate and too vain of his own place in Urbino.

"Our lord the duke!" shouted the people standing in the street; and Ser Benedetto walked out with stately tread to receive the honor of his master's visit to his bottega.

Raffaelle slipped noiselessly up to his father's side, and slid his little hand into Sanzio's.

"You are not surely afraid of our good Guidobaldo!" said his father, with a laugh and some little surprise, for Raffaelle was very pale, and his lower lip trembled a little.

"No," said the child, simply.

The young duke and his court came riding down the street, and paused before the old stone house of the master-potter,—splendid gentlemen, though only in their morning apparel, with noble Barbary steeds fretting under them, and little pages and liveried varlets about their steps. Usually, unless he went hunting or on a visit to some noble, Guidobaldo, like his father, walked about Urbino like any one of his citizens; but he knew the pompous and somewhat vainglorious temper of Messer Benedetto, and good-naturedly was willing to humor its harmless vanities. Bowing to the ground, the master-potter led the way, walking backward into his bottega; the courtiers followed their prince; Giovanni Sanzio with his little son and a few other privileged persons went in also at due distance. At the farther end of the workshop stood the pupils and the artists from Pesaro and other places in the duchy whose works were there in competition. In all there were some ten competitors: poor Luca, who had set

his own work on the table with the rest as he was obliged to do, stood hindmost of all, shrinking back, to hide his misery, into the deepest shadow of the deep-bayed latticed window.

On the narrow deal benches that served as tables on working-days to the pottery-painters were ranged the dishes and the jars, with a number attached to each,—no name to any, because Signor Benedetto was resolute to prove his own absolute disinterestedness in the matter of choice: he wished for the best artist. Prince Guidobaldo, doffing his plumed cap courteously, walked down the long room and examined each production in its turn. On the whole, the collection made a brave display of majolica, though he was perhaps a little disappointed at the result in each individual case, for he had wanted something out of the common run and absolutely perfect. Still, with fair words he complimented Signor Benedetto on the brave show, and only before the work of poor Luca was he entirely silent, since indeed silence was the greatest kindness he could show to it: the drawing was bold and regular, but the coloring was hopelessly crude, glaring, and ill-disposed.

At last, before a vase and a dish that stood modestly at the very farthest end of the deal bench, the duke gave a sudden exclamation of delight, and Signor Benedetto grew crimson with pleasure and surprise, and Giovanni Sanzio pressed a little nearer and tried to see over the shoulders of the gentlemen of the court, feeling sure that something rare and beautiful must have called forth that cry of wonder from the Lord of Montefeltro, and having seen at a glance

that for his poor friend Luca there was no sort of hope.

"This is beyond all comparison," said Guidobaldo, taking the great oval dish up reverently in his hands. "Maestro Benedetto, I do felicitate you indeed that you should possess such a pupil. He will be a glory to our beloved Urbino."

"It is indeed most excellent work, my lord duke," said the master-potter, who was trembling with surprise and dared not show all the astonishment and emotion that he felt at the discovery of so exquisite a creation in his bottega. "It must be," he added, for he was a very honest man, "the work of one of the lads of Pesaro or Castel-Durante. I have no such craftsman in my workshop. It is beautiful exceedingly!"

"It is worth its weight in gold!" said the prince, sharing his emotion. "Look, gentlemen—look! Will not the fame of Urbino be borne beyond the Apennines and Alps?"

Thus summoned, the court and the citizens came to look, and averred that truly never in Urbino had they seen such painting on majolica.

"But whose is it?" said Guidobaldo, impatiently, casting his eyes over the gathered group in the background of apprentices and artists. "Maestro Benedetto, I pray you, the name of the artist; I pray you, quick!"

"It is marked number eleven, my lord," answered the master-potter. "Ho, you who reply to that number, stand out and give your name. My lord duke has chosen your work. Ho, there! do you hear me?"

But not one of the group moved. The young men

looked from one to another. Who was this nameless rival? There were but ten of themselves.

"Ho, there!" repeated Signor Benedetto, getting angry. "Cannot you find a tongue, I say? Who has wrought this work? Silence is but insolence to his highness and to me!"

Then the child Sanzio loosened his little hand from his father's hold, and went forward, and stood before the master-potter.

"I painted it," he said, with a pleased smile: "I, Raffaelle."

Can you not fancy, without telling, the confusion, the wonder, the rapture, the incredulity, the questions, the wild ecstasy of praise, that followed on the discovery of the child artist? Only the presence of Guidobaldo kept it in anything like decent quietude, and even he, all duke though he was, felt his eyes wet and felt his heart swell; for he himself was childless, and for the joy that Giovanni Sanzio felt that day he would have given his patrimony and duchy.

He took a jewel hung on a gold chain from his own breast and threw it over Raffaelle's shoulders.

"There is your first guerdon," he said: "you will have many, O wondrous child, who shall live when we are dust!"

Raffaelle, who himself was all the while quite tranquil and unmoved, kissed the duke's hand with sweetest grace, then turned to his own father.

"It is true I have won my lord duke's prize?"

"Quite true, my angel!" said Giovanni Sanzio, with tremulous voice.

Raffaelle looked up at Maestro Benedetto.

"Then I claim the hand of Pacifica!"

There was a smile on all the faces round, even on the darker countenances of the vanquished painters.

"Oh, would indeed you were of age to be my son by marriage, as you are the son of my heart!" murmured Signor Benedetto. "Dear and marvellous child, you are but jesting, I know. Tell me what it is indeed that you would have. I could deny you nothing; and truly it is you who are my master."

"I am your pupil," said Raffaelle, with that pretty serious smile of his, his little fingers playing with the ducal jewel. "I could never have painted that majolica yonder had you not taught me the secrets and management of your colors. Now, dear maestro mine, and you, O my lord duke, do hear me! I by the terms of the contest have won the hand of Pacifica and the right of association with Messer Ronconi. I take these rights and I give them over to my dear friend Luca of Fano, because he is the honestest man in all the world, and does honor Signor Benedetto and love Pacifica as no other can do so well, and Pacifica loves him; and my lord duke will say that thus all will be well."

So with the grave innocent audacity of a child he spoke,—this seven-year-old painter who was greater than any there.

Signor Benedetto stood mute, sombre, agitated. Luca had sprung forward and dropped on one knee: he was as pale as ashes. Raffaelle looked at him with a smile.

"My lord duke," he said, with his little gentle smile, "you have chosen my work; defend me in my rights."

"Listen to the voice of an angel, my good Ben-

edetto; heaven speaks by him," said Guidobaldo, gravely, laying his hand on the arm of his master-potter.

Harsh Signor Benedetto burst into tears.

"I can refuse him nothing," he said, with a sob. "He will give such glory unto Urbino as never the world hath seen!"

"And call down this fair Pacifica whom Raffaelle has won," said the sovereign of the duchy, "and I will give her myself as her dower as many gold pieces as we can cram into this famous vase. An honest youth who loves her and whom she loves,—what better can you do, Benedetto? Young man, rise up and be happy. An angel has descended on earth this day for you."

But Luca heard not: he was still kneeling at the feet of Raffaelle, where the world has knelt ever since.

"LET US REST A LITTLE."

IN THE APPLE-COUNTRY.

It was in one of the green lanes of South Devonshire that Gemma, being quite tired out, threw herself down on the daisied grass and said to her grandfather,—

"Nonno, let us rest a little and eat." Her grandfather said to her,—

"*Carina mia,* I would eat gladly, but we have nothing to eat. The satchel is empty."

Gemma, lying chest downward on the turf, sighed, and buried her hands in her abundant curls and cooled her forehead on the damp grass. She was just thirteen years old, and she was so pretty that she made the heart of the old grandfather ache often when he looked at her and thought that she would most likely soon be left alone in the world, for her little brother Bindo could not be said to count for anything, being only ten years old. Gemma was very lovely indeed, being tall and lithe and gay, and full of grace, and having a beautiful changeable face, all light and color. But she was only thirteen, and all she could do to get her livelihood was to dance the *saltarello* and the *tarantella.* She and her brother danced, which they did very prettily, and the old man whom they called Nonno told fortunes and performed some simple conjuring tricks, and these were all bad trades as times went, for nowadays nobody

amuses himself with simple things, and the rural folk have grown as sharp and as serious as the city people, which to my thinking is a very great loss to the world, for merry people are generally kind people, and contented people are easily governed, and have no appetites for politics and philosophies and the like indigestible things.

Nonno and Gemma and Bindo were merry enough even on empty stomachs. The old man was as simple as a duck, and as gentle as a rabbit, and was rather more of a child than either of the children. Bindo was a little, round, playful, gleeful thing, like a little field-mouse, and Gemma was as gay as a lark, though she had to bear the burden of the only brains that there were in the family.

They were little Neapolitans; they had been born in a little cabin on the sunny shore facing Ischia, and in their infancy had tumbled about naked and glad as young dolphins in the bright blue waters. Then their parents had died,—their father at sea, their mother of fever,—and left them to the care of Nonno; Nonno, who was very old, so old that they thought he must have been made almost before the world itself, and who, after having been a showman of puppets to divert the poorest classes all his life, was so very poor himself then that he could hardly scrape enough together to get a little drink of thin wine and an inch or two of polenta. Being so very poor, he was seduced into accepting an engagement for himself and the children with a wicked man whose business it was in life to decoy poor little Italians and make money out of them in foreign lands. Nonno was so good and simple himself that he thought every-

body was as harmless as he was, and his grief and amazement were very great when on reaching the English shores with this wicked man he found that the wicked man meant to give him the slip altogether and go off with the two children. By a mere hazard, Nonno, whose name was Epifania Santo (a droll name, but he himself had been a foundling), was able to defeat the wicked man so far that he got out of his clutches and took his grandchildren with him. But there they all three were in England, with no money at all, and nothing on earth but a few puppets, and a conjurer's box of playthings, and the stilts on which the wicked man had had the children taught to walk. And in England they had now been four years, remaining there chiefly because they had no notion how to get home again, and partly because Nonno had such a great terror of the sea. He had suffered so much on the long voyage into which he had been entrapped from Naples, round by the Bay of Biscay up the Bristol Channel, that he would sooner have died there and then than have set foot again on board a sea-going vessel. So in England they had stayed, wandering about and picking up a few pence in villages and towns, and clinging together tenderly, and being very often hungry, cold, tired, roofless, but yet being all the while happy.

Sometimes, too, they fared well: the children's brilliant uncommon beauty and pretty foreign accent often touched country-people's hearts, and sometimes they would get bed and board at homely farm-houses high on lonely hills, or be made welcome without payment in little wayside inns. They had kept to the south-

west part of the kingdom, never being able to afford other means of locomotion than their own feet, and the farthest distance they had ever compassed had been this far-south country-side, where the green woods and pastures roll down to the broad estuaries of Exe and Dart. This green, wet, shadowy country always seemed strange to the children; for a long while they thought it was always evening in England. They could remember the long sunshiny years at home, and the radiant air, and the blue, clear sky, and the sea that seemed always laughing. They could never forget it indeed, and when they were together they never talked of anything else: only the cactus-fruit and the green and black figs, the red tomatoes and the rough pomegranates, and the big balls of gold to be had in the orange woods just for the plucking; the boats with the pretty striped sails, and the villas with the marbles and the palms, and the islands all aglow in the sunset, and the distance you could see looking away, away, away into the immeasurable azure of the air. Oh, yes, they remembered it all, and at night they would weep for it, the old man's slow salt tears mingling with the passionate rain of the childish eyes. Here it was green and pretty in its own way, but all so dark, so wet, so misty!

"When I try to see, there is a white wall of shadow, —I think it is shadow; perhaps it is fog, but it is always there," said Gemma. "At home one looks, and looks, and looks; there is no end to it."

Gemma longed sorely to go home; she had not minded the sea at all. Bindo, like Nonno, had been very ill on the voyage, and cried even now whenever

he saw a ship, for fear he should be going in it. Bindo was sadly babyish for ten years old; to make amends, his sister was almost a woman at thirteen.

They ought now to have been all three serious and alarmed, for Nonno's satchel had not a penny in it, nor a crust, and they were all hungry, for it was noonday. But instead of being miserable they joked, and laughed, and kissed each other, as thousands of their country-folks at home with equally empty stomachs were doing, lying on sunny moles, or marble-strewn benches, or thymy turf under ilex shadows. But then in our dear Italy there is always the sun, the light, the air that kisses and feeds and sends to soft sleep her children, and Gemma and her brother and grandfather were in a wet English lane, with the clouds hurrying up over the distant hills by Dartmoor, and the raindrops still hanging to the great elm-boughs overhead.

Yet they were merry, and sang snatches of Neapolitan songs, and took no thought for the morrow. They were not far off Dartmouth, and they meant to go into the quaint old town by market-day, and the Dart fisher- and boating-folk were always kind to them. If they were hungry now they would eat to-morrow.

Suddenly, however, Nonno grew thoughtful as he looked at Gemma, lying face downward on the wet grass, her sandalled feet in air, a dragon-fly fluttering above her head.

"What would you do if I were to die, my *piccicotta?*" said the poor old man, all at once remembering he was nigh eighty years old. Gemma raised herself, and said nothing. Her eyes, which were very beautiful eyes, grew sad and moist.

"I would take care of Bindo, Nonno," she answered, at last. "Do not be afraid of that."

"But how? It is easy to say. But how?"

"I suppose I could dance at theatres," said Gemma, after reflection. Nonno shook his head.

"For the theatres you would need to dance differently: it is all spinning, craning, drilling there; you dance, my child, as a flower in the wind. The theatres do not care for that."

"Then I do not know," said Gemma. "But something I would do. Bindo should not suffer."

"You are a good child," said the old man, tenderly. She sank down again on the grass.

"Do not think of dying, Nonno," she said. "It is all so dark where death is."

"Not when one gets to the saints," said the simple old man. He always fancied Paradise just like Amalfi, —his own Amalfi, where long ago, so long ago, he had run and leaped, a merry naked boy, in the azure waves, and caught the glittering sea-mouse and the pink column of the gemmia in his hands. Paradise would be just like Amalfi; the promise of it consoled him as he trotted on tired limbs along the wet gravel of English market-roads, or meekly bore the noisy horse-play of English village crowds.

The rain had ceased, and the sun was shining a little in a drowsy half-hearted way, as if it were but half awake even at mid-day. There were big hedges on either side of the lane, and broad strips of turf. These lanes are almost all that is left of the rural and leafy old England of Seventeen Hundred; and they are beautiful in their own way when midsummer crowds

them with flowers, and in spring when their palm-willows blossom, and in autumn when their hazel-coppices are brown with nuts, and in winter when their holly and ivy clamber high, and their fine trees make a tracery of bare boughs delicate as the net-work of lace against the gray skies.

On the other side of the hedge, to their right, there was a large corn-field; it was now the time when wheat is ripe in England, and the men and women who were reaping it were sitting, resting, drinking their cider and eating their noonday bread and bacon. Bindo watched them through a hole in the hedge, and began to cry.

"It makes me hungrier to see them eat!" he said, with a sob. Gemma sprang to her feet.

"Do not cry so, my Bindo," she said, with a tender voice: "I will ask them to give you some."

She thrust her lithe body through the gap, and walked boldly across the field,—a strange figure for an English corn-field, with her short white skirt, and her red bodice, and her striped sash of many colors, and her little coral ear-rings in her ears; she was bareheaded, and her dusky gold hair, the hair that the old painters loved, was coiled rope-like all around her small head.

"My little brother is hungry: will you be so very gentle and give us a little bread?" she said, in her pretty accent, which robbed the English tongue of all its gutturals and clothed it in a sweetness not its own. She was not fond of begging, being proud, and she colored very much as she said it.

The reapers stared, then grinned, gaped once or twice, and then stretched big brown hands out to her with goodly portions of food, and one added a mug of cider.

"I do thank you so much," she said, with a smile that was like a sunbeam. "The drink I take not, for Nonno has no love of it; but for the bread I pray may San Martino bless you!"

Then she courtesied to them, as nature and nobody else had taught her to do, and ran away, fleet as a lapwing, with her treasure.

"'Tis that dancing-girl of the Popish country," said the men one to another, and added that if the master caught her in his lane 'twould be the worse for her, for he couldna abide tramps and vagabon's. But Gemma, who knew nothing of that, was sharing her spoils with glee, and breaking the small bit of bread she allowed to herself with teeth as white as a dog's.

"The way to Dartmouth will not now seem so long," she said, and Bindo nodded his head with a mouth quite full of good brown bread and fat bacon.

"How much do they love *carne secca* here!" said Nonno, with a sigh, thinking of the long coils of macaroni, the lovely little fried fish, the oil, the garlic, the black beans, that he never saw now, alas, alas! "The land is fat, but the people they know not how to live," he added, with a sigh. "A people without wine,—what should they know?"

"They make good bread," said Gemma, with her ivory teeth in a crust.

Meantime, the person who owned the lane was coming out into the fields to see how his men got on with their work. His house stood near, hidden in trees on a bend of the Exe. He was rich, young, prosperous, and handsome; he was also generous and charitable; but he was a magistrate, and he hated

strollers. By name he was known as Philip Carey; his people had been squires here for many generations; he called himself a yeoman, and was as proud as if he were a prince.

As fates would have it, he rode down the lane now on his gray horse, and when he saw the group of Nonno and Gemma and Bindo, with their bags and bales and bundles, scattered about on the turf of his lane, his gray eyes grew ominously dark.

"Who gave you leave to come here?" he asked, sternly enough, as he reined up his horse.

Nonno looked up smiling, and stood up and bowed with grace and ease. The English tongue he had never been able to master: he glanced at Gemma to bid her answer.

"We were only resting, Excellenza," said she, boldly. "It is a public road."

"It is not a public road," said the owner of it. "And if it were, you would have no right to cumber it. Are you strollers?"

"Strollers?" repeated Gemma: she did not understand the word.

"Tramps? Are you tramps?"

"We are artists," said Gemma.

"What do you do for your living?" asked her judge.

"We dance," she answered, "and Nonno yonder he does conjuring tricks, and sometimes has a little lotto, but that is only when we have got a little money: we have none now."

"A lottery!" exclaimed Mr. Carey, whose face grew very stern. "You are mere idle vagabonds, then, when you are not worse. Do you live by your wits?"

"We dance," said Gemma, again.

"Dance! Can you read and write?"

"Oh, no."

"How old are you?"

"I am thirteen, Bindo is ten, Nonno is—is—is, oh, as old as the world."

"Is he your grandfather?"

"That is what you say in English. We say Nonno."

"Cannot he speak English?"

"No: he has lost his teeth, and it is so hard, is your English."

"You are an impudent girl."

Gemma smiled her beautiful shining smile, as if he had paid her an admirable compliment.

She knew the rider by sight very well, though he did not know her. His housekeeper had whipped Bindo for getting into her poultry-house and putting two eggs in his pocket, and his gardener one day had turned them both out of his orchards as trespassers, so that he and his residence of Carey's Honor were already scored with black in the tablets of the children's memories.

That he was a handsome young man, with a grave and pensive face and a very sweet smile, when he did smile, which was rarely, did not affect Gemma's dislike to him: she was too young to be impressed by good looks. Philip Carey was not touched by the beauty of her either: he scarcely saw that she was pretty, he was so angry with her for what seemed to him her saucy answers.

"Why are you not dressed like a Christian?" he said, somewhat irrelevantly.

"I am a Christian," said Gemma, angry in her turn, —"a better Christian than you are. And what is my dress to you? You do not buy it."

"It is immodest."

"Oh! oh!" cried Gemma, with a flame-like lightning in her eyes; and like lightning she leaped up on to the saddle and gave the astonished gentleman a sounding box on both ears.

He was so utterly astonished that he had no time to protect himself, and his horse, which was utterly astonished too, began to plunge and rear and kick, and fully occupied him, whilst a guffaw from the field beyond added to his rage by telling him that his reapers had witnessed his discomfiture.

Gemma had leaped to the ground as swiftly as she had leaped to the saddle, and, whilst the horse was rearing and plunging, had caught up their bag and baggage, had pushed and pulled her brother and her grandfather before her, and had flown down the lane and out of sight before Philip Carey had reduced his steed to any semblance of reason. His ears tingled and his pride was bitterly incensed, yet he could not help laughing at himself.

"The little tigress!" he thought, as he endeavored to soothe his fretting and wheeling beast, which was young and only half broken.

When he rode in at last by an open gate among his reapers the men were all too afraid of him not to wear very grave faces, as though they had seen nothing. Every one was afraid of Philip Carey except his dogs, which shows that he had a good heart under a stern manner, for dogs never make mistakes as men do.

He remained about his fields all the day, and went home to a solitary dinner. He had no living relative. He was rather more of a scholar than a farmer, and liked his loneliness. His old house, which was called Carey's Honor ever since the days of the Tudors, was a rambling comfortable building, set amidst green lawn, huge hew- and oak-trees, and meadows that stretched downward to the broad Dart water. It was all within and without as it had been in the days of the Armada, and the ivy that covered it was as old as the brass dogs in the big chimney-places. Many men with such a possession would have been restless to reach a higher rank, but Philip Carey was a grave young man, of refined and severe taste and simple habits. He loved his home, and was content with it, and wanted nothing of the world.

This evening he did not feel so contented as usual: his ears seemed still to tingle from those blows at the hand of a child. He liked old Greek and Latin authors, and when the day was done liked to sit and read of a summer evening under the biggest yew upon his lawn, with the lowing of the cattle, the song of the nightingale, and the cries of the water-birds the only sounds upon the quiet air. But this evening his favorite philosophers said nothing to him: had Plato or any one of them ever had his ears boxed by a little fury of a strolling dancer?

The little fury, meanwhile, was dancing the *saltarello* with her brother before a crazy old wooden inn in Dartmouth,—dancing it as the girls do under the cork-trees in Sardinia, and under the spreading oaks of the Marches, and so pleasing the yokels of the river town

with her grace and fire and animation that the pence rolled in by scores into her tambourine, and the mistress of the poor little inn said to her, "Nay, my pretty, as you have gained them here you must spend them here, and it is market-day to-morrow."

Gemma was quite happy to have gained so much, and she got a modest little supper for Nonno, and as she shook down all her dark gold hair in the moonlight and looked on the water rippling away past the walls of the old castle she laughed out, though she was all alone, thinking of the grave gentleman on the gray horse, and murmured naughtily to herself, "I hope I did hurt him! Oh, I hope I hurt him!"

Then she knew she ought not to hope that, and kissed the Madonnina that hung at her throat, and asked the Holy Mother's pardon, and then laid herself down on the little hard bed and went as sound asleep as a flittermouse in winter-time.

The next day was market-day in the little sleepy Old-World town upon the Dart, where the ships and the boats go by on the gray sea and the brown river-water. There would be watermen and countrymen, both, in numbers, farmers and fisherfolk, millers and cider-merchants, peddlers and hucksters, and egg-wives and wagoners, and Nonno was early awakened by the children, who were eager to begin getting more pence with the sunrise: the pence when they *were* made had such a terrible knack of flying away again. Gemma believed that they grew wings like the butterflies, though she never could see them, and though she and Nonno kept such close watch and ward over them.

They made themselves as spruce as they could for

the day. Gemma had washed her white bodice and Bindo's white shirt, and, though the scarlet and the blue and the yellow had got stained and weather-worn, the clothes yet were picturesque, and with their curling hair, and their beautiful big black eyes, and their cheeks as warm and as soft as peaches, she and Bindo were a pretty sight as they bent and swayed and circled and moved, now so slowly, now so furiously, in the changes of the *saltarello*, whilst their grandfather played for them on a little wooden flute, and Gemma beat her tambourine high above her auburn head, and, as the music waxed faster and the dance wilder, sprang and whirled and leaped and bounded for all the world, the people said, like the jack-o'-lantern that flashes over the bogs of Dartmoor.

They danced, with pauses for rest between their dances, all the day long; and when they were so very tired that they could dance no more, Nonno began his simple tricks with his thimble and peas, his wooden cups, and his little tray full of cards. They were innocent tricks, and when he told fortunes by the cards (which Gemma expounded to whosoever would pay a penny to hear the future) he dealt out fate so handsomely that such a destiny was very cheap indeed at four farthings.

The country-folks were pleased and content to have a gilt coach and horses and all manner of good luck promised them over the cards, and the youths liked to look at pretty Gemma, who was so unlike the maidens they picked apples with, or sold pilchards to, in their green Devon; and so the day wore merrily on apace, and the afternoon sun was slanting towards its setting over the Cornish shores and Cornish seas far away to

the westward, when all in a moment there was a shout of "Police! Police!" and the good-humored crowd hustled together and made way, and two constables with wooden truncheons, saying never a word, marched up to the poor little tray-table, swept off it cards and coins and conjuring toys, and arrested poor old trembling Nonno in the sacred name of the Law!

Nonno began to scream a million words to a minute, but, alas! they were all Italian words, nobody under stood one of them. Bindo sobbed, and Gemma, standing a moment transfixed with horror, flew upon the constable who had taken her poor old grandfather and bit his arm till the blood spurted. Mad with pain, the constable seized her, not gently, and clutched Bindo by the collar with his other hand. There was no possibility of resistance; Gemma fought, indeed, like a little polecat, but the men were too strong for her; they soon took her away through the crowd on the same road that Nonno was taking peaceably, and when the crowd muttered a little at its play being thus spoiled, the constables only said, gruffly, "Get you out of the way, or ye'll be clapped in jail too, maybe; thimble-rigging, card-sharping, posturing, gambling, swindling,—why, this old dodger will have a month of treadmill if he have a day!"

And the crowd said among itself that to be sure the old fellow was a foreigner, it would not do to get into trouble about him, and most likely he only made believe to know the future; so left him to himself, and went to the alehouses and consoled themselves for his misfortunes in draughts of cider.

The two constables, meanwhile, consigned the old

man and his grandchildren to the lock-up: Nonno kept sighing and sobbing, and asking innumerable questions in his own tongue, and Bindo shrieked at the top of his voice as he was dragged along; Gemma alone, now that she was vanquished, was mute. Her lips were shut and silent, but her eyes spoke, darting out flames of fire as if Vesuvius itself were burning behind them. For four whole years they had been wandering about the southwest part of England, and had done no less and no more than they had done to-day, and never had they been told that it was wrong.

How could it be wrong to make a pea jump away from under a wooden cup, and promise a ploughman or a wagoner a coach and horses if it pleased him? For if Nonno did cheat a little, ever so little, poor old man, the children did not know it, and whatever Nonno did was always to them alike virtue and wisdom.

The constables were very angry with them; Gemma had bitten one of them as if she were a little wild-cat, and the old man seemed to them a sorry old rascal, living by his wits and his tricks and promising the yokels coaches-and-six to turn a penny. Foreigners are not favored by the rural police in England; and whether they have plaster casts, dancing bears, singing children, performing mice or monkeys, or only a few conjuring toys, like poor old Epifania Santo, it is all one to the rural police: down they go as members of the dangerous classes. If the market-folks wanted diversion, there were good, honest Punch and Judy generally to be seen on fair-days; and once or twice a

year, at the great cider or horse fairs, there came always a show, with dwarfs, and giants, and a calf with two heads: what more could any country population need in the way of entertainment?

Into the lock-up, accordingly, they put poor Nonno and his grandchildren, and shut and locked the door upon them.

It was now evening-time: there was clean straw in the place, and a mug of water and some bread. Nonnc and Bindo abandoned themselves to the uttermost hopelessness of despair, and laid themselves face downward on the straw, sobbing their very hearts out. Gemma was dry-eyed, her forehead was crimson, her teeth were set; she was consumed with rage, that burnt up alike her terror and her pain. Oh, why did not a handful of Neapolitan sailors sail over the water, and land, and kill all these English? It was four years since she had seen Naples, but she remembered,—oh, how she remembered! And they had come all the way out of their own sunshine only to be locked up in a trap like rats! Furious thoughts of setting fire to this prison-house beset her; she had matches in her pocket, but it would be hard to set it on fire without consuming themselves with it, since the doors were fast locked. What could she do? what could she do?

"Why do they take us? We have done no harm," she said, through her shut teeth.

"*Carina mia,*" sighed her grandfather, shivering where he lay on the straw, "I am afraid before the law we are no better than the owls and the wood-rats are; we are only vagabonds; we have no dwelling and we have no trade."

"We pay for our lodging, and we pay for our bread!"

"Perhaps they do not believe that. Always have I been so afraid this would happen, and now it has come at last."

The poor old man sank back on the straw again, and began to sob piteously. Why had he left the merry crowds of the Strada del Male, where there was always a laugh and a song, and a slice of melon or of *pasta?*

At last both he and Bindo sobbed themselves into sleep, but no sleep came to Gemma; she was wide awake, panting, hot, all alive with fury, all the night.

With morning they were all taken before the magistrates, who were sitting that day. There were a great many gentlemen and officials, but among them all Gemma only saw one, the horseman whose ears she had boxed in the lane. For Philip Carey was on the bench that day, and recognized, with not much pleasure, the little group of Italian strollers. They all three looked miserable, jaded, and very dusty. The night passed in the lock-up had taken all their look of sunshiny merriment away; the straw had caught on their poor garments; the faces of Nonno and the little boy were swollen and disfigured with crying; only Gemma, all dishevelled and dusty and feverish, had a pride and ferocity about her that gave her strength and kept her beauty.

As she was the only one who could talk any English, she was ordered to speak for the others; but when she said her grandfather's name was Epifania Santo, there was a laughter in the court, which incensed her so bitterly that she flung back her curls out of her eyes

and said, "If you do not believe what I say, why do you want me to speak?"

Then being once started she went on before any of the magistrates or officials could stop her: "You have taken us up; why have you taken us up? we have done nobody any sort of harm. We only dance, and Nonno tells fortunes, and does the tricks, and you have taken his box away, and do you call that honest to a poor man? We do not rob, we do not kill, we do not hurt; when Bindo takes an apple I am angry." And then her English, which was apt to go away from her in moments of excitement, failed her utterly, and she poured out a torrent of Neapolitan patois which not a soul there present understood, only from her flashing eyes and her expressive gestures it was easy to guess that it meant vehement invective and reproach.

Mr. Carey looked at her attentively, but he said nothing; his brother magistrates, when she had been peremptorily ordered to be still and listen, put a few sharp questions to her and examined the witnesses, who were policemen and country-people, and who all deposed to the fact that the old Italian did tricks and told fortunes and got them to put their pence down by fair promises, and had moreover dice and cards whereby he induced them to lose money. The children only danced; they had no habitation; they were always wandering about; by their papers they were natives of Naples. Then the constable whose arm Gemma had bitten appeared with it in a sling, and stated what she had done to him, and this terrible piece of violence prejudiced the whole court greatly against her.

Mr. Carey smiled once; he took no share in the

examination. But Gemma was always looking at him; she was always thinking, "This is all his doing because I struck him: he has had us all put in prison because I offended him."

She hated him,—oh, how she hated him! If she had not been so watched and warded by the constables, she would have leaped across the court and done the same thing again. For she did not mind anything for herself; but if they put Nonno and Bindo back in prison, and parted them from her,—she knew people were parted in prison and boys and girls were never together there, nor ever the old left with the young. And she knew too that in England there were prisons called workhouses, where they packed away all the people who were poor. Her heart stood still with fright, and all she saw in the dusky court was the grave face of Philip Carey, which seemed to her like the stony face of Fate.

"Ah, *bimba mia*," sobbed her grandfather in a whisper, "yonder is the gentleman you struck as he rode on his horse. You have been our undoing with your fiery temper: always was I afraid that you would be!"

Under that reproof Gemma's head drooped and all the color fled out of her cheeks. She knew that it was a just one.

Bindo, meanwhile, was clinging to her skirts and whimpering like a poor little beaten puppy, till she thought her very brain would go mad, whirling round and round in such misery.

The magistrates spoke together, Mr. Carey alone saying little: there was a strong feeling against all

strollers at that time in the county, on account of many robberies that had been committed on outlying farms by tramps and gypsies in the last few years, and many raids that had been made on poultry-houses, apple-lofts, and sheep-folds. Epifania Santo and his grandchildren only seemed to the bench idle, useless, and not harmless vagrants, no better than the wood-rats, as old Nonno had said; whilst the fierce onslaught on the constable of which Gemma had been guilty gave their misdeeds a darker color in the eyes of the Devon gentlemen.

After some consultation and some disagreement among the magistrates, the old man, having no visible means of subsistence, was condemned to a month's imprisonment for unlawfully gambling and deceiving the public, whilst Bindo and Gemma were respectively ordered to be consigned to reformatories. In consideration of Epifania Santo's age, and of his being a foreigner, he was spared hard labor. When Gemma comprehended the sentence, and the old man had been made to understand it also, such a scene of grief and of despair ensued as no English court had ever beheld. To the slow and stolid folk of the banks of Dart it seemed as if madness had descended straight upon these strangers. Their passionate paroxysms of woe had no limit, and no likeness to anything ever seen in Devon before.

Gemma had to be torn by main force from her brother and grandfather, and, writhing in the hands of the constables as an otter writhes on a spear, she shook her little clinched fists at the bench, and, seeing there only the face of Philip Carey, who to her belief

was sole author of all her sorrows and ills, she cried to him, "I struck you yesterday, I will hurt you more before many days are over. You are a wicked, wicked, wicked man!"

Then the policeman seized her more roughly, and put his hand over her mouth, and carried her away by sheer force.

"Did that little jade really strike you a blow, Carey?" asked one of his fellow-magistrates, in surprise.

Mr. Carey smiled a little. "Oh, yes," he said, quietly. "But I had deserved it."

"I wonder you wanted us to be more lenient, then."

"One cannot be revenged on a child," he answered, "and they are children of the sun; they have hotter passions than ours, and quicker oblivion. It would have been better to have given them a little money and shipped them back to Naples. But you outnumbered me. The old man is inoffensive, I think. After all, a penny was not much for a yokel to pay to be blessed by the promise of a coach-and-six."

But his fellow-magistrates did not see the matter in this light, and thought the old stroller well out of mischief in the jail of Dartmouth. Philip Carey two days before would have thought so with them, for he had the reputation of being severe on the bench; but the sunny, dusky, ardent face of Gemma had touched him, and the love of the three for each other seemed enviable to him. He had been all alone since his early boyhood, and such affection as theirs seemed to him a beautiful and priceless treasure. It was cruel, he thought, to tear it asunder, as cruel

as to pluck all to pieces a red rose just flowered to the light.

He rode home that evening in the twilight, somewhat saddened, and doubtful whether the law was as just and unerring a thing as he had always until then believed it.

The night saw poor old Nonno put in prison as if he were a thief, and saw the children severed and taken respectively to the boys' and the girls' asylum in a reformatory for naughty children, which some good people with the best intentions had built and endowed in the neighborhood. They had so clung together, and so madly resisted being parted, that they had fairly frightened the men and women in charge of them. They had never been away from each other an hour in their lives ever since little Bindo had been born one summer day in the cabin by the Mediterranean and laid in the half of a great gourd as a cradle for his sister's wondering eyes to admire. But severed now they were, and whilst poor Bindo in the boys' ward was subjected to such a scrubbing as he had never had in all his days, and his abundant auburn curls were cut short, Gemma—whose paroxysms of passion had given place to a stolid and strange quietude—was also bathed, and clothed in the clothes of the reformatory, whilst her many-colored sash, her picturesque petticoats, and her coral ear-rings and necklace were all taken away, fumigated, rolled up in a bundle, and ticketed with a number. She submitted, but her great eyes glared and glowed strangely, and she was perfectly mute. Not a single sound could those set in command over her force from her lips.

The superiors were used to stubborn children, savage children, timid children, vicious children; but this silence of hers, following on her delirium of fury and grief, was new and startling to them.

She looked very odd, clad perforce in some straightly-cut stiff gray clothes, and when she was set down, one of a long row, to have supper off oatmeal porridge, the handsome, pale, desperate little face of hers, with burning eyes and an arched red mouth, looked amidst the faces of the other little girls like a carnation among cabbage-stalks. Not a morsel would she eat; not a word would she speak; at no one would she even look.

"Oh, Nonno! oh, Bindo!" her heart kept crying, till it seemed as if it would burst, but never a sound escaped her.

Poor little Bindo, meanwhile, was sobbing every minute, but he ate his porridge, though he watered it with floods of tears, where he was set among a score of gray-clad, crop-headed English boys, who were gaping and grinning at him.

With the close of evening Bindo was stowed away in the boys' dormitory, and Gemma was led to one of a number of narrow little iron beds with blue counterpanes. She was undressed and bidden to lie down, which she did. Her bed was the last of the row, and next to the wall: she turned her face to the wall and they thought her resigned. Soon the light was put out, and the little sleepers were in the land of dreams.

But Gemma never closed her eyes. Her heart seemed to be beating all over her body. She stuffed the sheet into her mouth, and bit it hard to keep in the

cries of agony that sprang to her lips. Would she ever see Nonno again? Bindo she might, perhaps, but Nonno,—she was sure he would die in prison.

There was a window in the wall near the bed; it was unshuttered. She could see the gray of the evening change to the dark of the night, and then the moon came out,—the harvest-moon, as they called it here. She was only waiting for every one to be asleep to get up and look out of that window and see whether it would let her escape. An under-matron slept in the dormitory, but at the farther end, where everything was quite hushed, and when the slow breathing of the children told that they were all sleeping soundly, Gemma got up in her bed and sat erect. Finding all was still, she put one foot out of bed, and then another, and very softly stole to the window. It was a lattice window, and left a little open, for the night was warm. A sweet smell of moist fields, of growing grass, of honeysuckle hedges, came up on the night air. Gemma noiselessly opened the window a little farther and looked out: it was far, far down to the ground below: still, she thought it was possible for her to escape. She stole back to the bedside, put on the hideous, ungainly cotton clothes as well as she could in the dark, and knotted the skirt of the frock tight round her limbs so as to leave them untrammelled. If no one awoke, she could get away, she reflected; for her quick eyes had seen a rain-pipe that passed from the casement to the ground.

She paused a few moments, making sure, quite sure, that every one in the long dormitory was asleep. As she stood, she saw some hundred matches lying by a

lamp, of which the light was put out, on a little table near. A cruel joy danced into her eyes: she stretched out her hand and took the matches and slipped them in the bosom of her frock. Then, with the courage of desperation, she climbed to the window-seat, put half her body out of it, and, clinging to the iron pipe with both hands, let herself slide down, down, down, to where she knew not. All was dark beneath her.

But if she slid into the sea that would be better, she said to herself, than to live on imprisoned.

As it happened, the window was twenty feet and more from the earth, but the turf was beneath, and the rain-pipe was so made that she could easily clasp it with feet and hands and glide down it, only grazing all the skin off her palms, and bruising her knees and her chest. No one heard her, there was no alarm given; she reached the ground in safety as a village clock tolled ten.

She dropped all in a heap, and lay still, half stunned, for some moments; soon she got her breath and her wits again, and rose up on her feet and looked about her. She knew all the country-side well, having been here ever since the apple-orchards had been in blossom, and, when they had not been performing, having scampered hither and thither with Bindo, begging honey or eggs at the cottages, or coaxing the boatmen to let them drift down the river.

The moon was now very bright, and she saw that she stood near the Dart water, and she could discover here a steeple, there a gable, yonder a windmill, and so forth, by which she could tell where she was. She had

been brought in a covered van to the reformatory, and had only known that it was near Dartmouth.

The grass on which she stood grew under a low wall, and beyond the wall was a towing-path, and beyond that the river. The towing-path she knew well; she and Bindo had often ridden on the backs of the towing-horses or got a seat in the big barges by just singing their little songs and twanging their tambourines.

The towing-path served her purpose well. She looked back at the big pile behind her, a white, square, grim-looking place; Bindo was sleeping under its roof; then she hardened her heart, vaulted over the river-wall, and began to run down the river-path.

She did not hesitate, for she had a very wicked resolve in her soul, and her goal was four miles away, she knew, as a water-mill on the other bank among willows was an old friend of hers, and told her her whereabouts. Not a sound came from the house behind her; not a creature had awakened, or the alarm-bell would have been clanging and lights appearing at every window. She was quite safe thus far, and she began to run along the dewy grassy path where the glowworms were twinkling at every step under the ferns and the dock leaves.

"The wicked, wicked man!" she kept saying in her teeth.

She never saw the pretty glowworms she was so fond of at other times, or heard the nightingales singing in the woods, for when a sin is in the soul it makes the eyes blind and the ears deaf. She only ran on, stumbling often and feeling for the matches in the bosom of her ugly gray cotton frock. The frock was

irksome to her: she longed for her own short skirts and pliable bodice, and she missed the scarf about her loins, and the necklace at her throat. But she ran on and on, having a set purpose and a great crime in her mind.

She knew that if she only followed the towing-path long enough she would come to the place called Carey's Honor.

She knew it well: she had often looked over its white gates and envied the calves and the lambs in its pastures, and wondered what the rooms were like within beyond the rose-hung windows, and sighed for the nectarines and the cherries that grew in its green old garden-ways. It might be farther or nearer than she fancied; that she could not be sure about; but she knew that if she went on long enough along the Dart water she would come to it. She did not feel at all frightened at being out all alone so late; after the excitement and despair of the day she seemed to have no feeling left except this one burning, consuming, terrible longing for vengeance, which made her feet fly over the towing-path to the peaceful Elizabethan house lying among its yews and limes and stacks and hives and byres in the moonlight.

She had been running and walking an hour and a half or more, when a bend in the water showed her the twisted chimney-stacks and the black-and-white wood-work and the honeysuckle-covered porches of the homestead, with the moon shining above it and the green uplands sloping behind. Then Gemma, whose young soul was now so full of wickedness that there was not a spot of light left in it, climbed over

the white wooden gate and crept up over the wide grass-lands where the cattle were asleep and the big ox-eye daisies were shut up at rest. The air was full of the sweet smell of the dog-rose, of the honeysuckle, of the sweet brier, and away across the meadows the black-and-white timbers and the deep gables of the old house were distinct in the moon-rays.

She crossed the pastures and opened a little wicket that was never latched, and got into the gardens, where the stocks and picotees and gilly-flowers and moss roses and sweet williams and all other dear old-fashioned blossoms were filling the night with their fragrance. But Gemma had no thought for them. She crept on up to the house, and saw that in one part the thatched roof came down so low to the ground that, standing on a stone bench which was beneath, she would be able to touch it. She sprang on to the bench, drew her matches out of her bosom, struck light to them, and was about to thrust the blazing bunch into the thatch, when a huge dog bounded out of the shadow, leaped on her, and knocked her head downwards off the stone seat on to the grass: he would have torn her to pieces, only he was such a great and good creature that, seeing she was a child, he was merciful in his strength.

"Monarch, what is it, my lad?" said Philip Carey, as he came out from the open door of the porch, alarmed at the noise of the fall.

The Newfoundland left her and went to his master, and Mr. Carey saw the form of Gemma lying prone upon his gravel and the bundle of blazing matches still clutched in her clinched hand.

"Good heavens! the child came to burn my house

down!" he cried, half aloud, as he stooped over her and lifted her up: she had fallen on the back of her head and was stunned into insensibility for the moment. He wrenched the burning matches out of her tightly-closed fingers and stamped the fire out of them with his heel. That was soon done, and when the dangerous things were mere harmless splinters of wood he lifted the insensible form of the child up in his arms and carried her into his house.

"She has escaped from the reformatory," he thought, as he saw the ugly gray cotton gown and the blue apron that was tacked on to it.

He laid her gently on a couch, and called his housekeeper, a white-haired, kindly old woman, with cheeks like the apples that crowded his orchards in October.

"Monarch knocked this little girl down, and she is senseless with the fall. Will you do your best for her, Mary? She is one of the Home children," he said to the old dame, and he did not add a word about the matches.

The housekeeper's simple remedies soon recalled Gemma back to her senses, and she opened her great, frightened, humid eyes to the light of the lamp-lit room.

"*I zolfini, I zolfini!*" she murmured, thinking of her matches and vaguely fancying that she was in the midst of flames. All her English had gone clean away from her.

"It is that foreign child, master," said the housekeeper,—"the one that has been roaming the country ever since Candlemas; I caught her little brother at the hen-house at Easter-time, and spanked him. They

were both of them sentenced, weren't they, in town this morning, and the old grandfather too?"

"Yes," said Mr. Carey, curtly, "she has run away, that is evident. Suppose you go and get some little room ready for her, for she will not be able to go back to-night. She is all right now, I fancy, though she is not yet fairly awake."

"One of the attics, master? Shall she sleep with Hannah?—not as Hannah will stomach it, a little waif and stray out of prison——"

"No, no; get her a nice little room ready anywhere you like, but one that is comfortable. She is a very forlorn little maid: we must be good to her, Mary."

"Her little brother was at the hen-house, and I spanked him——"

"She is not her brother," said Philip Carey, impatiently. "Leave me with her a little."

Though her master was very gentle, the housekeeper knew that he chose to be obeyed, and she trotted off up the broad oak staircase obediently.

Philip Carey remained beside Gemma; and the big black dog also sat looking at her, with his head held critically on one side, for he had not made up his mind about her.

"You came to burn my house down?" said Mr. Carey, gravely, as he looked full into her face.

She understood what he said, but she did not answer. Her mind was still confused; she remembered what she had come to do, and she began to understand that she had failed to do it and was in the power of this man whom she hated.

"I caught you in the act," he continued, sternly·

"and if my dog had not thrown you down you would probably have succeeded, for old thatch burns like tinder. Now, will you tell me why you wished to do me so great an injury?"

Gemma was still mute; her brows were drawn together, her eyes underneath them were flashing and sombre; she had raised herself on one arm on the cushions of the couch, and gazed at him in silence.

"Perhaps you do not know," said Mr. Carey, "that the crime of arson, the crime you tried to commit, is one punished by only less severity than is shown to murder. Very often it becomes murder too, when people are burned, as they often are, in the house that is fired. For the mere attempt I can have you imprisoned for many years. Now tell me, I order you to tell me instantly, why you desired to injure me so hideously?"

Gemma followed his words and gathered their meaning, and felt forced to obey. But all the passion of hate and of pain in her surged up in broken utterances, for the foreign language was ill able to convey all the vehemence of emotion and of indignation raging in her heart.

"I came—I came—I came," she muttered, "I came to burn your house: yes; why not? I told you in the morning I would do something worse to you. I did strike you, but you had deserved it. You had said I was immodest; and then because you were angry you had us all taken up by the police, and you put dear Nonno in prison as if he were a thief, when he is so honest that he scolds Bindo if Bindo takes an apple, and you have parted me and Bindo, and shut us in a

horrible place, and they have cut our hair and washed us, and I saw I could get away to-night, and I did, and I dropped through the window; and the matches were there, and I said to myself I would burn your house down; I had heard people say that you were fond of your house, and if you say that it was wicked of me, it has been you who have been wicked first. You are a bad, vile, cruel man to shut dear Nonno into your prisons, and he nearly *ottant' uno* years old, and so good and so kind and so merry; and never will we see him again, and sooner than go back to that place which you put me in, I will drown myself in your river there, or make your dog tear me to pieces——"

Then the poor little soul burst into a rain of tears enough to have extinguished a million lighted lucifer matches or the very fires of a burning house had there been one.

Philip Carey allowed the tempest of grief to exhaust itself; then he said to her, in a grave and very sweet voice, yet a little sternly,—

"My poor little girl, you were ready to take a great crime on your little white soul to-night; and who knows where its evil might have stopped? Fire is not a plaything. Now, I want you to listen to what I have to say about myself. I am a magistrate, and I was on the bench to-day, it is true. But I did not approve of the sentence passed on you by men of greater age and weight in the county than I am, and I tried my best, vainly, to have it mitigated. I had nothing whatever to do with your grandfather's arrest. What he did, harmless though it seems, was yet against the law; and the mayor of the town chose to enforce the law against

him. More than this, my dear, not only would I not, had I been alone, have sentenced your grandfather in so severe a manner, but I would have aided you all to return to your own country. As it is, I mean to-morrow to use what influence I possess to endeavor to obtain a remission of your grandfather's sentence, and I meant also to go across to Portsmouth and see the Italian consul there, to ascertain whether or not he could not help you to go back to Naples if I could succeed in getting your punishments remitted, as I hoped to do."

He paused, and Gemma gazed at him with dilated eyes and a hot color on her cheeks. She was silent and ashamed.

"Now you have spoiled it all," continued Mr. Carey: "how can I beg for a little incendiary to be let loose on the world? And my gardener will see those lucifer matches in the morning, and every one will know or guess then what you came to do, and why my dog Monarch sprang on you."

The color went out of her face, and her lips quivered.

"But it was only *me*," she said, piteously. "Nonno would not have tried to fire your house, nor Bindo. It was only me. Could you not punish me all by myself and let them out? If you will only let them out, I will go back to prison, and I will not run away again: I will bear it all my life if I must, if you will only let out Nonno and Bindo!"

"My dear," answered Philip Carey, "I have no power: I cannot deal you out life and death, as you seem to think. You are a dangerous and fierce little tigress, of that there is no doubt; but I do not think

the reformatory, good as it is, would improve you much. Suppose we make a bargain: if you will promise me to try and be good, I will promise you to try and liberate you all three, and send you all back in a good ship to your own country."

With as much rapidity as she had sprung up on his saddle to box his ears, Gemma sprang off the couch, and, to his great amazement, threw her arms about his neck and kissed him.

"Oh, you are good!" she murmured, rapturously. "I love you, I love you, I love you as much as I hated you yesterday!"

And she was so pretty that Philip Carey could not be angry with her any more.

She slept soundly that night under the roof she had tried to burn, and in the morning had the most tempting breakfast brought to her on her little bed that she had ever imagined in all her life, and Monarch came and put his big muzzle down on the snowy counterpane, and made friends with her over honey and muffins and cream.

Mr. Carey kept his promise, and, by means of continuous efforts for some ten days, succeeded in getting the release of poor old Epifania Santo and of Bindo, and obtaining also for them a free passage by a sailing-ship then loading in Devonport and bound to go down Channel to the south coast of Italy with a cargo of iron and steel.

During this time that he was thus returning good for evil and exerting himself in her cause, Gemma remained under the care of his housekeeper, and saw him very often in each day, and had a simple, pretty, white linen

frock made for her, and spent all her time in the gardens and orchards and meadows with Monarch and the other dogs of the house.

When Philip Carey at last announced to her that all was arranged for their departure by the sailing-vessel, and that she would meet her brother and grandfather at the docks, he was surprised to see a cloud sweep over her mobile face, and great tears fill her eyes once more.

"Cannot we stay? cannot we stay?" she said, with a sob. "Grandfather is so afraid of the sea, and Bindo will be so sorry to leave before the apples are ripe, and me,—I cannot bear to leave *you!*"

"Do you like me a little, then?" said Mr. Carey, astonished and touched.

"Oh, so much!" said Gemma, with a great sigh. "You have been so kind, and I have been so wicked."

He hesitated a moment, much surprised, then answered,—

"Well, it might perhaps be arranged. Your grandfather is very old for a voyage, and there is a little cottage down beyond my orchards that he might have; but, Gemma, if I let you stay on my land, you must promise me to be very reasonable and obedient, and to learn all you are told to learn, and never to give way to your furious passions."

"Oh, I will be so good!" she cried, in ecstasy, as she sprang up in his arms and kissed him again. "I will be so good! and when I am with you I forget that we never really see the sun, and Bindo says he is sure that your apples are better than our grapes and figs and oranges at home."

"It is well you should think so, if you are to live all your lives amidst the apples," said Philip Carey, with a smile.

So they stayed there; and a few years later, when Gemma had grown a most beautiful young girl, and become wise and gentle as well, though she still kept her April face that was all sunshine and storm in the same moment, Philip Carey made her his wife and Monarch's mistress; and she is still always ready to declare that apples are the best and sweetest fruit that grows. For, you see, Love gathers them for her.

FINDELKIND.

There was a little boy, a year or two ago, who lived under the shadow of Martinswand. Most people know, I should suppose, that the Martinswand is that mountain in the Oberinnthal where, several centuries past, brave Kaiser Max lost his footing as he stalked the chamois, and fell upon a ledge of rock, and stayed there, in mortal peril, for thirty hours, till he was rescued by the strength and agility of a Tyrol hunter,—an angel in the guise of a hunter, as the chronicles of the time prefer to say.

The Martinswand is a grand mountain, being one of the spurs of the greater Sonnstein, and rises precipitously, looming, massive and lofty, like a very fortress for giants, where it stands right across that road which, if you follow it long enough, takes you through Zell to Landeck,—old, picturesque, poetic Landeck, where Frederick of the Empty Pockets rhymed his sorrows in ballads to his people,—and so on by Bludenz into Switzerland itself, by as noble a highway as any traveller can ever desire to traverse on a summer's day. It is within a mile of the little burg of Zell, where the people, in the time of their emperor's peril, came out with torches and bells, and the Host lifted up by their priest, and all prayed on their knees underneath the

steep gaunt pile of limestone, that is the same to-day as it was then whilst Kaiser Max is dust; it soars up on one side of this road, very steep and very majestic, having bare stone at its base, and being all along its summit crowned with pine woods; and on the other side of the road are a little stone church, quaint and low, and gray with age, and a stone farm-house, and cattle-sheds, and timber-sheds, all of wood that is darkly brown from time; and beyond these are some of the most beautiful meadows in the world, full of tall grass and countless flowers, with pools and little estuaries made by the brimming Inn River that flows by them; and beyond the river are the glaciers of the Sonnstein and the Selrain and the wild Arlberg region, and the golden glow of sunset in the west, most often seen from here through the veil of falling rain.

At this farm-house, with Martinswand towering above it, and Zell a mile beyond, there lived, and lives still, a little boy who bears the old historical name of Findelkind, whose father, Otto Korner, is the last of a sturdy race of yeomen, who had fought with Hofer and Haspinger, and had been free men always.

Findelkind came in the middle of seven other children, and was a pretty boy of nine years, with slenderer limbs and paler cheeks than his rosy brethren, and tender dreamy eyes that had the look, his mother told him, of seeking stars in mid-day: *de chercher midi à quatorze heures*, as the French have it. He was a good little lad, and seldom gave any trouble from disobedience, though he often gave it from forgetfulness. His father angrily complained that he was always in the clouds,—that is, he was always dreaming, and so very

often would spill the milk out of the pails, chop his own fingers instead of the wood, and stay watching the swallows when he was sent to draw water. His brothers and sisters were always making fun of him: they were sturdier, ruddier, and merrier children than he was, loved romping and climbing and nutting, thrashing the walnut-trees and sliding down snow-drifts, and got into mischief of a more common and childish sort than Findelkind's freaks of fancy. For indeed he was a very fanciful little boy: everything around had tongues for him; and he would sit for hours among the long rushes on the river's edge, trying to imagine what the wild green-gray water had found in its wanderings, and asking the water-rats and the ducks to tell him about it; but both rats and ducks were too busy to attend to an idle little boy, and never spoke: which vexed him.

Findelkind, however, was very fond of his books: he would study day and night, in his little ignorant, primitive fashion. He loved his missal and his primer, and could spell them both out very fairly, and was learning to write of a good priest in Zirl, where he trotted three times a week with his two little brothers. When not at school, he was chiefly set to guard the sheep and the cows, which occupation left him very much to himself; so that he had many hours in the summer-time to stare up to the skies and wonder—wonder—wonder about all sorts of things; while in the winter—the long, white, silent winter, when the post-wagons ceased to run, and the road into Switzerland was blocked, and the whole world seemed asleep, except for the roaring of the winds—Findelkind, who

still trotted over the snow to school in Zirl, would dream still, sitting on the wooden settle by the fire, when he came home again under Martinswand. For the worst—or the best—of it all was that he *was* Findelkind.

This is what was always haunting him. He was Findelkind; and to bear this name seemed to him to mark him out from all other children and to dedicate him to heaven. One day three years before, when he had been only six years old, the priest in Zirl, who was a very kindly and cheerful man, and amused the children as much as he taught them, had not allowed Findelkind to leave school to go home, because the storm of snow and wind was so violent, but had kept him until the worst should pass, with one or two other little lads who lived some way off, and had let the boys roast a meal of apples and chestnuts by the stove in his little room, and, while the wind howled and the blinding snow fell without, had told the children the story of another Findelkind,—an earlier Findelkind, who had lived in the flesh on Arlberg as far back as 1381, and had been a little shepherd-lad, "just like you," said the good man, looking at the little boys munching their roast crabs, and whose country had been over there, above Stuben, where Danube and Rhine meet and part.

The pass of Arlberg is even still so bleak and bitter that few care to climb there; the mountains around are drear and barren, and snow lies till midsummer, and even longer sometimes. "But in the early ages," said the priest (and this is quite a true tale that the children heard with open eyes, and mouths only not open be-

cause they were full of crabs and chestnuts), "in the early ages," said the priest to them, "the Arlberg was far more dreary than it is now. There was only a mule-track over it, and no refuge for man or beast; so that wanderers and peddlers, and those whose need for work or desire for battle brought them over that frightful pass, perished in great numbers, and were eaten by the bears and the wolves. The little shepherd-boy Findelkind—who was a little boy five hundred years ago, remember," the priest repeated,—"was sorely disturbed and distressed to see these poor dead souls in the snow winter after winter, and seeing the blanched bones lie on the bare earth, unburied, when summer melted the snow. It made him unhappy, very unhappy; and what could he do, he a little boy keeping sheep? He had as his wages two florins a year; that was all; but his heart rose high, and he had faith in God. Little as he was, he said to himself, he would try and do something, so that year after year those poor lost travellers and beasts should not perish so. He said nothing to anybody, but he took the few florins he had saved up, bade his master farewell, and went on his way begging,—a little fourteenth-century boy, with long, straight hair, and a girdled tunic, as you see them," continued the priest, "in the miniatures in the black-letter missal that lies upon my desk. No doubt heaven favored him very strongly, and the saints watched over him; still, without the boldness of his own courage and the faith in his own heart they would not have done so. I suppose, too, that when knights in their armor, and soldiers in their camps, saw such a little fell w all alone, they helped

him, and perhaps struck some blows for him, and so sped him on his way, and protected him from robbers and from wild beasts. Still, be sure that the real shield and the real reward that served Findelkind of Arlberg was the pure and noble purpose that armed him night and day. Now, history does not tell us where Findelkind went, nor how he fared, nor how long he was about it; but history does tell us that the little barefooted, long-haired boy, knocking so loudly at castle gates and city walls in the name of Christ and Christ's poor brethren, did so well succeed in his quest that before long he had returned to his mountain-home with means to have a church and a rude dwelling built, where he lived with six other brave and charitable souls, dedicating themselves to St. Christopher, and going out night and day to the sound of the Angelus, seeking the lost and weary. This is really what Findelkind of Arlberg did five centuries ago, and did so quickly that his fraternity of St. Christopher twenty years after numbered among its members archdukes, and prelates, and knights without number, and lasted as a great order down to the days of Joseph II. This is what Findelkind in the fourteenth century did, I tell you. Bear like faith in your hearts, my children; and though your generation is a harder one than this, because it is without faith, yet you shall move mountains, because Christ and St. Christopher will be with you."

Then the good man, having said that, blessed them, and left them alone to their chestnuts and crabs, and went into his own oratory to prayer. The other boys laughed and chattered; but Findelkind sat very quietly,

thinking of his namesake, all the day after, and for many days and weeks and months this story haunted him. A little boy had done all that; and this little boy had been called Findelkind: Findelkind, just like himself.

It was beautiful, and yet it tortured him. If the good man had known how the history would root itself in the child's mind, perhaps he would never have told it; for night and day it vexed Findelkind, and yet seemed beckoning to him and crying, "Go thou and do likewise!"

But what could he do?

There was the snow, indeed, and there were the mountains, as in the fourteenth century, but there were no travellers lost. The diligence did not go into Switzerland after autumn, and the country-people who went by on their mules and in their sledges to Innspruck knew their way very well, and were never likely to be adrift on a winter's night, or eaten by a wolf or a bear.

When spring came, Findelkind sat by the edge of the bright pure water among the flowering grasses, and felt his heart heavy. Findelkind of Arlberg who was in heaven now must look down, he fancied, and think him so stupid and so selfish, sitting there. The first Findelkind, a few centuries before, had trotted down on his bare feet from his mountain-pass, and taken his little crook, and gone out boldly over all the land on his pilgrimage, and knocked at castle gates and city walls in Christ's name and for love of the poor! That was to do something indeed!

This poor little living Findelkind would look at the

miniatures in the priest's missal, in one of which there was the little fourteenth-century boy with long hanging hair and a wallet and bare feet, and he never doubted that it was the portrait of the blessed Findelkind who was in heaven; and he wondered if he looked like a little boy there, or if he were changed to the likeness of an angel.

"He was a boy just like me," thought the poor little fellow, and he felt so ashamed of himself,—so very ashamed; and the priest had told him to try and do the same. He brooded over it so much, and it made him so anxious and so vexed, that his brothers ate his porridge and he did not notice it, his sisters pulled his curls and he did not feel it, his father brought a stick down on his back and he only started and stared, and his mother cried because he was losing his mind and would grow daft, and even his mother's tears he scarcely saw. He was always thinking of Findelkind in heaven.

When he went for water, he spilt one-half; when he did his lessons, he forgot the chief part; when he drove out the cow, he let her munch the cabbages; and when he was set to watch the oven he let the loaves burn, like great Alfred. He was always busied thinking, "Little Findelkind that is in heaven did so great a thing: why may not I? I ought! I ought!" What was the use of being named after Findelkind that was in heaven, unless one did something great too?

Next to the church there is a little stone lodge, or shed, with two arched openings, and from it you look into the tiny church with its crucifixes and relics, or out to great, bold, sombre Martinswand, as you like

best; and in this spot Findelkind would sit hour after hour, while his brothers and sisters were playing, and look up at the mountains or on to the altar, and wish and pray and vex his little soul most wofully; and his ewes and his lambs would crop the grass about the entrance, and bleat to make him notice them and lead them farther afield, but all in vain. Even his dear sheep he hardly heeded, and his pet ewes, Katte and Greta, and the big ram Zips, rubbed their soft noses in his hand unnoticed. So the summer droned away, —the summer that is so short in the mountains, and yet so green and so radiant, with the torrents tumbling through the flowers, and the hay tossing in the meadows, and the lads and lasses climbing to cut the rich sweet grass of the alps. The short summer passed as fast as a dragon-fly flashes by, all green and gold, in the sun; and it was near winter once more, and still Findelkind was always dreaming and wondering what he could do for the good of St. Christopher; and the longing to do it all came more and more into his little heart, and he puzzled his brain till his head ached. One autumn morning, whilst yet it was dark, Findelkind made his mind up, and rose before his brothers, and stole downstairs and out into the air, as it was easy to do, because the house-door never was bolted. He had nothing with him; he was barefooted, and his school-satchel was slung behind him, as Findelkind of Arlberg's wallet had been five centuries before.

He took a little staff from the piles of wood lying about, and went out on to the high-road, on his way to do heaven's will. He was not very sure what that divine will wished, but that was because he was only

EVEN HIS DEAR SHEEP HE HARDLY HEEDED.

nine years old, and not very wise; but Findelkind that was in heaven had begged for the poor; so would he.

His parents were very poor, but he did not think of them as in any want at any time, because he always had his bowlful of porridge and as much bread as he wanted to eat. This morning he had nothing to eat; he wished to be away before any one could question him.

It was quite dusk in the fresh autumn morning: the sun had not risen behind the glaciers of the Stubaïthal, and the road was scarcely seen; but he knew it very well, and he set out bravely, saying his prayers to Christ, and to St. Christopher, and to Findelkind that was in heaven.

He was not in any way clear as to what he would do, but he thought he would find some great thing to do somewhere, lying like a jewel in the dust; and he went on his way in faith, as Findelkind of Arlberg had done before him.

His heart beat high, and his head lost its aching pains, and his feet felt light; so light as if there were wings to his ankles. He would not go to Zirl, because Zirl he knew so well, and there could be nothing very wonderful waiting there; and he ran fast the other way. When he was fairly out from under the shadow of Martinswand, he slackened his pace, and saw the sun come on his path, and the red day redden the gray-green water, and the early Stellwagen from Landeck, that had been lumbering along all the night, overtook him.

He would have run after it, and called out to the travellers for alms, but he felt ashamed: his father

had never let him beg, and he did not know how to begin.

The Stellwagen rolled on through the autumn mud, and that was one chance lost. He was sure that the first Findelkind had not felt ashamed when he had knocked at the first castle gates.

By and by, when he could not see Martinswand by turning his head back ever so, he came to an inn that used to be a post-house in the old days when men travelled only by road. A woman was feeding chickens in the bright clear red of the cold daybreak.

Findelkind timidly held out his hand. "For the poor!" he murmured, and doffed his cap.

The old woman looked at him sharply. "Oh, is it you, little Findelkind? Have you run off from school? Be off with you home! I have mouths enough to feed here."

Findelkind went away, and began to learn that it is not easy to be a prophet or a hero in one's own country.

He trotted a mile farther, and met nothing. At last he came to some cows by the wayside, and a man tending them.

"Would you give me something to help make a monastery?" he said, timidly, and once more took off his cap. The man gave a great laugh. "A fine monk, you! And who wants more of these lazy drones? Not I."

Findelkind never answered: he remembered the priest had said that the years he lived in were very hard ones, and men in them had no faith.

Ere long he came to a big walled house, with turrets

and grated casements,—very big it looked to him,—like one of the first Findelkind's own castles. His heart beat loud against his side, but he plucked up his courage, and knocked as loud as his heart was beating.

He knocked and knocked, but no answer came. The house was empty. But he did not know that; he thought it was that the people within were cruel, and he went sadly onward with the road winding before him, and on his right the beautiful impetuous gray river, and on his left the green Mittelgebirge and the mountains that rose behind it. By this time the day was up; the sun was glowing on the red of the cranberry shrubs and the blue of the bilberry-boughs: he was hungry and thirsty and tired. But he did not give in for that; he held on steadily; he knew that there was near, somewhere near, a great city that the people called Sprugg, and thither he had resolved to go. By noontide he had walked eight miles, and came to a green place where men were shooting at targets, the tall thick grass all around them: and a little way farther off was a train of people chanting and bearing crosses and dressed in long flowing robes.

The place was the Hottinger Au, and the day was Saturday, and the village was making ready to perform a miracle-play on the morrow.

Findelkind ran to the robed singing-folk, quite sure that he saw the people of God. "Oh, take me, take me!" he cried to them; "do take me with you to do heaven's work."

But they pushed him aside for a crazy little boy that spoiled their rehearsing.

"It is only for Hotting folk," said a lad older than

himself. "Get out of the way with you, *Liebchen*." And the man who carried the cross knocked him with force on the head, by mere accident; but Findelkind thought he had meant it.

Were people so much kinder five centuries before, he wondered, and felt sad as the many-colored robes swept on through the grass, and the crack of the rifles sounded sharply through the music of the chanting voices. He went on, foot-sore and sorrowful, thinking of the castle doors that had opened, and the city gates that had unclosed, at the summons of the little long-haired boy whose figure was painted on the missal.

He had come now to where the houses were much more numerous, though under the shade of great trees, —lovely old gray houses, some of wood, some of stone, some with frescos on them and gold and color and mottoes, some with deep barred casements, and carved portals, and sculptured figures; houses of the poorer people now, but still memorials of a grand and gracious time. For he had wandered into the quarter of St. Nicholas in this fair mountain-city, which he, like his country-folk, called Sprugg, though the government calls it Innspruck.

He got out upon a long gray wooden bridge, and looked up and down the reaches of the river, and thought to himself, maybe this was not Sprugg but Jerusalem, so beautiful it looked with its domes shining golden in the sun, and the snow of the Soldstein and Branjöch behind them. For little Findelkind had never come so far as this before. As he stood on the bridge so dreaming, a hand clutched him, and a voice said,—

"A whole kreutzer, or you do not pass!"

Findelkind started and trembled.

A kreutzer! he had never owned such a treasure in all his life.

"I have no money!" he murmured, timidly, "I came to see if I could get money for the poor."

The keeper of the bridge laughed.

"You are a little beggar, you mean? Oh, very well! Then over my bridge you do not go."

"But it is the city on the other side?"

"To be sure it is the city; but over nobody goes without a kreutzer."

"I never have such a thing of my own! never! never!" said Findelkind, ready to cry.

"Then you were a little fool to come away from your home, wherever that may be," said the man at the bridge-head. "Well, I will let you go, for you look a baby. But do not beg; that is bad."

"Findelkind did it!"

"Then Findelkind was a rogue and a vagabond," said the taker of tolls.

"Oh, no—no—no!"

"Oh, yes—yes—yes, little sauce-box; and take that," said the man, giving him a box on the ear, being angry at contradiction.

Findelkind's head drooped, and he went slowly over the bridge, forgetting that he ought to have thanked the toll-taker for a free passage. The world seemed to him very difficult. How had Findelkind done when he had come to bridges?—and, oh, how had Findelkind done when he had been hungry?

For this poor little Findelkind was getting very

hungry, and his stomach was as empty as was his wallet.

A few steps brought him to the Goldenes Dachl.

He forgot his hunger and his pain, seeing the sun shine on all that gold, and the curious painted galleries under it. He thought it was real solid gold. Real gold laid out on a house-roof,—and the people all so poor! Findelkind began to muse, and wonder why everybody did not climb up there and take a tile off and be rich? But perhaps it would be wicked. Perhaps God put the roof there with all that gold to prove people. Findelkind got bewildered.

If God did such a thing, was it kind?

His head seemed to swim, and the sunshine went round and round with him. There went by him, just then, a very venerable-looking old man with silver hair: he was wrapped in a long cloak. Findelkind pulled at the coat gently, and the old man looked down.

"What is it, my boy?" he asked.

Findelkind answered, "I came out to get gold: may I take it off that roof?"

"It is not gold, child, it is gilding."

"What is gilding?"

"It is a thing made to look like gold: that is all."

"It is a lie, then!"

The old man smiled. "Well, nobody thinks so. If you like to put it so, perhaps it is. What do you want gold for, you wee thing?"

"To build a monastery and house the poor."

The old man's face scowled and grew dark, for he was a Lutheran pastor from Bavaria.

"Who taught you such trash?" he said, crossly.

"It is not trash. It is faith."

And Findelkind's face began to burn and his blue eyes to darken and moisten. There was a little crowd beginning to gather, and the crowd was beginning to laugh. There were many soldiers and rifle-shooters in the throng, and they jeered and joked, and made fun of the old man in the long cloak, who grew angry then with the child. "You are a little idolater and a little impudent sinner!" he said, wrathfully, and shook the boy by the shoulder, and went away, and the throng that had gathered round had only poor Findelkind left to tease.

He was a very poor little boy indeed to look at, with his sheepskin tunic, and his bare feet and legs, and his wallet that never was to get filled.

"Where do you come from, and what do you want?" they asked; and he answered, with a sob in his voice,—

"I want to do like Findelkind of Arlberg."

And then the crowd laughed, not knowing at all what he meant, but laughing just because they did not know: as crowds always will do. And only the big dogs that are so very big in this country, and are all loose, and free, and good-natured citizens, came up to him kindly, and rubbed against him, and made friends; and at that tears came into his eyes, and his courage rose, and he lifted his head.

"You are cruel people to laugh," he said, indignantly: "the dogs are kinder. People did not laugh at Findelkind. He was a little boy just like me, no better and no bigger, and as poor; and yet he had so much faith, and the world then was so good, that he

left his sheep and got money enough to build a church and a hospice to Christ and St. Christopher. And I want to do the same for the poor. Not for myself, no; for the poor! I am Findelkind too, and Findelkind of Arlberg that is in heaven speaks to me."

Then he stopped, and a sob rose again in his throat.

"He is crazy!" said the people, laughing, yet a little scared; for the priest at Zirl had said rightly, this is not an age of faith. At that moment there sounded, coming from the barracks, that used to be the Schloss in the old days of Kaiser Max and Mary of Burgundy, the sound of drums and trumpets and the tramp of marching feet. It was one of the corps of Jägers of Tyrol, going down from the avenue to the Rudolfplatz, with their band before them and their pennons streaming. It was a familiar sight, but it drew the street-throngs to it like magic: the age is not fond of dreamers, but it is very fond of drums. In almost a moment the old dark arcades and the river-side and the passages near were all empty, except for the women sitting at their stalls of fruit or cakes, or toys. They are wonderful old arched arcades, like the cloisters of a cathedral more than anything else, and the shops under them are all homely and simple,—shops of leather, of furs, of clothes, of wooden playthings, of sweet and wholesome bread. They are very quaint, and kept by poor folks for poor folks; but to the dazed eyes of Findelkind they looked like a forbidden paradise, for he was so hungry and so heart-broken, and he had never seen any bigger place than little Zirl.

He stood and looked wistfully, but no one offered him anything. Close by was a stall of splendid purple

grapes, but the old woman that kept it was busy knitting. She only called to him to stand out of her light.

"You look a poor brat: have you a home?" said another woman, who sold bridles and whips and horses' bells, and the like.

"Oh, yes, I have a home,—by Martinswand," said Findelkind, with a sigh.

The woman looked at him sharply. "Your parents have sent you on an errand here?"

"No; I have run away."

"Run away? Oh, you bad boy!—unless, indeed,—are they cruel to you?"

"No; very good."

"Are you a little rogue, then, or a thief?"

"You are a bad woman to think such things," said Findelkind, hotly, knowing himself on how innocent and sacred a quest he was.

"Bad? I? Oh ho!" said the old dame, cracking one of her new whips in the air, "I should like to make you jump about with this, you thankless little vagabond. Be off!"

Findelkind sighed again, his momentary anger passing; for he had been born with a gentle temper, and thought himself to blame much more readily than he thought other people were,—as, indeed, every wise child does, only there are so few children—or men—that are wise.

He turned his head away from the temptation of the bread and fruit-stalls, for in truth hunger gnawed him terribly, and wandered a little to the left. From where he stood he could see the long, beautiful street of Teresa, with its oriels and arches, painted windows and gilded

signs, and the steep, gray, dark mountains closing it in at the distance; but the street frightened him, it looked so grand, and he knew it would tempt him: so he went where he saw the green tops of some high elms and beeches. The trees, like the dogs, seemed like friends. It was the human creatures that were cruel.

At that moment there came out of the barrack gates, with great noise of trumpets and trampling of horses, a group of riders in gorgeous uniforms, with sabres and chains glancing and plumes tossing. It looked to Findelkind like a group of knights,—those knights who had helped and defended his namesake with their steel and their gold in the old days of the Arlberg quest. His heart gave a great leap, and he jumped on the dust for joy, and he ran forward and fell on his knees and waved his cap like a little mad thing, and cried out,—

"Oh, dear knights! oh, great soldiers! help me! Fight for me, for the love of the saints! I have come all the way from Martinswand, and I am Findelkind, and I am trying to serve St. Christopher like Findelkind of Arlberg."

But his little swaying body and pleading hands and shouting voice and blowing curls frightened the horses: one of them swerved and very nearly settled the woes of Findelkind forever and aye by a kick. The soldier who rode the horse reined him in with difficulty: he was at the head of the little staff, being indeed no less or more than the general commanding the garrison, which in this city is some fifteen thousand strong. An orderly sprang from his saddle and seized the child, and shook him, and swore at him. Findelkind was frightened; but he shut his eyes and set his teeth, and

said to himself that the martyrs must have had very much worse than these things to suffer in their pilgrimage. He had fancied these riders were knights,—such knights as the priest had shown him the likeness of in old picture-books, whose mission it had been to ride through the world succoring the weak and weary, and always defending the right.

"What are your swords for, if you are not knights?" he cried, desperately struggling in his captor's grip, and seeing through his half-closed lids the sunshine shining on steel scabbards.

"What does he want?" asked the officer in command of the garrison, whose staff all this bright and martial array was. He was riding out from the barracks to an inspection on the Rudolfplatz. He was a young man, and had little children himself, and was half amused, half touched, to see the tiny figure of the little dusty boy.

"I want to build a monastery, like Findelkind of Arlberg, and to help the poor," said our Findelkind, valorously, though his heart was beating like that of a little mouse caught in a trap; for the horses were trampling up the dust around him, and the orderly's grip was hard.

The officers laughed aloud; and indeed he looked a poor little scrap of a figure, very ill able to help even himself.

"Why do you laugh?" cried Findelkind, losing his terror in his indignation, and inspired with the courage which a great earnestness always gives. "You should not laugh. If you were true knights, you would not laugh: you would fight for me. I am little, I know,

—I am very little,—but he was no bigger than I; and see what great things he did. But the soldiers were good in those days; they did not laugh and use bad words——"

And Findelkind, on whose shoulder the orderly's hold was still fast, faced the horses, which looked to him as huge as Martinswand, and the swords, which he little doubted were to be sheathed in his heart.

The officers stared, laughed again, then whispered together, and Findelkind heard them say the word "crazed." Findelkind, whose quick little ears were both strained like a mountain leveret's, understood that the great men were saying among themselves that it was not safe for him to be about alone, and that it would be kinder to him to catch and cage him,—the general view with which the world regards enthusiasts.

He heard, he understood; he knew that they did not mean to help him, these men with the steel weapons and the huge steeds, but that they meant to shut him up in a prison; he, little free-born, forest-fed Findelkind. He wrenched himself out of the soldier's grip, as the rabbit wrenches itself out of the jaws of the trap even at the cost of leaving a limb behind, shot between the horses' legs, doubled like a hunted thing, and spied a refuge. Opposite the avenue of gigantic poplars and pleasant stretches of grass shaded by other bigger trees, there stands a very famous church, famous alike in the annals of history and of art,—the church of the Franciscans, that holds the tomb of Kaiser Max, though, alas! it holds not his ashes, as his dying desire was that it should. The church stands here, a

noble, sombre place, with the Silver Chapel of Philippina Wessler adjoining it, and in front the fresh cool avenues that lead to the river and the broad water-meadows and the grand Hall road bordered with the painted stations of the Cross.

There were some peasants coming in from the country driving cows, and some burghers in their carts, with fat, slow horses; some little children were at play under the poplars and the elms; great dogs were lying about on the grass; everything was happy and at peace, except the poor throbbing heart of little Findelkind, who thought the soldiers were coming after him to lock him up as mad, and ran and ran as fast as his trembling legs would carry him, making for sanctuary, as, in the old bygone days that he loved, many a soul less innocent than his had done. The wide doors of the Hofkirche stood open, and on the steps lay a black-and-tan hound, watching no doubt for its master or mistress, who had gone within to pray. Findelkind, in his terror, vaulted over the dog, and into the church tumbled headlong.

It seemed quite dark, after the brilliant sunshine on the river and the grass; his forehead touched the stone floor as he fell, and as he raised himself and stumbled forward, reverent and bareheaded, looking for the altar to cling to when the soldiers should enter to seize him, his uplifted eyes fell on the great Tomb.

The tomb seems entirely to fill the church, as, with its twenty-four guardian figures round it, it towers up in the twilight that reigns here even at mid-day. There are a stern majesty and grandeur in it which dwarf every other monument and mausoleum. It is

grim, it is rude, it is savage, with the spirit of the rough ages that created it; but it is great with their greatness, it is heroic with their heroism, it is simple with their simplicity.

As the awe-stricken eyes of the terrified child fell on the mass of stone and bronze, the sight smote him breathless. The mailed warriors standing around it, so motionless, so solemn, filled him with a frozen nameless fear. He had never a doubt that they were the dead arisen. The foremost that met his eyes were Theodoric and Arthur; the next, grim Rudolf, father of a dynasty of emperors. There, leaning on their swords, the three gazed down on him, armored, armed, majestic, serious, guarding the empty grave, which to the child, who knew nothing of its history, seemed a bier; and at the feet of Theodoric, who alone of them all looked young and merciful, poor little desperate Findelkind fell with a piteous sob, and cried, "I am not mad! Indeed, indeed, I am not mad!"

He did not know that these grand figures were but statues of bronze. He was quite sure they were the dead, arisen, and meeting there, around that tomb on which the solitary kneeling knight watched and prayed, encircled, as by a wall of steel, by these his comrades. He was not frightened, he was rather comforted and stilled, as with a sudden sense of some deep calm and certain help.

Findelkind, without knowing that he was like so many dissatisfied poets and artists much bigger than himself, dimly felt in his little tired mind how beautiful and how gorgeous and how grand the world must

have been when heroes and knights like these had gone by in its daily sunshine and its twilight storms. No wonder Findelkind of Arlberg had found his pilgrimage so fair, when if he had needed any help he had only had to kneel and clasp these firm, mailed limbs, these strong cross-hilted swords, in the name of Christ and of the poor.

Theodoric seemed to look down on him with benignant eyes from under the raised visor; and our poor Findelkind, weeping, threw his small arms closer and closer round the bronze knees of the heroic figure, and sobbed aloud, "Help me, help me! Oh, turn the hearts of the people to me, and help me to do good!"

But Theodoric answered nothing.

There was no sound in the dark, hushed church, the gloom grew darker over Findelkind's eyes; the mighty forms of monarchs and of heroes grew dim before his sight. He lost consciousness, and fell prone upon the stones at Theodoric's feet; for he had fainted from hunger and emotion.

When he awoke it was quite evening; there was a lantern held over his head; voices were muttering curiously and angrily; bending over him were two priests, a sacristan of the church, and his own father. His little wallet lay by him on the stones, always empty.

"Boy of mine! were you mad?" cried his father, half in rage, half in tenderness. "The chase you have led me!—and your mother thinking you were drowned!—and all the working day lost, running after old women's tales of where they had seen you! Oh, little

fool, little fool! what was amiss with Martinswand, that you must leave it?"

Findelkind slowly and feebly rose, and sat up on the pavement, and looked up, not at his father, but at the knight Theodoric.

"I thought they would help me to keep the poor," he muttered, feebly, as he glanced at his own wallet. "And it is empty,—empty."

"Are we not poor enough?" cried his father, with natural impatience, ready to tear his hair with vexation at having such a little idiot for a son. "Must you rove afield to find poverty to help, when it sits cold enough, the Lord knows, at our own hearth? Oh, little ass, little dolt, little maniac, fit only for a madhouse, talking to iron figures and taking them for real men! What have I done, O heaven, that I should be afflicted thus?"

And the poor man wept, being a good affectionate soul, but not very wise, and believing that his boy was mad. Then, seized with sudden rage once more, at thought of his day all wasted, and its hours harassed and miserable through searching for the lost child, he plucked up the light, slight figure of Findelkind in his own arms, and, with muttered thanks and excuses to the sacristan of the church, bore the boy out with him into the evening air, and lifted him into a cart which stood there with a horse harnessed to one side of the pole, as the country-people love to do, to the risk of their own lives and their neighbors'. Findelkind said never a word; he was as dumb as Theodoric had been to him; he felt stupid, heavy, half blind; his father pushed him some bread, and he ate it by

sheer instinct, as a lost animal will do; the cart jogged on, the stars shone, the great church vanished in the gloom of night.

As they went through the city towards the riverside along the homeward way, never a word did his father, who was a silent man at all times, address to him. Only once, as they jogged over the bridge, he spoke.

"Son," he asked, "did you run away truly thinking to please God and help the poor?"

"Truly I did!" answered Findelkind, with a sob in his throat.

"Then thou wert an ass!" said his father. "Didst never think of thy mother's love and of my toil? Look at home."

Findelkind was mute. The drive was very long, backward by the same way, with the river shining in the moonlight and the mountains half covered with the clouds.

It was ten by the bells of Zirl when they came once more under the solemn shadow of grave Martinswand. There were lights moving about his house, his brothers and sisters were still up, his mother ran out into the road, weeping and laughing with fear and joy.

Findelkind himself said nothing.

He hung his head.

They were too fond of him to scold him or to jeer at him; they made him go quickly to his bed, and his mother made him a warm milk posset and kissed him.

"We will punish thee to-morrow, naughty and cruel one," said his parent. "But thou art punished enough already, for in thy place little Stefan had the sheep,

and he has lost Katte's lambs,—the beautiful twin lambs! I dare not tell thy father to-night. Dost hear the poor thing mourn? Do not go afield for thy duty again."

A pang went through the heart of Findelkind, as if a knife had pierced it. He loved Katte better than almost any other living thing, and she was bleating under his window childless and alone. They were such beautiful lambs, too!—lambs that his father had promised should never be killed, but be reared to swell the flock.

Findelkind cowered down in his bed, and felt wretched beyond all wretchedness. He had been brought back; his wallet was empty; and Katte's lambs were lost. He could not sleep.

His pulses were beating like so many steam-hammers; he felt as if his body were all one great throbbing heart. His brothers, who lay in the same chamber with him, were sound asleep; very soon his father and mother snored also, on the other side of the wall. Findelkind was alone wide awake, watching the big white moon sail past his little casement, and hearing Katte bleat.

Where were her poor twin lambs?

The night was bitterly cold, for it was already far on in autumn; the rivers had swollen and flooded many fields, the snow for the last week had fallen quite low down on the mountain-sides.

Even if still living, the little lambs would die, out on such a night without the mother or food and shelter of any sort. Findelkind, whose vivid brain always saw everything that he imagined as if it were being acted

before his eyes, in fancy saw his two dear lambs floating dead down the swollen tide, entangled in rushes on the flooded shore, or fallen with broken limbs upon a crest of rocks. He saw them so plainly that scarcely could he hold back his breath from screaming aloud in the still night and answering the mourning wail of the desolate mother.

At last he could bear it no longer: his head burned, and his brain seemed whirling round; at a bound he leaped out of bed quite noiselessly, slid into his sheepskins, and stole out as he had done the night before, hardly knowing what he did. Poor Katte was mourning in the wooden shed with the other sheep, and the wail of her sorrow sounded sadly across the loud roar of the rushing river.

The moon was still high.

Above, against the sky, black and awful with clouds floating over its summit, was the great Martinswand.

Findelkind this time called the big dog Waldmar to him, and with the dog beside him went once more out into the cold and the gloom, whilst his father and mother, his brothers and sisters, were sleeping, and poor childless Katte alone was awake.

He looked up at the mountain and then across the water-swept meadows to the river. He was in doubt which way to take. Then he thought that in all likelihood the lambs would have been seen if they had wandered the river way, and even little Stefan would have had too much sense to let them go there. So he crossed the road and began to climb Martinswand.

With the instinct of the born mountaineer, he had brought out his crampons with him, and had now fas-

tened them on his feet; he knew every part and ridge of the mountains, and had more than once climbed over to that very spot where Kaiser Max had hung in peril of his life.

On second thoughts he bade Waldmar go back to the house. The dog was a clever mountaineer, too, but Findelkind did not wish to lead him into danger. "I have done the wrong, and I will bear the brunt," he said to himself; for he felt as if he had killed Katte's children, and the weight of the sin was like lead on his heart, and he would not kill good Waldmar too.

His little lantern did not show much light, and as he went higher upwards he lost sight of the moon. The cold was nothing to him, because the clear still air was that in which he had been reared; and the darkness he did not mind, because he was used to that also; but the weight of sorrow upon him he scarcely knew how to bear, and how to find two tiny lambs in this vast waste of silence and shadow would have puzzled and wearied older minds than his. Garibaldi and all his household, old soldiers tried and true, sought all night once upon Caprera in such a quest, in vain.

If he could only have awakened his brother Stefan to ask him which way they had gone! but then, to be sure, he remembered, Stefan must have told that to all those who had been looking for the lambs from sunset to nightfall. All alone he began the ascent.

Time and again, in the glad spring-time and the fresh summer weather, he had driven his flock upwards to eat the grass that grew in the clefts of the rocks and on the broad green alps. The sheep could not climb to the highest points; but the goats did, and he with

them. Time and again he had lain on his back in these uppermost heights, with the lower clouds behind him and the black wings of the birds and the crows almost touching his forehead, as he lay gazing up into the blue depth of the sky, and dreaming, dreaming, dreaming.

He would never dream any more now, he thought to himself. His dreams had cost Katte her lambs, and the world of the dead Findelkind was gone forever: gone were all the heroes and knights; gone all the faith and the force; gone every one who cared for the dear Christ and the poor in pain.

The bells of Zirl were ringing midnight. Findelkind heard, and wondered that only two hours had gone by since his mother had kissed him in his bed. It seemed to him as if long long nights had rolled away, and he had lived a hundred years.

He did not feel any fear of the dark calm night, lit now and then by silvery gleams of moon and stars. The mountain was his old familiar friend, and the ways of it had no more terror for him than these hills here used to have for the bold heart of Kaiser Max. Indeed, all he thought of was Katte,—Katte and the lambs. He knew the way that the sheep-tracks ran; the sheep could not climb so high as the goats; and he knew, too, that little Stefan could not climb so high as he. So he began his search low down upon Martinswand.

After midnight the cold increased; there were snow-clouds hanging near, and they opened over his head, and the soft snow came flying along. For himself he did not mind it, but alas for the lambs!—if it covered

them, how would he find them? And if they slept in it they were dead.

It was bleak and bare on the mountain-side, though there were still patches of grass such as the flocks liked, that had grown since the hay was cut. The frost of the night made the stone slippery, and even the irons gripped it with difficulty; and there was a strong wind rising like a giant's breath, and blowing his small horn lantern to and fro.

Now and then he quaked a little with fear,—not fear of the night or the mountains, but of strange spirits and dwarfs and goblins of ill repute, said to haunt Martinswand after nightfall. Old women had told him of such things, though the priest always said that they were only foolish tales, there being nothing on God's earth wicked save men and women who had not clean hearts and hands. Findelkind believed the priest; still, all alone on the side of the mountain, with the snow-flakes flying round him, he felt a nervous thrill that made him tremble and almost turn backward. Almost, but not quite; for he thought of Katte and the poor little lambs lost—and perhaps dead—through his fault.

The path went zigzag and was very steep; the Arolla pines swayed their boughs in his face; stones that lay in his path unseen in the gloom made him stumble. Now and then a large bird of the night flew by with a rushing sound; the air grew so cold that all Martinswand might have been turning to one huge glacier. All at once he heard through the stillness—for there is nothing so still as a mountain-side in snow—a little pitiful bleat. All his terrors vanished; all his mem-

ories of ghost-tales passed away; his heart gave a leap of joy; he was sure it was the cry of the lambs. He stopped to listen more surely. He was now many score of feet above the level of his home and of Zirl; he was, as nearly as he could judge, half-way as high as where the cross in the cavern marks the spot of the Kaiser's peril. The little bleat sounded above him, and it was very feeble and faint.

Findelkind set his lantern down, braced himself up by drawing tighter his old leathern girdle, set his sheepskin cap firm on his forehead, and went towards the sound as far as he could judge that it might be. He was out of the woods now; there were only a few straggling pines rooted here and there in a mass of loose-lying rock and slate; so much he could tell by the light of the lantern, and the lambs, by the bleating, seemed still above him.

It does not, perhaps, seem very hard labor to hunt about by a dusky light upon a desolate mountain-side; but when the snow is falling fast,—when the light is only a small circle, wavering, yellowish on the white,—when around is a wilderness of loose stones and yawning clefts,—when the air is ice and the hour is past midnight,—the task is not a light one for a man; and Findelkind was a child, like that Findelkind that was in heaven.

Long, very long, was his search; he grew hot and forgot all fear, except a spasm of terror lest his light should burn low and die out. The bleating had quite ceased now, and there was not even a sigh to guide him; but he knew that near him the lambs must be, and he did not waver or despair.

He did not pray; praying in the morning had been no use; but he trusted in God, and he labored hard, toiling to and fro, seeking in every nook and behind each stone, and straining every muscle and nerve, till the sweat rolled in a briny dew off his forehead, and his curls dripped with wet. At last, with a scream of joy, he touched some soft close wool that gleamed white as the white snow. He knelt down on the ground, and peered behind the stone by the full light of his lantern; there lay the little lambs,—two little brothers, twin brothers, huddled close together, asleep. Asleep? He was sure they were asleep, for they were so silent and still.

He bowed over them, and kissed them, and laughed, and cried, and kissed them again. Then a sudden horror smote him; they were so very still. There they lay, cuddled close, one on another, one little white head on each little white body,—drawn closer than ever to gether, to try and get warm.

He called to them; he touched them; then he caught them up in his arms, and kissed them again, and again, and again. Alas! they were frozen and dead. Never again would they leap in the long green grass, and frisk with each other, and lie happy by Katte's side; they had died calling for their mother, and in the long, cold, cruel night, only death had answered.

Findelkind did not weep, or scream, or tremble; his heart seemed frozen, like the dead lambs.

It was he who had killed them.

He rose up and gathered them in his arms, and cuddled them in the skirts of his sheepskin tunic, and cast his staff away that he might carry them, and so, thus

burdened with their weight, set his face to the snow and the wind once more, and began his downward way.

Once a great sob shook him; that was all. Now he had no fear.

The night might have been noon-day, the snow-storm might have been summer, for aught that he knew or cared.

Long and weary was the way, and often he stumbled and had to rest; often the terrible sleep of the snow lay heavy on his eyelids, and he longed to lie down and be at rest, as the little brothers were; often it seemed to him that he would never reach home again. But he shook the lethargy off him and resisted the longing, and held on his way: he knew that his mother would mourn for him as Katte mourned for the lambs. At length, through all difficulty and danger, when his light had spent itself and his strength had wellnigh spent itself too, his feet touched the old high-road. There were flickering torches and many people, and loud cries around the church, as there had been four hundred years before, when the last sacrament had been said in the valley for the hunter-king in peril above.

His mother, being sleepless and anxious, had risen long before it was dawn, and had gone to the children's chamber, and had found the bed of Findelkind empty once more.

He came into the midst of the people with the two little lambs in his arms, and he heeded neither the out-cries of neighbors nor the frenzied joy of his mother: his eyes looked straight before him, and his face was white like the snow.

"I killed them," he said, and then two great tears rolled down his cheeks and fell on the little cold bodies of the two little dead brothers.

Findelkind was very ill for many nights and many days after that.

Whenever he spoke in his fever he always said, "I killed them!"

Never anything else.

So the dreary winter months went by, while the deep snow filled up lands and meadows, and covered the great mountains from summit to base, and all around Martinswand was quite still, and now and then the post went by to Zirl, and on the holy-days the bells tolled; that was all. His mother sat between the stove and his bed with a sore heart; and his father as he went to and fro between the walls of beaten snow, from the wood-shed to the cattle-byre, was sorrowful, thinking to himself the child would die, and join that earlier Findelkind whose home was with the saints.

But the child did not die.

He lay weak and wasted and almost motionless a long time; but slowly, as the spring-time drew near, and the snows on the lower hills loosened, and the abounding waters coursed green and crystal-clear down all the sides of the hills, Findelkind revived as the earth did, and by the time the new grass was springing and the first blue of the gentian gleamed on the alps, he was well.

But to this day he seldom plays and scarcely ever laughs. His face is sad, and his eyes have a look of trouble.

Sometimes the priest of Zirl says of him to others,

"He will be a great poet or a great hero some day." Who knows?

Meanwhile, in the heart of the child there remains always a weary pain, that lies on his childish life as a stone may lie on a flower.

"I killed them!" he says often to himself, thinking of the two little white brothers frozen to death on Martinswand that cruel night; and he does the things that are told him, and is obedient, and tries to be content with the humble daily duties that are his lot, and when he says his prayers at bedtime always ends them so:

"Dear God, do let the little lambs play with the other Findelkind that is in heaven."

MELEAGRIS GALLOPAVO.

A TURKEY stood on a wall and saw a drove of black and gray pigs go by on the high-road underneath. The turkey was a very handsome gobbler, and his plumage was of the most brilliant gray and white, and his wattles were of the red of the carnation or the rose. He was very proud, and as he looked down on the pigs he stuck up his tail peacock-wise and fanned the air with it, and strutted up and down on the stone ledge, and said to himself, "What poor, dusty, hard-driven drudges those are in the road there! And not a single feather upon them! Nothing to cover their bodies except a few dingy-looking hairs! And they can only make an odd snuffling noise instead of gobbling! What a contemptible grunting and grumbling! And then what a tail!—a wisp of rope would be better!"

Then he spread his own tail higher and higher and broader and broader, just to show the pigs what a tail could be; and he gobbled loudly, that they might know what intelligible and melodious speech was like.

The poor pigs went snuffling and shuffling along in the mud and stones beneath the wall, and were driven into the straw-yard of the turkey's own farmhouse.

Next morning, lo! the turkey was put in a coop

and was carried off to market, with a number of ducks and geese and cackling pullets, and who should be next to him but a poor gray pig, with his heels tied together so that he could not stir.

"What a wretched creature!" said the turkey in its pride, for the coop had not taken down its vanity one peg. "What a sorry animal! and such a tail! Of course they are going to cut his throat. As for me, this is a throne: I suppose I am going to the palace. Perhaps the queen has never seen a beautiful turkey before."

Then he began again to spread out his tail-plume and shake his rosy wattles, and began to gobble, gobble, gobble with all his might. But the cart gave a lurch and the coop tilted on one side, and the turkey tilted up with it and lost his balance.

"Dear me! what a price one pays for being of high rank in this world!" he said to himself, as he clung to the side of the wicker-work and tried to preserve his dignity.

The poultry were all in flat baskets, and so were the geese and the ducks.

"He'll be fine for killing three months hence, ma'am!" his driver was saying, as he stopped the cart and held up the coop to show our gentleman to a woman who stood on the curbstone.

"For killing!" echoed the turkey; and he swooned away, and fell in a heap of ruffled feathers on the bottom of the wicker-work prison.

For death had never occurred to him as a possible fate for himself, though he saw other creatures go daily to martyrdom.

"You will be sooner or later killed, just as I shall be," said the pig, with a grunt, as the turkey came to itself. "What do you suppose they fatten you for? For love of you? Ough! you silly vain thing!"

"I thought it was because—because—because I am a turkey!" sighed the poor prisoner in the coop.

"Because you are a turkey!" echoed the pig. "As if there were not five hundred thousand turkeys in the world! That is all. You will be before Christmas just as I shall be: a knife will slit your throat."

The poor turkey swooned again on hearing this, and did not recover so rapidly as before: therefore the cart had jolted on again and was standing in the market-place, with the horses out of the shafts, before he opened his eyes and regained his consciousness.

The master of the cart was away from it, and it had been unpacked of most of its contents, and the pig and the turkey were left alone.

Suddenly the pig gave a grunt, and the turkey started, for his nerves were on edge and the least thing frightened him.

"What a hideous voice you have!" he said, pettishly. "You should hear *me!*"

And he began to gobble with all his might.

"I don't see that your noise is a bit prettier than mine," said the pig. "But it is very silly to lose your time squabbling about voices. We could get out if you would help me a little."

The turkey was silent.

To get out would be delightful; but to go into partnership with piggy hurt his pride so much that he would not even ask in what way escape could be

accomplished. But the pig was in too much haste and too much in earnest to stand upon etiquette.

"I can get my snout to your coop," he said, eagerly; "and I will gnaw it asunder—it's nothing but wicker—if you will promise to peck my cords to pieces when you are out. Now, don't you see what I mean?"

The turkey was so enraptured that his pride all tumbled down like a broken egg, and his wings began to flap in a tremendous flurry.

"Make haste! make haste!" he cried, and gobbled till he was red in the face.

"Don't make such a noise, or they'll hear you," said the pig, getting his teeth well on to the wicker, "and then you and I shall go up as the alderman and his chains on to some horrid man's table."

"Alderman?" said the turkey.

"They call a roast turkey and its sausages so," explained the pig.

The turkey thought it very ghastly pleasantry.

The pig meanwhile was hard at work, and in a very little time he had gnawed, and pulled, and bitten, and twisted the coop on the side near to him in such an effectual manner that the turkey soon got his head through, and then his throat, and then his body. He gave a gobble of glory and joy.

"But undo me!" squeaked the pig.

Now, the turkey was in a fearful hurry to be gone; his heart beat and his wings flapped so that he almost fell into convulsions; but he was a bird of honor and good faith. He bent down and pecked with such frantic force at the knots tying the pig's legs that he filled his beak with frayed cord, and in less time than

I take to write it piggy tumbled in his heavy fashion off the cart on to the ground,—free.

"Now run," said the pig; and nobody knows how fast a pig can run who has not seen him put his mind and his will into it. The turkey could not fly, because his wings were cut, and tame turkeys seldom know much about flying; but, what with a stride and a flutter mixed in one, he managed to cover the ground rapidly, and kept up side by side with the pig, who, for his part, knowing the country, kept steadily on down the road, which fortunately for them was a solitary one, and made straight for a wood which he saw in the distance. The wood was about a mile and a half off, and the two comrades were in sore distress when they came up to it; but they did reach it unstopped, and sank down on the grass under some larches with a sigh of content.

"Such a useless tree the larch!" murmured the pig; "not an acorn on it once in all its days!"

For, of course, the pig viewed all trees only in relation to acorns.

"I can't eat acorns," sighed the turkey, as soon as he got his breath.

"You ungrateful creature," said the pig in reproof. "Be content that you have escaped with your life."

"Are you *sure* we have escaped?"

"We have escaped for the time," said the philosophic pig; "and to be loose in a wood is heaven upon earth. There must be grain, or berries, or something you can pick up, if only you will look about for it."

Now it was easy for the good pig to be philosophic,

because near at hand he had smelt out a savory spot in the mossy ground, and he was right in the very middle of a hearty meal of truffles.

"I never thought to have to beg my bread," sighed the turkey.

"Who do you suppose would take the trouble to feed you if it was not to kill you?" grunted the pig, with his mouth quite full. "You need not *beg* your bread, as you call it; *look* for it,—as I do."

The turkey, pressed by hunger, did begin to look. A tame turkey, you know, knows nothing about feeding itself; food is thrown out to it; and our turkey, at any rate, had always supposed that was an ordination of Providence.

But little by little, watching the pig devouring the truffles, natural appetites and instincts awoke in him: no doubt his grandparents a hundred times removed had been wild turkeys by the borders of the Missouri or in the woods of Arkansas, and hereditary instincts revived in him under the all-potent prick of hunger. He did begin to look about, and spied a wild strawberry or two and ate them, and saw a blackberry-bush and stripped it, and, finding a big grasshopper and a small frog, found an appetite also for them.

"I never knew so much natural nourishment grew about one," he remarked to the pig, who snorted,—

"There is food enough; only men take it all. Your people are all in America, but men can't let them alone even there, so I have heard. Oh, there is a pretty hen-pheasant! Good-morning, Madame Phasiani."

"Is that her name?" asked the turkey.

"It is her family name; and your own is Meleagris

Gallopavo, and I don't suppose you knew that," said the pig, very snappishly.

The turkey was silent. Meleagris Gallopavo! That really was a very fine name!

"Is one well off in this wood, Madame Phasiani?" asked the pig of the pheasant, who sighed, and replied that the wood was very nice, and Indian corn was thrown out twice a day; but then when there was the trail of the beater over it all, who could be happy?

"There is the trail of the butcher over me," said the pig, "but I enjoy myself whilst I can. You mentioned Indian corn, madam: is the keeper's cottage unfortunately near us, then?"

She said it was half a mile off, or perhaps not so much.

"This is a preserve, then?" said the pig.

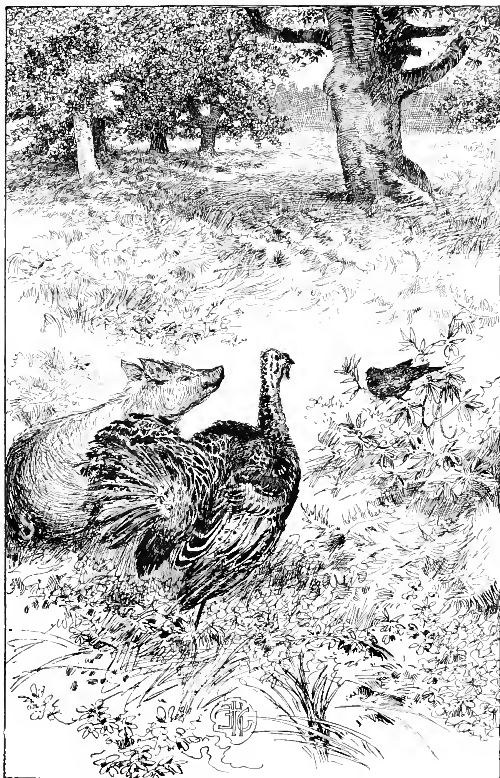
She sighed again, and said it was, and sauntered pensively away with her head on one side, as pheasants always do.

"I hoped it was a bit of wild coppice," said the pig. "Ah, here is a kingfisher. How do, Mr. Alced?"

But the kingfisher, who is the shyest creature upon earth, skimmed away in silence.

"Why do you call them all those fine names?" said the turkey.

"It costs nothing, and it pleases them," said the pig, curtly. "It is part of men's tomfoolery," he added, after a pause; and then, seeing a turtle-dove, he grunted in his most amiable fashion, "Sir Turtur Auritus, good-day. We are resting in your wood a little while; it is very cool, and green, and pleasant. May I ask if it be also *safe?*"



"MAY I ASK IF IT BE ALSO SAFE?"

"Safe!" said the turtle-dove, sitting down on a cranberry-bough. "There are guns, guns, guns, from morning to night."

"Surely not this time of the year? No!"

"There are for us," said the turtle-dove, sorrowfully; "and when there are not guns there are traps. They have no mercy on us. We only eat the pine-kernels, the wood-spurge, grain, the little snails. We do no harm. Yet they hunt us down; they put poisoned colza for us; they kill us by thousands; and I have heard—though it seems too terrible to be true—that they pack us alive in hampers, keep us shut up one atop of another for days, then pull our tail-feathers out, and shut us up again in another box; when that box flies open they shoot at us, so I have heard."

"Oh, yes; my gentlemen call that their '*poules*,' and give each other prizes for doing it," said the pig, with a grim sympathy. "They think it vulgar when the lads at village fairs grease our tails and hunt us. Dear Sir Turtur Auritus, is there such a gigantic sham, such an unutterable beast anywhere as Man?"

"I should think there is not," said the turtle-dove. "Myself I live out of the world, on the top of that lime-tree you see there, and if I can only alight safely to feed and drink twice a day, I ask no more."

A pretty partridge went tripping by at that moment, with some finely-grown sons and daughters after her. She was a charming and lovely creature, only she had a sadly nervous manner.

"When it grows near the 1st of September," she said in a tone of apology to the pig, who saluted her as Lady Starnacineria, "every sound, the very slightest

sends my heart up into my mouth, and I take every stone for a dog. What is the use or the joy of bringing these dear children into a world of shot? Their doom is to be huddled alive into a game-bag, with broken limbs and torn bodies, and my lord will think himself a saint fit for heaven if he send a hamper of them up to a hospital."

"All men's hypocrisy, madam," said the pig. "I prefer the frank, blunt snap of the fox, who makes no pretence of Christian charity, but only wants his dinner."

"If it were only the fox," sighed the partridge, "that would be very bearable; and he likes a common hen quite as well as ourselves,—and better, because the poor vulgar creature is bigger."

With a sigh she devoted herself to laying open an ants' nest, and called to her young to devour the eggs in it.

"This seems a very nice home of yours," said the pig, to provoke conversation.

The partridge sighed as the pheasant had done.

"It is too charming among these turnips," she said, "and there is most excellent fare all over these fields; but, alas! for what a fate do I live and hatch these dear children—the gun, the dog, the bag! Ah, dear sir, life to a partridge, where man is, is only a vale of tears, though led in the best of corn-fields!"

And she said "Cheep, cheep," and made a restless little flutter of all her feathers, and crept under the rail again back among the turnips.

At that moment a fine black rabbit, with a white tuft for a tail, darted by too quick for the pig to stop him.

"Ah, he has a sad life,—almost as sad as mine!" said the turtle-dove. "He dwells in quite a humble way under ground, but they never let him alone. When they can shoot nothing else, they are forever banging and blazing at him. And they put a ferret through his hall door without even knocking to say they are there. Have you ever seen the poor bunnies sitting outside their warrens cleaning their faces like pussy-cats in the cool of the early morning! Ah, such a pretty sight! But men only want them for their pelts or to put them in a pie."

"What is your opinion of men, dear lady?" said the pig, as a red-and-white cow came and looked over the fence.

"Oh, don't mention them!" said the cow, with unfeigned horror. "Don't they massacre all my pretty children, and drive me to market with my udders bursting, and break my heart and brand my skin? and when I am grown old will they not knock me on the head, or run a knife through my spine, and turn me into a hundred uses, hide, and hoofs, and everything? it is all written in their children's lesson-books. 'The most useful animal in the kingdom of nature is a cow.' That is what they say. Ugh!"

"My dear friend," said the pig, turning to the turkey, "you see that every living thing is devoured by man. Why should you suppose you were to be the exception?"

"No one has such a tail as I have," said the turkey.

His fright over, he had come to the conclusion that

nobody would ever do anything except adore a being with such a tail as his.

"What is your tail compared with the peacock's?" said the pig, with scorn. "You are only so vain because you are so ignorant."

"Do they kill peacocks?" asked the turkey.

"No; I don't think they do," replied the pig, truthful, though truth demolished his theories, which is more than can be said for human philosophers.

"Then why do they keep them?" said the turkey.

"Because they have such wonderful tails," said the pig, incautiously.

"*There!*" said the turkey, triumphantly; and out he spread his own tail, making it into a very grand wheel, and crying with all his might in that peculiar voice which nature has given to turkeys, "I am Meleagris Gallopavo! I am Meleagris Gallopavo!"

He had never known his new name till five minutes previously; but that made no difference: he was just as vain of it as if he had borne it all his life. Ask the Herald's College if this be uncommon.

He had stretched his throat out, and his rosy wattles glowed like geraniums, and he turned slowly round and round so that every one might admire him, and he stuck his tail up on high as stiff and as straight as if it had been made of pasteboard.

"I am Meleagris Gallopavo!" he cried, with a very shrill shriek, and scattered the sandy soil of the wood all about him with his hind claws.

Crack! A bludgeon rolled him over, a mere ball of ruffled, crumpled feathers, on the ground, and a lurcher dog ran into him and gripped him tight and hard.

"We're in luck, mate!" said an ill-looking fellow who was prowling along the edge of the field with another as ill favored. "Mum's the word, and he'll go in the pot worth twenty rabbits. Who'd ha' thought of finding a darned turkey out on the spree?"

Then the cruel man rammed poor Meleagris Gallopavo into a bag that he carried with him. He was a village ne'er-do-weel, seeing if he could trespass with impunity and knock over a bunny or two on the sly, knowing that the keepers were away from that part of the wood that day. The pig lay hidden among the wood-spurge and the creeping moss, and looked so exactly like a log of grayish-brown timber that the ruffians never noticed him.

"I knew his tail would be the undoing of him!" he said, sorrowfully, as his poor friend was borne off dead in the poachers' sack.

He himself had never looked so complacently on his own gray hairless wisp as he did now. How convenient it was! Anybody would take it for a bit of dry grass or a twig.

I may as well add that the mistress of the wood came through it next day, and the pig followed her home, and ate an apple which she gave him so cannily that she sent him into her yard, and has kept him like a very prince of pigs ever since. But he is always sorry for his poor friend's fate; and he has never since told any turkey that its family name is Meleagris Gallopavo.

THE LITTLE EARL.

The little Earl was a very little one indeed, as far as years and stature were, but he was a very big one if you consider his possessions and his importance. He was only a month old when his father died, and only six months old when his mother, too, left him for the cold damp vault, with its marbles and its rows of velvet coffins,—a vault that was very grand, but so chilly and so desolate that when they took the little Earl there on holy-days to lay his flowers down upon the dead he could never sleep for nights afterwards, remembering its darkness and solemnity.

The little Earl was called Hubert Hugh Lupus Alured Beaudesert, and was the Earl of Avillion and Lantrissaint; but by his own friends and his grandmother and his old nurse he was called only Bertie.

He was eight years old in the summer-time, when there befell him the adventure I am going now to relate to you, and he was, for his age, quite a baby; he was slender and slight, and he had a sweet little face like a flower, with very big eyes, and a quantity of fair hair cut after the fashion of the Reynolds and Gainsborough children. He had always been kept as if he were a china doll that would break at a touch. His

grandmother and his uncle had been left the sole charge of him; and as they were both invalids, and the latter a priest, and both dwelt in great retirement at the castle of Avillion, the little Earl's little life had not been a boy's life.

He had always been tranquil, for every one loved him, and he had all things that he wished for; yet he was treated more as if he were a rare flower or a most fragile piece of porcelain, than a little bright boy of real flesh and blood; and, without knowing it, he was often tired of all his cotton-wool. He was such a tiny fellow, you see, to be the head of his race, and the last of it too; for there were no others of this great race from which he had sprung, and his uncle, as a priest, could never marry. Thus so much depended on this small short life that the fuss made over him, and the care taken of him, had ended in making him so incapable of taking any care of himself that if he had ever got out alone in a street he would have been run over to a certainty, and as he grew older he grew sad and feverish, and chafed because he was never allowed to do the things that all boys by instinct love to do. By nature the little Earl was very brave, but he was made timid by incessant cautions; and as he was, too, by nature very thoughtful, the seclusion from other children in which he was brought up made him too serious for his age.

Avillion was deep-bosomed in woods, throned high above a lake and moors and mountains, and setting its vast stone buttresses firmly down into the greenest, smoothest turf in all the green west country of England; a grand and glorious place, famous in history,

full of majesty and magnificence, and sung to, forever, by the deep music of the Atlantic waves. Once upon a time the Arthurian Court that Mr. Tennyson has told you of so often had held its solemn jousts and its blameless revels there; at least, so said the story of Avillion, as told in ballads of the country-side,—more trustworthy historians than most people think.

All those ballads the little Earl knew by heart, and he loved them more than anything, for Deborah, his nurse, had crooned them over his cradle before ever he could understand even the words of them; so that Arthur and Launcelot, and Sir Gawain and Sir Galahad, and all the knightly lives that were once at Tintagel, were more real to him than the living figures about him, and these fancies served him as his playmates,—for he had few others, except his dog Ralph and his pony Royal. His relatives were ailing, melancholy, attached to silence and solitude, and though they would have melted gold and pearls for Bertie's drinking if he could have drunk them, never bethought themselves that noise and romps and laughter and fun and a little spice of peril are all things without which a child's life is as dead and spiritless as a squirrel's in a cage. And Bertie did not know it either. He studied under his tutor, Father Philip, a noble and learned old man, and he was caressed and cosseted by his nurse Deborah, and he wore beautiful little dresses, most usually of velvet, and he had wonderful toys that were sent from Paris, automatons that danced and fenced and played the guitar, and animals that did just what live animals do, and Punches and puppets that played and mimicked by clock-work, and little yachts that sailed by clock-work,

and whole armies of soldiers, and marvellous games costly and splendid; but he had nobody to play at all these things with, and it was dull work playing with them by himself. Deborah played with them in the best way she knew, but she was not a child, being sixty-six years old, and was of a slow imagination and of rheumatic movements.

"Run and play," Father Philip would often say to him, taking him perforce from his books; but the little Earl would answer, sadly, "I have nobody to play with!"

That want of his attracted no attention from all those people who loved the ground his little feet trod on; he was surrounded with every splendor and indulgence, he had half the toys of the Palais Royal in his nursery, and he had a bed to sleep in of ivory inlaid with silver, that had once belonged to the little King of Rome; millions of money were being stored up for him, and lands wide enough to make a principality called him lord: it never occurred to anybody that the little Earl of Avillion was not the most fortunate child that lived under the sun.

"Why do people all call me 'my lord'?" he asked one day, suddenly becoming observant of this fact.

"Because you are my lord," said Deborah,—which did not content him.

He asked Father Philip.

"My dear little boy, it is your title: think not of it save as an obligation to bear your rank well and without stain."

At last the little Earl grew so pale and thin and so delicate in health that the physician who was always

watching over him said to his grandmother that the boy wanted change of air, and advised the southern coast for him, and cessation of almost all study; which order grieved Father Philip sorely, for Bertie could read his Livy well, and was beginning to spell through his Xenophon, and it cut the learned gentleman to the heart that his pupil should give up all this and go back on the royal road to learning. For both he and his uncle were resolved that the little Earl should be very learned, and the boy was eager enough to learn, only he liked still better knowing how the flowers grew, and why the birds could fly while he could not, and how the wood-bee made his neat house in the tree-trunk, and the beaver built his dam across the river,—inquiries which everybody about him was inclined to discourage. Natural science was not looked on with favor in the nursery and school-room of Avillion. It was considered to lead people astray.

So the little Earl was moved southward, with his grandmother, and his nurse, and his physician, and Ralph and Royal,—for he would not go without them, —and several servants as well. They were to go to Shanklin in the Isle of Wight, and they made the journey by sea in the beautiful sailing-yacht which was waiting for Bertie's manhood, after having been the idol of his father's. On board, the little Earl was well amused; but he worried every one about him by questions as to the fishes.

"Lord, child! they are but nasty clammy things, only nice when they are cooked," said his nurse; and his grandmamma said to him, "Dear, they were made to live in the sea, just as the birds are made to fly in

the air." And this did not satisfy the little man at all; but he could get no more information, for the doctor, who could have told him a good deal, was under the thumb of his stately mistress, and Lady Avillion had said very sternly that the boy was not to be encouraged in his nonsense: what he must be taught were the duties of his position and all he owed to the country,—the poor little Earl!

He was a very small, slender, pale-cheeked lord indeed, with his golden hair hanging over his puzzled forehead, that used to ache sometimes with carrying Xenophon and Livy, and underneath the hair two great wondering blue eyes, of a blue so dark that they were like wet violets. His hands were tiny and thin, and his legs, clad in their red-silk stockings and black-velvet breeches, were like two sticks: people who saw him go by whispered about him and said all the poor little fellow's rank and riches would not keep him long in the land of the living. Once the little Earl heard that said, and understood what it meant, and thought to himself, "I shouldn't mind dying if I could take Ralph: perhaps there would be somebody to play with there."

It was May, and there were not many folks at Shanklin: still, there were two or three children he might have played with, but his grandmamma thought them vulgar children, not fit playmates for him; and so the poor little Earl, with the burden of his greatness, had to walk soberly and sadly past them, with his little tired red-stockinged legs, while the little girls said to each other, in a whisper, "There's a little lord!" and the boys hallooed out, "He's the swell that owns

the schooner." Bertie would sigh, as he heard: what was the use of owning the schooner, when you had no one to play with on it, and never could do what you liked?

You have never seen Shanklin, for you have never been in England; and if you do go now, you will never see it as it was when Bertie walked there, when it was the prettiest and most primitive little place in England; now, they tell me, it has been made into a watering-place, with a pier and an esplanade.

Shanklin used to be a little green mossy village covered up in honeysuckle and hawthorn; low long houses, green too with ivy and creepers, hid themselves away in sweet-smelling old-fashioned gardens; yellow roads ran between high banks and hedges out to the green down or downward to the ripple of the sea; and the cool brown sands, glistening and firm, twice a day felt the kiss of the tide. The cliffs were brown too, for the most part; some were white; the gray sea stretched in front; and the glory of the place was its leafy chine and ravine that severed the rocks and was full of foliage and of the sound of birds. It used to be all so quiet there; now and then there passed in the offing a brig or a yacht or a man-of-war; now and then farmers' carts came in from the downs by Appuldurcombe or the farms beyond the Undercliff; there were some fishing-cabins by the beach, and one old inn with a long grassy garden, where the coaches used to stop that ran through the quiet country from Ryde to Ventnor. It was so green, so still, so friendly, so fresh; when I think of it I hear the swish of its lazy waves, and I smell the smell of its eglantine hedges,

and I see the big brown eyes of my gallant dog as he came breathless up from the sea.

Alas! you will never see it so. The hedges are down, they tell me, and the grand dog is dead, and the hateful engine tears through the fields, and the sands are beaten to make an esplanade, and the beach is noisy and hideous with the bray of bands and the laughter of fools.

What will the world be like when you are twenty? Very frightful, I fear. This is progress, they say?

But what of the little Earl? you ask.

Well, the little Earl knew Shanklin as I knew it,—when the blackbirds and thrushes sang in the quiet chine, and the sense of an infinite peace dwelt on its simple shores. His grandmamma had taken for the summer the house that stands in its woods at the head of the chine and looks straight down that rift of greenery to the gray sea. I know not what that house is now; then it was charming, chalet-like, yet spacious.

Here the little Earl was set free of his studies and kept out in the air when it was fine, and when it rained was sent, not to his books, but to his toys. Yet it did not seem to him any great change; for when he rode, James was with him; and when he walked, Deborah was with him; and when he bathed, William was with him; and when he was only in the garden, there was grandmamma.

He was never alone. Oh, how he longed to be alone sometimes! And he never had any playfellows: how he would watch those two or three vulgar little boys building sand-castles and sailing their boats! He

would have given all his big schooner and its crew to be one of those little boys.

He had a cruise now and then off the island, and the skipper came up bare-headed and hoped my lord enjoyed the sail; but he did not enjoy it. William and Deborah were always after him, telling him to mind this, and take care of that, till he wished his pretty snow-white sailor dress with the gold buttons were only rags and tatters! For the poor little Earl was an adventurous and curious little lad at heart, and had a spirit of his own, though he was so meek; and he was tired of being treated like a baby.

His eighth birthday came round in June, and wonderful and magnificent were the presents he had sent him; but he only felt a little more tired than he had done before; the bonbons he was not allowed to eat, the splendidly-bound books seemed nonsense to a little classic who read Livy; the toys he did not care for, and the gold dressing-case his grandmamma gave him was no pleasure: he had one in silver, and his very hair he was never permitted to brush himself.

"As I may not eat the bonbons, might I send them all to the children on the sands?" he asked wistfully of his grandmother.

"Impossible, my love," she answered. "We do not know who they are."

"May I give them to the poor children then?" said the little lad.

"That would hardly be wise, dear. It would give them a taste for luxuries."

Bertie sighed: life on this his eighth birthday seemed very empty.

"Why are people strangers to each other? Why does not everybody speak to every one else?" he said at last, desperately. "St. Paul says we are all brothers, and St. Francis——"

"My dear child, do not talk nonsense," said Lady Avillion. "We shall have you a Radical when you are of age!"

"What is that?" said Bertie.

"The people who slew your dear Charles the First were Radicals," said his grandmother, cleverly.

He was discouraged and silent. He went sorrowfully and leaned against one of the windows and looked down the green vista of the chine. It was raining, and they would not let him go out of doors. He thought to himself, "What use is it calling me 'my lord,' and telling me I own so much, and bowing down before me, if I may never do once, just once, as I like? I know I am a little boy; but then, if I am an Earl, if I am good enough to be *that,* I ought to be able to do once as I like. Else, if not, what is the use? And why does the skipper say always to me, 'Your lordship is owner here'?"

And then a fancy came into his little head. Was he like the Princes in the Tower? Was he a prisoner, after all? His little mind was full of the pageant of history, and he made his mind up now that he was a princely captive watched and warded.

"Tell me, dear Deb," he said, catching his nurse by the sleeve as she turned from his bed that night, "tell me, is it not true that I am in prison, though you are all so kind to me; that somebody else wants my throne?"

Nurse Deborah thought he was "off his head," and ran to the physician for a cooling draught, and sat up in fright all the night, not even reassured by his sound tranquil sleep.

Bertie asked her nothing more.

He was more sure than ever that a captive he was, kept in kindly and honorable durance, like James of Scotland in the Green Tower.

Whilst he was lying awake, a grand and startling idea dawned on him: What if he were to go out and see the world for himself? This notion has fascinated many a child before him. Did not St. Teresa of Spain, when she was a little thing, toddle out with a tiny brother over the brown sierras? So absolutely now did this enterprise dazzle and conquer the little Earl that before night was half-way over he had persuaded himself that a prisoner he *was*, and that his stolen kingdom he would go and find, just as the knights in his favorite tales sallied forth to seek the Holy Grail. The passion for adventure, for escape, for finding out the truth, grew so strong on him that at the first flush of daybreak he slid out of bed and resolved that go alone he would. He longed to take Ralph, but he feared it would not be right: who knew what perils or pains awaited him?—and to make the dog sharer in them seemed selfish. So he threw a glove of his own for Ralph to guard, bade him be still, and set about his own flight.

He made a sad bungle of dressing himself, for he had never clothed himself in his life; but at last he got the things on somehow, and most of them hind-part-before. But he did it all without awaking Deb-

orah, and, taking his sailor-hat, he managed to drop out of the window on to the sward below without any one being aware.

It was quite early day; the sky was red, the shadows and the mists were still there, the birds were piping good-morrow to each other.

"How lovely it is!" he thought. "Oh, why doesn't everybody get up at sunrise?"

He knew, however, that if he wanted to see the world by himself he must not tarry there and think about the dawn. So off he set, as fast as his not very strong legs could carry him, and he got down to the shore.

The fog was on the sea and screened it from his sight, and there was no one on the beach except a boy getting nets ready in an old boat. To the boy ran Bertie, and held to him two half-crowns. "Will you row me to Bonchurch for that?" he asked.

The boy grinned. "For sure, little master; and I'd like to row a dozen at the price."

Into the boat jumped the little Earl, with all the feverish agility given to prisoners, who are escaping, by their freed instincts. It was a very old, dirty boat, and soiled his pretty white clothes terribly, but he had no eyes for that, he so enjoyed that delicious sense of being all alone and doing just as he liked. The boy was a big boy and strong, and rowed with a will; and the old tub went jumping and bobbing and splashing through the rather heavy swell. The gig of his yacht was a smart, long boat, beautifully clean, and with rowers all dressed in red caps and white jerseys; but the little Earl had never enjoyed rowing in *that* half

so much. There had been always somebody to look after him and say, "Don't lean over the side," or, "Mind the water does not splash you," or, "Take care!" Oh, that tiresome "Take care!" It makes a boy want to jump head-foremost into the sea, or fling himself head-downwards from the nearest apple-tree! I know you have felt so yourself twenty times a week, though I do not tell you that you were right.

Nothing is prettier than the Undercliff as you look up at it from the sea,—a tangle of myrtle and laurel and beech and birch coming down to the very shore, all as Nature made it. Bertie, as the boat wabbled along like a fat old duck, looked up at it and was enchanted, and then he looked at the white wall of mist on the waters, and was enchanted too. It was like Wonderland. His dreams were broken by the fisher-lad's voice:

"I'll have to put you ashore at the creek, little master, and get back, or daddy 'll give me a hiding."

"Who is 'daddy'?"

"Father," said the boy. "He'll lick me, for the tub's his'n."

Bertie was perplexed. He had heard of bears being licked into shape by their fathers and mothers, but this boy, though rough and rather shapeless, looked too old for such treatment.

"You were a wicked boy to use the boat, then," he said, with great severity.

The lad only grinned.

"Little master, you tipped me a crown."

"I did not mean to tempt you to do wrong," said Bertie, very seriously still; and then he colored, for

was he very sure that he was not doing wrong himself?

The old boat was grinding on the shingle then, and the rower of it was putting him ashore at a little creek that was wooded and pretty, and up which the sea ran at high tide; there was a little cottage at the head of it. I have heard that this wood-glen used to be in the old time a very famous place for smugglers, and it is still solitary and romantic, or at least was so still when the little Earl was set down there. "Where am I?" he asked the boy. But the wicked boy only grinned, and began to wabble back through the water as fast as his long slashing strokes could carry him. The little Earl felt rather foolish and rather helpless.

He was not far on his way towards seeing the world, and he began to wish for some breakfast. There was smoke going out of a chimney of the cottage, and the door of it stood open, but he was afraid the people there might stop him if he asked for anything, and, besides, the path up to it through the glen looked rocky and thorny and impassable, so he kept along by the beach, finding it heavy walking, for there were more stones than sands, and the beach was strewn with rocks, large and small, and stiff prickly furze. But he had the sea beside him and the world before him, and he walked on bravely, and in a little while he came into Bonchurch. It was very early yet, and Bonchurch was asleep, and most of its snug thatched houses, hidden away in their gardens and fuchsia hedges, were shut up snugly; the tall trees of its one street made a deep shadow in it, and the broad placid water of its great

come, you are; and your pa and your ma can pay for it."

"No, no," murmured Bertie, getting very red; and, fearing lest his longing for the meal should overcome his honor, he stumbled out of the baking-house door and ran up the tree-shadowed road faster than ever he had run in his life.

To be sure, he had plenty of money of his own; they all said so; but he never knew well where it was, or what it meant; and, besides, he intended never to go back to his grandmother and Deborah and Ralph and Royal any more, till he had found out the truth and seen his kingdom.

So he ran on through Bonchurch and out of it, leaving its pleasant green shade with a little sigh, half of impatience, half of hunger. He did not go on by the sea, for he knew by hearsay that this way would take him to Ventnor, and he was afraid people in a town would know him and stop him; so he set forth inland, where the deep lanes delve through the grassy downs; and here, sitting on a stile, the little Earl saw the ploughboy eating something white and round and big that he himself had never seen before.

"It must be something very delicious to make him enjoy it so much," thought the little Earl, and then curiosity entered so into him, and he longed so much to taste this wonderful unknown thing, that he went up to the boy and said to him,—

"Will you be so kind as to let me know what you are eating?"

The ploughboy grinned from ear to ear.

"For certain, little zurr," he said, with a burr and

a drawl in his speech, and he gave the thing to Bertie, which was neither more nor less than a peeled turnip.

The little Earl looked at it doubtfully, for he did not much fancy what the other had handled with his big brown hands and bitten with his big yellow teeth. But then, to enjoy anything as much as that other had enjoyed it, and to taste something quite unknown!—this counterbalanced his disgust and overruled his delicacy. One side of the great white thing was unbitten; he took an eager tremulous little bite out of that.

"But, oh!" he cried in dismay as he tasted, "it has no taste at all, and what there is is nasty!"

"Turnips is main good," said the boy.

"Oh, *no!*" said the little Earl, with intense horror; and he threw the turnip down amongst the grass, and went away sorely puzzled.

"Little master," roared Hodge after him, "I'll bet as you aren't hungry."

That was it, of course.

The little Earl was not really hungry,—never had been really hungry in all his life. But this explanation of natural philosophy did not occur to him, not even when the boy hallooed it after him. He only said to himself, "How can that boy eat that filthy thing? and he really did look as if he liked it so!"

Presently, after trotting a mile or so, he passed a little shop set all by itself at the end of a lane,—sure.y the tiniest, loneliest shop in Great Britain. But a cheery-looking old woman kept it, and he saw it had bread in it, as well as many other stuffs, and tin canisters that were to him incomprehensible.

"If you please," he said, rather timidly, offering the gold anchor off the ribbon of his hat, "I have lost my money, and could you be so kind as to give me any breakfast for this?"

The old woman smelt the anchor, bit it, twinkled her eyes, and then drew a long face. "It ain't worth tuppence, master," she said; "but ye're mighty small to be out by yourself, and puny like: I don't say as how I won't feed yer."

"Thanks," said Bertie, who did not know at all what his anchor was worth.

"Come in out o' dust," said the old woman, smartly, and then she bustled about and set him down in her little den to milk, bread, and some cold bacon.

That he had no appetite was the despair of his people and physician at home, and cod-liver oil, steel, quinine, and all manner of nastiness had been administered to provoke hunger in him, with no effect: by this time, however, he had almost as much hunger as the boy who had munched the turnip.

Nothing had ever tasted to him half so good in his life.

The old woman eyed him curiously. "You's a runaway," she thought; "but I'll not raise the cry after ye, or they'll come spying about this bit o' gold."

She said to herself that the child would come to no harm, and when a while had gone by she would step over to Ryde or Newport and get a guinea on the brooch.

Her little general shop was not a very prosperous business, though useful to the field-folk; and sanding

her sugar, and putting clay in her mustard, and adding melted fat to her butter, had not strengthened her moral principles.

As Bertie was eating, there came a very thin, scantily-clad, miserable-looking woman, who held out a half-penny. "A sup o' milk for Susy, missus," she said, in a very pitiful faint voice.

"How be Sue?" asked the mistress of the shop. The woman shook her head with tears running down her hollow cheeks.

"My boy he's gone in spinney," she murmured, "to try and catch summat, if he can: will you change it, missus, if he git a good bird?"

The old woman winked, frowned, and glanced at Bertie.

"Birds aren't good eatin' on fust of July," she observed, as she handed the milk. The woman paid the halfpenny and hurried away with the milk.

"I think that woman is very poor," said Bertie, questioningly and solemnly.

The old dame chuckled.

"No doubts o' that, master."

"Then you are cruel to take her money: you should have *given* her the milk."

"Ho, ho, little sir! be you a parson in a gownd? I'm mappen poor as she, and *she* hiv desarved all she gits, for her man he were a poacher, and he died in jail last Jannivery."

"A poacher!" said Bertie, with the natural instinctive horror of a landed gentleman. "And her son was going to snare a bird!" he cried, with light breaking in on him; "and you would give them things

in exchange for the bird! Oh, what a very cruel, what a very *wicked* woman you are!"

For an answer she shied at him a round wooden trencher, which missed its aim and struck a basket of eggs and smashed them, and one of the panes of her shop-window as well.

Bertie got up and walked slowly out of the door, keeping his eyes upon her.

"When I see a magistrate, I shall tell him about you," he said, solemnly: "you tempt poor people: that is very dreadful."

The enraged woman, in her outraged feelings, threw a pail of dirty water after him, some of which splashed him and completed the disfigurement of his white suit. He looked up and down to see for the poor woman with the milk, that he might console her poverty and open her eyes to her sins; but she was not within sight; and Bertie reflected that if he stopped to correct other people's errors he should never see the world and find his kingdom.

He had eaten a hearty meal, and his spirits rose and his heart was full of hope and valor; and if he had only had Ralph with him, he would have been quite happy.

So he went away valorously across a broad rolling down, and about half a mile farther on he came to a little shed. In the shed were a fire, and a man, and a pig; in the fire was an iron, and the pig was tied by a rope to a ring. Bertie saw the man take the red-hot iron and go up to the pig: Bertie's face grew blanched with horror.

"Stop, stop! what are you doing to the pig?" he

screamed, as he ran in to the man, who looked up and stared.

"I be branding the pig. Get out, or I'll brand you!" he cried. Bertie held his ground; his eyes were flashing.

"You wicked, wicked man! Do you not know that poor pig was made by God?"

"Dunno," said the wretch, with a grin. "She'll be eat by men, come Candlemas! I be marking of her, 'cos I'll turn her out on the downs with t'other. Git out, youngster! you've no call here."

Bertie planted himself firmly on his feet, and doubled his little fists.

"I will not see you do such a cruelty to a poor dumb thing," he said, while he grew white as death, "*I will not.*"

The man scowled and yet grinned.

"Will you beat me, little Hop-o'-my-thumb?"

Bertie put himself before the poor black pig, who was squealing from mere fright and the scorch of the fire.

"You shall not get the pig without killing me first. You are a cruel man."

The man grew angry.

"Tell you what, youngster: I've a mind to try the jumping-irons on you for your impudence. You look like a drowned white kitten. Clear off, if you don't want to taste something right red hot."

Bertie's whole body grew sick, but he did not move and he did not quail.

"I would rather you did it to me than to this poor thing," he answered.

"I'm blowed!" said the man, relaxing his wrath from sheer amazement. "Well, you're a good plucked one, you are."

"I do not know what you mean," said Bertie, a little haughtily; "but you shall not hurt the pig."

"Darn me!" yelled the man; "I'll burn you, sure as you live, if you don't kneel on your bare bones and beg my pardon."

"I will not do that."

"You won't beg my pardon for cheeking me?"

"No: you are a wicked man."

Bertie's eyes closed; he grew faint; he fully believed that in another instant he would feel the hissing fire of the brand. But he did not yield.

The man's hand dropped to his side.

"You *are* a plucked one," he said, once more. "Lord, child, it was a joke. You're such a rare game un, to humor you, there, I'll let the crittur go without marking her. But you're a rare little fool, if you're not an angel down from on high."

Bertie's eyes filled with tears. He held his hand out royally to be kissed, as he was used to do at Avillion.

The big, black-looking man crushed it in his own brown paw.

"My! you're a game un!" he muttered, with wonder and awe.

"And you will never, never, never burn pigs any more?" said Bertie, searching his face with his own serious large eyes.

"I'll ne'er brand this un," said the man, with a shamefaced laugh. "Lord, little sir, you're the first as ever got as much as that out of me!"

"But you *never* must do it," said Bertie, solemnly. "It is wicked of you, and God is angry; and it is very mean for you, such a big man and so strong, to hurt a defenceless dumb thing. You must *never* do it."

"What is your name, little master?" said the big man, humbly.

"They call me Avillion."

"William? Then I'll say William all the days of my life at my prayers o' Sundays," said the man, with some emotion, and murmured to himself, "Such a game un I never seed."

"Thanks very much," said Bertie, gently, and then he lifted his hat politely, and went out of the shed before the man could recover from his astonishment. When the little Earl looked back, he saw the giant pouring water on the fire, and the pig was loose.

"I *was* afraid," thought Bertie. "But he should have burnt me all up every bit: I never would have given in."

And something seemed to say in his ear, "The loveliest thing in all the world is courage that goes hand in hand with mercy; and these two together can work miracles, like magicians."

By this time Bertie, except for a certain inalienable grace and refinement that were in his little face and figure, had few marks of a young gentleman. His snowy serge was smirched and stained with blackberries; his red stockings, from the sea-water and the field-mud, had none of their original color; his hat had been bent and crumpled by his fall, and his hair was rough. Nobody passing him could have dreamt

that this sorry wanderer was a little earl. Nevertheless, when he had been dressed in his little court suit and had been taken to see the queen once at Balmoral, he had never been a quarter so proud nor a tenth part so happy. He longed to meet Cromwell, and Richard the Third, and Gessler, and Nero. He began to feel like all the knights he had ever read of, and those were many.

Presently he saw a little maiden weeping. She was an ugly little maiden, with a shock head of red hair, and a wide mouth, and a brickdust skin; but she was crying. In his present heroic mood, he could not pass her by unconsoled.

"Little girl, why do you cry?" he said, stopping in the narrow green lane.

She looked at him out of a sharp little eye, and her face puckered up afresh.

"I'se going to schule, little master!"

"To school, do you mean? And why does that make you cry? Can you read?"

"Naw," said the maiden, and sobbed loudly.

"Then why are you not glad to go and learn?" said Bertie, in his superior wisdom.

"There's naebody to do nowt at home," said the red-haired one, with a howl. "Mother's abed sick, and Tam's hurt his leg, and who'll mind baby? He'll tumble the kittle o'er hisself, I know he will, and he'll be scalt to death, 'll baby!"

"Dear, dear!" said Bertie, sympathetically. "But why do you go to school then?"

"'Cos I isn't thirteen," sobbed the shock-haired nymph: "I'se only ten. And daddy was had up las

week and pit in prison 'cos he kept me at home. And if I ain't at home, who'll mind baby, and who'll bile the taters, and who'll——? Oh, how I wish I was thirteen!"

Bertie did not understand. He had never heard of the School Board.

"What does your father do?" he asked.

"Works i' brick-field. All on us work i' brick-field. I can take baby to brick-field; he sit in the clay beautiful, but they awn't let me take him to schule, and he'll be scalt, I know he'll be scalt. He'll allers get a-nigh the kittle if he can."

"But it is very shocking not to know how to read," said the little Earl, very gravely. "You should have learned that as soon as you could speak. I did."

"Maybe yours aren't brick-field folk," said the little girl, stung by her agony to sarcasm. "I've allers had a baby to mind, ever since I toddled; first 'twas Tam, and then 'twas Dick, and now 'tis this un. I dunno want to read; awn't make bricks a-readin'."

"Oh, but you will learn such beautiful things," said Bertie. "I do think, you know, that you *ought* to go to school."

"So the gemman said as pit dad in th' lock-up," said the recalcitrant one, doggedly. "Butiful things aren't o' much count, sir, when one's belly's empty. I oodn't go to the blackguds now, if 'tweren't as poor dad says as how I must, 'cos they lock him up."

"It seems very hard to lock him up," said Bertie, with increasing sympathy; "and I think you ought to obey him and go. I will see if I can find the baby. Where do you live?"

She pointed vaguely over the copses and pastures: "Go on a mile, and you'll see Jim Bracken's cottage; but, Lord love you! *you*'ll ne'er manage baby."

"I will try," said Bertie, sweetly. His fancy as well as his charity was stirred; for he had never, that he knew of, seen a baby. "But indeed you should go to school."

"I'm a-going," said the groaning and blowsy heroine with a last sob, and then she set off running as quickly as a pair of her father's boots, ten times too large, allowed her, her slate and her books making a loud clatter as she struggled on her way.

He was by this time very tired, for he was not used to such long walks; but curiosity and compassion put fresh spirit into his heart, and his small legs pegged valorously over the rough ground, the red stockings and the silver buckles becoming by this time much begrimed with mud.

He knocked at one cottage door, and saw only a very cross old woman, who flourished a broom at him.

"No, it bean't Jim Bracken's. Get you gone!—you look like a runaway."

Now, a runaway he was; and, as truth when we are guilty is always even as a two-edged sword, Bertie colored up to the roots of his hair, and bolted off as fast as he could to the only other cottage visible, beyond a few acres of mangel-wurzel and all the lucern family, which the little Earl fancied were shamrocks. For he was far on in Euclid, could speak German well, and could spell through Tacitus fairly, but about the flowers of the field and the grasses no one had ever thought it worth while to tell him anything at all.

Indeed, to tell you the truth, I do not think his tutors knew anything about them themselves.

This other cottage was so low, so covered up in its broken thatch, which in turn was covered with lichen, and was so tumble-down and sorrowful-looking, that Bertie thought it was a ruined cow-shed. However, it stood where the school-girl had pointed: so he took his courage in both hands, as we say in French, and advanced to it. The rickety door stood open, and he saw a low miserable bed with a miserable woman lying on it; a shock-headed boy sprawled on the floor, another crouched before a fire of brambles and sods, and between the legs of this last boy was a strange, uncouth, shapeless object, which, but for the fact that it was crying loudly, never would have appeared to his astonished eyes as the baby for whom was prophesied a tragic and early end by the kettle. The boy who had this object in charge stared with two little round eyes.

"Mamsey, there's a young gemman," he said, in an awed voice.

Bertie took off his hat, and went into the room with his prettiest grace.

"If you please, are you very ill?" he said, in his little soft voice, to the woman in bed. "I met—I met—a little girl who was so anxious about the baby, and I said I would come and see if I could be of any use——"

The woman raised herself on one elbow, and looked at him with eager, haggard eyes.

"Lord, little sir, there's naught to be done for us;—leastways, unless you had a shillin' or two——"

"I have no money," murmured Bertie, feeling very

unlike a little earl in that moment. The woman gave a weary angry sigh and sank back indifferent.

"Can I do nothing?" said Bertie, wistfully.

"By golly!" said the boy on the floor, "unless you've got a few coppers, little master——"

"Coppers?" repeated the little Earl.

"Pence," said the boy, shortly; then the baby began to howl, and the boy shook it.

"Do please not make it scream so," said Bertie. "That is what you call the baby, is it not?"

"Iss," said the boy Dick, sullenly. "This here's baby, cuss him! and what bisness be he of yourn?"

For interference without coppers to follow was a barren intruder that he was disposed to resent.

"I thought I could amuse him," said Bertie, timidly. "I told your sister I would."

Dick roared into loud guffaws.

"Baby'd kick you into middle o' next week, you poor little puny spindle-shanks!" said this rude boy; and Bertie felt that he was very rude, though he had no idea what was meant by spindle-shanks.

The other boy, who was lying on his stomach,—a sadly empty little stomach,—here reversed his position and stared up at Bertie.

"I think you're a kind little gemman," he said, "and Dick's cross 'cos he's broke his legs, and we've had no vittles since yesternoon, and only a sup o' tea Peg made afore she went, and mother's main bad, that she be."

And tears rolled down this gentler little lad's dirty cheeks.

"Oh, dear, what shall I do?" said Bertie, with a

sigh: if he had only had the money and the watch that had fallen into the sea! He looked round him and felt very sick; it was all so dirty, so dirty!—and he had never seen dirt before; and the place smelt very close and sour, and the children's clothes were mere rags, and the woman was all skin and bone, on her wretched straw bed; and the unhappy baby was screaming loudly enough to be heard right across the sea to the French coast.

"Baby, poor baby, don't cry so!" said Bertie, very softly, and he dangled the ends of his red sash before its tearful eyes, and shook them up and down: the attention of the baby was arrested, it ceased to howl, and put out its hands, and began to laugh instead! Bertie was very proud of his success, and even the sullen Dick muttered, "Well, I never!"

The little Earl undid his scarf and let the baby pull it towards itself. Dick's eyes twinkled greedily.

"Master, that'd *sell* for summat!"

"Oh, you must not sell it," said the little Earl, eagerly. "It is to amuse the poor baby. And what pretty big eyes he has! how he laughs!"

"Your shoes 'ud sell," muttered Dick.

"Dick! don't, Dick! that's begging," muttered Tam. Bertie stared in surprise. To sell his shoes seemed as odd as to be asked to sell his hair or his hands. The woman opened her fading, glazing eyes.

"They're honest boys, little sir: you'll pardon of 'em; they've eat nothing since yesternoon, and then 'twas only a carrot or two, and boys is main hungry."

"And have you nothing?" said Bertie, aghast at the misery in this unknown world.

"How'd we have anything?" said the sick woman, grimly. "They've locked up my man, and Peg's sent to school while we starve; and nobody earns nothin', for Dick's broke his leg, and I've naught in my breasts for baby——"

"But would not somebody you work for—or the priest—?" began Bertie.

"Passon don't do nowt for us,—my man's a Methody; and at brick-field they don't mind us; if we be there, well an' good,—we work and get paid; and if we isn't there, well—some un else is. That's all." Then she sank back, gasping.

Bertie stood woe-begone and perplexed.

"Did you say my shoes would sell?" he murmured, very miserably, his mind going back to the history of St. Martin and the cloak.

Dick brightened up at once.

"Master, I'll get three shillin' on 'em, maybe more, down in village yonder."

"You mus'n't take the little gemman's things," murmured the mother, feebly; but faintness was stealing on her, and darkness closing over her sight.

"Three shillings!" said Bertie, who knew very little of the value of shillings; "that seems very little! I *think* they cost sovereigns. Could you get a loaf of bread with three shillings?"

"Gu-r-r-r!" grinned Dick, and Bertie understood that the guttural sound meant assent and rapture.

"But I cannot walk without shoes."

"Walk! yah! ye'll walk better. We niver have no shoes!" said Dick.

"Don't you, *really?*"

"Golly! no! Ye'll walk ten times finer; ye won't trip, nor stumble, nor nothin', and ye'll run as fast again."

"Oh, no, I shall not," murmured Bertie, and he was going to say that he would be ashamed to be seen without shoes, only he remembered that, as these boys had none, that would not be kind. A desperate misery came over him at the thought of being shoeless, but then he reasoned with himself, "To give was no charity if it cost you nothing: did not the saints strip themselves to the uttermost shred for the poor?"

He stooped and took off his shoes with the silver buckles on them, and placed them hastily on the floor.

"Take them, if they will get you bread," he said, with the color mounting in his face.

Dick seized them with a yell of joy. "Tarnation that I can't go mysel'. Here, Tam, run quick and sell 'em to old Nan; and get bread, and meat, and potatoes, and milk for baby, and Lord knows what; p'raps a gill of gin for mammy."

"I don't think we ought to rob little master, Dick," murmured little Tam. His brother hurled a crutch at him, and Tam snatched up the pretty shoes and fled.

"My blazes, sir," said Dick, with rather a shamefaced look, "if you'd a beast like a lot of fire gnawing at your belly all night long, yer wouldn't stick at nowt to get bread."

Bertie only imperfectly comprehended. The baby, tired of the sash, began to cry again; and Dick, grown good-natured, danced it up and down.

"How old are you?" said Bertie.

"Nigh on eight," said Dick.

"Dear me!" sighed the little Earl; this rough, masterful, coarse-tongued boy seemed like a grown man to him.

"You won't split on us?" said Dick, sturdily.

"What is that?" asked Bertie.

"Not tell anybody you give us the shoes: there'd be a piece of work."

"As if one *told* when one did any kindness!" murmured Bertie, with a disgust he could not quite conceal. "I mean, when one does one's duty."

"But what'll you gammon 'em with at home?—they'll want to know what you've done with your shoes."

"I am not going home," said the little Earl, and there was a something in the way he spoke that silenced Dick's tongue,—which he would have called his clapper.

"What in the world be the little swell arter?" thought Dick.

Bertie meanwhile, with some awe and anxiety, was watching the livid face of the sick woman: he had never seen illness or death, but it seemed to him that she was very ill indeed.

"Are you not anxious about your mother?" he asked of the rough boy.

"Yes," said Dick, sulkily, with the water coming in his eyes. "Dad's in the lock-up: that's wuss still, young sir."

"Not worse than death," said Bertie, solemnly. "He will come back."

"Oh, she'll come round with a drop of gin and a sup

of broth," said Dick, confidently. "'Tis all hunger and frettin', hers is."

"I am glad I gave my shoes," thought Bertie. Then there was a long silence, broken only by the hissing of the green brambles on the fire and the yelps of the baby.

"Maybe, sir," said Dick, after a little, "you'd put the saucepan on? I can't move with this here leg. If you'd pit some water out o' kittle in him, he'll be ready for cookin' when the vittles come."

"I will do that," said Bertie, cheerfully, and he set the saucepan on by lifting it with both hands: it was very black, and its crock came off on his knicker-bockers. Then, by Dick's directions, he found a pair of old wooden bellows, and blew on the sticks and sods; but this he managed so ill that Dick wriggled himself along the floor closer to the fire and did it himself.

"You're a gaby!" he said to his benefactor.

"What is that?" said Bertie.

But Dick felt that it was more prudent not to explain.

In half an hour Tam burst into the room, breathless and joyous, his scruples having disappeared under the basket he bore.

"She gived me five shillin'!" he shouted; "and I's sure they's wuth a deal more, 'cos her eyes twinkled and winked, and she shoved me a peg-top in!"

"Gie us o't!" shrieked Dick, in an agony at being bound to the floor with all these good things before his sight.

Little Tam, who was very loyal, laid them all out

on the ground before his elder: two quartern loaves, two pounds of beef, onions, potatoes, a bit of bacon, and a jug of milk.

Dick poured some milk into an old tin mug, and handed it roughly to Bertie.

"Feed the baby, will yer, whiles Tam and me cooks?"

The little Earl took the can, and advanced to the formidable bundle of rags, who was screaming like a very hoarse raven.

"I think you should attend to your mother first," he said, gently, as the baby made a grab at the little tin pot, the look of which it seemed to know, and shook half the milk over itself.

"Poor mammy!" said Tam, who was gnawing a bit of bread; and, with his bread in one hand, he got up and put a little gin and water quite hot between his mother's lips. She swallowed it without opening her eyes or seeming to be conscious, and Tam climbed down from the bed again with a clear conscience.

"We'll gie her some broth," he said, manfully, while he and Dick, munching bread and raw bacon, tumbled the beef in a lump into the saucepan, drowned in water with some whole onions, in the common fashion of cottage-cooking. The baby, meanwhile, was placidly swallowing the milk that the little Earl held for it very carefully, and, when that was done, accepted a crust that he offered it to suck.

The two boys were crouching before the crackling fire, munching voraciously, and watching the boiling of the old black pot. They had quite forgotten their benefactor.

"My! What'll Peg say when she's to home?" chuckled Tam.

"She'll say that she'd ha' cooked better," growled Dick. "Golly! ain't the fat good?"

Bertie stood aloof, pleased, and yet sorrowful because they did not notice him.

Even the baby had so completely centred its mind in the crust that it had abandoned all memory of the red scarf.

Bertie looked on a little while, but no one seemed to remember him. The boys' eyes were glowing on the saucepan, and their cheeks were filled out with food as the cherubs in his chapel at home were puffed out with air as they blew celestial trumpets.

He went to the door slowly, looked back, and then retreated into the sunshine.

"It would be mean to put them in mind of me," he thought, as he withdrew.

Suddenly a sharp pain shot through him: a stone had cut his unshod foot.

"Oh, dear me! how ever shall I walk without any shoes or boots!" he thought, miserably; and he was very nearly bursting out crying.

On the edge of these fields was a wood,—a low, dark, rolling wood,—which looked to the little Earl, who missed his own forests, inviting and cool and sweet. By this time it was getting towards noon, and the sun was hot, and he felt thirsty and very tired. He was sad, too: he was glad to have satisfied those poor hungry children, but their indifference to him when they were satisfied was chilling and melancholy.

"But then we ought not to do a kindness that we

may be thanked," he said to himself. "It is a proper punishment to me, because I wished to be thanked, which was mean."

So he settled, as he usually did, that it was all his own fault.

Happily for him, the ground was soft with summer dust, and so he managed to get along the little path that ran from the cottage through the lucern-fields, and from there the path became grass, which was still less trying to his little red stockings.

Yet he was anxious and troubled; he felt heavily weighted for his battle with the world without any shoes on, and he felt he must look ridiculous. For the first time, St. Martin did not seem to him so very much of a hero, because St. Martin's gift was only a cloak. Besides, without his sash, the band of his knickerbockers could be seen; and he was afraid this was indecent.

Nevertheless, he went on bravely, if lamely. Believe me, nothing sets the world more straight than thinking that what is awry in it is one's self.

The wood, which was a well-known spinney famous for pheasants, was reached before very long, though with painful effort. It was chiefly composed of old hawthorn-trees and blackthorn, with here and there a larch or holly. The undergrowth was thick, and the sunbeams were playing at bo-peep with the shadows. Far away over the fields and thorns was a glimmer of blue water, and close around were all manner of ferns, of foxgloves, of grasses, of boughs. The tired little Earl sank downward under one of the old thorns with feet that bled. A wasp had stung him, too, through

his stocking, and the stung place was smarting furiously. "But how much more Christ and the saints suffered!" thought Bertie, seriously and piously, without the smallest touch of vanity.

Lying on the moss under all that greenery, he felt refreshed and soothed, although the foot the wasp had stung throbbed a good deal.

There were all sorts of pretty things to see: the pheasants, who were lords of the manor till October came round, did not mind him in the least, and swept smoothly by with their long tails like court mantles sweeping the grass. Blackbirds, those cheeriest of all birds, pecked at worms and grubs quite near him. Chaffinches were looking for hairs under the brambles to make their second summer nest with. Any hairs serve their purpose,—cows', horses', or dogs'; and if they get a tuft of hare-skin or rabbit-fur they are furnished for the year. A pair of little white-throats were busy in a low bush, gathering the catch-weed that grew thickly there, and a goldfinch was flying away with a lock of sheep's wool in his beak. There were other charming creatures, too: a mole was hurrying to his underground castle, a nuthatch was at work on a rotten tree-trunk, and a gray, odd-looking bird was impaling a dead field-mouse on one of the thorn-branches. Bertie did not know that this gentleman was but the gray shrike, once used in hawking; indeed, he did not know the names or habits of any of the birds; and he lay still hidden in the ferns, and watched them with delight and mute amazement. There were thousands of such pretty creatures in his own woods and brakes at home, but then he was never alone: he

was always either walking with Father Philip or riding with William, and in neither case was he allowed to stop and loiter and lie in the grass, and the sonorous voice of the priest scattered these timid dwellers in the greenwood as surely as did the tread of the pony's hoofs and the barking of Ralph.

"When I am a man I will pass all my life out of doors, and I will get friends with all these pretty things, and ask them what they are doing," he thought; and he was so entranced in this new world hidden away under the low hawthorn boughs of this spinney that he quite forgot he had lost his shoes and did not know where he would sleep when night came. He had quite forgotten his own existence, indeed; and this is just the happiness that comes to us always, when we learn to love the winged and four-footed brethren that Nature has placed so near us, and whom, alas! we so shamefully neglect when we do not do even worse and persecute them. Bertie was quite oblivious that he was a runaway, who had started with a very fine idea or finding out who it was that kept him in prison, and giving him battle wherever he might be: he was much more interested in longing to know what the great gray shrike was, and why it hung up the mouse on the thorn and flew away. If you do not know any more than he did, I may tell you that the shrikes are like your father, and like their game when it has been many days in the larder. It is one of the few ignoble tastes in which birds resemble mankind.

The shrike flew away to look for some more mice, or frogs, or little snakes, or cockroaches, or beetles, for he is a very useful fellow indeed in the woods, though

the keepers are usually silly and wicked enough to try and kill him. His home and his young ones were above in the thicket, and he had stuck all round their nests insects of all kinds: still, he was a provident bird, and was of opinion that every one should work while it is day.

When the shrike flew away after a bumble-bee, the little Earl fell asleep: what with fatigue, and excitement, and the heat of the sun, a sound, dreamless slumber fell upon him there among the birds and the sweet smell of the May buds; and the goldfinch sang to him, while he slept, such a pretty song that he heard it though he was so fast asleep. The goldfinch, though, did not sing for him one bit in the world; he sang for his wife, who was sitting among her callow brood hidden away from sight under the leaves, and with no greater anxiety on her mind than fear of a possible weasel or rat gnawing at her nest from the bottom.

When the little Earl awoke, the sun was not full and golden all about him as it had been; there were long shadows slanting through the spinney, and there was a great globe descending behind the downs of the western horizon. It was probably about six in the evening. Bertie could not tell, for, unluckily for him, he had always had a watch to rely upon, and had never been taught to tell the hour from the "shepherd's hour-glass" in the field-flowers, or calculate the time of day from the length of the shadows. Even now, though night was so nigh, the thought of where he should find a bed did not occur to him, for he was absorbed in a little boy who stood before him,—a very

miserable little black-haired, brown-cheeked boy, who was staring hard at him.

"Now, he, I am sure, is as poor as Dick and Tam," thought the little Earl, "and I have nothing left to give him."

The little boy was endeavoring to hide behind his back a bright bundle of ruffled feathers, and in his other hand he held a complicated arrangement of twine and twigs with a pendent noose.

That Bertie did know the look of, for he had seen his own keepers destroy such things in his own woods, and had heard them swear when they did so. So his land-owner's instincts awoke in him, though the land was not his.

"Oh, little boy," he said, rubbing his eyes and springing to his feet, "what a wicked, wicked little boy you are! You have been snaring a pheasant!"

The small boy, who was about his age, looked frightened and penitent: he saw his accuser was a little gentleman.

"Please, sir, don't tell on me," he said, with a whimper. "I'll gie ye the bird if ye won't tell on me."

"I do not want the bird," said Bertie, with magisterial gravity. "You are a wicked little boy to offer it to me. It is not your own, and you have killed it. You are a *thief!*"

"Please, sir," whimpered the little poacher, "dad allus tooked 'em like this."

"Then he is a thief too," said Bertie.

"He was a good un to me," said the small boy, and then fairly burst out sobbing. "He was a good un to

me, and he's dead a year come Lady-day, and mother she's main bad, and little Susie's got the croup, and there's nowt to eat to home; and I hear Susie cryin', cryin', cryin', and so I gae to cupboard where dad's old tackle be kep, and I gits out this here, and says I to myself, maybe I'll git one of them birds i' spinney, 'cos they make rare broth, and we had a many on 'em when dad was alive, and Towser."

"Who was Towser?"

"He was our lurcher; keeper shot him; he'd bring of 'em in his mouth like a Chrisen; and gin ye'll tell on me, they'll clap me in prison like they did dad, and it's birch rods they'd give yer, and mother's nowt but me."

"I do not know who owns this property," said Bertie, in his little sedate way, "so I could not tell the owner, and I should not wish to do it if I could; but still it is a very wicked thing to snare birds at all, and when they are game-birds it is *robbery*."

"I know as how they makes it so," demurred the poacher's son. "But dad said as how——"

"No one makes it so," said Bertie, with a little righteous anger; "it *is* so: the birds are not yours, and so, if you take them, you are a thief."

The boy put his thumb in his mouth and dangled his dead pheasant.

A discussion on the game-laws was beyond his powers, nor was even Bertie conscious of the mighty subject he was opening, though the instincts of the landowner were naturally in him, and it seemed to him so shocking to find a boy with such views as this as to *meum* and *tuum*, that he almost fancied the sun would

fall from the sky. The sun, however, glowed on, low down in the wood beyond a belt of firs, and the green downs, and the gray sea; and the little sinner stood before him, fascinated by his appearance and frightened at his words.

"Do you know who owns this coppice?" asked Bertie; and the boy answered him, reluctantly,—

"Yes: Sir Henry."

"Then, what you must do," said Bertie, "is to go directly with that bird to Sir Henry, and beg his pardon, and ask him to forgive you. Go at once. That is what you must do."

The boy opened eyes and mouth in amaze.

"That I won't never do," he said, doggedly: "I'd be took up to the lodge afore I'd open my mouth."

"Not if I go with you," said Bertie.

"Be you one of the fam'ly, sir?"

"No," said Bertie, and then was silent in some confusion, for he bethought him that, without any shoes on, he might also be arrested at the lodge gates.

"I thought as not, 'cos you're barefoot," said the brown-cheeked boy, with a little contempt supplying the place of courage. "Dunno who you be, sir, but seems to I as you've no call to preach to me: you be a-trespassin' too."

Bertie colored.

"I am not doing any harm," he said, with dignity; "you are: you have been stealing. If you are not really a wicked boy, you will take the pheasant straight to that gentleman, and beg him to forgive you, and I dare say he will give you work."

"There's no work for my dad's son," said the little

poacher, half sadly, half sullenly: "the keepers are all agen us: 'tis as much as mother and me and Susie can do to git a bit o' bread."

"What work can you do?"

"I can make the gins," said the little sinner, touching the trap with pride. "Mostwhiles, I never come out o' daylight; but all the forenoon Susie was going off her head, want o' summat t' eat."

"I'm sorry for Susie and you," said the little Earl, with sympathy. "But indeed, indeed, nothing can excuse a theft, or make God——"

"The keepers!" yelled the boy, with a scream like a hare's, and he dashed head-foremost into the bushes, casting on to Bertie's lap the gin and the dead bird. Bertie was so surprised that he sat perfectly mute and still: the little boy had disappeared as fast as a rabbit bolts at sight of a ferret. Two grim big men with dogs and guns burst through the hawthorn, and one of them seized the little Earl with no gentle hand.

"You little blackguard! you'll smart for this," yelled the big man. "Treadmill and birch rod, or I'm a Dutchman."

Bertie was so surprised, still, that he was silent. Then, with his little air of innocent majesty, he said, simply, "You are mistaken: I did not kill the bird."

Now, if Bertie had had his usual nicety of apparel, or if the keeper had not been in a fuming fury, the latter would have easily seen that he had accused and apprehended a little gentleman. But no one in a violent rage ever has much sense or sight left to aid him, and Big George, as this keeper was called, did not notice that his dogs were smelling in a friendlv way at

his prisoner, but only saw that he had to do with a pale-faced lad without shoes, and very untidy and dusty-looking, who had snares and a snared pheasant at his feet.

Before Bertie had even seen him take a bit of cord out of his pocket, he had tied the little Earl's hands behind him, picked up the pheasant and the trap, and given some directions to his companion. The real culprit was already a quarter of a mile off, burrowing safely in the earth of an old fox killed in February,—a hiding-place with which he was very familiar.

Bertie, meanwhile, was quite silent. He was thinking to himself, "If I tell them another boy did it, they will go and look for him, and catch him, and put him in prison; and then his mother and Susie will be so miserable,—more miserable than ever. I think I ought to keep quiet. Jesus never said anything when they buffeted him."

"Ah, you little gallows-bird, you'll get it this time!" said the keeper, knotting the string tighter about his wrists, and speaking as if he had had the little Earl very often in such custody.

"You are a very rude man," said Bertie, with the angry color in his cheeks; but Big George heeded him not, being engaged in swearing at one of his dogs,—a young one, who was trotting after a rabbit.

"I know who this youngster is, Bob," he said to his companion: "he's the Radley shaver over from Blackgang."

Bertie wondered who the Radley shaver was that resembled him.

"He has the looks on him," said the other, prudently.

"Sir Henry's dining at Chigwell to-night, and he'll have started afore we get there," continued Big George. "Go you on through spinney far as Edge Pool, and I'll take and lock this here Radley up till morning. Blast his impudence,—a pheasant! think of the likes of it! A pheasant! If 't had been a rabbit, 't had been bad enough."

Then he shook his little captive vigorously.

Bertie did not say anything. He was not in trepidation for himself, but he was in an agony of fear lest the other boy should be found in the spinney.

"March along afore me," said Big George, with much savageness. "And if you tries to bolt, I'll blow your brains out and nail you to a barn-door along o' the owls."

The little Earl looked at him with eyes of scorn and horror.

"How dare you touch Athene's bird?"

"How dare I what, you little saucy blackguard?" thundered Big George, and fetched him a great box on the ears which made Bertie stagger.

"You are a very bad man," he said, breathlessly. "You are a very mean man. You are big, and so you are cruel: that is very mean indeed."

"You've the gift of the gab, little devil of a Radley," said the keeper, wrathfully; "but you'll pipe another tune when you feel the birch and pick oakum."

Bertie set his teeth tight to keep his words in: he walked on mute.

"You've stole some little gemman's togs as well

as my pheasant," said Big George, surveying him. "Why didn't you steal a pair of boots when you was about it?"

Bertie was still mute.

"I will not say anything to this bad man," he thought, "or else he will find out that it was not I."

The sun had set by this time, leaving only a silvery light above the sea and the downs: the pale long twilight of an English day had come upon the earth.

Bertie was very white, and his heart beat fast, and he was growing very hungry; but he managed to stumble on, though very painfully, for his courage would not let him repine before this savage man, who was mixed up in his mind with Bluebeard, and Thor, and Croquemitaine, and Richard III., and Nero, and all the ogres that he had ever met with in his reading, and who seemed to grow larger and larger and larger as the sky and earth grew darker.

Happily for his shoeless feet, the way lay all over grass-lands and mossy paths; but he limped so that the keeper swore at him many times, and the little Earl felt the desperate resignation of the martyr.

At last they came in sight of the keeper's cottage, standing on the edge of the preserves,—a thatched and gabled little building, with a light glimmering in its lattice window.

At the sound of Big George's heavy tread, a woman and some children ran out.

"Lord ha' mercy! George!" cried the wife. "What scarecrow have you been and got?"

"A Radley boy," growled George,—"one of the

cussed Radley boys at last,—and a pheasant snared took in his very hand!"

"You don't mean it!" cried his wife; and the small children yelled and jumped. "What'll be done with him, dad?" cried the eldest of them.

"I'll put him in fowl-house to-night," said Big George, "and up he'll go afore Sir Henry fust thing to morrow. Clear off, young uns, and let me run him in."

Bertie looked up in Big George's face.

"I had nothing to do with killing the bird," he said, in a firm though a faint voice. "You quite mistake. I am Lord Avillion."

"Stop your pipe, or I'll choke yer," swore Big George, enraged by what he termed the "darned cheek" of a Radley boy; and without more ado he laid hold of the little Earl's collar and lifted him into the fowl-house, the door of which was held open eagerly by his eldest girl.

There was a great flapping of wings, screeching of hens, and piping of chicks at the interruption, where all the inmates were gone to roost, and one cock set up his usual salutation to the dawn.

"That's better nor you'll sleep to-morrow night," said Big George, as he tumbled Bertie on to a truss of straw that lay there, when he went out himself, slammed the door, and both locked and barred it on the outside.

Bertie fell back on the straw, sobbing bitterly: his feet were cut and bleeding, his whole body ached like one great bruise, and he was sick and faint with hunger. "If the world be as difficult as this to live in,"

he thought, "how ever do some people manage to live almost to a hundred years in it?" and to his eight-year-old little soul the prospect of a long life seemed so horrible that he sobbed again at the very thought of it. It was quite dark in the fowl-house; the rustling and fluttering of the poultry all around sounded mysterious and unearthly; the strong, unpleasant smell made him faint, and the pain in his feet grew greater every moment. He did not scream or go into convulsions; he was a brave little man, and proud; but he felt as if the long, lonely night there would kill him.

Half an hour, perhaps, had gone by when a woman's voice at the little square window said, softly, "Here is bread and water for you, poor boy; and I've put some milk and cheese, too, only my man mustn't know it."

Bertie with great effort raised himself, and took what was pushed through the tiny window; a mug of milk being lowered to him last by a large red fat hand, on which the light of a candle held without was glowing.

"Thanks very much," said the little Earl, feebly. "But, madam, I did not kill that bird, and indeed I am Lord Avillion."

The good woman went within to her lord, and said timidly to him, "George, are you sartin sure that there's a Radley boy? He do look and speak like a little gemman, and he do say as how he is one."

Big George called her bad names.

"A barefoot gemman!" he said, with a sneer. "You thunderin' fool! it's weazened-faced Vic Radley, as have been in our woods a hundred times if wunce,

though never could I slap eyes on him quick enough to pin him."

The good housewife took up her stocking-mending and said no more. Big George's arguments were sometimes enforced with the fist, and even with the pewter pot or the poker.

Meanwhile, the little Earl in the hen-house was so hungry that he drank the milk and ate the bread and cheese. Both were harder and rougher things than any he had ever tasted; but he had now that hunger which had made the boy on the stile relish the turnip, and, besides, another incident had occurred to give him relish for the food.

At the moment when he had sat down to drink the milk, there had tumbled out from behind the straw a round black-and-white object, unsteady on its legs, and having a very broad nose and a very woolly coat. The moon had risen by this time, and was shining in through the little square window, and by its beams Bertie could see this thing was a puppy,—a Newfoundland puppy some four months old. He welcomed it with as much rapture as ever Robert Bruce did the spider. It had evidently been awakened from its sleep by the smell of the food. It was a pleasant, companionable, warm and kindly creature; it knocked the bread out of his hand, and thrust its square mouth into his milk, but he shared it willingly, and had a hearty cry over it that did him good.

He did not feel all alone, now that this blundering, toppling, shapeless, amiable baby-dog had found its way to him. He caressed it in his arms and kissed it a great many times, and it responded much more grate-

fully than the human baby had done in Jim Bracken's cottage, and finally, despite his bleeding feet and his tired limbs, he fell asleep with his face against the pup's woolly body.

When he awoke, he could not remember what had happened. He called for Deborah, but no Deborah was there. The moon, now full, was shining still through the queer little dusky place; the figures of the fowls, rolled up in balls of feathers and stuck upon one leg, were all that met his straining eyes. He pulled the puppy closer and closer to him: for the first time in his life he felt really frightened.

"I never touched the pheasant," he cried, as loud as he could. "I am Lord Avillion! You have no right to keep me here. Let me out! let me out! let me out!"

The fowls woke up, and then cried and cackled and crowed, and the poor pup whined and yelped dolefully, but he got no other answer. Everybody in Big George's cottage was asleep, except Big George himself, who, with his revolver, his fowling-piece, and a couple of bull-dogs, was gone out again into the woods.

At home, Bertie in his pretty bed, that had belonged to the little Roi de Rome, had always had a soft light burning in a porcelain shade, and his nurse within easy call, and Ralph on the mat by the door. He had never been in the dark before, and he could hear unseen things moving and rustling in the straw, and he felt afraid of the white moonbeams shifting hither and thither and shining on the shape of the big Brahma cock till the great bird looked like a vulture. Once a rat ran swiftly across, and then the fowls shrieked, and

Bertie could not help screaming with them; but in a minute or two he felt ashamed of himself, for he thought, "A rat is God's creature as much as I am; and, as I have not done anything wrong, I do not think they will be allowed to hurt me."

Nevertheless, the night was very terrible. Without the presence of the puppy, no doubt, the little Earl would have frightened himself into convulsions and delirium; but the pup was so comforting to him, so natural, so positively a thing real and in no wise of the outer world, that Bertie kept down, though with many a sob, the panics of unreasoning terror which assailed him as the moon sailed away past the square loop-hole, and a great darkness seemed to wrap him up in it as though some giant were stifling him in a magic cloak.

The pup had not long been taken from its mother, and had been teased all day by the keeper's children, and was frightened, and whimpered a good deal, and cuddled itself close to the little Earl, who hugged it and kissed it in paroxysms of loneliness and longing for comfort.

With these long, horrible black hours, all sorts of notions and terrors assailed him; all he had ever read of dungeons, of enchanted castles, of entrapped princes, of Prince Arthur and the Duke of Rothsay, of the prisoner of Chillon and the Iron Mask, of every kind of hero, martyr, and wizard-bewitched captive, crowded into his mind with horrifying clearness, thronging on him with a host of fearful images and memories.

But this was only in his weaker moments. When he clasped the puppy and felt its warm wet tongue

lick his hair, he gathered up his courage: after all, he thought, Big George was certainly only a keeper,—not an ogre, or an astrologer, or a tyrant of Athens or of Rome.

So he fell off again, after a long and dreadful waking-time, into a fitful slumber, in which his feet ached and his nerves jumped, and the frightful visions assailed him just as much as when he was awake; and how that ghastly night passed by him, he never knew very well.

When he again opened his eyes there was a dim gray light in the fowl-house, and sharp in his ear was ringing the good-morrow of the Brahma chanticleer.

It was daybreak.

A round red face looked in at the square hole, and the voice of the keeper's wife said, "Little gemman, Big George will be arter ye come eight o'clock, and 't 'll go hard wi' yer. Say now, yer didn't snare the bird?"

"No," said Bertie, languidly, lying full length on the straw; he felt shivery and chilly, and very stiff and very miserable in all ways.

"But yer know who did!" persisted the woman. "Now, jist you tell me, and I'll make it all square with George, and he'll let you out, and we'll gie ye porridge, and we'll take ye home on the donkey."

The little Earl was silent.

"Now, drat ye for a obstinate! I can't abide a obstinate," said the woman, angrily. "Who did snare the bird? jist say that; 't is all, and mighty little."

"I will not say that," said Bertie; and the woman slammed a wooden door that there was to the loop-

hole, and told him he was a mule and a pig, and that she was not going to waste any more words about him; she should let the birds out by the bars. What she called the bars, which were two movable lengths of wood at the bottom of one of the walls, did in point of fact soon slip aside, and the fowls all cackled and strutted and fluttered after their different manners, and bustled through the opening towards the daylight and the scattered corn, the Brahma cock having much ado to squeeze his plumage where his wives had passed.

"The puppy's hungry," said Bertie, timidly.

"Drat the puppy!" said the woman outside; and no more compassion was wrung out of her. The little Earl felt very languid, light-headed, and strange; he was faint, and a little feverish.

"Oh, dear, pup! what a night!" he murmured, with a burst of sobbing.

Yet it never occurred to him to purchase his liberty by giving up little guilty Dan.

Some more hours rolled on,—slow, empty, desolate,—filled with the whine of the pup for its mother, and the chirping of unseen martins going in and out of the roof above-head.

"I suppose they mean to starve me to death," thought Bertie, his thoughts clinging to the Duke of Rothsay's story.

He heard the tread of Big George on the ground outside, and his deep voice cursing and swearing, and the children running to and fro, and the hens cackling. Then the little Earl remembered that he was born of brave men, and must not be unworthy of them; and he rose, though unsteadily, and tried to pull his dis-

ordered dress together, and tried, too, not to look afraid.

He recalled Casabianca on the burning ship: Casabianca had not been so very much older than he.

The door was thrust open violently, and that big grim black man looked in. "Come, varmint!" he cried out; "come out and get your merits: birch and bread-and-water and Scripture-readin' for a good month, I'll go bail; and 't 'ud be a year if I wur the beak."

Then Bertie, on his little shaky shivering limbs, walked quite haughtily towards him and the open air, the puppy waddling after him. "You should not be so very rough and rude," he said: "I will go with you. But the puppy wants some milk."

Big George's only answer was to clutch wildly at Bertie's clothes and hurl him anyhow, head first, into a little pony-cart that stood ready. "Such tarnation cheek I never seed," he swore; "but all them Radley imps are as like one to t' other as so many ribston-pippins,—all the gift o' the gab and tallow-faces!"

Bertie, lying very sick and dizzy in the bottom of the cart, managed to find breath to call out to the woman on the door-step, "Please do give the puppy something; it has been so hungry all night."

"That's no Radley boy," said the keeper's wife to her eldest girl as the cart drove away. "Only a little gemman 'ud ha' thought of the pup. Strikes me, lass, your daddy's put a rod in pickle for hisself along o' his tantrums and tivies."

It was but a mile and a half from the keeper's cottage to the mansion of the Sir Henry who was owner of these lands; and the pony spun along at a swing

trot, and Big George, smoking and rattling along, never deigned to look at his prisoner.

"Another poachin' boy, Mr. Mason?" said the woman who opened the lodge gates; and Big George answered, heartily,—

"Ay, ay, a Radley imp caught at last. Got the bird on him, and the gin too. What d'ye call that?"

"I call it like your vigilance, Mr. Mason," said the lodge-keeper. "But, lawks! he do look a mite!"

Big George spun on up the avenue with the air of a man who knew his own important place in the world, and the little cart was soon pulled up at the steps of a stately Italian-like building.

"See Sir Henry to wunce: poachin' case," said Big George to the footman lounging about the doorway.

"Of course, Mr. Mason. Sir Henry said as you was to go to him directly."

"Step this way," said one of the men; and Big George proceeded to haul Bertie out of the cart as unceremoniously as he had thrown him in; but the little Earl, although his head spun and his shoeless feet ached, managed to get down himself, and staggered across the hall.

"A Radley boy!" said Big George, displaying him with much pride. "All the spring and all the winter I've been after that weazen-faced varmint, and now I've *got* him."

"Sir Henry waits," said a functionary; and Big George marched into a handsome library, dragging his captive behind him, towards the central writing-table, at which a good-looking elderly gentleman was sitting.

Arrived before his master, the demeanor of Big George underwent a remarkable change; he cringed, and he pulled his lock of hair, and he scraped about with his leg in the humblest manner possible, and proceeded to lay the dead pheasant and the trap and gear upon the table.

"Took him in the ac', Sir Henry," he said, with triumph piercing through deference. "I been after him ages; he's a Radley boy, the little gallows-bird; he's been snarin' and dodgin' and stealin' all the winter long, and here we've got him."

"He is very small,—quite a child," said Sir Henry, doubtingly, trying to see the culprit.

"He's stunted in his growth along o' wickedness, sir," said Big George, very positively; "but he's old in wice; that's what he is, sir,—old in wice."

At that moment Bertie managed to get in front of him, and lifted his little faint voice.

"He has made a mistake," he said, feebly: "I never killed your birds at all, and I am Lord Avillion."

"Good heavens! you thundering idiot!" shouted Sir Henry, springing to his feet. "This is the little Earl they are looking for all over the island, and all over the country! My dear little fellow, how can I ever——"

His apologies were cut short by Bertie dropping down in a dead faint at his feet, so weak was he from cold, and hunger, and exhaustion, and unwonted exposure.

It was not very long, however, before all the alarmed household, pouring in at the furious ringing of their master's bell, had revived the little Earl, and brought

him to his senses none the worse for the momentary eclipse of them.

"Please do not be angry with your man," murmured Bertie, as he lay on one of the wide leathern couches. "He meant to do his duty; and please —will you let me buy the puppy?"

Of course Sir Henry would not allow the little Earl to wander any farther afield, and of course a horseman was sent over in hot haste to apprise his people, misled by the boat-lad, who, frightened at his own share in the little gentleman's escape, had sworn till he was hoarse that he had seen Lord Avillion take a boat for Rye.

So Bertie's liberty was nipped in the bud, and very sorrowfully and wistfully he strayed out on to the rose-terrace of Sir Henry's house, awaiting the coming of his friends. The puppy had been fetched, and was tumbling and waddling solemnly beside him; yet he was very sad at heart.

"What are you thinking of, my child?" said Sir Henry, who was a gentle and learned man.

Bertie's mouth quivered.

"I see," he said, hesitatingly,—"I see *I* am nothing. It is the title they give me, and the money I have got, that make the people so good to me. When I am only *me*, you see how it is."

And the tears rolled down his face, which he had heard called "wizen" and "puny" and likened to tallow.

"My dear little fellow," said his grown-up companion, tenderly, "there comes a day when even kings are stripped of all their pomp, and lie naked and stark;

it is then that which they have done, not that which they have been, that will find them grace and let them rise again."

"But I am nothing!" said Bertie, piteously. "You see, when the people do not know who I am, they think me nothing at all."

"I don't fancy Peggy and Dan will think so when we tell them everything," said the host. "We are all of us nothing in ourselves, my child; only, here and there we pluck a bit of lavender,—that is, we do some good thing or say some kind word,—and then we get a sweet savor from it. You will gather a great deal of lavender in your life, or I am mistaken."

"I will try," said Bertie, who understood.

So, off the downs that day, and in the pleasant hawthorn woods of the friendly little Isle, he plucked two heads of lavender,—humility and sympathy. Believe me, they are worth as much as was the moly of Ulysses.

THE END.