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THE

CANARY-

BIRD.





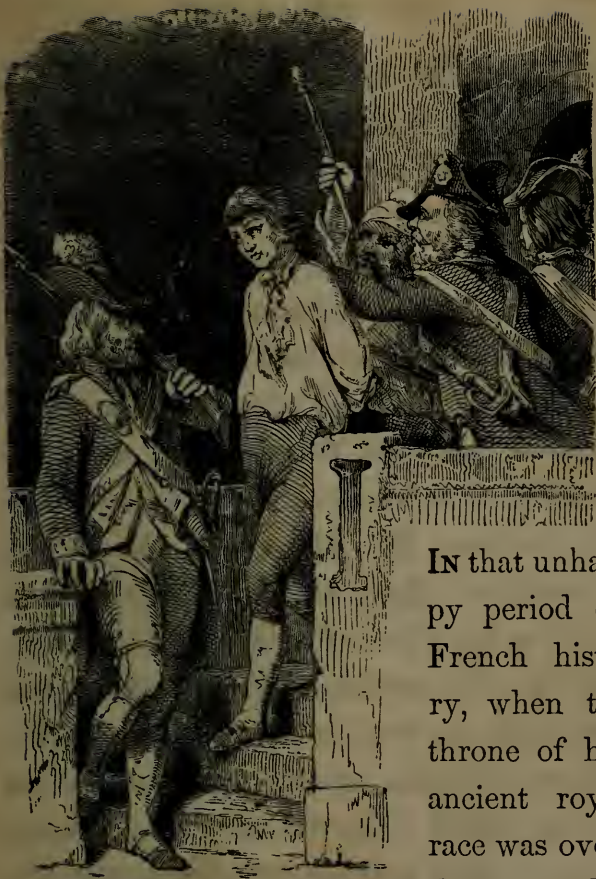
“Behold, yonder lives the honest old man
who is to shelter you.”

THE CANARY BIRD



NEW YORK:
EDWARD DUNIGAN & BROTHER,
CATHOLIC PUBLISHING HOUSE,
599 BROADWAY.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1849
By EDWARD DUNIGAN,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for
the Southern District of New-York.



IN that unhappy period of French history, when the throne of her ancient royal race was overthrown, and a

multitude of her noblest families plunged into the deepest misery, there lived on the farther bank of the Rhine a family named

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D'Erlau. Mr. D'Erlau was a man of high principle and excellent disposition; his wife was a very good and amiable lady; and their two children, Charles and Lina, were exact copies of their parents' virtuous dispositions. The moment that the fearful disturbances, which cost all Europe such streams of blood and of tears, broke out in France, Mr. von Erlau retired from the metropolis to his most remote estate, which lay between the Rhine and the Vosges mountain. Here, in his castle, which, as well as the adjacent village, was surrounded by rocks, vine-clad hills, corn fields, and orchards, he lived with his family in the deepest solitude, far away from the business of the world. His retainers, who honored him as their greatest benefactor, and who hitherto had been accustomed to see him only for a few weeks each year, were delighted to find him now permanently

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settled amidst them. His kindness to them was beyond description—the country all around was like a garden—and the object of his generous ambition was, to render it a garden of Paradise by elevating the character of its inhabitants.

Devotedly attached to his children, he esteemed it a great happiness that he here found time to be himself their instructor; and his most delightful hours were those which he spent in instructing them in religion. He was firmly convinced that religion alone is capable of truly forming a man, imparting to him true worth, securing his happiness, and comforting him in the hour of necessity or of death. His virtuous wife, penetrated with the same feelings, always sat by during these lessons, and her tender and pious maternal heart often suggested an impressive sentiment confirmatory of the instructions. In these times of peril,

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the father dwelt with special emotion on God's holy Providence, and on confidence in Him. When the mother looked upon her children, who were doomed to pass through this stormy world, and then thought of the love which rules all destinies on high, she shed tears at once of sorrow and of joy, and her words became truly "spirit and life." What came from the heart found its way to the heart. The good children listened with the utmost attention and piety, and the tears often glistened in their eyes also. Both parents and children, however, notwithstanding the perils which encompassed them, preserved a joyous and cheerful spirit.

In addition to the most important subject of all, religion, Mr. D'Erlau instructed his children in every other useful and necessary science; nor did he even overlook those things which are but ornamental, and

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serve to add to the enjoyments of life. He himself, among other accomplishments, played admirably upon the harpsichord, and sang so extremely well, that few, except his wife, could excel him. He taught little Charles, therefore, to play the harpsichord, and gentle little Lina to sing.

One gloomy and terrific evening in the end of winter, the father and mother, with Charles and Lina, were sitting together at the harpsichord, in their warm and brilliant saloon; for music and singing was their ordinary relaxation at this season of the year. Mr. D'Erlau had written a little hymn to God's protecting Providence, specially for the two children, set it to an easy, pleasing air, and composed for it an accompaniment so simply arranged that the little fellow could compass it with his tiny fingers. Their mother did not know anything of it as yet, for the children wished to give her

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an agreeable surprise with their hymn. After she had sung several beautiful airs, therefore, with her own matchless voice, her husband accompanying her on the instrument, he called upon the children to give a specimen of their little skill; and the little ones, modestly, but yet with great sweetness, sang the air which he had composed. Their mother was charmed with this first performance of her darling children. No concert at the king's court could have given her so much pleasure. "Yes," she cried, "God, who has yet protected you, will still be your powerful Protector."

But lo!—on a sudden the door was flung violently open,—a body of the National Guard, in full uniform, pressed forcibly into the apartment—the leader of the troop produced an order for Mr. D'Er-lau's arrest: he was taken prisoner, and informed that, without remonstrance or

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delay, he must accompany them to the town prison. He was charged with being a royalist, and an enemy of liberty—this was the ground assigned in the order for his arrest. The mother threw herself at the feet of the rude man who stood before her, with dark flashing eyes, tangled black hair hanging dishevelled on his forehead, and a fierce-looking bushy beard.—She wrung her hands; the scalding tears streamed down her cheeks, pale with terror; her two little ones, too, held up their tender little hands, praying and beseeching them not to take away their father.—The tears chased each other down their cheeks, and in a short time they could not articulate for sobbing. All was in vain! They did not even obtain a delay till the morrow, not even for a single hour, to enable him to pack up a few necessaries for his dreary residence in the prison.

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They were immovable. He was ordered to proceed upon the spot; and while the mother embraced him with tears and loud lamentations, and the children clung to his knees, he was violently torn from them and led away.

It would be idle to attempt a description of the sorrow of the mother and her children. They were guarded in the apartment, in order to prevent all further excitement in the village, in which D'Er-lau was very much loved. The mother had fainted away with terror; and now she sat in an arm-chair, weeping, wringing her hands, and raising her streaming eyes to heaven, the children sobbing and wailing around her. In a short time, however, this pious and high-souled woman recovered her firmness. "Let us not so soon, my dearest children," she cried, "abandon our hope in God! 'Tis He who has sent

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us this dreadful trial: He, too, will give us grace to support it; He will turn it to our advantage, and change it hereafter into joy. Let us say to Him cheerfully and confidently, 'Lord, Thy will be done.'"

CHAPTER II.

THE MOTHER'S FLIGHT.

THE unhappy lady employed every possible exertion to obtain her husband's release. The moment the guard was withdrawn, she flew to the city. She went to the judges, declared her husband's complete innocence; appealed to the evidence of the whole neighborhood, that he had always lived peaceful and retired, not mixing at all in public business, nor even speaking to any one upon it. She flung herself at

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their feet, but she might as well have spoken to statues of stone. Not one of them was moved to pity, and all she could obtain from them was permission to visit her husband in prison; and she was even informed, that in a few days he must die a bloody death.

When she returned, after three days, to her residence, the castle was beset by soldiers. Her property had been sequestered, and the castle pillaged, and converted into a barrack. She was not even allowed to go in, and went sadly away, weeping and bewailing her children, for no one could tell her where they were. All her people were dispersed; it was now late in the evening, and she knew not whither to turn, even for shelter during the night.

In the dusk of twilight she met Richard, her old and faithful servant.

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“Ah! my dear, kind lady,” said he, “you are in imminent peril of being arrested at any moment. In some hasty moment you dropped a few words about ‘injustice and barbarity crying out to heaven;’ about ‘oppression under the semblance of freedom.’ Some evil-minded persons have taken up these words, and given information in the proper quarter, and now there is no hope possibly for you but in instant flight. To harbor you would be attended with too much danger; you could not hope to save your husband; and your remaining would but lead to your own destruction. Your children are in my house; come thither with me; my brother, the old fisherman of the Rhine, is already in expectation; I will accompany you to him to-night, and he will transport you and your children safely across the Rhine, and thus you shall, at least, save your life.”

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She went to honest Richard's house, which was in the village. But a new trouble awaited her here. On the very day on which her mother went to the city, Lina had taken ill, with grief and alarm, and the sickness had this evening greatly increased. The poor little girl lay in a violent fever. She was quite delirious, and did not recognize even her mother. The mother, therefore, insisted upon remaining and taking charge herself of her darling child; but the physician, who was present at the moment, very earnestly opposed this resolution.

"The patient," he said, "will not hold out much longer; she will not recover her senses any more, and may now be regarded as dead. The lady's presence cannot now be of any use to the poor child; and it is her duty to think of her own safety."

The afflicted mother stood, pale as

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death, and her eyes red with weeping, by the sick bed, unable to resolve on leaving it. The physician took her gently by the arm, urging her anxiously to fly. She made a step or two towards the door, trembled from head to foot, and then turned round eagerly with outstretched arms, and clasping her daughter to her heart, cried out in a tone of deep anguish, "No, my darling child! I cannot leave you! I care not for life! I will die with you!"

Old Richard and his good wife besought her with uplifted hands to set out without delay, and promised solemnly to take care of the sick child as though she were their own.

"Night has just fallen," said Richard: "under its protecting shade it is possible to escape; every delay brings danger, and may cost not alone you, my dear, noble

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lady, but also myself and my wife, our lives; for to harbor any one for a night, without giving previous notice, is forbidden under pain of death."

"Well, dearest Lina," said the heart-broken mother, "if I can render you no further service in this world; if my remaining here can serve no end but to bring these good old people to the scaffold; I will now go in God's name. Farewell, dearest angel; go to the abodes of bliss, where innocence no longer is doomed to suffer, where the tear ceases to flow, and loving hearts shall know no further separation."

Little Charles, who stood beside his mother, took his sister's hand with tears and sobs.

"Rejoice, dear Lina," said he, "you will now be a bright angel in heaven. There you will be far happier than here on earth,

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where we must ever live in fear and in anxiety. Oh! that I could go with you!"

The mother knelt down by her darling daughter's sick bed.

"To Thee, O God," she cried, looking up to heaven, "to Thee I offer her as a sacrifice. I deliver her, without reserve, to Thy mercy and compassion!"

She was silent for a few moments; stood up quickly, kissed Lina, then took Charles's hand, and without looking around, passed out of the door, trembling in every nerve with suppressed emotion.

She now betook herself to flight. The trusty servant had collected some necessaries for the journey, and appeared very heavily laden. The poor lady followed him, carrying a little packet under one arm, and holding with the other hand her dear little boy, who also carried a small bundle. Not a word was exchanged. The

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night was most severe, it blew and rained fearfully. "This storm and these torrents of rain," said the old man, in a low voice, "are pure mercies from God; they shelter us from our enemies. Thus, everything that to us appears terrific, actually tends to our advantage; and thus it is with the sorrows, the storms, and the gloomy occurrences of life!"

They arrived, at length, at the old fisherman's house, and went into the little sooty room, dimly lighted by a single oil-lamp. The generous fisherman welcomed the lady and her boy heartily to his hut. While he, with Richard's assistance, was conveying the skiff to the Rhine, his wife set before the lady and the little boy some warm soup, bread, and a little wine. Trembling with cold and with fear, they swallowed a few morsels. The two men returned. They conducted the lady to

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the Rhine. The moon, now in the last quarter, had arisen, and shone at intervals through broken clouds, enlivening the terrific darkness a little. The poor lady left an icy chill come over her, as she stood on the brink of the vast river, roaring fearfully in the might of its current, and saw their wretched little skiff scarcely capable of holding two persons. She trembled as they urged her and her little boy to go on board; but the men gave her courage. The old fisherman stepped in, seized the oar, and with pious confidence predicted, "God will help us over!"

Richard now took his leave; the faithful fellow had secured, in the plunder of the castle, a gold box, a gold watch, and a couple of diamond rings. These he now delivered up to Madam D'Erlau, and he added a few gold pieces which he had saved in her service, without saying that they were

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his own. As he kissed her hand, he wept bitterly; and he pressed the little boy to his heart with many a deep sob.

“O, my dear lady!” he said, “I am an old man, and this is the last time I shall ever see you and my dear Charles. I cannot be of further service to you, but God will protect you; He still has happy days in store for you. So good a mistress cannot be left a prey to misfortune. I would gladly accompany you; but perhaps, I shall yet find means to rescue my kind and noble master. I will leave nothing untried.”

They all wept and sobbed together. The lady once more commended to him the care of her husband and her daughter; the old man faithfully promised this, and assisted her and Charles to get on board.

As the boat pushed off, Richard fell

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upon his knees on the shore, and raised up his hands to heaven.

“I will kneel here,” he cried, “and pray to God for a safe passage for them; I shall not rise from my knees, till my brother shall bring the glad tidings of their safety. Oh! that I could bring to them there the same happy news of my dear master and their darling little daughter!”

CHAPTER III.

THE HONEST TYROLESE.

MADAME D'ERLAU had crossed the Rhine in safety with her boy, and was now secure. But she could not remain where she was. There were great difficulties in the way of a refugee's remaining in that country, and besides the scene of the war

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was drawing nearer every day. By the directions which Richard had given her she travelled along the Rhine to Switzerland. Her money disappeared rapidly. The cost of living in Switzerland was represented as too high, and she was advised to seek a retreat in Swabia. After much fruitless wandering hither and thither, she came to the frontier of the Tyrol; and at last, by the mediation of a benevolent man, she obtained a promise that an old Tyrolese would give her shelter in his cottage.

She prepared at once, with little Charles, for the journey, the guide, who showed her the way, also carrying the baggage. Her road lay over high mountains and deep valleys. At last, as she reached the summit of one of these mountains, she espied, at a fearful depth below, a narrow green valley. On the right of this valley, at the foot of a gloomy over-hanging cliff, stood

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a few low wooden cottages, with flat, and almost perfectly plane roofs, from the midst of which arose gleaming, as though it were covered with glossy gray silk, the window, roof, and spire, of a little chapel. On the left of the valley stood a bleak pine forest, behind which two mountain peaks arose to the clouds, still entirely covered with snow, though everything in the valley was green and blooming. The guide pointed into the valley with his staff, and said, "That is Schwarzenfels! Below, yonder, lives the honest old man who is to shelter you." Madam D'Erlau sighed, and descended by the narrow foot-path.

The old Tyrol^{er}, who had been expecting her on that day, came out to meet her with a hearty and cordial air. Though old, he was still a hale man. With our forms of politeness he was entirely unacquainted. He never dreamed of our cere

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monious forms of address in speaking to any one. Still he had his own correct notions of good breeding. And on this day, to testify his respect for the strange lady, he appeared in his gray Sunday jacket, with his scarlet neck-cloth, and wore his fine green hat, from which a waving cock's feather dangled. "God save you, noble lady!" said he; "I am delighted to be able to afford you and your little boy a shelter under my roof."

His wife, a fine old gray-headed, but rosy-cheeked dame, stood at the door. Her dress was scrupulously clean. As she was just coming from the kitchen, she rubbed her hand in her white apron, before she offered it to the lady. "God save you, dear lady!" said she, "our meal is just ready, but you must put up with humble fare. We have little here but milk and butter, oaten bread and potatoes."

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The Tyrolese conducted the lady into a side apartment, the little window of which looked out upon the gloomy pine forest and the snow-covered peaks. The whole furniture of the room consisted of a table, a bench, two deal chairs, and a shining green earthenware stove, which supplied the place of a grate; beside it, there was a small miserable sleeping closet. Still the lady thanked God for having granted her even this little spot.

She managed her little housekeeping as well as circumstances permitted. She cooked for herself, and spent the rest of the time in knitting and sewing, by which she earned a trifle. Her greatest anxiety was to keep Charles occupied. She had no books to instruct him herself; and beside, he had already begun to learn Latin. One morning as she was thinking anxiously about this, the little bell of the chapel began

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to ring, and her good, pious hostess came running in to say that the parish priest, from the village on the opposite side of the mountain, was going to say Mass that day. Madam D'Erlau at once went with Charles to the chapel. The priest after Mass made a little address, which affected her deeply. After Mass she spoke to him, and found him a very intelligent, pious, benevolent man. He promised to provide the necessary books, and to instruct Charles for a couple of hours every afternoon, if he would take the trouble of coming over the mountain to him.

Charles agreed to this gladly, and now that he had a fixed occupation once more, was doubly happy. He could hardly wait for his dinner, in his anxiety to be early over the mountain with his books. Meanwhile, however, when, at times, it rained for days together, and he was prevented

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from going out, the poor fellow was almost without any means of entertainment. His prudent mother was convinced that innocent recreation is just as necessary as work, and tried to devise some means of providing both for him.

In the Tyrol they breed a great many canary-birds, which are sold far and near, by dealers who make a special trade of it. Their old host, too, had at that moment, several very fine young canaries, and Charles begged his mother, as these birds were so cheap here, to buy one of them for him.

“Lina used always to have one at home,” said he: “buy one for me, and we shall have something, amid these rocks and woods, to remind us of our dear native land!”

His mother readily consented, and the boy selected for himself, from among all

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the birds, the prettiest one, and that which most resembled the bird his sister had formerly had.

Charles took the greatest delight in the little yellow bird, with its bright, black little eyes. In a short time it became tame, and would fly to him when he stretched out his finger, and pick the crumbs even from his very lips.—When he sat down to write, it would fly to him, perch on his pen, and peck at his finger; so that, though these tricks delighted him, he was often obliged to shut it in its cage, in order to labor without interruption. When the bird began to sing, he was never tired praising its notes.

“You must teach him some pretty little piece,” said the old Tyrolese to him, one day.

Charles thought the old man was joking, for he did not know that birds can be

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taught to sing airs. The old man produced a small instrument, which he called a little flageolet.

“ Ah ! ” said Charles, “ that is a beautiful little ivory flute ! ” His host played a little waltz for him, and showed him how to hold it. The boy was charmed with its clear, distinct tones ; and as he had great musical talent, learned it easily, and soon was able to play every piece the moment he heard it. He often would play for the bird now, and always the same piece ; and when, at length, the bird sang it for the first time perfectly and without a mistake, he actually leaped for joy ; and his mother smiled, and told him that he must always have to say his lesson as correctly and as readily as the bird. And thus the canary-bird and the flute were the source of many a pleasant hour to the merry boy, and even to his mother, when it happened that storm

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or rain shut them up in their gloomy apartment.

Meanwhile the fate of her husband and daughter was ever before Madam D'Erlau's mind, and caused her many a sad day, and many a sleepless and tearful night. She was always on the watch for intelligence, but in vain. The only French news she saw was in the journals which the parish priest used to send her every week by Charles, not receiving them oftener himself. One evening, Charles came joyously into the house, and took the papers out of his bag. "The parish priest," said he, "had not time to read them all through, but he had seen that they contain a great deal of good news."

She read eagerly, and found that the news about the war was really very good; and she began to hope that she might soon again venture to return to her dear native

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land. But, alas! at the end of the last journal was a list of the nobles who had been executed for their devotion to the old regime, and among them was the name of her husband, Henri D'Erlau! She shrieked as though a thunderbolt had smote her; the paper dropped from her hand, and she fell down in a swoon. It was long before the people of the house, who hastened in at Charles's cries, were able to restore her. She fell into a dangerous illness; her recovery was extremely uncertain; the poor boy, who never for a moment quitted her bedside, wasted visibly away; and many a time the old Tyrolese would shake his head and say—

“Alas! the coming harvest will strew its leaves on the grave of this poor lady; and the little boy will, perhaps, never see the next spring.”

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CHAPTER IV.

THE FATHER IN PRISON

RICHARD, the faithful old servant, had waited on the opposite bank of the Rhine till his brother, the fisherman, returned with the news of the lady's having safely reached the opposite bank. His greatest anxiety now was to save his dear master from death; for Richard thought it the extreme of injustice that he should perish for his devotion to the rightful king.

Early on the following day he hastened to the town. He had a son in the town, named Robert, who had been compelled to serve in the National Guard; and by the assistance of this brave and quick-witted youth, who took his turn in guarding the

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prisoners, Richard hoped to rescue his master from prison. They devised every sort of plan, but could not form any that was practicable. At last they resolved that the son should keep a sharp look-out, and embrace the first favorable opportunity to release his lord. None however offered, and Robert began to abandon all hope.

At last, Monsieur D'Erlau was condemned to die, and the sentence was ordered to be executed upon the following morning. Gloomily resting his head upon his hand, he sat late at night in his solitary cell, unable to sleep. They had not thought it worth while to bring him a light, so that he sat in utter darkness. He thought of his wife and children. His care was for them, and not for himself. In utter ignorance of what had befallen them, he was full of anxiety for their fate. But the sentiment which, with a glance to heaven, he

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had uttered when his death-sentence was pronounced, still remained unshaken in his heart—"O Lord, Thy will be done!"

He turned all his thoughts to God. "In whom," said he, among other things, "shall I find comfort in this the last night of my life, save in Thee, dearest Father in heaven! What thou permittest, is ever the best. Do, therefore, with me and with mine, according to Thy divine will. If Thou takest me from my wife and my dear children, Thou wilt watch over them Thyself with paternal care, and comfort them in their great affliction; and in firm reliance upon Thee, I will lay my head upon the block, which is already stained with the blood of so many of my friends. If, on the contrary, Thou wilt grant me yet a little longer to my wife and children, it is easy for Thee to open the door of my prison, and deliver me from the power of my enemies, and

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our whole lives shall be devoted to continual thanksgiving to Thee!"

While the high-minded prisoner was buried in such thoughts as these, a sudden alarm was raised upon the gallery outside. In a moment, the door of his prison was flung open; clouds of smoke rushed in, and a fearful glare illuminated the entire cell. A young soldier stood before him and cried out, "Save yourself, in God's name!"

The young soldier was Robert, Richard's son. By the carelessness of a drunken soldier, a fire had broken out in the building where the prisoners were confined. The soldiers who guarded the prisoner's gate, had laid aside their arms and uniforms, and were engaged in extinguishing it. Robert made use of the first confusion to seize the uniform and arms of one of the soldiers and run with them to M. L'Erlau.

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“Be quick, and draw these clothes upon you!” he cried; and he assisted him to put on the uniform, placed the hat with the plume and cockade upon the side of his head, buckled on his sabre-belt, and put the musket upon his arm. The beard which the poor gentleman had let grow during his confinement, made him resemble more closely the savage-looking soldiers of the time, and completed his military appearance.

“Now,” said Robert, “hasten boldly down the staircase, and out of the great gate. In this guise you will pass, I think, without difficulty. Then make the best of your way to my father, who will be found at the house of his brother, the fisherman, upon the Rhine.”

The sight of the young soldier had been to M. D'Erlau like the apparition of an angel, and his words like a message from

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heaven. He fell at once into the plan. With all the earnestness of one who had most important business, he hastened down the stairs, cried out with an authoritative tone to the people, who were pressing in with fire-buckets, "Way, way!" and reached the street without interruption. With a bold air and a rapid step, he went straight to the great gate, and having learned the word from Robert, he passed safely out of the city.

Long after midnight he reached the old fisherman's house. He knocked at the window-shutter. The fisherman came out, and was no little alarmed. He imagined it was a soldier, come to arrest him or his brother, for they had made many enemies by their attachment and fidelity to the Erlau family. But when the worthy fisherman recognized M. D'Erlau, he lifted up his hands in wonder and thanks-

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giving, and led him joyously into the room. Richard, who had been waiting and watching here for ten nights, threw himself into his arms, crying out, "My dear master!" and they embraced one another affectionately. Erlau's first question was about his wife and children. Richard told him that the lady and Charles had escaped, that Miss Lina had been ill but was now well again, and in the house at that moment. The little girl, indeed, slept in the next room, and being awakened by Richard's joyous exclamation, she had recognized her father's voice. She hastened to him with tears of joy, threw herself into his arms, and his tears plentifully bedewed the rosy cheeks of his child.

He resolved to cross the Rhine while it was still night, in order to escape from the country which once was a paradise, and now was but a den of murderers; and he

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wished to cross to the still peaceful soil of Germany, in the same boat which had transported his wife and son across the river. He prepared himself and Lina for the journey without delay. The old fisherman went before them, and Richard followed with a portmanteau on his back. The night was clear and starry. In deep silence they were approaching the Rhine, where the little skiff lay in readiness among the bushes, when on a sudden they heard shots behind them, and a number of rough voices cried out, "Halt, halt!"

The fire in the prison had soon been extinguished, and the soldiers, the moment it was over, examined carefully to see whether any of the prisoners had escaped during the confusion and uproar of extinguishing it. To their great mortification, they found M. D'Erlau's cell empty. The soldier who missed his uniform, his musket,

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and his sabre, cried out furiously: "He has fled in my uniform and arms! let us follow him at once!" They soon obtained traces of the fugitive; and a whole troop of excited soldiers set out in hot pursuit. With fearful shouts they drew nigh. The poor fugitives were frightened almost to death, and made all the haste they could to reach the boat. M. D'Erlau, with Lina in his arms, sprang hastily in; Richard followed him; both seized the oars and rowed with might and main. The old fisherman, for whom there would not have been room in the boat, concealed himself in the hollow of a willow tree.

But the boat was hardly twenty paces from the shore, when the soldiers reached the bank, and commenced firing on the fugitives. The bullets whizzed frightfully about the ears of the innocent voyagers. D'Erlau ordered Lina to lie down in the

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boat; and they redoubled their exertions. A ball pierced M. D'Erlau's hat, and two others lodged in Richard's oar. The skiff, which was sunk to within an inch of the water, tottered and was almost sinking; but they all escaped unhurt, nevertheless, and reached the opposite shore in safety.

M. D'Erlau fell upon his knees to thank God, and Lina and Richard followed his example; and after this they sat down on the trunk of a fallen tree, to rest after their desperate exertions. When they were a little rested, Richard, who had resolved not to leave his master in his trouble, led the way with his staff in his hand and the heavy burden on his back, and his master and Miss Lina followed him. He took the road which led to the mountain forest of Swabia, which, from the number of black and gloomy pines which are found there, is called the Black Forest.

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CHAPTER V.

THE FAITHFUL SERVANT.

M. D'ERLAU'S greatest anxiety now was to find his wife. Richard was acquainted with an honest peasant in the neighborhood of the Black Forest, and to him they made their way in the first instance, in order to rest for a few days, and prepare for the rest of their journey. But hardly had D'Erlau set his foot within the cottage, when he began to speak of going. "I shall not have one easy moment," said he to Richard, "till I shall have found my wife and son once more. You tell me confidently, dear Richard, that they are in Switzerland. But how shall we ever make our way thither? Lina will never be able

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to travel there on foot, and I am not able to take any conveyance."

Richard produced a purse of gold, and emptied it upon the table.



"You are not so poor as you think, my dear, noble master," said he: "all this is yours."

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M. D'Erlau stared now at the gold, now at the faithful servant.

“As you were always independent,” continued Richard, “so you were always benevolent too. How many persons are there, to whom you advanced money in their distress. Some of this money I have collected while you were languishing in prison, and your wife was an exile in a distant country. And although, as I found in this case, there are some who possess neither gratitude nor honesty, yet I also met many worthy souls, who not only repaid the money which had been lent, but, in love and gratitude to their kind master, added from their own stock to the amount.”

M. D'Erlau counted the money. “It is a great deal, a very great deal,” said he, with a grateful look towards heaven; “but how long will it last! how long can it last!”

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“Never mind,” said Richard. “We shall manage it, and, never fear, we shall have enough to travel comfortably to Switzerland.”

Richard bought a horse and a light farmer’s cart, which was so arranged that it could be covered against the wind and rain. They set out on their journey. Richard generally walked by the side of the cart. M. D’Erlau and Lina wished to take it by turns with him; but at the urgent request of the kind-hearted old man, they were obliged to ride almost always. In this way they reached Switzerland. But M. D’Erlau could not hear anywhere a syllable about his wife: all his inquiries were in vain. He was convinced that she must have taken some other road; and they returned to Swabia.

Meanwhile, his sufferings in prison, the agony and distress attendant on his trial,

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the anxiety and fears of his flight, and the daily hardships to which he was exposed on the journey, all conspired to exhaust his strength. He fell sick, and was obliged to rest in a small town of Swabia, till his health should be restored.

Richard took a couple of apartments, purchased the most necessary house furniture, and took charge himself of their humble housekeeping, in which he was very skilful.—Lina assisted him with all her heart; and every morning and evening cheerfully performed all the little household duties which were not beyond her strength. In the beginning M. D'Erlau was obliged to keep his bed almost constantly; and it was a long time before he was able to sit up during the greater part of the day. Lina did everything in her power to cheer him, to take care of him, and to make his time pass agreeably. She contrived to

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find a new pleasure for him every day, One time she would surprise him with a new dish, which she had herself cooked for the first time; another time with a new song; another, with an agreeable piece of news. And her father testified, in every conceivable way, his affection and his gratification with her dutiful dispositions.

At last Lina's birth-day arrived. Early in the morning she went to mass, to offer her thanks to God on this day, and especially to pray for her mother, her father, and her brother. When she came home, behold! in the window stood her favorite flower, a magnificent red and blue stock gilly-flower; and a little canary-bird, of the purest yellow, with a splendid crest, just such as she used to have at home, hung, in a pretty cage, above the flowers in the window. The morning sun shone with unusual brilliancy and beauty into the window, and

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enlivened the colors of the flowers. Lina was enchanted. The tears rushed to her eyes, at this evidence of her father's tender love for her. She thanked him with the liveliest expressions of childish gratitude.

“Accept them for my sake, dear child,” said her father. “I can give you no more now. Were we at home at our castle, it would have been different: this day would have been celebrated with loud jubilee, and would have been a festival for the whole village. To-day we must celebrate it with quiet joy.”

A better dinner than ordinary was prepared. Her father was once more happy and cheerful at table; and Richard was forced to sit along with them. At the end of dinner the trusty old servant brought in an additional tart decorated with flowers, and a flask of the red wine of their own native land, Alsace. M. D'Erlau drank

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first to Lina's health, and then to that of his wife and son. But a melancholy feeling came over him in the midst of his joy, and the tears dropped into his wine.

“ Ah, Lina!” said he, “ where are your mother and brother celebrating this birthday of yours? What has befallen them? Alas! a lady and a child driven out into the wide world, without friend or protector, are exposed to a thousand inconveniences, embarrassments, and dangers. Who can tell whether we shall ever again celebrate this day together? Once I used to have such a cheerful heart and so firm a trust in God's Providence—but now I often have very gloomy hours.—I am afraid—I am afraid.”

Lina threw herself weeping upon her father's neck to console him. “ Take courage, dearest father,” she cried, “ God will not forsake us—He will bring us all

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once more together; otherwise He never would have delivered us in so wondrous a manner. Be assured He watches over us!"

"Yes, that He does," said Richard, drying his eyes. They were all silent. It was a moment of deep and pious emotion for them all.

When, lo! on a sudden the canary-bird began to sing the air of the little song, which M. D'Erlau had formerly composed for his children, on "Trust in Providence!" Lina clapped her hands in amazement. "O my God!" she cried, "what is this? That is the first air which Charles learned to play upon the harpsichord, and to accompany him by singing—the very air which we were singing when you were arrested, dearest father!"

Her father, Richard, and she, gazed at

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the little bird in wonder and amazement. It sang the piece over again.

“It is the very air!” said Lina. “Precisely the same—not a single note is wanting!”

“That is most wonderful,” said her father, taking off his cap. “O merciful God! I believe Thou wilt restore my dear wife and son to me once again. It is only from them the bird can have learned this air, though I cannot comprehend how. O Richard, where did you get the bird?”

Richard told him that he had bought the pretty little thing from a young Tyrolese yesterday.

“Oh, run with all your might,” said his master, “and do everything in your power to find him out. Perhaps he may be able to give us more precise information.”

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Richard remained a long time away; and M. D'Erlau and his daughter spent their time in most anxious expectation. "How great must their distress have been," he said, "to sell this dear little creature! or, perhaps it is that they are dead, and that the bird is all they have left us!"

Richard at length returned with the young Tyrolese; but the young man could not give any particular information about the bird. He had bought it from a shepherd-boy in the Tyrol; and Madam D'Erlau's name was entirely unknown to him. But when M. D'Erlau interrogated him further, he assured him that such a lady and boy did live in his native district, and that it was very possible the bird might have belonged to them. I have seen the lady at church every Sunday," said he; "and I have often met the boy,

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who goes to school to the parish priest. The little fellow must be a great scholar, for he always carries on his back a great bundle of books, buckled in a leather strap."



He described the figure and appearance of the lady and the boy so accurately, that they all unanimously and joyously

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cried out, "It is they! it must certainly be they!"

They thanked God with many a tear, for disclosing to them, by His wondrous providence, the abode of their beloved friends. M. D'Erlau made the strictest inquiries about the place where the lady lived, and the road which led to it; and presented the astonished Tyrolese with a broad dollar for his true-hearted tale.

They prepared for their journey without delay. M. D'Erlau forgot his weakness at once: the good news strengthened him more than the most powerful medicine. Lina assisted him in packing, and Richard went to put the little carriage in order, and to bring back their horse, the little brown, which he had lent to the innkeeper, meanwhile, to work for his feeding, without hire. On the very next day they set out for the Tyrol. The dear little

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bird was not left behind: it was hung up in its cage to the arched roof of the carriage; and M. D'Erlau and Lina had the pleasure, from time to time during the journey, of being entertained by its enlivening notes.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REUNION.

M. D'ERLAU, with his little party, arrived safely in their rustic carriage in the chief village of the parish to which the hamlet of Schwarzenfels belonged. He went at once to the parish priest, who confirmed all that the young Tyrolese, who sold the bird, had told him. Madam D'Erlau and her son were still alive. "But the good lady," said the priest, "lives in the deepest

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melancholy. She believes that her dear husband is dead, and since she heard this unhappy news her heart has never felt a single throb of joy. It was with difficulty she survived the mortal sickness into which her sorrow plunged her, and she is now recovering, but very tediously and imperfectly."

M. D'Erlau inquired whence this false intelligence had reached here. The priest produced a packet of newspapers, and selecting one of them, placed it before him, and M. D'Erlau read, with his own eyes, that he had been executed upon a certain day. Strange as this appeared, yet it was not difficult of explanation. In those days of confusion, this mistake was but a trifling irregularity. They had either forgotten to erase his name from the list of victims, which had been already prepared, or they had purposely omitted to do so, in order the

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better to avoid animadversion for allowing him to escape.

It grieved M. D'Erlau to the soul, to learn that this false but melancholy news had thrown his wife into such affliction, and almost brought her to the grave. The parish priest thought that the utmost caution would be necessary now, in communicating to her the joyful intelligence which awaited her. He discussed with M. D'Erlau how it might best be done; and though it was already late and the weather was very unfavorable, they all set out for Schwarzenfels. It had been raining all day, and now it began to snow heavily; for in that country the winter sets in earlier than here. They soon reached the peak of the woody mountain, whence, through the pine branches, the humble cottages could be seen far in the valley below, with their flat snow-covered roofs and smoking

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chimneys. Here the party sat down upon a moss-grown rock under the thick pines, whose pendant branches sheltered them from the wind and snow; and Richard went first to the cottage, which the kind-hearted priest pointed out to him, through a gap in the branches of the trees.

Madam D'Erlau was sitting, in deep mourning, at her rude little fireplace, whose flickering blaze had begun to illumine the apartment, which was already somewhat dark. She was knitting, and her little boy was reading aloud. As she saw her faithful white-headed servant enter the room, she screamed aloud, and the work fell from her hands. She ran up to him, and, with tears of joy and of sorrow, saluted him as affectionately as if he were her father. Charles, too, was out of his senses with delight. The lady desired the old man to sit down upon the wooden stool which

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Charles placed at the fire for him. “ Ah, Richard !” she cried, as he sat opposite to her at the fire, “ is it thus we are destined to meet? Alas! let us not speak of the bloody death of my dearest, kindest, most excellent husband!—the memory is too gloomy. But what has happened Lina? Did the dear child die as the doctor foretold? Alas! perhaps the darling child is now in her cold grave!”

Richard told her that in order to persuade the mother to fly, the kind-hearted physician had represented Lina’s illness, as more dangerous than it really was; and that she had recovered soon after, and had been well and healthy ever since. The mother was delighted—her eyes sparkled with joy.

“ But why,” she cried, and her countenance fell again, “ why did you not bring her with you? Why did you not rescue her from our unhappy country, where her

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life is not safe for a single hour? How could you be so hard-hearted, as to travel without her? How could you?"

Before she could finish the sentence, the door opened suddenly, and Lina flew into her mother's arms. Charles, too, rushed into her embrace; and it would not be easy to imagine more delicious tears, than those which the delighted mother shed, as she thus clasped them once more in her arms.

But her joy soon changed into sorrow again.—“Ah! would that my dear husband were alive!” she cried, looking to heaven with tears in her eyes. “Oh, then—then, indeed, would the measure of my joy be complete! But now, my dearest children, you are poor fatherless orphans; and the sight of you fills your afflicted mother's heart with anguish! For, alas! what can I, a poor, unfriended, uncounselled widow, do for you!”

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Richard now began, by distant preparations, to open the way for the glad tidings of his master's deliverance. But Madam D'Erlau was more collected than he had imagined. The great happiness of seeing the good old man once more—the still greater delight of clasping her daughter in her arms again—had been, for the high-souled lady, the most natural and gradual preparations for receiving now into her heart even the greatest joy—the joy of seeing alive once again her husband, whom she had believed to have been executed. With beating heart he had long been standing outside the door, where he could hear every word that was said.

When the lady now discovered, from Richard's words, that her husband was still alive, she cried out in a voice of ecstasy: "He is alive! Oh, God's mercy be forever praised, which delivered him from

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his murderers! He cannot be far away from us. Come, my children, let us go to him."

At this moment M. D'Erlau opened the door, and threw himself, full of joy, into the arms of his wife. But the feelings of the poor lady, who, till that hour, had mourned her dear husband as dead, and now saw him living before her eyes, were altogether peculiar. Timid and fearful, as if she still doubted the reality of what she saw, she gazed upon him, as he stood before her in the light of the little fire. Unable to describe the happiness which thrilled through her soul, she exclaimed, "Oh, what happiness awaits us in heaven, where we shall see again so many dear ones, whom on earth we bewailed as dead!"

Need it be said, that the little party spent a happy evening by their humble fireside? The old Tyrolese and his wife joined them,

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and shared heartily in the happiness of their guests.

On the following morning another guest made his appearance, and one who, under God, had had the chief share in bringing about the reunion of this noble family. Richard brought in the canary-bird, which he had left, the evening before, in the parish priest's house. Charles was delighted to see his bird again. During his mother's illness it had escaped through the window, and he had never heard anything more of it since then ; and now M. D'Erlau related how the bird had led to the discovery of his wife and son. His wife shed tears of joy and gratitude, at the wondrous dispensation of Providence. "Yes, good God!" she cried, clasping her hands, "it was Thou who didst so dispose it. Thou didst employ this little winged messenger, to tell my husband this secluded corner to

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which I had retired. Had it not been for his speedy arrival, I should have died of grief before the end of this winter!"

Charles rapturously echoed his mother's thanks. "Was it not a happy idea of mine," he said, "to teach the bird this precise air? Little did I dream, when I was so distressed about the loss of my bird, that God had only taken it from me, in order to give me back my father and sister, and the bird, too, into the bargain. This shows us how God, out of a trivial misfortune, may prepare a great blessing for us."

"You are right, dear Charles," said his father. "It was with this view God took from us all our earthly goods, in order to give us better treasures in heaven. I trust that, by this temporary loss, we have all been gained to PIETY and VIRTUE, in comparison with which splendor and riches are nothing, and of which alone it can be

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said that they possess an eternal value. And after all, perhaps God may restore our temporal goods, too, as He has given you back your canary-bird."

The shepherd boy, whom Charles had employed to catch his lost canary, and who, instead of returning it, had sold it to the bird merchant, was very much confounded, when he was called before the parish priest, and learned from him how the theft had been discovered in another country, many miles away. "Never again, in my life," said the boy, "will I be guilty of a dishonest act, for I now see clearly, there is no roguery so clever that it will not be detected at last."

M. D'Erlau resolved to spend the winter under this humble roof. Richard was lodged in one of the neighboring cottages: the canary-bird was restored to the place it had occupied before it flew away.

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Lina took the greatest care of it; and even in the harshest season, never left it a day without a green leaf or a fresh slice of an apple. Many a time, in the bright winter days, when the happy family were all seated together in their little parlor, looking out upon the white earth, and the wild snow-powdered pine-forest, the bird would sing the first part of their favorite melody, and the children and parents together would sing the rest of it, and console themselves by the sentiments it inspired. And even in the many gloomy occurrences and melancholy forebodings to which this family were afterwards subjected, it was always no trifling solace to them all, when the tiny songster would, on a sudden, set up his little melody, and conclude with a lively, cheerful shake. "Yes," they would say, "we will trust in Him who already has aided us so wondrously, by means of

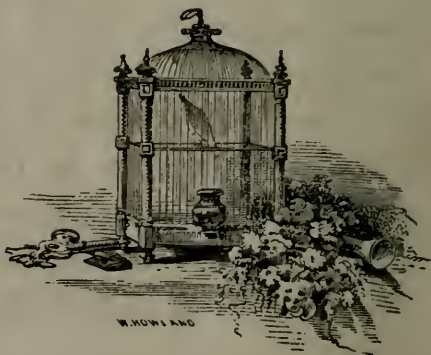
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so small and insignificant a creature. He, who can aid us in a thousand ways, and has already done so, will continue his protecting care over us!"

"Yes, yes!" old Richard would say, "I think so, too. The sight of the poor little bird outside of the window there, in the deep snow and the piercing frost, has always something affecting in my eyes. I always think of the words—'Consider the birds of the air:—they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. And are not you more precious than they?' But when I see this little bird, these words sink deeper into my heart, and when it chants its little song, I cannot be down-hearted any longer, no matter how bad things may look, or how hard it may go with us. He who cares for birds of the air, will not forget us."

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This noble family were destined to live for a while longer with very narrow means; but, in the end, were enabled to return to their country and recovered the greater part of their property. M. and Madam D'Erlau were rejoiced to find themselves once more rich and independent; for it enabled them to reward, to their hearts' content, those who had been their friends in need, Richard, his wife and son, the old fisherman, and every one who had shown them kindness.



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