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A PRIMITIVE PEOPLE  
BY W.A. BAILLIE GROHMAN

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LEISURE HOUR SERIES—No. 98

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GADDINGS WITH  
A PRIMITIVE PEOPLE

*BEING A SERIES OF SKETCHES OF*

TYROLESE LIFE AND CUSTOMS

BY

W. A. BAILLIE GROHMAN



NEW YORK  
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1878

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TO  
THE KEENEST OF ROYAL SPORTSMEN,  
**His Royal Highness,**  
**ERNEST II.,**  
REIGNING DUKE OF SAXE-COBURG-GOTHA, KNIGHT OF  
THE GARTER, ETC., ETC.,  
IN HUMBLE ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND GRATEFUL  
REMEMBRANCE OF  
THE KIND HOSPITALITY  
EXPERIENCED AT HIS HANDS BY  
THE AUTHOR.



## PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

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THE advance-sheets of Mr. Grohman's "GADDINGS WITH A PRIMITIVE PEOPLE" contained so much of merit, that the attention of those who were considering the advisability of publishing the book in America was stimulated toward the author's earlier work entitled "TYROL AND THE TYROLESE." It was ultimately concluded that, whatever might be the success in this country of either book alone, a greater success would certainly attend a volume containing the best points of both.

In attempting, however, to arrange such a volume, the realization was soon reached, that all the points were too good to lose; and the result was that, with the exception of repetitions, the substance of both books is contained in the one here presented.

In combining the two masses of material into an organic whole, some parts naturally fell out of the original sequence. Moreover, as the later book could not, before publication, have the benefit of the revision which the call for a second edition had secured for the first one, some effort was made during the re-arrangement to give it such a benefit, especially in particulars where its style differed unfavorably from that of the book which the author had revised. In addition, a careful index has been substituted for the detailed tables of contents given in the original works.

The place among American publications into which, after

some vicissitudes, the advance-sheets of "Gaddings with a Primitive People" ultimately fell, required that the book should be published, if at all, before it would be possible to communicate with the author regarding the changes. While the present book was in press, however, a strange testimonial to the judiciousness of its preparation was received from a notice of "Gaddings with a Primitive People" in the London Athenæum, where an entirely independent critic suggested the very proceedings which had already resulted in the preparation of this volume. It is but fair, though, that its American sponsors should assume the blame for any infelicities of arrangement that may attract attention, and bespeak for the author the praise which, they feel confident, the reader will often be moved to bestow.

NEW YORK, July 1, 1878.

## PREFACE.

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“Knowing that Nature never did betray  
The heart that loved her,”

I VENTURE to express the humble hope that “Gaddings with a Primitive People” will be received by my readers in the spirit in which it is written.

Written out as all Alpine subjects are reputed to be, I would modestly point out that this impeachment only holds good as regards surface matter; for, to speak of the country I am now describing, not one but many volumes could be compiled, had one the wish to do full justice to all that is strange, quaint, and out-of-the-way, in the “Land in the Mountains.”

Let this volume be accepted as a feeble attempt to do this. If it fails, the pen assuredly has caused the failure; if it succeeds, the subject has wrought success.

A few years more, and the national scenes I have depicted here will be tales of the past. High pressure civilization, and that curse of modern creation, the traveling tourist, are fast dismantling Tyrol of the charm of primitive seclusion no less than of the time-hallowed customs and relics of mediæval life, that to me have formed its chief attraction.

One point is left, upon which I think it right to offer some explanation, especially to those of my readers whose views respecting the salutary influence of the Roman Catholic Church upon a people, and especially upon the lower ranks

of society, differ from those which they will find I betray on one or two occasions.

Let the reader remember throughout this volume, that it is not intolerance or a spirit of antagonism, based on prejudice, that leads me to speak as I do of the disastrous results of the Roman Catholic rule in Tyrol. Nor is it in mere caviling at the ordinances of a creed, when, moved by the sight of an intelligent race chained down by an overbearing and intolerant Church, I perhaps lose sight of the fact that I am myself but an intruder who, to begin with, is bound to respect the ordinances of the people among whom he has chosen to reside. But it is just my long residence that urges me to forget that circumstance; for not only have I been taught to respect the people for their upright and manly qualities of character, but my sympathy has been enlisted by their unhappy thralldom in the ever-dark dungeon of ignorance. Only a very intimate acquaintance with them will show one to what an extent the two chief blemishes upon the national character—bigotry, and laxity of morals—must be ascribed to the policy pursued by the Roman Curia in this her chief stronghold.

SCHLOSS MATZEN, BRIXLEGG, TYROL,  
April, 1878.



PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION OF  
TYROL AND THE TYROLESE,

WHICH BOOK IS INCORPORATED IN THE PRESENT VOLUME.

---

IN laying the second edition of "Tyrol and the Tyrolese" before the public, it becomes my duty — one of the most pleasant that fall to the lot of an author — to express my sense of gratitude for the kind praise bestowed on my book.

In preparing the second edition, I have taken pains to remedy the errors and misprints that had crept in; and nothing would be left for me to say, were it not my wish to touch upon a charge brought by my reviewers, not against me, but, what is tantamount to it in my eyes, against the people of "the Land in the Mountains."

This race, my critics say, are, according to the account I give of them, a treacherously cruel people. It is naturally difficult to refute a charge of this kind in the face of the ample evidence of the rough and shaggy coat that hides the finer points of the Tyrolese character from the gaze of the stranger. I must beg them, however, to remember that in bringing out the national character as fully as I did, I was mainly prompted by the wish to convey a perfectly truthful picture to my reader's mind. This desire led me, I am afraid, to dwell too long upon the dark sides of the question: roughness and a certain freedom of morals.

Eye-gouging and biting off one's opponent's fingers, rarely as these casualties occur now-a-days in Tyrol, are undoubtedly cruel and reprehensible expedients in a free fight; but let me ask my critics, would they call the English a treacherous and cruel people because in England kicking a wife to death, or brutally ill-treating a defenseless man, are daily occurrences?

The amount of respect shown to the female sex is generally considered to be a true criterion for the nobleness of man's character; and if this rule is allowed to hold good for nations at large, I have to own, Englishman as I am, that the Tyrolese need not dread a comparison. Whatever be the faults of the stanch old race dwelling in the recesses of the Tyrolese Alps, treacherous or cowardly cruelty certainly does not rank amongst them.

LONDON, July, 1877.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION OF  
TYROL AND THE TYROLESE,

WHICH BOOK IS INCORPORATED IN THE PRESENT VOLUME.

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A CERTAIN value may, I hope, be imparted to this volume by the fact that I have lived for many years in the Tyrol, and being by parentage half an Austrian, and as well acquainted with the German language as with my mother tongue, am therefore more likely to gain a true insight into the lives and characters of the Tyrolese than most writers on the same subject, who have not this advantage.

My love for sport and a sound bodily constitution have gone hand in hand in enabling me to acquire an accurate acquaintance with the rough fashions of this picturesque country; and as they have brought me across many an odd character lost to the world in some out-of-the-way nook among these little-known mountains and valleys, I have had many adventures, some of which I have endeavored to relate in the following pages.

It seems that some question has been raised relative to the spelling of the word Tyrol. Without wishing to enter more fully into the merits of the controversy, I may mention that Tyrol was up to the beginning of this century, with hardly any exception, spelled with a "y." It is only within the last fifty or sixty years that the letter "i" has supplanted

it; and at present we find that the word is generally spelled Tirol. The fact that a number of geographical names have undergone in this half-century precisely the same change as the word Tyrol, and that the "foreign" letter "y" is hardly ever used by Germans, does not render the spelling of the word Tirol less incorrect; for we must remember throughout this whole question that the derivation of Tyrol is not, as many suppose, from "Terioles," but from "Tyr," a "fortress in the mountains," in which sense we find it in use as early as the ninth century.

I may finally remark that two of the chapters in this volume have appeared in the shape of sketches in "The Alpine Journal."

SCHLOSS MATZEN, BRIXLEGG, TYROL.

December, 1875.

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# GADDINGS WITH A PRIMITIVE PEOPLE.



## CHAPTER I.

### THE SCHLOSS, THE LANDSCAPE, AND THE PEOPLE.

THE table I am writing on is a worm-eaten structure of unwieldy shape, adorned with Renaissance carving, and provided with numberless drawers and strange out-of-the-way secret springs. The chair I occupy is of comfortable but highly antiquated build; its dingy leather cover, studded at the sides with massive embossed nails, once formed part of the primitive furniture in one of the favorite castle shooting-boxes of that enthusiastic royal sportsman of the later Middle Ages, — the Emperor Maximilian I. The very air I breathe is that of bygone centuries. The grim time-worn tower of huge proportions, looming into the room through the broad low window glazed with diamond-shaped panes, was the work of Roman stonemasons. It marked the strong and historically well-known "station" Masciacum, on the high road from barbaric Germany to civilized Italy. In the cloistered courtyard once pranced the barbed steeds of the powerful knights, — von Frundsberg, the martial forefather of a warlike descendant; the great Condottieri, of the sixteenth century; and burly Georg von Frundsberg,

whose "children," as he loved to term his savage, unruly troopers, the famed and dreaded "Landsknechte," played such a conspicuous rôle at the sack of Rome. In the deep rock-hewn cellars of amazing depth and size were stored the rich vintages of Italy and the East, with which the Rothschilds of the Middle Ages, the Fugger and Fiegers of Augsburg and Nürnberg, the successors of the Frundsbergs, entertained their princely guests. The vaulted hall rang with the voices of half a dozen generations of the richest and most notable families of the country. And now what is left of all the glory of bygone centuries, of all the sumptuous fittings-up of this abode of feudal wealth? Nothing! The shell of the old castle, it is true, still stands, and the Roman tower, stained with the antique tint of some sixteen or seventeen centuries, has withstood time, no less than the two old bells hanging in a miniature belfry, open on all sides to the keen blast of furious winter gales which at weird hours of the night set them ringing in a dismal fashion, and have served in no little measure to transform the ruin into the reputed haunt of hobgoblins and specters,—a reputation which the paneless windows, the battered roof, and general aspect of utter decay did not tend to remove. Alas! Time, fierce wars, and a destructive fire have united to convert the once noble castle into a shapeless, burnt-out shell. So have been reduced hundreds of its kindred that were once the mighty strongholds of powerful Tyrolese nobles more famous than the notorious Rhenish knights for their warlike spirit, and for their daring deeds of highwaymanry.

Lost in a deep revery, a stranger once stood, one balmy September evening some four years ago, at a window on the top floor of this building. It evidently had been once an oriel window of noble proportions, and provided in front with a small balcony standing out over a giddy height and overlooking the whole country near. Ruthless hands had wrecked it for the sake of its marble, and had wrenched the solid fluted framework of the same material from the massive masonry. The jagged, irregular orifice



which remained in the thick wall served as a frame in picturesque harmony with the lovely landscape rolled out at his feet: in the foreground the silver streak of the swift "Inn;" at both sides the lofty mountains whose wooded offshoots sweep down to it in undulating lines of rare beauty, each one diffused and rendered distinct by a different autumnal tint, such as one can only see in the High Alps. In the background, a chain of glacier peaks bounds the picture.

The broad Innvalley lying in calm loveliness at his feet conjures up visions of bygone times, when through this very valley, and in two or three others of Tyrol's chief vales, ran the most noted high roads of commerce, connecting the civilized world of Italy with the barbaric north.

This very road, winding along the fertile expanse in pleasing curves, was made nigh upon eighteen hundred years ago for the Roman legions advancing northward slowly but surely. Along it sprang up the strongly fortified stations so well known to the historian as the milestones of civilization. The grim old tower lordling over this castle is one of them; and in the distance are two more, both marking the site of feudal strongholds that centuries later were erected round their base by the serfed villains of the Middle Ages. Following the early caravans of armed traders, came the motley array of Crusaders, and at their heels trooped the turbulent armies of the great Hohenstauffen Emperors, one and all pressing southwards; the one having for its visionary goal the Holy Shrine, the other, the vast Roman Empire.

Tyrol's grand history aids the imagination, and gives birth to visions as romantic as they are profuse. Its position close to the old Bavarian frontier made it in olden times the constant scene of strife and warfare. Sieges as sanguinary as they were protracted tried the mettle of the warlike old race of Frundsbergers. We hear of one of them, valiant Ulrich, defending Castle Matzin for seven long weeks against a large Bavarian army intent upon reducing the stronghold that barred the way to the rich and fertile Unter Innthal, their favorite resort for

plunder. We see the last of that mighty race, the ill-starred Hohenstauff Conradin, in whom were centered his partisan's most ambitious projects, pass under our window, the youthful but proudly dominant commander of that huge army of thousands of chainmailed knights, the noblest that mighty Germany possessed, and all as eager as their juvenile king to wrench the crown of Naples from his traitor uncle. We watch the vast train winding serpent fashion through the sunny vale at our feet, and our eyes rest upon the slim boyish figure of the royal youth, and on that of his former playmate, now friend and banneret knight, Frederic of Frundsberg, the no less youthful owner of our old ruin, then a proud feudal castle. From the very window we now occupy, his doting mother, the noble Lady Elizabeth, probably waved him her last adieu. Alas! weary were the hours and days she stood here watching for the return of her much-loved son; and many more were the suns that rose and set ere she learnt that her boy, like most of his companions in arms, fell for the cause of his royal friend Conradin, whose lamentable end under the executioner's axe, on the market-place at Naples, forms the most tragic episode in the tragic history of his mighty race.

The last rays of the setting sun were tingeing the far-off glaciers a roseate hue, and the evening bells of two distant churches were blending their melodious sounds, when the lonely stranger whose train of thought we have been following turned away from his lofty point of view, and after traversing suites of empty rooms, dismally gaunt and spectral in the dusk, slowly descended flight upon flight of creaking stairs, and finally stepped out into the cloistered courtyard. It was surrounded on three sides by lofty buildings, while on the fourth loomed the Roman tower. The ground was strewn with the marble fragments — covered by lichen, and embedded in tall grass — of the large well that once had adorned its center. The massive portal of huge beams, iron-plated on the outside, stood open, and through the covered gateway a flood of golden evening light permeated the deep dusk of the

romantic court. A smile of pleasure flits over the wanderer's face ; and when, after some little time, he leaves the picturesque old castle, a resolution seems stamped upon his brow. Before twenty-four hours have elapsed, the venerable pile has changed hands, and a new era dawns for it ; four years have altered its interior aspect, though not its exterior, which has lost none of that look of moldy age so dear to the lover of the old ; the antiquarian taste of its owner has rendered it at least inhabitable ; and glancing up from his writing, and allowing his eyes to rove over the lovely landscape visible through the renovated oriel window, a smile of gratification flits over his face as he recalls to himself the pleasant excitement incidental to this his first trophy of curiosity-hunting in Tyrol.

It may well amaze even those who have been whirled in the train through the two or three chief valleys of Tyrol, to learn that this country, with a population considerably less than half that of Yorkshire, contains five hundred and thirty-seven old castles.

These Tyrolese castles form so picturesque a feature in scenery nearly always grand and striking, that the indulgent reader will excuse my inviting him to visit one of their number ere I lay before him the results of my experience amongst the people. To this end he will kindly accompany me up the steep path leading to the ponderous iron-barred old gate giving entrance to one of the most ancient and historically interesting of Tyrolese castles, — the home of this volume, — and after ascending endless flights of stairs, find himself comfortably seated in an armchair in front of the broad old-fashioned window overlooking the whole of the country near.

Lying at your feet is a goodly stretch of the smiling, exquisitely verdant valley of the Inn, skirted by two parallel rows of noble peaks terminating in the far distance with the glistening glacier world of the Oetz and Stubai Thäler.

As your eye glances down the giddy height and follows

the upward course of the broad swift Inn at your feet, as it winds like a band of silver through green meadows, eight old castles, the remains of what were once feudal strongholds, occupying the eminences of hills, or perched like swallows' nests on the precipitous slopes of the adjacent mountains, become discernible. Interspersed between these hoary relics rise the amazingly slender, needle-shaped spires of three churches, the houses belonging to each village clustering round the sacred edifice. Of the broad-roofed houses, hidden behind groves of apple or nut-trees, little is to be seen; and of such as are visible, the greater part are of the velvety-brown timber which is so sunny and pleasing to the eye. Only the blue rings of smoke curling up in the gloriously-tinted evening sky indicate the presence of human habitations secreted behind bowers of trees. Fancy a dark green background of precipitously rising mountains, covered with somber pine forest, terminating in the gray cliffs that form the eminences, thereby bringing the rich vegetation of the verdant valley into close contrast with the sternness of the impending peaks, and you have the type of a peaceful sunny North Tyrolese landscape.

I say North Tyrolese, for Tyrol, divided into halves by the high snow-peaked main chain of the Alps, represents, taken as a whole, two geographically distinct countries. North Tyrol can be identified to all practical purposes with the German cantons of Switzerland, having an Alpine climate, while the South, with its vineyards and its genial air, is akin to fertile Italy. This perfect dissimilarity of Northern to Southern Tyrol renders a cursory glance at the physical appearance of the latter indispensable in order to form a faithful conception of the whole country.

Removing our chair of observation to a window of any one of the numerous castles of Meran in South Tyrol, we have, though at a distance of scarcely more than seventy-five miles as the crow flies, from our former point of view, a landscape before our eyes as different from the first as it well can be.

To the painter's palette supplied with various shades of green and gray sufficient to depict North Tyrolese scenery, we have to add the blue, yellow, and mauve of Italian landscape.

The number of castles in our picture has increased from eight to five and twenty or thirty. The rich verdant pasturages are supplanted either by scrubby brushwood scorched to a somber brown, or by large expanses of vineyards, while the dark green peaceful pine forests have been replaced by the stunted fir of a brownish tint, or by the ashy white dolomite rocks, unrelieved by a single patch of green. In the valleys, again, the simple cherry and apple-tree have given way to the far more variegated and luxurious vegetation of a warmer zone, producing, of course, a greater diversity in colors than is created in the northern parts by the two or three shades of green peculiar to Alpine vegetation.

Gigantic chestnut and nut-trees, ivy-clad ruins, and venerable old castles in a good state of preservation, in the foreground, with gardens and vineyards, surmounted by ashy-toned cliffs, in the background, are the characteristics of South Tyrolese scenery.

If, with regard to the Tyrolese themselves, the experience of many years spent in Tyrol gives me a right to express an opinion varying somewhat from those of many authors, I must say that I have found the Tyrolese in matters of daily life a highly intelligent, bold, and excessively hard-working people, distinguished, even from the inhabitants of other mountainous countries, by great patriotism and by an innate unquenchable love for their native soil, enhanced by a strangely chivalrous feeling of manly independence. Regarding their warlike spirit, — fostered, to a great extent, by their strong attachment to the Hapsburg dynasty, — we need but refer to the endless wars in which the Tyrolese were involved from the very earliest times down to the present day. In the Middle Ages the country was hardly ever in a state of peace from external or internal foes. Not only was it surrounded on four sides by dire enemies, the Venetians,

Italians, Swiss, and Bavarians; but the broad Inn and the sunny Adige valley, connected by one of the lowest passes over the Alps, formed the chief high road between civilized Italy and rough Germany. Not only was this highway, paved by Nature herself, used for commerce, accompanied, however, by a calamitous system of rapacious highwaymanry, but it was also constantly crossed and recrossed by victorious or defeated armies marching to or returning from Italy. Whether these armies were hostile or friendly to the Tyrolese, the results were always disastrous to the highway.

There are, indeed, few countries that have suffered from war and its dire calamities so much as Tyrol; and though its affairs occupy but a small space in the history of Europe, yet to the student they afford quite as rich a field for research as the history of many a mighty and powerful kingdom.

Great heroism distinguished the Tyrolese on every occasion, generally indeed bringing them out the victors against odds. Their great power of endurance, superior muscular force, indomitable courage, and a certain love for fighting and hard knocks, have, since the time when the generals of Charles V. and Maximilian recruited their best soldiers from the country, gained them high repute, quite apart from their deadly marksmanship, which even Napoleon's best generals and picked troops could not withstand.

Nothing demonstrates their innate love for their native soil more signally than the fact that, while in other countries a portion of the inhabitants emigrate to more propitious territories, a genuine Tyrolese very rarely indeed leaves his country for good. When their great purpose of life, the accumulation of small fortunes, as peddlers, musicians, or in other vocations, is accomplished, they never fail to return to their home, and, settling down in their native valley, enjoy the well-earned fruits of their industry.

There is something very pleasing in this attachment to the home soil, which carries a man steadfastly through

difficulties, and incites him to overcome the ups and downs of a wandering life, and lands him at last, after twenty or five and twenty years' toil, in the promised land of his desires. It seems strange to meet in some remote corner of Tyrol men who, in the course of their constant travels, have acquired a certain polish of manners as well as a quite unlooked-for intelligence of thought and aptitude of expression.

To be addressed by one of these traveled Tyrolese, dressed maybe in the very roughest of national costumes, perhaps even without a coat on his back or shoes to his feet, in the North German dialect, or in French or English, is indeed surprising.

Some of the men, particularly those who have traveled in the character of Tyrolese singers, have visited the four quarters of the globe. Many who are known to me have exhibited their musical talents at the courts of all the potentates of Europe, and a few even in New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. One of the latter, Ludwig Rainer,<sup>1</sup> owner of a charming hotel on the beautiful shores of the Achensee in Tyrol, related to me once his various adventures while traveling in the United States. He had been there three times. The first time he fell into the hands of scoundrels who rid him of every penny he had put by; from the second trip he returned not much the richer; and only the third time did he manage to amass the comfortable fortune he is reputed to possess. Another man, now a well-to-do peasant, related to me in capital English, interspersed, however, with copious Yankee slang, how he had once been blown up on a Mississippi steamboat; while a third, owner of a small inn in the Pusterthal, on my asking him how he had come by his lacerated face, told me that while out bear-shooting in one of the Northern States of America, he had been suddenly attacked by a female bear, and, not having time to draw his knife, he had succeeded in throttling the animal. The man's gigantic build and resolute demeanor was to me the best proof of his veracity.

<sup>1</sup> He and his troupe exhibited themselves, I think, on two occasions before our Queen, and several times at the Paris and St. Petersburg courts.

The traveler who wanders through the Defferegger valley, a remote Alpine glen high up among the mountains, may, in certain months of the year, see a very singular sight.

The annual total emigration of the male population of this valley compels the women to do the work of the men. There is probably not a single man above eighteen or twenty, and below sixty or seventy years of age, in that valley for four of the spring and summer months.

You see women fell trees, drive their heavily-laden carts, till the ground, gather fodder, chop wood; and if you enter one of the village inns you will see rows of women, their short pipes in their mouths, and elbows leaning on the table, drinking their pint of Tyrolese wine after their hard work.

A year or two ago I happened one Sunday evening to be present when one of the female occupants of the bar-room in the chief inn of St. Jacob — I being the only man present — read to her companions a letter she had received that day from her husband, who at the time of writing was at Salt Lake City, among the Mormons. Though he was only a simple peddler in hosiery, his graphic but inexpressibly quaint description of the city and of the customs of its inhabitants was highly amusing. Very singular and laughable it was to watch the effects of this description on the minds of the simple women, who had never heard of such a thing as the plurality of wives. Such a state of things seemed to them the height of human iniquity. Some thought the Mormons utter barbarians, while others, evidently applying the rule to their own homes, swore they would rather be killed than suffer any female rivals in their houses.

The Defferegger folk collect the necessary means to purchase their stock in trade by raising joint-stock companies. The man who contributes the largest sum of money to one of these modest commercial enterprises is also entitled to the proportionate amount of the net gains. They keep no books, nor have they any security in hand for the money invested; mutual confidence, engendered



by a certain *esprit de corps*, with strict honesty among themselves, is the base upon which these companies are built. In their business transactions with strangers while on their tours, they exhibit a sharpness quite unlooked for, and their simple exterior and dull speech disguise in most cases a very remarkable shrewdness.

Twenty or thirty years ago, a very brisk and remunerative cattle-trade existed between two Tyrolese valleys and Russia. The traders in this business used to drive their droves of twenty or thirty head themselves from Tyrol to Central and Eastern Russia. When they could, they took advantage of a water-course, as, for instance, down the Danube to the Black Sea, thence along the coast by land to Taganrog, and thence either north or north-east. The large fairs at Nishnei Novgorod and Orenburg were visited by them, and very frequently they penetrated far into Asiatic Russia. Their journey thither often occupied eight or nine months, so that one venture entailed an absence from home of eighteen months or two years. The prices which they realized for the highly-prized Tyrolese cattle used for breeding purposes were naturally very high; 500 ducats per head (about 250*l.*) was by no means an unusual figure for a beast which they had bought in their native valley for some eight or nine pounds.

The risks from accidents, disease, or natural causes were of course correspondingly high, and some men in one venture lost their all by the murrain destroying their drove, while others grew rich and prosperous in two or three expeditions of this kind.

Now all this is changed. The Russians are loth to pay fancy prices, and prefer getting their breeding cattle from England at a quarter of the former cost; but it nevertheless gives us an idea of the intrepidity and commercial intelligence that prompted so highly venturesome and hazardous transactions.

Many a time have I been asked by some middle-aged rustic if I have ever been in Wolgsk, or Uralsk, or Orenburg, or Astrachan, and on my giving him a negative answer

I have had to put up with the retort, "Then you have been nowhere." One or two villages in the two valleys that monopolized the Russian cattle-trade are entirely peopled by families who have grown rich in this trade, and who are now slowly descending the social ladder, step by step, till they reach the level of peasants, the stock from which they sprang seventy or eighty years ago.

The Tyrolese peasant has been often compared with a small freeholder in England, though of course the latter, in comparison with a Tyrolese cultivator, lives in the style of a prince or king. A peasant proprietor who owns three or four acres of tolerable land maintains himself and his family in a simple but comfortable manner; he and his son being sufficient for the labors of such a farm, while his wife and daughters spin and make the greater part of the family clothing.

There is, however, one very striking difference in the circumstances of a small cultivator in England and a peasant in Tyrol.

In the latter country all the cultivators are of one and the same class, and therefore one has the same chance as another; while in England there are cultivators on a large scale able to apply to the soil capital and skill with greater advantage and economy than the small proprietor.

I have said that the Tyrolese exhibit a chivalrous independence of character arising from an innate confidence in their own powers. I might qualify this observation by remarking that a kindly, good-natured courteousness towards the female sex, and a bold, half-defiant, half-saucy bearing among themselves, are, generally speaking, marked characteristics of the young Tyrolese rustics.

The exuberance of animal spirits, the self-confidence engendered by muscular strength, and the jaunty, smart appearance of a young fellow dressed out in his best, give him a sort of a "cock-of-the-walk" air, increased by the fact that fighting is looked upon by a young Tyrolese very much in the same light as by a shillelah-swinging Irishman on a visit to Donnybrook fair.

This defiant or saucy air generally sticks to a man up

to eight and twenty or thirty. Later on it is supplanted by the natural results of an excessively toilsome life, in the shape of a somewhat stern and even morose expression of face. An angular, spare, but well-knit and powerful frame replaces youthful agility and rounded forms. Hard-worked as women are in the Tyrol, their lot is by no means an unenviable one. They are uniformly treated in a kind manner by their husbands, and wife-beating or brutal handling of women is entirely unknown in the country. Their relation to man in their spinster state reminds us in many points of the chivalrous manners of society some five or six hundred years ago. Morality is about on the same par, and the lass who yields to the solicitations of her lover who has proved his right in a fierce fight with his rival or rivals, stands very much in the position of the noble lady who, five centuries ago, rewarded victory in combat and tournament with her love. The very poetry of the country is yet tinted with the sentiments of the "Minnesänger." What other people in Europe treat the whole subject of love in so quaint and charming a manner?

Nothing proves the vitality of this people more signally than the survival of the spirit of bygone days. Given to bouts of hard drinking, rough towards men, kindly in his manner to women, bold and warlike in his youth, cool and self-possessed in his age, the Tyrolese peasant, uncontaminated by civilization, may be said to represent a strikingly true picture of a knight of the days of chivalry.

Poor and primitive as the Tyrolese are, and hard-working as they have to be, their lot is yet far preferable to that of many inhabitants of rural districts in Italy, France, England, and North Germany. The man, enjoying a life of domestic happiness, ignorant alike of real want and superfluity, the woman, kindly treated by her husband, surrounded by healthy curly-headed children, can bear comparison with most, if not all, of the lower classes throughout Europe.

Of the defiant bearing that characterizes the young folk, I may give one or two examples. A custom very

dear to a genuine Tyrolese is to adorn his Sunday and fête-day hat with the tail-feathers of the blackcock (*Tetrao tetrix*) and the "Gamsbart," the long dark brown hair growing along that animal's back at certain seasons of the year. The tail-feathers of the blackcock are curved at the extremity; but if they are turned round so that the curve or "hook" comes to be placed in a contrary direction to that usually worn, a man is at once metamorphosed from a peaceful native into a quarrel-seeking "Robbler."

The manner in which a fight is brought about by any young fellow stung by the Robbler's defiant challenge is extremely simple. Stepping up to him he asks, "Was kost die Feder?" ("How much for the feather?") the answer "Fünf Finger und ein Griff" ("Five fingers and a grip") being followed, before one has time to look round, by a hasty rush and a fierce struggle, ending frequently in bloodshed. Some fifteen or twenty years ago, this practice prevailed throughout the greater part of North Tyrol: now, thanks to railways and tourists, it is confined to two or three remote vales, where even at the present moment, and I am speaking by experience, it is not safe for a native of some other valley to sport a "turned" feather of the blackcock if he does not wish to invite a challenge.

I need hardly mention that the naturally quick eye of the Tyrolese detects at the first glance if a stranger, wearing a turned blackcock feather, is a Tyrolese or not. In the latter case the stranger can rest assured that were his hat garnished with twenty turned feathers no harm or insult of any kind would come to him. I have often been amused in watching the broad grin settling on the face, and mirth lighting up the eyes of a native, as he sees a specimen of that most terrible species of Continental tourists — some spindle-shanked "Berliner," his "pincenez" on his nose, or a pale-faced, shrunken Saxon — strutting about with blackcock feathers on their hats, and displaying the invariable Gamsbart — both, in nine cases out of ten, shams thrice overpaid — representing animals which these would-be sportsmen have never seen out of a zoölogical garden, much less shot.

The Zillertal, in my opinion, and in that of every traveler who has had occasion to see some of the really beautiful scenery to be found in other parts of Tyrol, scarcely deserves its fame for natural beauty, yet fifteen years ago — before it had been spoilt by the wide-spread repute of its landscape and quaint inhabitants, it exhibited a curious medley of ancient and half-civilized customs. Among these institutions of the past was the “Robbler,” or “Haggler.”

The fact that a village could boast of a “Robbler” of repute as its champion at fêtes or weddings was a matter of importance. If two such “Robblers,” or even two young fellows who claimed this honorary title, happened to meet, or if one should hear his rival’s loud jodler, defiant and challenging to its last note, echo from mountain to mountain, he would hasten, guided by the sound of the repeated jodler war-cries, to the spot where perhaps his foe was at work, and a fierce struggle for the supremacy in that part of the country would ensue. On these occasions severe injuries were the rule. A year or two ago an old wrestler, a famous Robbler in his youth, died in his native village in the Zillertal. The numerous disfiguring wounds on his body told the tale of many a fierce combat in his youth. His left eye, the better part of his nose, the tip of his ear, and two fingers were “missing ;” he had also had an arm and a leg broken.

All this has now passed away. Such meetings, if they do occur, are decided by more legitimate means ; and certain laws and rules, strictly enforced by those present, confine the combat to the limits of a mere wrestling match. The use of the knife, at present even of frequent occurrence in the Highlands of Bavaria, was always discountenanced by the Tyrolese. Although the opinion may not be expressed in so many words, it is considered a cowardly act by the natives, and a man once caught while wrestling in the act of lowering his hand to the trouser-pocket from which the handle of the knife protrudes, is shunned thenceforth, and any quarrel with him broken off.

Sunday or fête-day fights, originating in the Wirths-

häuser, or village inns, now and then occur still. The usual cause of these fights is, of course, some buxom Helen, somewhat too free and indiscriminate in the display of her favors to her several admirers. It is obvious that the responsibilities of "mine host" on Sunday and fête-day evenings, when wine and schnapps have done their work, are vastly increased.

A rural "wirth" in Tyrol is a being it would require a whole book to depict with accuracy. A farmer himself, and owner perhaps of four or five horses, he is not only a man of importance in the village, but generally also of comparative wealth, sure to be, or to have been once, at the head of the "Vorsteherung," or municipality. He is "*the*" man who dares to avow any anti-orthodox opinion in the face of an enraged priest; he heads the liberal party, if there be any, in his village; and his word very frequently carries the day in any question of village faction quarrel. Large, portly men generally, they have to be firm and resolute; "For," as a giant "wirth" once remarked to me, "a wirth who cannot expel any one of his quarrelsome or drunken guests can never hope to keep order in his house." Though it would be going too far to say that this is the rule, the "wirth's" position is always one requiring men of firm and determined character, who know, either by their bodily strength or by their mental superiority, how to make themselves respected and obeyed.

Nothing illustrates the stuff these men are made of better than the important part they played in the memorable war with the French. Out of nine renowned leaders of the Tyrolese peasant troops, no less than seven were "wirthe;" among them the Wallace of Tyrol, Andreas Hofer, the "Sandwirth," as the populace term him.

Rare as fights are now, the customs which rule these encounters nevertheless vary a good deal according to the locality. In some valleys the combatants content themselves with throwing each other; in others, again, severe injuries are the rule. I once happened to be present in the Upper Zillerthal at a fight between four

men. The ferocity of the combatants and the savage way in which they attacked each other rendered it amazing that no serious injuries were inflicted. An eye scooped out and two bleeding heads were about the only visible results. I was not a little struck with the cool and off-hand manner in which the victim of the first-named injury replaced his eye into the socket, to which it had remained attached by some fibers. A strip of cloth was bound over it, and the man rejoined his companions sitting round the table, all being the best friends in the world now that the quarrel was once settled. I may add that loss of the eyesight is by no means the inevitable result of a "scooped-out" eye, as long as it remains attached to the socket, and the nerves are not injured. I know a man whose right eye has been twice "scooped," and yet he sees perfectly well with it.

To give an idea of the hardships which fall to the lot of a Tyrolese peasant, I will endeavor to recount the odd features of some of the remote valleys noticed by me in the course of my wanderings.

In the Wild-Schönau (North Tyrol) not a few of the houses are built on such steep slopes that a heavy chain has to be laid round the houses and fastened to some firm object, a large tree, or boulder of rock, higher up. In many of the side valleys of the "Pusterthal" manure and earth, the latter to replace the poor soil exhausted in one or two years, have to be carried up the precipitous slopes in large baskets, or "kraksen," on the backs of men. In one village off the Pusterthal, and in two others off the Oberinnthal, many of the villagers come to church with crampons<sup>1</sup> on their feet, the terribly steep slopes on which their huts are built, somewhat like a swallow's nest on a wall, requiring this precautionary measure; and they are so accustomed to wear them constantly on their feet during the week that on the Sunday they even come to church with them.

<sup>1</sup> A sort of iron sole, supplied with six or eight spikes an inch or an inch and a half in length. The irons are securely strapped to the shoe by means of leather or cord fastenings. They are of great help on precipitous slopes.

In Moos, a village not very far from the Brenner, having a population of 800 inhabitants, more than 300 men and women have been killed since 1758 by falls from the incredibly steep slopes upon which the pasturages of this village are situated. So steep are they, in fact, that only goats, and even they not everywhere, can be trusted to graze on them; and the hay for the larger cattle has to be cut and gathered by the hand of man.

The "Wildheuer" is very numerous represented in the Tyrol. Their occupation is very similar to the one just described, with the difference that a "wildheuer" climbs the highest eminences, up to eight and nine thousand feet, in search for the long Alpine grass growing on steep slopes. Armed with his crampons, he sets out on his dangerous task. If the precipices are too high to admit his precipitating the bundles of hay, closely packed in a sort of net, down the declivity, he has no other means of transporting it but to take the heavy burden, exceeding often a hundredweight, on his shoulder, and return by the same perilous path by which he ascended. So common in Tyrol are valleys having amazingly precipitous slopes, with not a patch of level ground in their whole stretch, that we frequently meet with proverbs quaintly illustrating the dangerous nature of a glen. Thus of one (Hochgallmig) the saying runs: "Here the hens have to walk on crampons, and the cocks use Alpine poles." Of another: "If the swallows can't find any walls of suitable height in the rest of Tyrol, they come to Taufers" (Oberinntal) "to build their nests on the slopes of the valley."

In See, a tiny village in one of the remote glens off the latter valley, the bodies of persons who had died in winter were formerly kept in the lofts of the houses till the snow vanished from the path traversing a mountain over 8,000 feet high, which connected See with the village to whose parish it belonged. See, however, with its population of 500 souls, has been recently added to a parish not requiring ten or twelve hours to be reached.

In another valley the letter-carrier, who visits it once a



fortnight (in summer), is obliged to wear crampons on his feet for two days, and each day for more than twelve hours.

In many villages the staple article of production is butter, which is carried over mountain paths to the next large village or town.

Thus in Hinter-Dux about half of the male population of that valley are occupied during the summer months in transporting this commodity to Innsbruck. One of these men will carry 120 to 130 pounds, or about 150 English pounds, for eleven or twelve hours constantly on his back, and traverse two very steep ridges of mountains over which the path to Innsbruck, their market for butter, leads.

Considering the poor pay received by these carriers, and the exceptional fatigue attendant upon the transport of such a weight, it is astonishing that emigration is but rarely resorted to by natives of the Hinter-Dux and other valleys where similar precarious means of gaining a livelihood are the rule.

Strangers, oddly enough, very often find the unsophisticated population of the remoter parts of the country the most difficult to deal with. This is caused to a great extent by the suspicious shyness with which these rustics glance at the strangely-dressed invader. Nothing aids one's efforts to penetrate the outer coat of reserve, and at the same time to gain a true insight into the lives and characters of this people, so much as an assimilation to their habits, customs, language, and dress. But very naturally too, as all travelers do not care to acquire the necessary broad German, or to walk about in short "leathers" with an old hat on one's head, I must content myself with asking the reader to make his own inferences from the following sketches of Tyrolese life.

I may as well mention here that my adoption of the native dress and language has very frequently been the source of great amusement to me. A worn shooting-jacket on the back, with short time-stained "leathers" displaying a bronzed knee, is an apparel that not only

opens the hearts of the natives, but also the minds of unsuspecting tourists.

Many of my readers no doubt will know the exquisite view from the "Matreier Thörl,"—a pass intervening between the two villages of Matrei and Kals in the Tyrol. On a fine August day, two or three years ago, I was lying at full length on the short grass, basking in the warm afternoon sun, on the height of this pass. A three-days' unsuccessful chamois-stalking expedition high up among the opposite range of snowy peaks had brought me on my return to civilized quarters across this height. Feeling rather tired, I determined to while away a few hours till approaching dusk would render advisable a speedy descent to Kals—for that day my goal. I had not been more than half an hour thus enjoying the grand view and the absolute and impressive tranquillity reigning around me, when I perceived a group of tourists slowly climbing the narrow path leading to the celebrated point of view, on the height of the "Joch," or pass.

Retreating to a patch of rhododendrons a few yards off, in order to be out of the way of the puffing and "winded" tourists, I immediately learned on their arrival, by the "charming"s, and "delightful"s, and "beautiful"s, that fell from the lips of the three ladies that made up the female contingent of the group, that the guess which I had made on first seeing the group, when yet half a mile distant, was right.

An hour or so was spent by the party in admiring the view, sketching the valley at their feet, and deriving animal comfort from sundry parcels and bottles produced from the knapsacks of the two men, one evidently the father, the other the son and apparently a university man. The fact that they were unprovided with guides or porters was explained in the course of their conversation by the casual remark of one of the ladies that they hoped their luggage had safely reached Kals, the village they were intending to gain that evening.

Not wishing to play the eavesdropper any longer, I had swung my "Rucksack" on to my shoulders, and was

just taking up my rifle in order to turn my steps Kalsward, when a hasty exclamation of one of the younger ladies, to the purport that she desired to sketch me as representing a typical Tyrolese chamois-hunter, made me hasten away. The brother, evidently the only one of the party acquainted with German, ran after me, intending to secure me as a model for his sister. The excuse — in German, of course — that I was pressed for time, and had a walk of two or three hours before me, got rid of this proposal, only, however, to get me into a worse scrape. Asking me if I was going to Kals, he seemed quite astonished to hear that it was nearly three hours off, whereupon he informed his relatives of the unwelcome piece of information gleaned from “this fellow,” pointing to me. Hardly able to suppress my laughter, but desiring to retain my incognito, I was just going to pass on, when my interrogator asked me in his execrable German if I would mind showing them the way down. My hint that the path could scarcely be missed was met by the further request of the ladies that I would carry their shawls, which had thus far been fastened to their waists by straps. Escape seemed impossible, and, not wishing to be disobliging or uncivil, I assented. Ten minutes later I was stalking in front of the file, now rid of their shawls and knapsacks. The latter had been introduced into my spacious “Rucksack” by the young man, who imagined that I had not observed the addition of weight. “These fellows don’t feel fifteen or twenty pounds more or less on their backs,” was the off-hand speech with which he quieted the remonstrance of one of his sisters.

Close behind me tripped the two girls, the parents in the center, and the son closing the file. The confidential conversation of the two young ladies, both bright and handsome specimens of that most pleasing of England’s characteristics, — her fair sex, — to which I had to listen for two long hours, must of course remain untold in these pages: let it suffice that the concoction of a strategical device how to get me into their sketch-books, intermingled with personal remarks, not uniformly flattering,

on my humble self's appearance, formed the chief subject of their constant chatter, making me rejoice that the even path and their sure-footedness rendered the extension of a helping hand to the two fair conspirators unnecessary. Just before dark we reached the straggling village of Kals, and the "Gasthaus," a modest but scrupulously clean little inn.

Dreading to enter the house in the character of a porter, as I was well known to the host and the guides, who were sure to be lingering about the entrance, I came to a sudden halt a few yards from the inn. Unfastening the knapsacks and bundle of shawls from my "Rucksack," with the intention of handing them to the two gentlemen of the party, I meant to make off to another little inn, where I hoped to be safe from any unwelcome *dénoûment*.

An ominous whispering, and the accompanying jingle of loose money, made me recollect that my "porter" character entitled me to a fee. "Here, my good fellow, are two florins for your pains," were the last words I heard, for with a sudden turn I was off, leaving the "paterfamilias" rooted to the ground with outstretched hand. Fate, however, meant differently, for with a slap on my shoulder, and "Why, my dear Mr. Grohman, where on earth are you off to in such a hurry?" I was brought to a dead stop, not five yards from my bewildered "employers."

A London barrister, whom I had accidentally met some weeks before while on a mountaineering tour in the Dolomites, was thus destined to tear off my porter disguise, and, what was far more disagreeable, made me the object of profound excuses on the part of my late "masters." Of the blushes of the two charming conspirators on seeing the Tyrolese chamois-hunter transformed into a fellow-countryman, whom they had unwittingly made their confidant on more than one point, it is unnecessary to speak; nor of the upshot of the whole mystification, a charming supper in the little parlor of the inn, and a far more charming tour in their company back to Lienz, and into the heart of the Dolomites, followed, five or six

months later, by several very merry dinners in a certain house not a hundred miles from Hyde Park Corner.

On another occasion — for this incident recalls to my mind a host of ludicrous scenes — while sitting at a crowded dinner-table in Schluderbach, near Ampezzo, and chatting with a stout old monk, I had to lend an unwilling ear to some very severe criticisms on the part of two somewhat emancipated English ladies of a certain age, on the beastly custom of my stout neighbor, of indulging in very frequent doses of snuff; and then, when that subject was exhausted, to no less stinging remarks on my own appearance. A flannel shirt and a shooting-jacket of Tyrolese cut are perhaps not the guise in which I should care to appear at a Swiss *table d'hôte*; but for the primitive Tyrolese hostelrys, those two ladies exercised, I am inclined to think, somewhat too harsh a judgment.

For the benefit of those of my readers who have never had occasion to cross the threshold of an Alp-hut or *châlet*, I may add the following short sketch of these elevated summer abodes of vast numbers of Tyrolese. In May, when the last streaks of snow have vanished from the mountains of medium height, the peasants, now rid of their autumnal stock of fodder, lead their herds of cattle up to the juicy pasturages on the mountain slopes that encircle their native valleys. These "Alps" or pasturages are resorted to at different seasons, according to their heights, and many of them, at an elevation of 6,000 and 7,000 feet above the level of the sea, afford the necessary food for the cattle only for a short period.

Each pasturage is provided with a hut, the *châlet* or Alp-hut, and a rich peasant will tell you that he has three and four of these "Alps," situated one above the other at an interval of an hour or more between each. Thus when the grass on the lowest, which is first resorted to, grows scarce, the herd and his cattle migrate to the one higher up, and in this way the highest Alp-hut is reached in the warmest season of the year, about the month of July.

Poorer peasants have two Alps ; and if the peasant has but a few head of cattle to call his own he will be even content with one, though this may be said to be the exception in all but the very poorest valleys.

The Alp-huts are simple log-huts divided into two unequal divisions. The larger part at the rear provides the necessary shelter for young cattle in wet or cold weather, while the smaller front portion is the kitchen, parlor, and bedroom of the man or woman to whose guardianship the cattle are intrusted. On mountains abounding with grassy slopes we find clusters of these huts together, often to the number of twenty or thirty.

The interior of these huts is extremely primitive. The fireplace occupies one of the corners, and is generally a sort of pit or trench, dug around by way of a seat, surmounted by a crane, from which is suspended the huge black caldron or kettle, the most necessary utensil for the manufacture of cheese.

In large and prosperous Alp-huts these caldrons are of amazing size ; and I well remember that in my younger days it was my habit at night, while sojourning in these *châlets*, to seek a warm though somewhat confined resting-place in the inside of one of these giant kettles. Once, in fact, I was nigh drowned by the "Senner," or cowherd, pouring a huge pailful of water into the caldron, ignorant as he was of its contents.

In Styria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, and certain valleys in Tyrol, girls — strong, healthy-looking lasses — are the occupants of these solitary huts, while in other parts of Tyrol and in Switzerland a man guards the cattle intrusted to him. If the peasant to whom the Alp belongs is unable to afford to keep such a "Senner" or "Sennerin," his grown-up son or daughter, as the case may be, is sent up in that character.

These people have but little opportunity of indulging in that Arcadian leisure which romance assigns to tenants of solitary Alp-huts. The manufacture of cheese, the churning of butter, the milking of the cows twice a day, the cleaning and arrangement of the dairy-utensils,

and the responsibility of keeping their flock from straying into dangerous places, and attending on sick cattle, give them constant and excessively arduous occupation.

A bed of straw and a blanket on a sort of projecting balcony in the inside of the hut is their resting-place ; and the stranger or native who seeks a night's shelter has to content himself with the fragrant hay on the loft right over the second partition where the cattle seek a welcome shelter from the inclemencies of a rough Alpine climate.

The dairy or milk-cellar is either underground or in a small chamber off the front division. As the type of *châlet* in which the *Senner* is the presiding master has been often described in books on Swiss travel, I shall confine myself to the more preferable class governed by female hands.

Greater cleanliness in dairy matters, the generally scrupulously clean interior of the hut itself, and the far more pleasing and attractive welcome accorded to the stranger, are some of the manifold merits of the latter custom. Little more than a hundred years ago the *Senner* was an unknown being ; every Alp-hut in the Tyrol was presided over by *Sennerinnen*. The Archbishop of Salzburg, to whose diocese many of the Tyrolese valleys appertained, moved by sundry complaints respecting the somewhat profligate life led "on high," gave strict injunctions that henceforth no "*Sennerin*" should be allowed. The Bishops of Trent and Brixen followed suit, though not in so rigorous a manner. Since that time, however, and chiefly since the wars in the first years of this century, the buxom, healthy-looking Alp-girl has re-occupied her former position in not a few Tyrolese valleys.

Saturday evening is the grand "reception" night of these gay and merry lasses. Work over in the distant valley, each young fellow who is lucky enough to be able to sing : "A rifle on my back, a buck chamois in my bag, and a black-eyed, merry Alp-girl in my heart," takes his rifle, his scant stock of provisions, and is off to the Alp-hut high up on the mountains, where he knows his lass is awaiting him. Far off, while the low *châlet* is yet

but a speck, a piercing, echoing "joddler" of the lover will bring his lass to the door, and a minute later a sharp silvery answer will float down to the mountaineer, whose feet cover the intervening distance with a speed that love only can accomplish.

Sunday is devoted to stalking or poaching, and on Monday morning, long before daybreak often, the swain is off in order to regain the site of his daily labor by five o'clock, the hour for beginning work.

Playing the Don Juan is not unfrequently dangerous work for a stranger or a native of another valley, and I have come across several instances where a speedy retribution overtook the pirate in strange waters.

In October and in cold autumns, when snow falls in September, often even sooner, the Alp-girl, aided by a peasant or a boy, returns with her twenty or thirty head of cattle to the home valley. Tinkling bells, hung round each cow's neck by broad leather belts, wreaths of flowers, loud rejoicings, mark this event; and lucky is the fair lass who has made her allotted quantity of cheese, churned the requisite hundredweights of butter, and brought back her flock without accident or mishap to any of them.

In a closing remark to this introductory chapter, I wish to draw the reader's attention to another peculiarity of the Tyrolese. It is the creative genius that has distinguished this people for centuries. Painters, carvers, poets, musicians of repute, form the body of the Tyrolese contingent of celebrated or well-known names.

Musical talent is, without comparison, the gift of nature most widely diffused in Tyrol; and to a stranger, particularly an Englishman, it is amazing to find a finely developed ear and a capital voice in the commonest country lout, who scarcely knows his A B C, and to whom Bismarck is an unknown being. To be able to join with a second or third voice in a song which they have not heard before, is a very common accomplishment. Often have I been amused by watching the expressive face of some country lass listening for the first time in her life to the full tones of a piano.



To give an instance of this fine sense of music : a lady of my acquaintance was one afternoon playing and singing a Viennese air. The windows of the room were open, and two country lasses passing along the road stopped and listened for a little time. Presently, when at my request my friend repeated the song, the two girls fell in, one with the second and the other with the third voice. Being a stranger to Tyrol, my friend would not believe that the girls were common peasant lasses, unacquainted with the piece of music which she played ; and so, in order to convince her, I sent down for them, and made them accompany her in a number of songs which she sang to try them. Their intonation and expressive voices excited her admiration no less than did the piano that of the buxom lasses. My reader must not imagine, however, that the Tyrolese are fond of exhibiting their innate talent for music. Stubbornly shy, they will often refuse to sing any of their national lays if they see that their listeners are strangers. Tourists who keep to the frequented high roads, following the ruck of travelers, will hardly ever hear a genuine Tyrolese song. To enjoy a musical treat of this kind, we must leave the carriage-roads, and strike into the more unfrequented paths, and if possible visit remote Alp-huts. If we do not press the "Senner" or "Sennerin," or betray by any sign our wish to hear them sing, it is probable they will begin of their own accord.

Sitting on the low step in front of her *châlet*, enjoying a quiet half-an-hour's rest in the calm evening after her fatiguing day's work, the "Sennerin" will awake the echoes of the surrounding heights, answered perhaps, if there be other huts within earshot, by their inmates. Tinkling bells, the rich silvery voice melodiously tender in all its notes, the quiet calm of the evening, and the grand landscape, all unite in producing an effect that will remain impressed upon the mind for many a day to come.

I may here remark that the Tyrolese entertain a passionate love for the mimic art. The famous "Mystery

Plays" of the Middle Ages are supplanted by the modern "Passion Plays," organized on the same principles as those at Ober-Ammergau, though in most cases on a much smaller scale. Theatrical representations of all descriptions are highly patronized. Of the many I have had occasion to visit, I remember in particular one—given in a small village near Kufstein—bearing the title "Richard, King of England, or the Lovers' Tomb." My mirth was great when, as an appropriate finish-up of the cruel king, — the chief character, — his head was bitten off by a make-believe lion, while a chorus, consisting of three peasant boys and two lasses, yelled out, "Thus perish all cruel monarchs!"

## CHAPTER II.

## THE PARADISE PLAY.

EVERYBODY, of course, has seen or heard of the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play. Who has not smiled at the quaint manner in which Biblo-historical facts are turned and twisted on those rural boards? Who has not laughed at the strange interludes, the odd sights, and comic anomalies, that crop up on those occasions? A "Virgin Mary," happy mother of a couple of brats; a widowed Joseph, the village ne'er-do-well, as Christ,—do not sound stranger to our ears, than the remark in the clear shrill voice of the little fellow, one of the audience at a Tyrolese Passion Play, who, on hearing the cock crow for the third time, to the well-rendered discomfiture of Peter, cried out, "Oh, mother, the cock has surely laid an egg!" These and a host of other incidents of a like nature, all of which betoken the simple, uncultured minds of the pious audience, are known to most. Far less familiar, however, is the history of the Miracle and Christmas plays, relics of bygone centuries, the study of which carries us back to a time when the Church looked to the stage as a sure and safe medium to enchain the ignorant, rendering at the same time their minds less susceptible to the dangerous doctrines promulgated by the heretic tongue of a Calvin or a Melanchthon. In South Germany, Tyrol was undoubtedly the cradle of these Mystery Plays, dealing, as they all did, with religious subjects.

The popular supposition that the Ober-Ammergau Play is the sole remaining relic is incorrect; and an observant

traveler who does not shrink from turning the world on end by visiting Tyrol at Christmas or Easter-tide, instead of in summer time, will find, if he takes the trouble to search in the secluded by-ways of the Alps, various kinds of religious plays enacted at these two seasons. It is a strange fact, and one that illustrates the high rank in civilization occupied by the Tyrolese in the Middle Ages, that a people unacquainted with the commonest luxuries of life, hard-working as perhaps no other race in Europe, and deprived by their isolated position from all accessories, such as tuition and books, to further the development of this taste, should yet find the wherewithal to indulge in this strange liking.

One of the most telling traits illustrating the age of these plays, and one which it is difficult to rhyme with the strict, not to say bigoted, religious sense peculiar to these people, is the seemingly irreligious intermingling of the most commonplace events of every-day life with sacred episodes and saintly personages of the Old and New Testaments. Ere we harshly criticise this feature, we must remember that the native looks upon it in quite a different light than we would. A peasant, stanch Roman Catholic though he be, is so absolutely swayed by blind belief in his creed, and by the word of his infallible priest, that to him no wrong whatever is attached to the use, we may say abuse, of sacred names in connection with domestic occurrences or casualties. Now to our play.

“So you have never heard of our Paradise Play: that’s odd—I thought the whole world knew of it; long enough we’ve played it, to be sure, for you folks in towns and cities to have heard of it.”

These words, spoken by the red-faced, jolly-looking “wirth,”—innkeeper of a snug, clean-looking inn in the village of X——, situated in a remote corner of the Eastern Alps, were the answer to a query called forth by hearing the unusual name “Paradise Play” mingled with some remark made by the talkative old fellow.

“Well, my dear sir,” he continued, “I can only tell you that if you’ve never heard of it, much less seen it,

come to this very inn, to this very room, on Christmas Day, and you'll learn what but simple peasant folk can do. Yes, yes, I tell you, you can't do better than come," he proceeded, as, with a glance at my face, he took stock of the effect of his words.

"But, my 'lieber wirth,' that's impossible; by that time I shall be far away in a strange country, in the gayest city of the world," I answered.

"And is it perhaps not worth while coming here for the day to see us, poor peasants as we are, play the 'godly' Paradise Play?"

The idea of coming from Paris to this out-of-the-way nook in the center of the Alps, for that purpose, made me laugh, to the evident annoyance of mine host.

"Yes, yes, you may laugh, but I can tell you that a better and more righteous play you can't see, were you to search from here to the Emperor's city. We have played it for many centuries, and nought but good has come of it."

I regret my hasty smile, for now, I fear, it will probably prove more difficult to get at the kernel of the nut, — the explanation of that strange-sounding word. Unfortunately my fears come true, for presently this embodiment of country bumpkinism recommenced conversation by asking where I might be on Christmas Day, that I should laugh at the idea of visiting the village.

"Paris, 'herr wirth!'"

"Why, that's in France, where they're continually changing and chopping — now it's an Empire, now a Republic; now they have one President, then again another. They are a bad lot, those Frenchmen, and the 'Bote,'" — mentioning the name of a petty local newspaper, containing about as much matter as would fill a quarter of a column in "The Times," — "says they'll begin war soon again. I was but a child when they were here in 1809, but, so help me God, if they come again, I would be the first man in X — who would take up arms against them."

And, beating his broad chest with his huge fist, the old fellow looked the man who would do it.

The man was now fairly launched in politics, and there was no use endeavoring to stop the voluble talk in which half a dozen peasants, who had been silent hitherto, now joined.

I am afraid it would hardly amuse my readers as much as it did me, to listen to the most astounding political facts, the most atrocious *canards* — brought into existence by this eminent politician, and received by his grateful audience with nods of approval and guttural “Jo, Jo’s.” To bring them under some standard or other, one may say that even a correspondent of “The New-York Herald” would have turned away with a painful shrug of the shoulder.

Now England had just made peace with the Russians (I am writing of the year 1871); now it is a Republic; then, again, England’s Queen had married a German, Consort by name; the next minute Bismarck is made the illegitimate son of the late King of Prussia; and we are told in connection with this fact, that it is only in consequence of this circumstance, that he has acquired such power over that heretic, the present Emperor. Russia, France, England, Turkey, and the Crimea, are cut up into a hash, from which nought but the facts that the Russians eat their own tallow candles, and the Turks drown their superfluous wives, appear with any thing like distinctness.

I sat quietly listening to these political vagaries. Not even when he was talking of England’s base policy toward the “Icelanders” (the man meant “Irlander” — Irish) and “the rest of the colored races,” did I show any sign of life, — not even when the positive fact was narrated that the English soldiers in their wars with the “blacks” dip their prisoners, as a punishment, into a chemical wash, and turn them white! For the sake of the Paradise Play, I kept my blood, though it be half that of a “colored Iclander,” in a state corresponding with the cool regions just named. Thanks to our silence, and to the fact that the peasant audience also seemed to have a dark inkling of the expediency of keeping

quiet, our political volcano presently evinced signs of having reached its climax.

At last he subsided, and I dared to return to the Paradise Play. It was too soon ; for, leaning over toward me, with his sparkling eyes bent on mine, he asked, —

“Is it not, perhaps, quite true, what I’ve said? I don’t read the priest’s weekly paper without getting some knowledge of the world from it.”

His huge fist came down upon the table with a bang, and I drew in my horns with a celerity only equalled by the alacrity of my answer, —

“Yes, yes ; one sees very plainly you’ve read your papers attentively.”

Not five minutes later I had brought him back to the track of the play.

“Why, you see, the Paradise Play is a religious performance played on Christmas Day.”

“And where do you act it?—in the church, or have you a separate building expressly for that purpose?”

“Oh, no ! we play it in this room ” (a very large but low chamber), “and have always acted it here with the exception of the year this house was burnt down, and then it was played in the barn belonging to the Vicarage. Here where we sit is the stage ; and there, on top of the stove ” (a huge pile of pottery some five feet in height), “God the Father has his throne, then the stove is hidden by a painted paper screen, representing clouds. Once, it is true,” he continued, “some mischievous boys lit a fire in the stove during the play, and in the most interesting scene, just when Eve bites into the apple, God the Father had to jump down from his throne, which, of course, had got too warm for him ! Didn’t the boys all laugh when he rushed out of Paradise, and out of the room, rubbing his legs and upsetting the long tailor, who that year acted the Archangel, and who, as luck would have it, was leaning on his flaming sword right behind the scenes, ready to come on the stage to drive off Adam and Eve? I can tell you, we were nearer laughing than crying, though the dark scowl of the Herr Vicar, who

was sitting in the first row, soon made us recollect the sacred parts we were acting."

"But are all the actors peasants?" I asked, getting interested.

"Oh, yes! The most suitable men are chosen for each part. He who has a long white beard of venerable aspect is God the Father. You see that fellow yonder" (pointing to a white-bearded old man, whose wrinkled face and bent frame betokened a green old age), "well, he has been our God the Father for the last five and twenty years, though of late he is getting too old and helpless for that hard part. Last Christmas he had to be lifted on to his throne before the commencement of the first scene, representing Chaos. During the first part of that, God the Father ought not to be in sight. So he had to crouch down on his throne, and was covered with a blanket, upon which snow was piled, figurating a snowy park rising beyond the 'cloud' screen. Unfortunately, the heat of the room melted the snow; and when at last, at a most solemn moment, he had to rise, and in his character as God the Father proclaim his Creation to his angels, his dragged look and dripping clothes called out a storm of laughter.

"For the Evil One, we find, if we can, a red-headed actor, with a cast in his eye and turned-in toes. For the Archangel, a tall, middle-aged man, who is sure in his parts, — one, in fact, upon whom we can rely. This year we shall have to take a smaller man; for the tailor, who always acted the Archangel, was killed a month or two ago by a fall from a pear-tree."

"And who acts Adam and Eve? for we suppose these two characters are indispensable in a Paradise Play," I said, drawing the man on.

"Oh! of course we've had an Adam, and an Eve too; but as regards these two parts being the most important ones in the play, I say, and I have always said, that God the Father has more talk than Adam and Eve put together. Eve comes next, and then the Archangel. And that's by no means an easy part to act, for the actor must



work himself up into a regular rage. Some of our men drink schnapps for this purpose ; but though I am the person who would get a profit from these made-up rages, I make it a point to discourage schnapps-drinking by those who are engaged in our sacred play. For the matter of that, we'll never again have such a fellow as the long tailor to act the Archangel : *he* never touched schnapps, or any liquor whatever, until the curtain dropped on the last scene.

“ But you asked me who play Adam and Eve : well, we choose the prettiest couple we can get hold of in the village ; and thank goodness, since God the Father, old Kerchler, yonder peasant, made such a fool of himself in that affair with his daughter, we've no difficulty in getting Eves. Some ten or twelve years ago it wasn't so easy. A couple of accidents, following close upon each other, showing up Adam's sinful mind, not only on the stage but elsewhere, and bringing on certain unpleasant consequences, made parents fight shy of allowing their daughters to be kissed and embraced by fiery Adams, who, for aught they knew, might be in secret their lovers. Well, some ten or twelve years ago, it happened that we had no Eve up to a week before the play. You can see what a fix we were in ; for married women we could not ask well to take Eve's part, while of maidens there were but few who suited, and those who did were strictly forbidden by their parents to play Eve.

“ Mary, the only daughter of our old God the Father, was by far the most suitable lassie ; but old Kerchler would not hear of letting her act that part. We actors (for at that time I played the part of one of the Guardians of Hell) had a talk over it, the upshot of which was that the long tailor was to try his utmost to bring old Kerchler round. If he failed, we were to make use of a trick proposed by the tailor himself, which we all voted for.

“ ‘ No, tailor, don't ask or bother me any more, ’ said old God the Father, when our sly delegate went to see him the next day ; ‘ I won't allow my daughter to be kissed

and hugged by a hot-headed Adam before the eyes of the whole world: she's the richest girl of the country round, and besides, it's not good for the morals of any decent young woman.' — 'But I've got such a modest milksop of an Adam,' urged the tailor. 'No, I won't; the very same thing was said of Joe last year, and yet the parents of Eve have now a *young* Joe on their hands. I won't, and that's enough.'

"There was no use in talking any more: old Kerchler had once said he wouldn't, and we all knew that he meant what he said. So now we had to fall back on our stratagem. The tailor again went to old Kerchler, and told him that owing to his stubborn refusal, and to the fact that there was no other girl in the village for an Eve, they had decided that Adam's part should be acted by a girl; would he allow his daughter to take that part? 'That's something else,' retorted old Kerchler: 'why, Adam she can play, if you wish, with all my heart. At least,' the old fellow continued, while a sly twinkle shone in his eyes, 'there won't be any danger, though of course the kissing and hugging will lose much of its naturalness.'

"The matter was settled, and pretty Mary came back every evening from the daily rehearsals, with a bright blush of mischief and happiness on her cheeks. Kerchler, who had played God the Father for so many years, knew every word of his part by heart, and of course felt it below his dignity to attend the rehearsals. The great evening came at last. Guests from the neighboring villages had been coming in all day long, and the whole house was turned topsy-turvy. The stage put up across this corner, with yonder door as exit, the benches and rows of chairs arranged in their places, the chairs in front, the benches behind for the commoner sort of visitors — all was fixed, and the curtain, two sheets stitched together, ready to be drawn aside.

"Behind the scenes all was order and grave silence. The actors were all in their costumes. The tailor, as Archangel, on his head a fire-brigade helmet borrowed for the occasion from the distant town, in his left hand a

huge round shield—the lid of a wash-tub, covered on one side with gold paper, while in his right he held the flaming sword, made of wood, painted so as to represent flames dancing round the blade. The rest of his dress was of a jacket of leather, ornamented with glass beads, and a pair of long Spanish hose, bought some thirty or forty years ago from a troupe of wandering jugglers. The Evil One, dressed in the red costume of the marker at rifle-matches, his face blackened, a pair of horns fastened to his head, and long claws made of stiff leather, glued with cobbler's wax to his fingers, looked very terrible indeed.

“Pretty Mary was at her post, in her disguise as Adam, blushing a great deal at the idea of appearing before the public in short linen knee-breeches, and a white linen jacket cut low about the breast—that being the garment worn customarily by Adam. Eve, on the contrary, decked out in a beautiful white robe, kept resolutely in the dark background. A garland of oak-leaves was ready. After the fall of the poor couple it was to be fastened across Eve's dress; for fig-leaves, you know,” my host continued with the gravest mien, “we can't get hereabouts.”

“But do you mean to say that Adam and Eve are clothed in flowing garments before the Fall?” we inquired.

“Why, yes, of course: you wouldn't have them come out in the naked state in which men and women, I am told, are not ashamed to appear on stages in your large towns and cities! No, no; we may be but peasants, dull and stupid folk in your eyes, but we don't let our sisters and daughters show their forms scarcely covered by a few scraps of gauze,” replied the host.

“Well, every thing was ready; the people came crowding into the room, for you must know the entrance is free to everybody who chooses to come, for of course it would be wrong to make any money out of a sacred play. Once, many years ago, it is true, a member of the play, the village grocer, proposed that we should have an entrance fee of six kreutzers” (two pence), “but he never

proposed it again, I can tell you. Such a hailstorm of abuse overwhelmed him that he was glad to make his escape. Did he think we were a set of wandering actors, who would sell our ancient play for money? or did he fancy we were Jews, willing to trade off our souls' salvation for copper and silver?" cried the host, indignant at the very memory of the affront.

"The boys were at their places behind the three candles that light the stage, each of them with a small board, and a screen made of red paper well oiled, wherewith they could either darken the stage, or throw a red glow upon the scene, according to the prompter's directions. For many years the schoolmaster has held this important post, and a capital prompter he makes, though he is the dread of the boys, who are always exposed to the sharp point of his long walking-cane, by which he directs the use of the screen, from the seat he occupies in the front row at the side of the Herr Vicar. Of late years we've often had trouble to get the boys for this office, for they all dread the schoolmaster's sharp tactics: now and again you will see one of the boys jump up with a prolonged 'O-o-oh,' and rub sundry parts of his body with all his might. 'Down, you rascal,' the schoolmaster will then cry, and down the boy goes, sure enough.

"But now attention: the bell rings, the curtain is pulled on one side, and before the public lies Chaos. The background of the stage is taken up by a large screen of blue paper, the sky, upon which are sprinkled in tasteful disorder divers suns, moons, stars, and comets. The stove, the future throne, hidden by the screen representing clouds, is empty. About the stage, in divers attitudes, lie half a dozen boys in cotton worsted tights, with paste-board wings fastened to their shoulders: they are the angels.

"'Ha,' cries one, 'to-day is Blue Monday; the lazy ones can sleep as long as they like: no one need get up.'

"'But if God the Father sees us,' replied another, 'we'll get a good thrashing, for he told us to pray and chant as usual, and not be idle.'

“ ‘Oh ! don't be afraid : God the Father is not at home to-day, he is out on the ‘Stör,’<sup>1</sup> creating the world ; and he told us he wouldn't be back for a whole week.’

“ ‘Ah, that's jolly !’ cries the first one again ; ‘let's have a week's holidays ; no praying and chanting for me.’

“ ‘Now for some fun,’ cry two or three of the rampageous angels. A game of leap-frog is commenced ; then the lively company resort to marbles.

“ They are interrupted in their game by the appearance of the Archangel Lucifer, with his lank black tresses waving round his shoulders, his golden lance and shield in his hands.

“ ‘That's right, my young friends,’ the prime minister of the Evil One commences, ‘pass your time as best you can ; were I your master, instead of God the Father, we'd be jolly from year's end to year's end ; fowl and the best of wine would be our daily fare, and figs and dates our dessert. But the old gentleman is a grumpy old fellow, who thinks more about creating new-fangled contrivances, such as that work of his that occupies him at present, than of jollity and good fare. May he have endless trouble with that world he is now creating ! may his hair turn gray before he has finished with it,’ exclaims the Devil's archangel.

“ These treasonable remarks of Lucifer are not without effect upon his listeners. Some clap their hands, others cry, —

“ ‘Oh, let's have *him* for our master ! we're tired of fasting, praying, and chanting the livelong day.’ Two only are silent, and turn their backs on the fiendish tempter.

“ In this manner the week passes, the intervals of night being indicated by darkening the stage for a few minutes at a time, while the angels lie about the stage asleep. Saturday afternoon, four strokes on a bell behind the scenes denote that it is four o'clock.

<sup>1</sup> Being on the “Stör” is the expression in use in Tyrol, indicating that an artisan, generally the village cobbler or tailor, is on his round of visits in quest of work. He will remain a week or so in each house, receiving his board and a trifle as wages. In most valleys this is a common proceeding.

“ ‘ Now, you beggars, be quiet,’ cries one of the good angels, ‘ it’s four o’clock, and you know God the Father knocks off work at that hour. He must be here presently.’ While he is saying this, a seventh angel comes running across the stage, singing, —

“ ‘ Praised be God the father, He has finished the creation, and will be back with you presently.’

“ The last comer sits down in a circle formed by his comrades, and narrates to them the various wonders of their master’s creation. He dwells in glowing language on the beauty and joys of Paradise, and tells them it will be the happiest day of their lives when they will be initiated into the mysteries of this new world. Lucifer, standing apart from the group, interrupts all of a sudden the brilliant description, by telling them not to be such fools as to believe that they will ever see any thing of Paradise ; with a sneering smile of victory on his face, he continues to dilate upon the wretched lives they lead, and closes with the promise to bring them to a place far superior to Paradise. He has hardly finished, when God the Father, rising on his stove throne, becomes visible ; the music falls in with a grand crash, and the angels, wholly forgetful of the wicked language they have just listened to with eager ears, commence to chant, while Lucifer, hiding his face in his hands, rushes from the stage. A threshing-machine behind the scenes, worked by a couple of strong arms, makes the hollow thunder to set off the evil counsellor’s hasty exit. The solemn announcement, that heaven and earth, the stars, moon, and sun are created, and that the morrow is the day of rest, flows from the lips of God the Father, who proceeds to tell His audience that likewise has He made living creatures of every kind, bulls and cows, cocks and hens, asses and pigs, and, to have dominion over them, He has shaped after His own image a being called man, and for his abode He would plant a garden called Paradise.

“ This finishes the Heavenly Father’s speech, and, turning round on his throne, he ducks down behind his screen, which closes the first scene.

“Hearty applause tells of the audience’s admiration. A pause of some ten minutes then follows, after which the curtain is again pulled aside, displaying a representation of certain underground regions. It is hell, fiery demoniacal hell, with all its infernal machinery, instruments of torture, and trapfalls for human folly. The center of the stage is occupied by a portable forge, upon which a bright coal-fire is burning; a large butcher’s block stands to the right, while huge knives, gigantic tongs, and brightly-polished axes litter the foreground. To the left of the forge we see a couple of huge boilers filled with steaming water. The stage is lit up by means of the red screens, and loud howling and gnashing of teeth and the most piercing shrieks increase the horrors of the picture. A harsh blast of trumpets brings in the Archangel Lucifer, the master of this fearful place. He is attended by a troupe of young imps, and devils on a small scale, who jump and caper round him in wicked gleefulness. Seating himself on his throne, the butcher’s bloody block, he catches hold of the signs of his office, — a heavy iron chain painted a bright red to represent red heat, and a pitchfork. Round his neck is hung a chain of teeth, human fingers (of wax), — those that were forfeited to him for slander and perjury, — and bunches of lank witches’ hair, and several dried toads.

“When he gets fixed up that way, Lucifer holds court. Hard questions are brought up. The new Creation is spoken of, and the chances of overthrowing the rule of God the Father. We hear of the various weak points of human nature, pride, lust, jealousy, greed, &c., how advantage could be taken of each one, and how God’s influence could be overcome. The talk is presently interrupted by two imps, who we see are two of the angels of the Chaos scene, who seemed to give heed to Lucifer’s words, and followed him down to his underground home.

“They have found out their mistake too late.

“‘The fowls you promised us are burnt to a cinder, and the wine is pure vinegar, and the heat is intolerable,’ they cry out in a piteous tone.

“A loud peal of fiendish laughter is the answer, and Lucifer holds his sides, at the bad fix he has got his victims in.

“Now you are here, you imps,’ he tells them, ‘and, what’s more, you’ll remain here for ever, unless some confounded Christian makes a fool of himself by undertaking some pilgrimage on your behalf!’

“Thereupon the deceived angels set up a wail of dismay, and the consultation they had interrupted is begun again.

“‘Which of you has the smoothest tongue, and can wriggle along the ground serpent-fashion?’ asks Lucifer of his company.

“From several candidates for this office, one is chosen, and instructed how to act.

“The weak points of Eve’s sex — disobedience and curiosity — are to be attacked.

“A screech of delight is the answer to this news, and a hellish song in praise of his Satanic Majesty close the second scene.

“The third scene is a short one, and represents to the eager public, Paradise in its perfect peace.

“God the Father occupies his stove-throne, while Adam stands in the center of the garden near a rosebush, borrowed for the occasion from the village priest’s garden.

“A long ‘Ah!’ goes through the room.

“‘Why, it’s Kerchler’s Mary,’ is on the lips of everybody.

“Adam, not dreaming of the amazement his appearance has called forth, is chanting a song in praise of his Creator.

“God the Father, supposed to be invisible to Adam, nods all the time, pleased at the praise bestowed upon him.

“When the song is finished, Adam amuses himself by a walk round the place, and while doing so has a conversation with sundry animals, which are, however, only heard, not seen.

“Presently God the Father interrupts Adam by asking him where Eve is.



“ ‘Master, she is asleep beneath yonder tree,’ exclaims Adam, in a voice like a bell.

“ ‘If she’s asleep, let her be ; she’ll give you trouble enough before you’ve finished with her ! Adam, I’m here as your master. I wish to satisfy myself of your obedience, so mark my words. You see that apple-tree yonder ? Neither you nor the woman Eve may taste of its fruit. It will be the worse for both of you if you break my commandment.’

“ A few more orders that would have been just in their place had Adam been a mischievous schoolboy, close their talk, and God the Father again ducks and disappears from the eyes of the public.

“ Now everybody is excited. The audience is dying to see Eve, for, strange to say, nobody seems to know who plays that part. Whispered guesses — all of which, after all, turn out to be wrong — go the round of the crowded room.

“ Always before that everybody knew the ins and outs of the play, and the actors, long before the great day ; but this time it was quite something else, for Eve, like Adam, astonished them no little ; but what was that in comparison to the surprise in store for them !

“ The fourth and last scene in the play again shows the Garden of Eden — where the temptation and fall took place. Towards the end of the scene God the Father has to walk across, and can not of course occupy his throne, for a descent from it would spoil the effect of the whole. So he has to wait outside till he is due on the stage.

“ Ting, ting, sounds the bell, and aside goes the curtain.

“ Adam and Eve are seen embracing each other most lovingly, in a sort of bower formed by thick rose-bushes and young fir-trees. We hear the splashing of a little waterfall behind the scenes, and a lively concert of various animals’ voices is kept up, such as the braying of asses, the bellowing of bullocks, the lowing of cows, the bleating of sheep, the barking of dogs, the caterwauling

of a tom-cat, mixed in with cock-crows, and the grunt of pigs.

“Then the voice of God the Father, who himself is invisible, and is speaking through the wrong end of a paper trumpet to lend distance to his words, is heard lecturing Adam, closing his charge with the words — ‘And man shall leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one.’

“Every eye is fixed upon Eve, a tall, fine figure, with a healthy bloom on her fresh pretty face, shaded by short, crisp curls of dark brown hair. The dark, fiery eyes are bent with the greatest tenderness on those of Adam, who is somewhat smaller in size.

“‘Who can she be?’ everybody asks. ‘She must be a stranger, for nobody can recollect the face.’

“Eve, meanwhile, turns round, and looks with a longing glance at an apple-tree, hung with imitation fruit about the size of small pumpkins.

“‘Come, Eve, my dearest,’ Adam exclaims, ‘come, let us sing a song in praise of our merciful Creator. Hark! how from sheer happiness these animals bellow, bray, bark, grunt, and crow. Listen to those birds yonder, how sweetly they warble. Don’t let us remain behind the beasts of the field in praising our God.’

“Eve, however, of a more worldly mind, takes no heed of her mate’s words, but remarks, —

“‘Come, Adam, I be hungry; let’s have some breakfast.’

“A din of smothered laughter, a buzz of ‘ah’s’ and ‘oh’s,’ on the part of the audience, now make themselves heard. Who Eve is has been discovered by her voice.

“What a joke! What fun! It’s Toni, the school-master’s son, and pretty Mary’s lover, as everybody in the village but her father well knew.

“Quiet being restored, Eve goes on, —

“‘Look, Adam, look, how beautiful these apples are.’

“‘My Eve, don’t you remember that God the Father has forbidden us to eat them? Let us go; we’ll find something better.’

“‘Oh, Adam! do look,’ urges Eve. ‘Let’s have at least a taste. God the Father has surely not counted them; just one. It’s a downright shame to let them rot on the tree.’

“‘No, Eve,’ replies Adam, ‘no, it’s forbidden fruit, and God the Father is the best judge why he has prohibited us to eat of it.’ Eve, however, won’t leave the dangerous neighborhood. ‘Look, Adam,’ she cries, ‘look at that serpent: he has picked one of the apples, and is holding it towards us.’

“‘If you love me, Eve,’ Adam replies, putting his arm around her waist, and breathing a hot kiss on her brow, ‘don’t touch it.’

“‘And, if I am your beloved Eve, you won’t refuse’ —

“Eve had not time to finish the sentence, for God the Father, returning from his dressing-shed to the back of the stage, had been rooted to the spot, horror-struck by the sight that met his eyes. His daughter hugged and kissed by that young dog of a schoolmaster’s son! A youth of no future prospects — in fact, a poor simple student — daring to embrace and kiss his daughter, the richest girl of the neighborhood! Forgetting the character he was playing, and his venerable appearance, the enraged father wrenched the ‘flaming sword’ from the hands of the amazed Archangel Michael, and, before the latter had time to hinder his mad design, God the Father was seen rushing across the stage —

“‘You scoundrel, how dare you kiss my daughter? I’ll teach you to deceive me,’ cried the enraged father; ‘be off, and never let me set eyes on you again,’ and the flaming sword was all the while raining down blows on the unfortunate lover’s back!

“Loud shouts of laughter interrupted these angry words. The audience, shaken with mirth, and fully enjoying the comic and novel termination of their play, cheered with all its might; and so ended that remarkable Christmas play,” said our burly, good-humored host.

My interest in the future of the young couple having

naturally been aroused, I ask him to give some further detail.

“Well, mein lieber Herr, Eve did at last taste of that dangerous inviting apple ; but it was fruit not easily to be got, for her purse-proud old father, having in his ignorant peasant breast a thorough contempt for the educated though poor and self-made young student, would not hear of granting her great wish.

“How dared the poor young bookworm, who, if his learned brain gave out, did not even know how to litter a cow, aspire to the hand of his daughter, the richest girl of the whole village, who would in time be mistress of a large farm and some forty head of cattle ?”

“A year or two passed : the young bookworm had got through with his studies, and was duly entered as engineer, with a salary large enough to satisfy such simple wants as Adam and Eve would be apt to have. And what then could stand in the way of their making real the words, ‘And man shall leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife,’ spoken by God the Father that eventful evening ? And so Adam, fair Mary, did leave his father, to cleave thenceforth to Eve, the self-made young engineer. Fate favored the persevering young couple, and the baby arms of a young Cain accomplished what no other earthly power could, — the reconciliation with Mary’s stubborn-hearted parent, the irascible God the Father of our play, thus filling their cup of happiness to the brim.”

We are at the end of our story, and pause to ponder over the strange influence these rurally primitive boards exercise over the minds of the untutored peasantry, upheld and encouraged as their religious representations are, unto this very day, by the Church.

No distance is too great, no passes too steep or rough, no march on dusty high roads too fatiguing, if a Miracle or Passion Play is their goal.

One meets entire families, consisting perhaps of three and four generations, toiling along little-trodden paths.

You can watch the feeble old grandfather leaning heavily on his staff; or, if the means of the family are such, comfortably seated on some bundles of straw on the springless two-wheeled cart, drawn by the wall-eyed mare, very likely a contemporary of the old man's prime. At the side of the vehicle trudges the weather-beaten father, erect and firm, but yet far advanced towards middle age; his eyes, shaded by his strongly-marked brows, are bent with scrutiny on the members of the party under his care.

The son, a picture of manly bearing, in the early prime of life, is attired in his Sunday best, his bronzed knees showing well, his gray frieze coat thrown jauntily over his shoulders, his ruddy face shaded by the broad-brimmed Tyrolese hat, adorned with the feather of the blackcock. Though evidently he is married — for at his heels trots his eldest born, his chubby little fist clasped in the hand of his buxom, gayly-attired mother — he has not quite lost that gay devil-may-care look, that keen sparkle of his eye, that cock-of-the-walk stride, which gave him the victory over the numerous rivals to the hand of the woman at his side, once the belle of her village. His youthful spirit betrays itself in the very act of pushing his hat more knowingly on one side, as he answers one of his wife's merry sallies.

Though she be freckled by life-long exposure to the sun's hottest rays, and though her face and neck are burnt to a ruddy red while guarding her father's cattle on that Alpine pasture high up yonder, exposed now to the fierce blasts of icy-cold winds, now to noontide heat, or to the sleety rain of Alpine heights; her dimpled smile, her ruby lips, her sparkling blue eyes, have lost none of their freshness, and are yet in the sight of her husband the embodiment of mortal charms, and the fountain of all the happiness which braces him for his toilsome, hard-working life.

Hot and weary, the dust-begrimed troupe make a halt in the cool shade of the pine forest, flanking on both sides, for many a mile to come, the high road.

The mare is unharnessed and turned to graze; the old

grandfather is lifted down from the cart and seated on a cushion of velvety moss in the center of the group, who are all taking their rest in the most varied positions. The curly-headed little fellow, with his head resting on his mother's lap, has fallen asleep, tired out by a long tramp from four o'clock in the morning till mid-day. Pipes are pulled out from various pockets, tobacco-pouches of enormous size are produced, and the process of filling the huge bowls is being undergone in that characteristically sedate and patient manner peculiar to Tyrolese peasantry.

By dint of endless pulling, and after blackening the tips of their fingers in the vain endeavor to ignite the stuff with which their pipes are filled, it is at last set ablaze. Vile as the tobacco is, the men relish it with a zest wholly unaccountable to a person who has once smelt its fumes; but there are ways and means of improving it. That strapping young fellow stretched out at full length at the feet of a comely black-eyed lass is in the act of "improving," for is it in the nature of even the vilest of tobacco to retain its stench and to burn one's tongue, if it has been set ablaze by the lips of the loved one?

An hour elapses, conversation is flagging, but the pipes are alight, and no signs that their contents are coming to an end. "There is nothing like a tobacco that keeps burning for a good time: none of your stuff which is consumed before one has time to pray a 'Vater unser,' " *pater noster*, as I once was told by a peasant, who upheld the merits of the saltpeter-drenched Tyrolese manufacture. Presently, however, the fiery furnaces cease smoking, and the pipes are cleared of the ashes by knocking them against the sole of the hob-nailed shoe.

The party, now rested and cooled, must soon be starting; for the village where they intend remaining the night is a good way off. Before setting out, however, a roomy basket, hitherto hidden from sight between the bundles of straw in the cart, is pulled forth, and a simple but substantial meal is produced from it by the head of the party. Everybody sets to with gusto to demolish the

luxuries, — a haunch of bacon, a loaf of black bread, and a pint of spirits, — which the careful paterfamilias has provided for them.

In this way a whole family travels a comparatively considerable distance without expending money, save perhaps the sixpence which is pressed into the unwilling hand of the kindly owner of the hayloft, their night quarters. In the evening of the second or third day they reach their goal. Tired out by a weary day's march, they long to stretch their limbs embedded in soft hay, but, alas! the tiny village is filled to overflowing by crowds of peasants, who have all come hither to see the grand play on the morrow. The haylofts, the barns, the spare bedrooms of the modest little village inns, are one and all filled. No room to be had for love or money. Here a sturdy peasant, surrounded by his wife and half a dozen girls of all ages and sizes, is bemoaning his fate, — twenty kreutzers (four pence) per head, which that cheat of a schoolmaster demanded for the privilege of encamping for the night in a breezy barn with half of its roof off! But what could he do? his wife was in delicate health; on her account he could not risk camping out in the open air.

“Why had she come, poor woman? this was no place for her.”

“Ah, sir, you must know that she's had five girls running, and now that her time is approaching, we are going to visit the renowned shrine of the Holy Virgin in the next village. They say there is none like it in the whole country, and maybe in the whole world, for working miracles in this particular line; you see, sons are so much more useful than girls; and now that we have spent the greater part of the day in prayer at the Virgin's shrine, and offered two large pound candles and a waxen boy,<sup>1</sup> we thought we would stay a day longer from home, and see the play to-morrow; but times are changed, and every thing is so dear, that a poor peasant like me ought never to venture out of his home valley. Twenty kreut-

<sup>1</sup> A miniature child of wax hung up as a votive offering in shrines and chapels.

zers each for seven ; that's, let me see, a florin, forty kreutzers, less than three shillings ; why, it's monstrous !”

And the peasant turned away from his companions in misfortune, to seek an airy resting-place in the barn, which the rascally schoolmaster had imposed upon him. Our own party, well-to-do peasantry from the fertile Unter Innthal, can afford to spend three or four shillings for the two rooms which are still to be had in one of the village inns.

The paterfamilias, a strict observer of decorum, marshals the females of his party into one room, while the men, not too tired to indulge in some beer before they retire, retain the smaller one.

The bar-room down stairs, a large chamber, is filled with a noisy crowd, drinking, playing at cards, or throwing dice for glasses, or rather jugs, of beer ; a thick veil of tobacco-smoke hides the features of those sitting in the farther end of the room. The two stout Kellnerinen, buxom and blooming on other occasions, are puffed and exceedingly red in the face, from stress of work and constant running up and down the steep cellar-stairs.

The burly, good-tempered old host greets us with a friendly nod and a touch of his green skull-cap, as he makes room for us at the table where he had been sitting. Conversation stops for a moment, and when the curiosity of the six or seven men sitting round us has at last been satisfied by a prolonged stare, talk is recommenced.

At first we can hardly hear a word of the conversation, though some is carried on at the very table we are occupying. The roar and din are terrific, — loud laughter, louder calls for schnapps or wine,<sup>1</sup> snatches of merry songs, and conversations carried on in the loudest key right across the room, from one table to the other, make moderately loud talking quite inaudible. If you wish to converse, you had better pitch your voice to a shout, or you won't be heard. A momentary lull discovers that a zither is being played at the other end of the room ; a second later, and its tones are again entirely drowned by the din.

<sup>1</sup> Wine being very cheap in Tyrol, it is drunk by the poorest.



A terrific crash at the table behind makes us turn round sharply. "Ah, they are at it again," we hear somebody say. "At what are they?" we ask, astonished, for our expectations to witness a fight are seemingly not to be fulfilled; there is nothing hostile in the act of slamming down on the table a leather purse filled with silver florins and thalers. But yet, strange as it seems, this proceeding is nevertheless frequently the prologue to a dire quarrel.

The two bucks of the valley, the only sons of the richest peasants of that district, are the actors. The purport of slamming down the purse, and of emptying its contents on the table, is simply to challenge the rival to do the same; and the one who can show the most wins. In fertile and therefore rich valleys, such as the Unter Innthal and the Zillertal, these peculiar manifestations by vain-glorious, hot-headed peasants' sons are not infrequent; and, though this species of rivalry is by no means a laudable one, we must look at it in the light of an emanation of boyish pride called forth by some sneering taunt of "apron-strings," and "short commons," rather than as an instance of purse-proud bumpiousness. Unfortunately, however, this rivalry is not as harmless as it appears, for it frequently sows the seed of a life-long animosity. Far better that the matter be settled on the spot by a fair fight, and the victor and vanquished shake hands afterwards, the best friends in the world.

Let us watch the two hot-headed youths before us. They eagerly count over their money; one, however, has nearly ten florins more than the other, and the vanquished, scratching his head and looking very foolish, declares himself beaten. A bright thought, however, flashes across his mind: he remembers that the wirth of the inn owes his father nigh upon twenty florins for oats and barley. Covering the heap of silver money on the table with his hat, he rushes off to the host, and comes back triumphantly with two crisp ten-florin notes in his hand. "I've won; here are twenty florins more," he cries, as he flings the notes upon the table. "No, by George, you haven't;

that isn't in the game," his foe rejoins. Eventually it is decided that this novel stratagem was not permissible, but that the issue of the bet was to be decided by "Fingerhackeln."

This game, or rather struggle, is a simple trial of strength of arm and biceps. The table is cleared, and the two competitors seated opposite each other, with the table between them, stretch out their right hands so as to let them meet in the center. Each, bending the middle finger into the shape of a hook, intertwines it with that of the rival. At a given signal, each begins to pull, the object being to drag the antagonist right across the board.

Both were strapping young fellows, each eager to show off his prowess, and the fact that they were well-known adepts at it, rendered the struggle doubly interesting. Victory swayed hither and thither; the most prodigious efforts were made to wrest the slightest advantage from the foe, the subtlest ruses coming into play, the most impossible contortions of the body undergone; and yet the issue was as far from decision as at the very outset.

With clinched teeth, firmly-set features, and heaving breasts, the two young fellows tug and pull, and neither will give in. Their hands are of an angry red, and the veins swollen to double their usual size, while drops of perspiration on their foreheads tell of their superhuman exertions.

Watching the face of the one, we all of a sudden see a look of agonizing pain shoot across it; his hand drops; the struggle is at an end. Poor fellow, his finger is maimed for life; for the chief muscle has been rent in the fierce struggle for supremacy. His antagonist, by a sudden jerk, — one of the numerous stratagems of *Fingerhackeln*, — had succeeded in unbending his foe's finger, though he did it at the cost of his rival's limb.

One very frequently sees in Tyrol men with a finger bent nearly double on the right hand. If you ask the cause, you will be invariably told that it happened while "*Fingerhackeln*."

In this instance it was doubly afflicting, for the maimed youth was one of the chief actors in the grand performance of the morrow. The news that Hauser Hansl had his finger "aus g'hackelt," spread like wildfire. "Who was to take his place at so short a notice? and could he really not act? Could not somebody else carry the cross?" were some of the numerous questions and propositions which went the round.

The "Herr Vicar," who was enjoying his Saturday evening game of cards in the sacred precincts of the "Herrenstübel," — the chamber set apart for the use of the dignitaries of the village, such as the priest, the doctor, the schoolmaster, and the owner of the general store, — was roused into unwonted activity by the news of this vexatious accident; his practical sagacity, however, came to his aid, and, in his character of supreme head of the Passion Play, he ordered that Hansl was to act as if nothing had happened, and that his antagonist was to carry the heavy cross in the last scene, as condign punishment for his misconduct. This decision, coming as it did from the mouth of the Vicar, was unanimously applauded. Franzl, the delinquent, did not, I am afraid, seem overwhelmed by grief; the idea of appearing on the stage, be it even in the secondary character of cross-bearer, was any thing but unpleasant to him; in fact, it was the very thing he desired, though brought about by an accident quite against his will. The Vicar, having spoken the weighty words, withdrew to his "Herrenstübel," followed by his fellow card-players, who had crowded into the bar-room to see what had happened. Hansl, though suffering, as one can imagine, great pain, would not budge from the table; and, a few minutes later, a left-handed shake with his foe's right restored the peace.

Though the night advances, the fun and noise does not subside: on the contrary, it is on the increase, if any thing.

Franzl, the constant butt of his friends' jokes at his new dignity of "cross-bearer," is in the best of spirits,

and shows it by repeatedly paying for drinks all round. Hansl, whose pain has been allayed by a poultice of chamcois-lard, and tincture of arnica, has forgotten his defeat in "Fingerhackeln," and joins right merrily in the snatches of songs, droll stories, and jokes made at his, or at his elated rival's, expense.

Presently the old wooden clock right over the table strikes out, in the faltering and slow manner peculiar to this kind of timekeeper, the hour of midnight. The host rises from the table, and, walking down the center of the room, doffs his velvet skull-cap, announcing to his noisy guests the "Polizeistunde" (police-hour), after which no more drink is furnished.

Many of the party remonstrate with the host, and maintain that on such an exceptional night, on the eve of a Passion Play, the hour should be extended to one o'clock; but mine host turns a deaf ear to their eloquent appeals; and though the order he gives to the Kellnerinen in an undertone, while pointing with his thumb over his shoulder to the door of the "Herrenstübel," to see that the Herr Vicar's bottle was kept replenished, is not in keeping with his severity, he remains firm, and our noisy party is broken up, and leaves the bar-room among general hilarity; each member, as he passes out of the room, dipping his fingers into the receptacle of holy water hanging on the door-post, and wetting his forehead.

We will wish them good-night, and a God-speed on their distant homeward tramp, and join in their hope that the morrow's performance will not only be the success their hearts desire, but also that the pious and righteous Passion Play will duly edify the hundreds that flock to that singular gathering.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE CHAMOIS AND THE CHAMOIS-STALKER.

VERY frequently have I been astonished at the degree of ignorance displayed by the traveling public respecting the chamois and its habitat. In fact, it would seem that in the minds of most people this animal is associated with tales of miraculous feats, intermingled with a superabundance of romance and superstition.

Let us endeavor to fathom the cause of this odd anomaly, — an animal inhabiting the very center of Europe, and yet enveloped in a veil of mystery.

The extraordinary powers of locomotion with which the chamois is gifted, and the elevated nature of its home, make its pursuit by man a difficult and dangerous task, requiring constant training from childhood, together with courage, an iron constitution, and a clear and steady eye and hand. These qualities a chamois-stalker must possess; and very naturally it is just these that remove chamois-stalking in its genuine sense from the hands of educated and scientific men to those of the hardy native, who, while willing to undergo the necessary fatigues and privations, has the muscles and heart that furnish a "Gamsjäger."

To a native chamois-stalker — the only person, as I have shown, who has the opportunity of watching the movements and habits of that animal — the idea of watching his game with any other view than that of sport would seem supremely ridiculous.

Saussure and the late Mr. Boner are perhaps the only

two persons who have described the chamois accurately and from their own experience. The Saussure of the eighteenth century found the Swiss peaks still tenanted by the fleet tribe of chamois, while Mr. Boner laid the scene of his observation and sport in the somewhat tame scenery of the Bavarian Highlands, where sport is made easy by large preserves, and the far less precipitous and dangerous nature of the sporting grounds.

While Switzerland has been effectually cleared of its former tenants by the invading hosts of tourists and travelers, Tyrol has, by dint of some judicious game-laws, managed to increase its stock to a very considerable extent.

The three largest preserves in the country—viz., the one near the Achensee, belonging to the Duke of Coburg; the one situated near Kufstein, the property of Archduke Victor, brother of the Emperor of Austria; and the preserve occupying the extreme end of the Zillerthal, owned by Prince Fürstenberg—are estimated to shelter from 2,500 to 3,000 head of chamois.

Besides these private preserves there are innumerable parochial preserves belonging to villages and hamlets, each house-owner having the right to shoot over a district of vast proportions.

The villages of Brandenburg and Steinberg, in North Tyrol, have, for instance, the shooting over not less than 48,000 Joch (about 80,000 acres) of the very best shooting ground to be met with in Europe, excepting perhaps some of the Scotch preserves, that cost their owners thousands of pounds, while here the concern pays each of the co-owners according to his annual bag.

For the benefit of those of my readers who have never seen a chamois, I may give the following abridged description of the animal.

Somewhat larger than a roe-deer, a chamois weighs when full grown from forty to seventy pounds. Its color, in summer of a dusky yellowish brown, changes in autumn to a much darker hue, while in winter it is all but black.

The hair on the forehead and that which overhangs the

hoofs remain tawny brown throughout the year, while the hair growing along the backbone is in winter dark brown and of prodigious length; it furnishes the much-prized "Gamsbart," literally "beard of the chamois," with tufts of which the hunters love to adorn their hats.

The construction of the animal exhibits a wonderful blending of strength and agility. The power of its muscles is rivaled by the extraordinary faculty of balancing the body, of instantly finding, as it were, the center of gravity. A jump of 20 or even 25 feet down a sheer precipice on to a small pinnacle of rock, the point of which is smaller than the palm of a man's hand, is a fact of constant recurrence in the course of a chamois' flight.

With its four hoofs, shaped like those of a sheep, but longer and more pointed, and of a much harder substance, converging together, it will occupy this position for hours, watching any particular object that has attracted its notice.

The marvelously keen sight and scent of this fleetest of the antelope species is equally a matter of wonder. A chamois, frightened by some unusual sound or sight, and dashing down the precipitous slopes of the most inaccessible mountains, will suddenly stop, as if struck by lightning, some yards from the spot where recent human footprints are visible in the snow, or when, by a sudden veering of the wind, its keen scent has warned it of the vicinity of a human being.

It is obvious that the chase of an animal gifted with such extraordinary powers of locomotion and endurance, and with an amazingly keen scent detecting danger at a great distance, requires corresponding faculties on the part of the hunter.

The power of undergoing great fatigue, privations, and cold, a steady hand, and a cool clear head and nerves, are the *sine quâ non* that go to produce a chamois-stalker; and it is just the knowledge and consciousness of possessing these qualities that in nine cases out of ten furnish the mainspring of the hunter's passion.

The hunter must rely entirely upon himself. Neither

man nor dog can be of service to him ; and no fear of hunger, cold, and the yawning abyss at his side, should make him waver or turn.

When following his game high up in the grand solitude of the sublime giant peaks, he is lost to man and the pursuits and passions that sway other men's destinies. He is entirely carried away by the excitement of the sport ; he crosses fields of snow without thinking of the chasms which are hidden under that treacherous cover ; he plunges into the most inaccessible recesses of the mountains ; and he climbs and jumps from crag to crag, and creeps along narrow bands of rock overhanging terrible precipices, without once thinking how he can return. Night finds him high up, seven or eight thousand feet, perhaps, over the tiny little valley that contains his poor dwelling. Alone, without fire, without light, without any sort of shelter, he has to pass the cold night close to glaciers and vast snowfields.

The chief characteristics of a chamois-hunter's appearance might be comprised in the following short delineation : a gaunt and bony figure, brown and sinewy knees, scarred and scratched, hair shaggy, and hunger the expression of the face ; dark piercing eyes, marked eyebrows, a bent eagle nose, and high fleshless cheek-bones.

The shirt open in front displays the breadth of the hairy mahogany-hued chest, while the strong and bony but fleshless hands, with talon-like fingers constantly bent, clutch the long and stout alpenstock.

The chamois and its chase has for ever been a rich mine of anecdote and myth. The elder Pliny, the great Roman naturalist, gives us in his *Natural History* a striking proof of the gross superstition which attached to this animal in old times. Among other distinctive peculiarities with which he invests the chamois, he declares that the blood of the chamois possesses great healing powers for several diseases, such as consumption and low fever ; but for one ailment in particular its qualities are a specific, namely, " the loss of one's intestines," as he terms a malady which we must hope, for humanity's sake, has



since disappeared from the long list of mortal sufferings. He closes his remarkable description of the animal with the somewhat mysterious disclosure, that the blood of the buck used in a certain manner softens the diamond into a sort of kneadable paste. "This latter piece of important information," the author adds, "has recently been doubted by skeptics."

One can not but be amazed that such absurdities were devoutly believed for many centuries; but it must be a source of even greater wonder to read in modern descriptions of the chamois whole pages of nonsense not a whit less astonishing. One recent author, for instance, maintains that the hunter rarely shoots, but drives his game into places from which further retreat is impossible; he then draws his knife, and "puts it to the side of the chamois, and the animal of its own accord pushes it into its body."

The recently-invented trick of "intelligent" hotel-keepers in Switzerland, of placing a stuffed chamois on some crag a couple of hundred feet over the hotel, and then pointing it out to unsuspecting tourists, can not throw much light on the chamois' habitat, however pleasant it must be to sightseeing cockneys to be able to eat their "Gamsbraten" and drink their pint of sour Swiss wine under the very nose of a royal chamois buck.

No doubt such a make-believe sight tends to confirm the innocent tourist in his conviction that he is in the midst of the glorious snow and glacier-covered Alpine peaks, watching the sportive chamois; and we well may suppose that the prospect of astounding willing cars on his return home with narratives of the numerous herds of chamois he has closely watched, gladdens his heart.

Returning to Tyrol, where such devices are as yet unknown, and I hope will remain so for many years to come, we must glance once more at the chamois-stalker.

His motives, even if he is a poacher, are not mercenary. It is the chase itself which attracts him, and not the value of the prey; it is the excitement and the very dangers themselves, which render the chamois-hunter indiffer-

ent to most other pursuits and pleasures. The glorious Alps, the grand stern solitude reigning around him, the gaunt peaks, and not least the exhilarating influence of the clear, bracing air, that renders motion and exertion a pleasure, instill in him an inordinate love for the solitary sport. "A chamois-stalker who would exchange his life for that of a king is not a genuine chamois-hunter," I have been told, not by one, but by twenty "Gamsjäger;" and, were I to call my own feelings into question, I must corroborate this sentiment.

Before giving my readers any instances of my own experience of the kingly sport, I must notice an interesting instance where a woman, urged by love, shared the perils and hardships undergone by her lover, a noted poacher, and exhibited a remarkable spirit of fortitude under the most trying circumstances.

Those of my readers who have ever visited the interesting old castle "Tratzberg," near Jenbach, on the Kufstein-Innsbruck line of rail, will no doubt have been struck by the very remarkable workmanship of divers groups of game in life-size, carved in wood, that ornament the hall and passages of the castle.

They display to the eye of a connoisseur great skill in their life-like imitation, and one is struck with the accuracy of every detail, be it the bend of a noble hart's neck, or the graceful attitude of a rose-deer, or the exact coloring of the chamois' hair.

The man who, by dint of his rare skill, has thus portrayed game in their wild state, was once a noted poacher, and now has risen to be one of the best carvers in this part of the country.

The circumstances that brought about the transformation of a daring poacher, — who, it is said, proved himself on more than one occasion a relentless foe of the keepers, — into a skillful artist, are the subject of my brief biography.

Toni, for such is the Christian name of the ex-poacher, is a native of the village E——, in the Unter-Innthal; and the surrounding large and well-stocked preserves of a certain noble duke afforded him, in his character of

poacher, the very best sport ; but, as a natural consequence, he ran the most deadly risk, every time he set out on his expeditions, of never returning home. A bullet, he well knew, was pretty sure to find its way into his body, if he persisted in his reckless course.

Fortunately for him, "the course of true love" saved him from a violent death. Pretty Moidl, a daughter of a wealthy peasant in Toni's native village, had been for some time past the object of his fondest hopes and the subject of many a daring "Schnaddahüpfler" sung in the village inn on festive occasions.

Marriage between the poor penniless poacher and the daughter of the rich peasant was, of course, impossible ; and so the two young people loved and sinned behind the backs of the parents.

In a short time the dire results of the free and easy love-making *à la Tyrol* began to show. The girl, terribly frightened by the thought of her parents' wrath, determined to elope with the choice of her heart.

When the white pall of snow had vanished from the adjacent peaks and mountains, and the balmy May sun was enticing the more venturesome peasants to drive their cattle to the verdant mountain slopes, Toni and his sweetheart suddenly disappeared, one fine day, from their village.

Nobody knew where they had gone ; and the mystery grew darker when, some weeks afterwards, the report was spread that Toni had been shot in an affray with keepers.

It was not known where, and by whom ; and the keepers, of course, took good care to give evasive answers to any indiscreet questions on the subject of Toni's fate.

All this time our hero and his fair donna were inhabiting a disused woodcutter's hovel high up on the mountains, in a tiny and excessively wild mountain gorge, uninhabited save by the royal hart and agile roe-deer.

For their sustenance they had to depend entirely upon the rifle of Toni : milk, bread, flour, or any other of life's most necessary commodities, were beyond their reach.

One night, two or three days previous to Moidl's con-

finement, Toni failed to return from his daily raid in quest of game. The girl was in a sad plight. Too weak to regain the next inhabited valley, some eight or ten hours off, she was at her wit's end, and beginning to repent her bold step.

On the eve of the second day, unfortunate Toni entered the hut. Bloodstained, hardly able to stand, and terribly weakened by the effects of a wound, he presented a sad spectacle to the loving eyes of his devoted girl. It seems that Toni had been tracked by the keepers, and, while watching the approach of some roe-deer, he received a ball right through the fleshy part of his shoulder.

Springing up, he was lucky enough to escape his pursuers; and, in his dread of having his retreat discovered, he took the opposite direction, and thus foiled the suspicions of his antagonists.

Anxious to elude his foes, who he feared would institute a close search among the adjacent peaks and passes, he and Moidl left the miserable hut that very night.

A sort of cave, distant about two hours from their abode, was their goal. After a wearisome and perilous ascent in the dark night, they reached their new hiding-place just as dawn was breaking. Both had exerted their utmost strength; he weak from loss of blood and the effects of his wound, she on the eve of her confinement.

The next day Toni set out in quest of game, and on his return towards evening with a chamois on his back, he found poor forsaken Moidl the mother of a babe. Being without means of lighting a fire, he could not even cook the meat, and for the first day Moidl had to find the necessary sustenance in the blood of the chamois, of which she drank about two pints.

The next morning Toni set out for a distant Alp-hut, where he hoped to find some matches and some cooking utensil or other. He was fortunate enough to find a box-full of the former and an iron pot.

The third day Moidl was already up and about, and with the aid of some water and the iron pot cooked some broth for Toni and herself.

The child born in such primitive and original quarters throve, and formed a fresh link between the two faithful lovers.

For eight weeks these poor creatures resided in the cave, and would have continued very probably till approaching winter obliged them to descend, had not an accident occurred to poor Toni.

On one of his raids he crossed the imaginary boundary line, running along a high ridge of mountains, which divides Tyrol from Bavaria. As he was returning, laden with a roebuck, two keepers from the Bavarian preserves and two keepers from the Tyrolese shooting grounds perceived him, and united their forces in order, if possible, to catch him alive. They succeeded only too well, and poor Toni was transported the following day to the next Bavarian town, some thirty or thirty-five miles off. There he was committed for trial; and the result was a sentence which condemned him to a comparatively long term of imprisonment.

Luckily for him he was brought to one of the model prisons near Munich, where he was taught the rudiments of drawing and carving; and when he left the penitentiary he had imbibed a strong taste for carving from nature. After several years' imprisonment he returned home and set up a primitive sort of workshop.

Moidl, on the contrary, finding that Toni did not return from his shooting expedition, waited for a few days longer, and then descended to civilized valleys. Afraid to return home with the proof of her guilt in her arms, she turned her back on Tyrol, and went on foot to Tegernsee, a lake in Bavaria, a good distance off. There she found kind people to take care of her child, and to her great joy she learned too that her Toni was not shot, but only imprisoned. After stopping a few months with her child, she returned to her native village, and re-entered her paternal home as if nothing extraordinary had occurred. None of her family, and none of the natives of the village, ever learned the details of her exploit, and very probably they never will.

To return to Toni's career. The owner of Castle Tratzberg, Count E——, happened to see one of the heads of a chamois turned out by Toni, and, perceiving therein the undoubted traces of great skill, sent him, at his own expense, to a celebrated Bavarian school for carving in wood from nature. Here Toni staid a considerable period, and left it the finished artist he now is.

Now to instances of my own experience of the noble sport of chamois-stalking.

Delightful old Schwaz, a quaint village dating its existence back to the early Middle Ages, situated on the right-hand bank of the swift Inn, has been for years a favorite starting-point for my chamois-stalking expeditions.

Right opposite the quaint old-fashioned houses forming the main street, and on the opposite side of the valley, the high and terribly steep "Vompergebirg" rises in one unbroken mass up to nearly 9,000 feet over the level of the sea.

Far in among the oddly-shaped pinnacles which rise to even a greater height than the front peaks, which are partly visible from the Inn valley itself, there is a deep and narrow glen, and snugly ensconced in it is a small log-hut, surrounded by a lovely grove of beech-trees. Built for the convenience of the gamekeepers of the vast surrounding preserves, who have to be constantly on the watch lest poachers, reckless of the terrible risk they run, should enter them, it has been many scores of times my night-quarters.

It was towards the end of October, 187—, that a six-hours' walk from Schwaz brought me to the Zwerchbachhütte, the name of the hut I have just described. My kit for chamois-stalking expeditions is of a somewhat bulky nature, and generally a weight not far short of eighteen pounds has accumulated by the time a big piece of bacon, a dozen or so of hard-boiled eggs, bread, tea, and sugar, a flask of Kirschwasser, a telescope, and that most important of culinary implements, a small iron pen with a hinged handle, have been packed into my

“Rucksack.”<sup>1</sup> The weight lies to a great extent against the small of the back.

Having left Schwaz at daybreak, I had reached the hut and cooked my simple repast by half-past ten o'clock. I had thus ample time for an afternoon stalk. Leaving every thing save my rifle, alpenstock, “Steigeisen” (crampons), and telescope, at the hut where I intended to pass that night, and even divesting myself of my heavy coat, so as to reach the heights of the mountains with as little loss of time as possible, I set out on my stalk.

As I looked up from the hut to the summit of the snow-clad peaks, it seemed impossible that human foot could gain them; and yet, to have any chance with the chamois, I must be on the top of an immense crag some 2,000 feet above my head, in an hour, or at the latest an hour and a half.

By a few minutes after three I had gained the aforesaid point. Night would fall at about six or half-past, and, counting an hour to get down, I had still about two hours to spare.

Reconnoitering with my telescope the rising precipitous slopes of the adjacent peaks, I soon discovered a herd of nine chamois, amongst which I perceived a patriarchal buck.

As the wind came up from the valley — a matter of high importance, on account of the amazingly keen scent of the game — I had to decide to make a considerable round in order to weather them. After an hour's hard scramble, I had gained the same altitude as that of the herd in view. Had the ground which now intervened between me and the game been a little less unfavorable, every thing would have gone well; but the only means of getting within range of the wary animals was by creeping along a narrow ledge of about two to two and one-half feet in width, that ran horizontally across the face of an immense wall of rock, at the other end of which the chamois were browsing on the stunted “Latschen” that grew there.

<sup>1</sup> A sack of strong canvas with two broad leather straps, through which the arms are looped.

The ledge was not more than 400 or 500 yards long, but I was obliged to proceed very slowly and carefully, for fear of betraying myself by knocking any of the small stones which littered the ledge down the precipice — some two or three hundred feet in height — which yawned at my side.

At last, after more than an hour and a half's hard work, I managed to reach the end of the ledge, and, picking out my buck at about 160 yards, I fired.

Intently watching the effect of my shot, I saw the chamois rise on his hind-legs and fall over backwards, a sure sign that he was mortally wounded.

The charm and excitement which the successful hunter experiences in moments like this are not easily described. Certain it is that few other pleasures that life can offer are preferable to them.

Reloading my rifle, I hastened up to the spot, but found the buck had vanished. The color of the blood which lay in a pool on the rock convinced me, however, that the game was hit hard, and could not be very far off.

Not till now, when it was too late, did the imprudence of proceeding so far by the waning daylight strike me. What should I do? Pursue the wounded buck, or try to return to the hut? A few moments' consideration showed me that, long before I could reach the really dangerous places in the descent, night would have fallen. In full daylight it required a very steady head and an extremely sure foot, as in most parts it was certain death to place one's foot an inch to the right or to the left of the jagged stones projecting from the rock, by the aid of which the ascent or descent could be accomplished. Thus I had to choose the more prudent course of patiently enduring the punishment of my rashness, which in this instance consisted in camping out.

Had I been provided with the necessaries for so doing, I should not have had any reason to dread the approaching night; but without a coat on my back, without blanket or any thing to cover me, and without a particle of food,



the case was very different ; and I entertained some unpleasant notions of the coming eleven or twelve hours.

Leaving the buck to his fate, I set about looking for a suitable nook or crevice which might offer some slight shelter. The waning daylight enabled me to find such a retreat in the shape of a small cave-like recess, which looked any thing but inviting.

The vast snowfields in close proximity, the icy-cold wind driving straight down from them, and an atmosphere considerably below freezing-point, did not add to my comfort. The only consolation left to me was my pipe, and before morning broke it had been filled and emptied many a time. At last the rosy tinge of the heavens, now unclouded by snow, which had begun to fall about midnight, assured me that my sufferings were coming to an end ; and never in my life do I remember greeting light with such feelings of gratitude as on that morning. My flannel shirt, saturated by perspiration the evening before, was frozen, and formed an icy coat of mail for my shivering body inside it.

Fortunately the snow lay very thin, so that it was easy to follow the gory tracks of the wounded buck. Half an hour's invigorating climb brought me to the place where the animal had evidently passed the night ; large pools of partly fresh and partly congealed blood marked the spot.

I had not proceeded more than a couple of hundred yards farther up a narrow gorge when a shrill "phew" — the chamois' whistle of alarm — brought my rifle to my shoulder, and levelled at the buck, standing on a crag projecting from the otherwise smooth surface of an immense precipice. The next instant my shot awoke the slumbering echoes of the ravine, and the buck came tumbling down the declivity, this time not to get up again.

On reaching the animal I found that my first ball had pierced its lungs. It seems hardly credible that an animal mortally wounded could continue its flight up the most dangerous passes and over chasm-parted crags, and that its steel muscles could carry it on and on after losing

such quantities of blood. But so it is, a wonder to those who know the miraculous vitality and tenacity of life which characterizes this magnificent little mountain antelope.

Brittling the game,—that is, removing the intestines, and filling the cavity thus formed with twigs of a neighboring “Latschen” bush,—I managed to fasten the buck, with the aid of my leather belt, to my back, and turned my steps homeward. I doubt very much if I could have reached the hut, had I not had my trusty crampons on my feet.

The thin coat of snow covering the rocks made the descent of a doubly dangerous nature; added to which I had a fifty-pound weight on my back, and naturally felt somewhat faint for want of food. In one place I was fairly compelled to divest myself of crampons, shoes, and socks, and pick my faltering steps barefooted over the projecting crags on the face of a perpendicular wall of rock, at the foot of which, some 2,000 feet below me, lay the hut, inviting one gigantic leap which would land me at its very threshold. At last, after one or two somewhat narrow escapes, I reached my asylum, and right glad I was that this descent, one of the most perilous I ever remember, had ended so satisfactorily.

By the time a hearty meal and a few hours' sleep on the soft and fragrant Alpine heather had restored my vigor, the afternoon had passed, and had it not been for a bright full moon, which promised to light me home, I should have remained that night in the hut.

Soon after sunset the full disk of the moon rose over a gap in the otherwise unbroken ridge flanking the gorge in which I was now walking homewards.

The huge gaunt forms of the peaks and crags, in many parts in deep mysterious shade, contrasted most charmingly with the glittering snowfields and ashy-white peaks illuminated by the rays of a full moon. Now passing a cataract of white foaming water, glittering and gleaming as the moonbeams touched each distinct drop, then again traversing dense gloomy pine-forests, the tops of the trees

tinged with silvery light, the rest dark and somber ; now fording a turbulent rivulet, rushing down the declivity in headlong haste, then again crossing peaceful stretches of Alpine meadow-land dotted here and there with clumps of patriarchal pine-trees, my walk proved a delightful close to my expedition.

The reader, however, must not infer from this narrative that the lonely chamois-stalker always meets with success at a cost of so little time and trouble as I experienced in this instance.

Droves of nine head of chamois are not to be met with in all parts of Tyrol, and often and often has it been my fate to be high up in the barren, terribly grand recesses of the Tyrolese Alps for days, and hardly see a chamois ; or, at other times, an unsteady hand at the moment of firing has obliged me to traverse glaciers, snowfields, and passes, to seek a distant glen or peak where the chamois had not been alarmed by the echoes of my shot.

Frequently two days elapse from the time of leaving the valley before a buck has been sighted and the line of attack resolved upon ; and then often, when after endless fatigue and danger the game has been nearly brought within range, the wind may suddenly veer, and a second later a shrill " phew " of the alarmed chamois tells you that the fine scent of your prey has frustrated all your designs.

On one occasion, I remember, while hunting in the rugged " Kaisergebirg," I had approached a drove of six or seven chamois to within shooting distance, when the sight of a " Steinadler " or golden eagle, which, circling right over my head, was allured probably by my motionless position *ventre à terre* for more than an hour, sent my game away in the twinkling of an eye, and long before I had time to venture a long shot at the wary old buck who was keeping guard farthest off from me, and for whose approach I had been patiently waiting.

Another time, on the same mountains, I was imprisoned for two nights and one day on a pinnacle of rock by the accidental slipping of the rope which had enabled me to

gain the eminence. The jump, or rather the drop, that eventually set me free, was not much of a jump in any ordinary place, but here it was a very serious affair indeed. I had thrown the ill-fated rope, provided with a running noose, so as to catch any projecting particle of the rock, from a band of rock not more than twenty-eight or thirty inches broad, running horizontally across the face of a stupendous precipice four or five church-steeple high. Now that the rope was gone, I had to jump the height, up which I had hauled myself by means of the rope. The distance intervening between the band of rock and the point I was standing on was less than twelve feet in height; and deducting seven or eight feet which I could cover by lowering myself and holding to the top by my hands, the actual drop, measured from the soles of my feet to the base of the miniature precipice where the narrow ledge projected, was about four or five feet. Nothing! if you have level ground to drop upon, and no yawning abyss at the side; but here there were nine chances to ten that the drop would end badly.

It was only when the pangs of hunger on the morning of the second day, and the certainty of a lingering death by starvation, rendered me reckless of the terrible risk, and a sudden death seemed preferable to tortures slow and lingering, that at last I resolved to chance the drop.

Fate favored me, and I alighted erect and firm on the narrow strip of rock that separated me from death. I had taken off my shoes and socks, so as to prevent my slipping on reaching the ledge, at that part, if any thing, shelving downwards. The slightest tremor of my knees, or the most minute giving-way of my joints on alighting, would have resulted in the loss of my balance; and as there was nothing to afford me the slightest hold on the smooth surface of the rock, I should have been pitched head foremost down the abyss. My feet were badly cut on the sharp stones on which I alighted, and for weeks my little adventure was recalled to my mind in an unpleasant manner: I ought not, however, to complain of this insignificant injury, considering I had a somewhat remarkable escape.

To show my reader that much time and exertion is expended, and severe privations are vainly endured, by hunters while pursuing chamois in thinly-stocked neighborhoods, I may mention that in one season I made the two expeditions I have just referred to, besides a third into the same range of mountains, and in all these I did not fire one shot.

At other times, when the chamois are driven at battues in the carefully-guarded preserves of either of the three noble owners above mentioned, a fairly good rifle-shot, posted on an advantageous point, can knock over from five to six chamois in the course of a few hours.

In my humble opinion, and in that of every sportsman who has once successfully "stalked" a chamois, the driving of chamois deprives the sport of those highly attractive features, which, beyond perhaps any other sport in the world, act as an ever-new, all-engrossing excitement on the mind of the man who has once tasted its pleasures.

It would seem to me that the wholesale slaughter of an animal that Nature herself has placed in the most sublime recesses of her creation, and endowed with such noble qualities and wonderful organization, is a proceeding which a true sportsman ought not to countenance.

In the preceding pages I have endeavored to give my readers an insight into the character of the chamois-stalker, as well as to show the nature of the sport itself.

Manifold dangers and adventures of more or less peril, together with the hardships natural to the craft, are the fate of the chamois-stalker, till perhaps some day or other he fails to return to his *châlet*, to his wife, and to his little ones. A bullet from the rifle of a hostile keeper, or a treacherous bough or a loose stone or a false step pitches him to the foot of a precipice hundreds of feet in height; and years afterwards, perhaps, his bones are found, picked clean by the mighty eagle or by the wild animals of the Alps. A grand and silent grave, marked by a mighty tombstone set by his Creator himself, is only too often the last resting place of a chamois-stalker.

## CHAPTER IV.

## AN ENCOUNTER WITH TYROLESE POACHERS.

A FOUR-MONTHS' tour in quest of sport brought me, in the autumn of 1867, to L——, a small and entirely isolated Alpine village in the Bavarian Highlands, close to the Tyrolese frontier.

I do not know whether it was the result of a heavy day's work, wading, rod in hand, in the icy-cold waters of "Isar," or the knowledge that a certain fresh barrel of Munich beer was to be tapped, — an event of no mean importance in the modest inn of the village, — which induced me, when night put a stop to my fishing, to seek a cozy retreat in the bar-room of the village *Wirthshaus*.

Hardly was I seated in my snug corner, right below the execrably-daubed crucifix adorning, as is the custom in the Tyrolese and Bavarian Highlands, the corner of every bar-room, when in rushed, in an evident state of excitement, the "Herr Oberförster," head-forester of the surrounding royal game-preserves.

My query as to the cause of his unusual emotion was speedily answered.

One of his numerous under-keepers had at that very moment brought him the news that four "Wilddiebe," or poachers, had been seen high up on the mountains by two keepers, one of whom had come down in hot haste to seek re-enforcements in order to capture the intruders.

Unquestionably, the head-keeper continued, these poachers were the very same four Tyrolese scoundrels who the year before had shot two of the Bavarian keepers,

and, hardly three months previously, severely wounded three others who had endeavored to take them prisoners.

This was welcome news to my friend the Herr Oberförster, who had on several occasions vowed the destruction of that fearless and daring quartet of Tyrolese, who in less than a year had killed or maimed no less than five of his subordinates.

All the keepers who at that precise moment were not out among the mountains were ordered to assemble; and in a quarter of an hour six men, eager to avenge their comrades' fate, were collected in the head-keeper's cottage, whither I had accompanied him.

The evident fact that adventure of no ordinary character would in all probability attend this exploit, naturally made me eager to witness the strife. After some trouble, I succeeded in persuading the head-keeper to allow my accompanying the party, of course, only as a mere looker-on.

To act as combatant on this occasion lay far from my intentions, as, strange to say, my sympathies were on the side of the Tyrolese, though, as I have related, a twofold manslaughter was laid to their door.

The deadly feud and animosity existing between the Tyrolese and Bavarian Highlanders since the time of the French wars in the beginning of the present century has by no means died out, but flares up on frequent occasions.

The Bavarian preserves, well stocked with game, but rigorously guarded by small corps of gamekeepers, aided by the rural policemen or gendarmes, are looked upon by the Tyrolese living close to the frontier as their legitimate sporting ground; and it is just on these occasions, when hostile parties meet, that the deadly animosity of the Tyrolese poacher to the Bavarian keeper, and *vice versa*, leads to murder and manslaughter.

To these two circumstances, and to the fact that the Tyrolese, inhabiting mountain recesses, have an innate love of wild sport, we must attribute the frequent encounters resulting in the death either of the keeper or the poacher.

They are by no means moved to this dangerous game by any motive of gain, but simply by that love of free nature and the excitement of the perilous chase, which He who created the chamois and He who piled the mountains and glaciers upon each other has placed in their hearts, like the apple-tree in the Garden of Eden.

Thus it frequently happens that a young fellow, not content with the sport which his own mountains afford, leaves his home, an isolated *châlet* on the Tyrolese-Bavarian frontier, crosses the mountains, and, entering the forbidden land, fails, one day, to return to his home. A deadly shot from behind some ambush, a cry of anguish, and the poor fellow has paid the penalty of death for a crime which, even were it to come before a court of justice, would be punished with but six or nine months' imprisonment.

The body of the unhappy poacher, if it has not fallen down the yawning abyss at the side of which he was walking, unconscious of danger, is pushed down into its deep and silent grave by the ruthless hand of the slayer, the gamekeeper, who, not caring to risk life and limb in a struggle with his foe, removes him from the face of God's earth by a cowardly shot.

Of late years this feeling of mortal enmity has somewhat abated; but at the time I am speaking of, some seven or eight years ago, inquiries respecting the mysterious disappearance of a young Tyrolese from his native village or solitary *châlet*-home were invariably met by a shrug of the shoulders and, "Shot by the Bavarians."

But to return to my narrative.

Our party, consisting of the head-keeper and six of his men and myself, were, after making some necessary preparations, ready to start.

With some bread, bacon, and a flask of "Kirschwasser" in my bag, and with my revolver, in case of emergency, in my pocket, I joined the rest, who had already left the head-keeper's habitation.

The man who had brought the alarm led the way, then followed the *Oberförster* and his other men, and I brought up the rear.



The night being pitch dark, and our way lying up some very awkward ledges and along some deep precipices, our progress was naturally slow; and the rain, which soon after our departure came on, did not serve to raise our spirits. Walking, and in many places creeping along on our hands and knees, we spent the best part of that night before we reached the spot where the two keepers had parted, one to give the alarm, the other to continue his watch on the movements of the poachers.

We were astonished to find no one there, and our undertone calls for "Johann" — the keeper — remained unanswered.

All of a sudden, our whispered consultation was interrupted by a low stifled groan, uttered apparently by a human being close by.

Fearing that this was part of a subtle stratagem of the poachers, who, we were now convinced, had discovered Johann, and intended by their groans to entice us to approach their ambush, we remained quite quiet for the next hour, till day began to break.

What dawn disclosed to our eyes, the reader will be astonished to learn.

Not thirty paces from the spot where we lay was poor Johann, divested of his coat, and securely pinioned to a pine-tree. With his mouth gagged, his face besmeared with blood, his rifle, broken at the stock, at his feet, he presented a sorry spectacle.

To cut him loose, force some spirits down his throat, and bind up his bleeding wounds, was the work of a few minutes. When sufficiently recovered to speak, he told us that while he was at his post his gun had slipped from his hand, and, striking a rock, the charge had exploded.

The poachers, then not more than 400 yards off, just across a narrow but deep gully, at first imagined the shot was intended for them; but, seeing nobody, they cautiously approached, rifle in hand, the spot where poor Johann had hid himself under some brushwood, afraid to move.

Searching the place, they soon discovered him, and,

threatening him with immediate death, they pinioned the poor fellow to the next tree.

His life hung upon a thread during the next five minutes, while the Tyrolese were deciding the fate of their prisoner.

The defenseless man must have moved their pity, for they took their departure soon afterwards, after inflicting with their iron-shod Alpenstöcke some painful prods on their hapless victim.

Had their prisoner been one of those keepers whom they suspected of picking off any of their comrades, a murder would have undoubtedly preceded their departure.

Watching his foes' movements as long as the waning daylight had allowed, he was convinced, by the direction the four men had taken, that they were encamped for the night in an Alp-hut not more than half an hour's climb distant, wholly unconscious of the fact that they had been seen by a second man, who had in a comparatively short time brought overwhelming odds against them.

As it was the month of October, and the Alp-hut, situated high up on the mountain, was occupied only during the three summer months, we were convinced that the hut was untenanted, thus affording a welcome night's shelter to the poachers.

It was now, naturally, a matter of the greatest importance to surprise the men while yet in the hut, and though, as Johann informed us, three of them had each a chamois on his back, they would not in all probability leave the hut for their return homeward before seven or eight o'clock.

Giving the necessary instructions to his seven men, — Johann was sufficiently recovered to join the party, — the Oberförster and his little army made for the hut as fast as they could, while I was to gain, by a somewhat circuitous route, a little eminence right over the hut, whence I might overlook the whole scene of the coming combat without incurring any risk.

Half an hour's scramble brought me to the height, and

on looking down the wreath of smoke curling up from the opening in the roof of the hut intimated that the poachers were still within, probably cooking their breakfast before starting on their perilous return over the frontier—in this instance an imaginary line running along the heights of the snow-covered ridge of mountains rising in one sublime wall from the plateau on which the Alp-hut stood.

My post enabled me to see every movement of the eight men as they cautiously approached the hut, hardly 400 yards below me.

When about 150 yards from the *châlet* they divided, it being the intention of their leader to station one man at each corner of the hut while the remaining four keepers were to advance to the closed door.

They had hardly walked a few paces, when a thundering "Halt! or we shoot," from the poachers within the hut, brought the advancing force to a sudden standstill; and, throwing themselves flat down, they instinctively sought shelter behind some trees and rocks which were lying around.

Caged undoubtedly the poachers were, but by no means caught.

To dislodge four resolute, well-armed men, dead shots, from a bullet-proof log-hut standing in the center of a flat piece of ground, is by no means an easy undertaking. The Oberförster, convinced against his will of the impossibility of bring about a favorable result by force unaided by subtle stratagem, withdrew his men to a safer place, whence the hut could be watched without being in imminent danger from the enemy's rifles.

At the trial of the poachers, who subsequently were made prisoners, it appeared that the silent man, attired in the garb of a cowherd, who was sitting in the dark corner of the bar-room the previous evening while the Oberförster related the news of the poachers having been seen, had acted as informant.

This man turned out to be a native of the next Tyrol-ese village, and, without being in the least connected with

the poachers, he had, from mere spite to the hated Bavarians, warned his countrymen of the approaching surprise ; too late, however, to enable them or him to escape to their own side of the adjacent peaks.

This of course explained the whole thing. As I was convinced that the head-keeper would postpone until night all attempts on the hut, I decided to leave my post, and by a roundabout route join the small but valiant army encamped barely 600 yards from the object of their continued watching.

On reaching them, I found that one of the keepers had been despatched back to L——, and on my inquiring the reason of such an arrangement at a time when every man was needed, I was informed by the leader that he intended to take the hut by assault at nightfall, and for this purpose needed a bag of gunpowder to remove the barricaded door, and thus enable the assailants to gain the hut with comparatively little danger.

A very easy job it may seem to take by assault, with a force of eight men, a simple log-hut defended by just half that number ; but when you come to consider the substantial manner in which these châteaux are built, the immense thick door, iron-bound and fastened by a huge beam drawn across it from the inside, and the resolute, dare-devil character of the defenders, the reader will understand the difficulties with which the assaulting force had to cope.

Soon after sunset the keeper returned, accompanied by a confrère whom he had found at home.

Soon afterwards, when it was sufficiently dark, we completed our arrangements.

The dangerous task of placing the gunpowder bag near the door of the hut devolved on a volunteer, a keeper whose brother had been shot by Tyrolese poachers some years before.

Slowly creeping along, the man gained the door in safety, and, placing the bag against the latter, lighted the slip of tinder which was to ignite the charge, consisting of four pounds of gunpowder.

A second later, two shots from the hut made us tremble for the life of the brave volunteer.

All of a sudden a huge bright flame shot up, illuminating with a vivid light all surrounding objects. A terrible explosion followed, and a second later the eight men had, with one impetuous rush, gained the hut, and were pouring in through the breach produced by the explosion.

A shot, a second one, followed by a third discharge, intimated that the struggle inside that narrow log-hut was waging fierce and hot.

At this moment a dark object rushed past me up the incline on which I was standing.

A bullet whistling past me in unpleasant proximity induced me to throw myself down, while two of the keepers, in hot pursuit of the decamping poacher, nearly stumbled over my prostrate form. Another shot, and the hot and fierce fight was over.

On entering the hut by the doorway, now a large and ill-shaped breach in the timber, my attention was first attracted by the Oberförster stooping over the body of a man lying full length in the center of the hut. The uncertain light of the fire in the open fireplace prevented my recognizing the body till quite close to it.

It was old Berchtold, one of the most trusty subordinates of the head-keeper, shot through the body. The poor fellow was apparently in a dying state.

Two of the other men were in the act of placing the gigantic form of a poacher on the table, while the remaining keepers were either busy binding up a wound in the arm one of their comrades had received, or pinioning the only other poacher then visible.

But where were the remaining two keepers and the two poachers, who, as we supposed, had been sheltered in the hut, in addition to the two now before us? And who was that miserable object sitting or rather crouching in the corner of the fireplace, with his hands in his lap, staring sullenly into the fire? These were all questions which arose in my mind while I was busying myself with the wound of the poacher stretched out on the table.

Before I was able to inquire, the two missing keepers returned, holding between them a third "Wilddieb," whose face, originally blackened with soot to disguise himself, was now, by the action of the blood trickling from a wound on the forehead, restored, in many parts at least, to its original color.

Through all this excitement we had entirely forgotten the brave fellow who had fired the gunpowder, which had done such good service in clearing the way for the assaulting force.

On my reminding the Oberförster of their negligence, a search was ordered, and the man was ultimately found, not twenty paces from the hut, in an insensible condition.

On examining him we found that a ball had grazed his head; and, although it had rendered him insensible, he was not much hurt.

When the several cases had been properly attended to, the question arose, What had better be done with those who were more seriously injured?

This point was not soon nor easily decided. Old Berchtold was without doubt, of all the wounded, the one requiring most the aid of a doctor. The poacher on the table was sinking rapidly; but the two keepers, one wounded in the head, the other shot through the shoulder, and the poacher taken prisoner while attempting to escape, although not very seriously injured, would all be better for a more scientific dressing of their wounds than we were able to bestow on them.

It was decided, therefore, to start homewards as soon as a serviceable litter for the transport of Berchtold could be put together.

The rest of the wounded, and the poacher who had come out of the fight without a scratch, were to accompany the litter, while the dying poacher was to be left behind, his end being an affair of a few hours at the most. One of the keepers was to remain behind to watch over him, as well as over the mysterious man who had been found in the hut, and whom the Oberförster determined to detain till the arrival of the Government commission, which was to investigate the whole affair.

Two six-foot-long Alpenstöcke, with a blanket and some branches of a pine-tree, furnished a capital litter. Passing a fresh bandage over Berchtold's wound, we placed him on it. Propped up with several coats, the poor fellow was better off than we could have hoped. Four keepers were told off to carry him, a task of considerable difficulty, owing to the steepness of the descent and the roughness of the path.

Next came the two injured keepers, followed by two poachers both with tied hands; the Oberförster walking behind them, rifle in hand, vowing he would shoot the man attempting to escape, closed the file. One of the front carriers of the litter, and the keeper injured by the ball grazing his head, carried each a torch made of dry pieces of wood, between two and three feet in length, steeped in molten rosin.

While burning, these emit a brilliant and ruddy light; and as they are not easily extinguished by either wind or rain, they are preferable to lanterns, which latter are rarely used in the Tyrol or the Bavarian Highlands.

At the last moment I changed my mind, and decided to remain in the hut for that night instead of accompanying the "train," whose progress, torturingly slow on account of the wounded, would in all likelihood only bring them to L—— towards the morning.

On re-entering the *châlet*, after wishing the departing file a safe journey, I found the poacher in the same semi-conscious state in which I had left him.

Lying there stretched to his full length, under the glare of the pine-torch stuck in between two beams right over his head, he presented a most painful spectacle.

His was a handsome, intelligent face; his two jet-black eyes, fierce and angry in their expression, when at intervals he opened them and bent a piercing glance at the keeper, were the most remarkable features.

His hands, crossed over his huge brawny chest, clasped a rosary which one of the keepers had handed him; and the motion of his fingers, as now and again they moved a bead, showed he was praying.

Closely watching him from my seat at the fireplace, I perceived the pearly dew of death settling on his brow, and matting the locks of curly black hair which hung over his forehead. His gigantic frame, in which great power and agility seemed to be blended, appeared to stretch, while the muscles of his face began to twitch, and distort his manly visage.

Presently he started up into a sitting posture, and in a high-pitched tone cried for his rifle. Stepping up to him, I offered to replace the bandage of his wound, which, loosely put on from the first, had been partially displaced by his violent movement. In a moment he fell back, apparently dead.

Both of us thought it was all over; but I hardly had time to resume my seat, when all of a sudden he again started up, and, with distorted face and shaking voice, demanded a priest; "for," he continued, "I can not die till I have confessed."

Hardly had he said these words when a stream of blood gushed from his mouth, and he fell back dead.

While yet speaking these words, he had fixed his piercing eyes, unnaturally bright, with an expression of such deadly hate and mortal enmity, on the keeper, that when I looked round, when all was over, I found the man with his hands before his face, utterly stricken down by that one look of unutterable animosity. It was only then that, by a few words dropped by the man, I became aware of the fact that he was the slayer of the poor fellow.

Though he had acted in accordance with the letter of the law empowering a keeper to shoot a poacher who refuses to surrender, or endeavors to defend himself, I have no doubt that dying glance of his victim must have haunted him ever after, warning him that he remained a mark for the rifles of his victim's comrades, who would be only too eager to avenge their clansman's death.

I left the keeper to his unpleasant meditations, and returned to my seat at the fire.

All this time the mysterious man was crouching, without even uttering a word, on the seat he had occupied



When first I entered the hut, some three or four hours before. I addressed a few questions to him ; but my queries remained unanswered, save by a grunt and a sullen shake of his head.

Presently he rose, and going towards the doorway, was about to leave the *châlet*, when the keeper, jumping up from his seat, restrained him, and told him he was his prisoner. The man obeyed the order to resume his seat, without saying a word ; but the vicious glance he bent upon the keeper assured me that he had to deal with a ferocious customer, who at the first opportunity would be sure to attempt an escape by foul or by fair means.

No food had passed my lips since the morning, and nature began to demand her due in a very peremptory manner.

After preparing my simple meal, and sharing it with the keeper (our prisoner refused to eat), the former proceeded to narrate the particulars of the fight in the hut.

The circumstance that only one keeper was seriously wounded in the fight was mainly due to the fact, that, a few seconds before the explosion and the subsequent assault, two of the defenders of the *châlet* had discharged their rifles at the man who had ignited the charge.

These two shots had been fired by two of the poachers sitting on the roof, to which they had climbed by means of the smoke-hole, for the purpose of looking out, and watching as much as possible the movements of the enemy. From the inside of the hut they were unable to do this, as the only window had to be barricaded for reasons of safety.

The shock of the explosion, which took place before they had time to reload their rifles, unseated and landed them on the ground outside of the hut.

This occurrence had been partly noticed by two members of the assaulting force in the blaze which followed the explosion ; and these two men proceeded to seize the poachers, while the rest rushed into the hut.

After a short but sharp chase they succeeded in capturing the hindermost, who was struck down with a clubbed rifle.

The two poachers occupying the hut were standing with their cocked rifles to their cheek, when Berchtold and the rest burst into the hut.

The former, on demanding their immediate surrender, was answered by two shots ; one of them laying him low, while the second one pierced the shoulder of the keeper standing at his side.

Not content with felling two men, they clubbed their rifles, and, swinging them over their heads, were about to attack the group clustering round the door, with the evident design of forcing their way out. This was, however, not to happen ; for before the foremost of the two poachers had advanced a few steps, he fell pierced through the lungs. His companion, who was a smaller man, had been sheltered more or less by the huge frame of his comrade ; as soon as that fell he surrendered, pitching his useless rifle into the corner.

The reader will now comprehend what a fortunate circumstance it was that the fire of two of these dare-devil fellows on the roof had been drawn, without serious results, before the moment when the assault actually took place. Had these four men retained their loaded rifles, and had they remained in the dark corner of the hut, the fight would have been of a more equal character, and the issue, if not reversed, would at least have involved a greater sacrifice of life. I passed the night, for the most part wide awake, before the fire, either watching my two dozing companions and the grotesque shadows playing about the walls, or replenishing the fire, which had to serve as our candle after the torch had burned out. Right glad I was when the gray morning light streamed in through the open doorway, and I could depart from the scene of the late fight without becoming a prey to that unpleasant feeling which undoubtedly I must have experienced had I left the previous evening, namely, that vague, uncomfortable sense of having acted inhumanly in leaving a dying man to the questionable care of his late adversary.

On reaching L—— towards noon I found that the

doctor, who had been summoned from the next small town, some seven or eight miles distant, had just arrived, and held out some hope of Berchtold's ultimate recovery; though of course he would be for ever afterwards unfit for his calling as keeper. The rest were going on well. I left L—— the next morning not a little disgusted with the heartless pleasure displayed by the villagers at the success of the keepers' raid: that a life had been victimized, seemed to them as part of a just and proper punishment.

My readers may perhaps ask why the poachers did not surrender to an overwhelming force at the outset of the fight. I think I have already partially answered this question when I said that a genuine Tyrolese, reared in the secluded parts of the glorious Alps, values freedom and liberty more than life itself. This feeling, together with the fact that poachers, by their reckless daring, often succeed in vanquishing a superior number of keepers, will explain the apparent imprudence of their resistance, which I am nearly convinced would have brought them through, had it not been for the stratagem of the wily Herr Oberförster.

The worst feature of such adventures is that scores of brave lives, gifted with powers of endurance and strength almost superhuman, are thus sacrificed; and, generally speaking, it is just this vigor and force which lead their possessors astray. The poor fellow turns poacher simply for the love of that most exciting and dangerous sport, the chase of the chamois, — an animal which has, indirectly, brought more lives to grief than the savage tiger of India or the royal lion of Africa.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE BLACKCOCK.

THE capercali, the largest of European gallinaceous birds, and the blackcock (*Tetrao tetrix*), are the two largest game-birds of Tyrol. Both belong to the grouse species; but while the former is of gigantic size, weighing as much as from ten to fourteen pounds, — in fact, quite as large as a turkey, — the latter is much smaller, his weight but rarely exceeding four pounds. Though the capercali is the more magnificent bird of the two, the blackcock is considered the nobler game. Far shyer and more cunning, the latter is very difficult to shoot in Tyrol; and the sport requires great hardihood, patience, and an accurate knowledge of the bird's peculiarities.

I believe these fine birds are to be found in some districts of England, especially on the estates of the Marquis of Anglesea; and from certain historical accounts it appears that both the blackcock and the capercali were once very abundant in the forests of Scotland, though the former had always the privilege, and was considered "royal game."

Both these species of grouse are shot in Tyrol on quite a different principle to that in England, where the shooting commences on Sept. 1. In Tyrol, on the contrary, they are shot during the pairing season, in April and May, the hen-birds being carefully spared.

Strange to say, the sight and ear of the blackcock assume during the pairing period an amazing keenness, while those of the capercali remain very much the same throughout the year.

This of course renders blackcock-shooting, although an interesting, by no means an easy sport. As with chamois-shooting, there are various ways and means of making it easier; and these are generally adopted by gentlemen who have well-stocked preserves, and who shun the fatigues and exposure to the cold incidental to the genuine sport. With the increased ease, much of its charm vanishes; and, to speak candidly, I would rather shoot one cock according to the regular Tyrolese fashion, alone and unaided by any artificial contrivance, than half a dozen from the hut erected near the tree where, for days previously, a cock has been spotted by a keeper. I must add that the blackcock, if he remains undisturbed, invariably returns every morning from his haunts lower down in the woods, during the whole of the pairing season, to one and the same tree, perched upon one of the branches of which he sings his love-song. It is therefore not difficult for the noble master to slay his royal game, when once a cock has been spotted by a keeper, and a miniature hut has been run up in the course of the day close to the tree in question. It is simply a question of sitting a few hours, well wrapped up in coats or furs, patiently awaiting the advent of the game. Far different from this is the genuine sport. An account of an expedition of this kind may give some idea of its attractiveness, though perhaps but few would be willing to share the fatigues and exposure to cold incidental to it.

The difficulties of the pursuit in the pairing season are much enhanced by the great elevation of the spot selected by the cock for the scene of his amorous adventures, and of the fierce combats which generally precede them. I have known as many as three or four fights take place before the cock, who proves himself victor over his two or three rivals, can commence his strange antics and odd-sounding love-song, for the edification of the hens who crowd round their polygamous lord and master. Nothing is more ludicrous than to see the love-sick cock, full dressed in the glory of his glossy steel-blue plumage, strut round the base of the tree selected for the scene of

action. Now trailing his wings, turkey fashion, and inflating his glistening throat; now throwing back his head, his neck waving to and fro, while the tail is expanded to its full, standing at right angles to his body; then again, in the ecstasy of passion, trembling all over his body, while froth issues from his beak, and the eyes are covered with the nictitating and glittering membrane, he will gambol and throw somersaults with amazing rapidity.

The love-song of the cock is, strange as it may seem, a matter of great importance to the sportsman. It consists of three distinct notes, or "Gsatzln," which are repeated constantly, and at intervals more or less regular. Resembling the love-song of the capercali, though much louder, the first and second notes could be compared to gurgling chuckles, while the third, "das Schleifen," might be compared to the sound caused by sharpening an edged tool on a whetstone. The third note is the one for which the sportsman must wait. During its utterance the cock is entirely insensible to danger; his passion in this second or two is so excessive that sight as well as hearing are dead to all other influences. While it is being repeated the hunter may advance, and can even fire off his gun without disturbing the bird; while during the two first notes, and during the intervals, the most perfect silence must be observed by the hunter, hidden by rock or brushwood from the amazingly keen sight of his game. A suppressed sigh at a distance of many yards is sufficient to send off the alarmed cock.

But now to my own account of a blackcock-shooting expedition. With a pair of snow-hoops, my trusty crampons, and a single-barreled large-bore fowling-piece, and with my usual bag, filled with provisions for three or four days, on my back, I started on a fine April morning for the scene of action, a remote valley some eight hours off. A week's bright sunshine had melted the snow on my path, and even for several hundred feet above me the Alpine pasturages and somber, dark-green pine-forests clothing the adjacent slopes were free of their white pall. Arriving in due time at a small peasant's cottage, — the last house

on my way, — I determined to remain there till fall of night. Entering the general room of the house, I received a warm welcome by its owner, his family, and Lois, a daring young native sportsman who had often been my companion on shooting-expeditions. The rest of the afternoon and the evening — I had decided to put off my departure till nine o'clock at night — were passed in agreeable company, chatting and laughing over our glasses of schnapps, that being the only liquor the man had in his house. A number of forgotten adventures and odd shooting anecdotes, in which either or both of us had played a part, came upon the *tapis*, to the great mirth of the whole party, so that when the crazy old clock in the corner of the wainscoted room began to “hum and haw” preceding the final effort of striking the necessary nine strokes, I was sorry to be obliged to leave the merry company, and exchange the cozy warm room for the bitterly cold air outside. On issuing forth, we saw the full disk of the moon just cresting the high ridge of snowy mountains, at the very base of which lay the narrow glen in which the cottage was situated. The cold, although it was the latter half of April, was intense; but I was very soon, by dint of fast walking, in that pleasant state of warmth peculiar to violent exertion in cold weather. Putting my best foot forward, I had within five or ten minutes reached the snow-line again. Fastening the snow-hoops to my feet, I began work in earnest. As I sank nearly up to my thighs at every step, it took me more than three tedious hours to gain the first eminence, some two or three thousand feet over the hut. The dry, powdery state of the snow had gradually given way to a greater firmness, and at last, on reaching the top of the ridge, I found the snow “harscht,” or frozen. Owing to the depth of the ravine up which I had traced my steps, the rays of the sun had never touched its sides, and the snow was therefore powdery and unresisting: higher up, on the contrary, the sun had melted the top layer of snow, which, in the long hours of the night, froze, and resembled as much as possible the smooth surface of a glacier after a hot August sun has

polished it. My snow-hoops now, of course, became not only useless, but actually dangerous. Unfastening them, I strapped my crampons on, and got my small ice-ax ready.

The moon shining brightly, night was changed into day; it was therefore easy to continue my way up the next ridge, from the base of which I was, however, yet some little distance off, a sort of miniature valley lying between me and the point where an ascent up the very precipitous slopes was practicable. Well acquainted with the terrain, I knew there was no chasm or rocks at the bottom of the gully, and imagined there was no danger attendant on sliding *à la Tyrolese* down the icy slope which, as I have said, I had to cross. Cutting two or three pine-branches off the next tree, I intertwined them so that they should furnish a sort of seat. On this I sat down, and digging my ice-ax, as a sort of drag, into the glistening surface, I began my descent. As the slope was not very steep at first, my drag was of sufficient resisting power to check the pace; but soon, to my dismay, the gradient grew steeper and steeper, increasing in a proportionate degree the speed at which I was traveling. My ax was wrenched out of my hand, and I was left to the mercy of the hindermost spokes in my crampons; but these, owing to the position of my body and my feet, only scratched the ice, checking the speed but little. The slope was some 900 or 1,000 yards in length, and before I had reached the middle even this mode of checking my downward course became too dangerous to continue; for had my crampons come in contact with the slightest unevenness, or with the smallest stone embedded in the ice, I should have been jerked head foremost off my seat, and left to continue my course at lightning speed in any but a comfortable position. Fortunately this did not occur, and I reached the bottom of the gully seated on my primitive sledge. Though my whole downward slide could not have taken more than four or five seconds, the terrific speed had taken away my breath, and, what was worse, the impetus had driven me far into



a snowdrift of large dimensions, which had accumulated at the foot of the slope, and which, as it was under the lee of a high wall of rock, was protected from the sun, and consisted therefore of powdery, loose snow, offering hardly any resistance to my mad onslaught, which carried me right to the center of the huge hill. After working myself out, and dusting my coat and trousers (my gun-lock was protected by a mackintosh wrapper), I started once more up a steep incline covered with a coat of ice, or rather frozen snow, polished and smoothed by the action of a warm April sun and intense cold at night. By two o'clock in the morning I reached the top of the mountain, or what might pass for it, the scene of action. I have said that the fact of knowing the precise spot where a blackcock holds his love-court facilitates, to a great extent, the final result. Now, the ridge of mountains upon which I was standing was some three or four hours in length, and probably along the whole of it not more than one, or at the utmost two, blackcocks could be found. The choice of the right spot thus became a matter of luck. To some extent, of course, one can be guided in one's selection of the spot one intends to watch by the fact that they generally choose the very highest points of the mountains, selecting, if possible, for their headquarters, an old, gnarled, weather-beaten pine, or "Zirbe," — a species of pine growing only in the highest regions of vegetation.

By the time I had eaten a piece of bread and a small bit of bacon, swallowed a gulp of the "Enzian Schnapps," and turned over in my mind the various "Stände" on that ridge where a cock could possibly be, it was close upon three o'clock, and therefore the very best time to proceed to the spot selected. The moon had disappeared; and I was glad I had no very bad places to cross on my way to the spot chosen by me as the most likely, if not for seeing a cock, yet at least for hearing him, and so spotting him for the next morning.

A quarter of an hour's cautious climbing brought me to the northern extremity of the ridge, where, in gigantic

steps of a couple of thousand feet each, the mountain abruptly fell off down to the valley, some four or five thousand feet below me.

Quite close to the spot where I had killed a fine cock the year before, I hid myself as much as possible behind the tough branches of a Latschen bush, about ten paces from a huge patriarchal "Zirbe," stripped of nearly all its branches by repeated strokes of lightning, and rearing its gaunt, gnarled trunk into the starlit sky. For the next hour all was silent round me; and the intense cold, abetted by a piercing wind, succeeded in making my place of ambush as uncomfortable as possible. Shortly after four o'clock the heaven began to show signs of approaching day. The snowy peaks which reared their noble forms all round me were one by one lit up with the exquisitely rosy tint peculiar to the reflection of the earliest rays of the sun on unbroken surfaces of snow. As yet the sun was not up, and would not be up for at least a quarter of an hour; in fact, it was just that moment when the blackcock, whose maxim is "early to bed and early to rise," shows the first signs of life.

A distinct "whirr" close over my head told me that my selection had been a good one. Hardly daring to look at the tree, for fear of betraying myself to the cock, I perceived, relieved against the light sky, the noble bird seated on one of the remaining branches of the Zirbe-tree.

I could do nothing, not even raise my gun, till the third note of the song assured me that the cock was at the height of his passion. A flap of his powerful wings, and he had changed his perch to another branch higher up, but hidden from my view by the trunk of the tree. The next minute the love-sick cock was singing. Was I to wait till he flew to the ground and began his amusing antics, running the chance of losing him out of sight? or was I to endeavor to "anspringen," the process of gradually approaching him by a series of jumps or strides, performed while the cock is singing the third notes? On the other hand, delay seemed imprudent, as by his song I knew the cock to be an "old" one, — that is, three

years of age, — and therefore of a particularly jealous disposition, eager to fight any young interloper who might betray his presence in the old cock's preserves by singing. As, further, it was very early in the season, and thus likely that the cock had not yet settled down to any one definite spot for his morning song, but was shifting about from place to place, singing a few stanzas at each, I presumed it was the safest course to try "anspringen," consisting in this instance of shifting my position a little to one side, in order to get a view of the bird. On my right, not more than a foot, an immense precipice fell off, so in order to hide myself I had to move to the left, over some rocks bare of any vegetation. *Ventre à terre*, I awaited the signal to move, namely, the third note; then jumping up and running forward two or three steps, I had at the conclusion of the third note, which lasts but a few seconds, to throw myself down again, remaining quite motionless till the next "Gsatzl."

Three of these momentary but frantic leaps brought me to the desired spot, from whence I had a full view of the cock, and the very next "Gsatzl" of the bird was intended by me to be its last.

Luck, however, forsook me at that moment. Inflating his throat, and expanding his magnificent tail to its full, he was just about to commence the second note of his dirge, in my full view, hardly thirty yards off, when with a slight crack a small twig snapped asunder under my weight. The next second, before I had time to raise my gun to venture a flying shot, the cock was off, passing in his short but "dipping" flight the very bush behind which I was hidden.

Cramped with the cold, wet through from lying on the snow, and out of humor, I was just considering what to do next, when from afar, but still on the same ridge of mountains, I heard the song of a second cock. The distance was too great to hold out any hopes of reaching the cock before he was off from his rendezvous. I therefore determined to "spot" him if possible, in order that I might be sure of him the next morning.

I proceeded, therefore, with all dispatch in the direction of the sound, and within three-quarters of an hour had reached a prominent crag, from the top of which I had a full view of the place where I supposed the game to be. Lying at full length on the eminence, telescope in hand, I scanned the isolated gnarled old pines and "Zirben" which dotted a large expanse of barren ground, upon which, scattered about in every direction, lay huge boulders of rock. All was silent, but shortly I saw two hens take wing from beneath one of the trees some eight or nine hundred yards off. Presently the cock followed suit; but as it was early in the season, he took a different direction, and finally, after alighting for a moment on a tree, crossed the valley at my feet, and disappeared in the morning mist that filled it.

After remaining upwards of an hour seated on my Rucksack, enjoying the splendid view rolled out at my feet, I descended to an Alp-hut half an hour's walk from the point I was occupying. In this hut I intended to stop during the day and the better part of the next night, leaving it an hour or two before sunrise next morning for the tree upon which I had spotted the last cock. On reaching the hut, occupying a sort of sink in the ground, I found only the roof projecting from the snow. As ingress by the door was well-nigh impossible, save by digging a cutting down to it, I preferred the other way of effecting an entrance, viz., by removing two or three of the "Schindeln," small boards of larch-wood, with which these huts are roofed, each board being nailed down, and, further, to prevent the whole roof being carried off by the high winds, weighted by heavy stones.

Five minutes' work and a jump down the dark space landed me safely in the front part of the hut, containing a fireplace, an iron pan, a brass spoon, and a cot filled with hay. Well provided with provisions, and even the luxury of some newspapers to pass the time, and a candle whereby to read them, I expected — to use an American phrase — to have a good time in my solitary habitation. The first quarter of an hour saw a bright fire on the open

hearth, a pan full of "Schmarn," my coat and boots hung up to dry, and an invigorating gulp of schnapps going down my throat. Having dispatched a hearty breakfast, and piled several logs on the fire, I turned in to have five or six hours of sleep. Buried in a pile of fragrant hay, I was as comfortably bedded as a tired man need wish to be.

Awaking refreshed after nearly eight hours of rest, I passed the remainder of the day and the evening in cooking a repetition of my breakfast for my dinner, and with reading comfortably, stretched out on the seat running round the fire, two or three numbers of "The Saturday Review." The intellectual as well as the bodily man being in a state of repletion, I turned over on the bench, and the next minute I was sleeping. Long before it was time to depart, I started up with an uneasy feeling of having overslept the right hour. Consulting my watch, I found it had stopped; so naught remained but to climb up to my air-hole, and have a look at the moon, by the position of which in the heavens I knew I could tell the time to within half an hour.

Re-assured, I returned to the fireplace, relit the fire, and proceeded to brew myself a strong panful of tea, which was followed by a "Schmarn" and a slice of bacon.

About half-past two I collected my traps, stowed them ("Saturday Review," candle, tea, and bacon) away in my Rucksack, put a fresh cap on my gun, and was just creeping out of the hole in the roof, when my attention was attracted to a small animal scampering away from the hut over the moonlit, glittering snow. Guessing it to be a pine-marten, I fired at it. My position at the moment of firing was a somewhat critical one. As I was balancing myself with one foot on a thin spar inside the roof, the least shock was sufficient to knock me down from my nicely-poised post. A heavy charge in the gun, and a proportionately strong recoil, sent me head over heels down into the hay some five or six feet below me.

Re-ascending, I saw that the marten had also fallen,

though, as its motionless position indicated, its fall was attended by more fatal results than my own tumble. Creeping out, I closed the hole, and going over to my prey, I found it to be a fine male pine-marten, a species prized for its fur. If it be shot in winter, the fur generally fetches some ten or twelve florins (1*l.*, or 1*l.* 4*s.*). My sportsman reader will perhaps learn with surprise that I ventured to fire so near the spot where I intended to watch for the blackcock. Considering, however, that it lay on the other side of the ridge, and that the birds always roost in woods or brushwood considerably lower down, I was not afraid of any bad results. I was soon at the place of ambush selected by me the previous morning. A cold hour followed, and then the "whirr" of the approaching cock. It was as yet too dark to shoot, for the moon had gone down some time before, so I waited patiently till break of day. Meanwhile the bird had begun to sing, flying to the ground now and again, and performing his amusing antics, of which, however, I saw but little. Again he was up on the branch, giving me a full view of his noble shape, drawn in sharp outlines on the cloudless sky. The next "Gsatzl" saw me raise my gun, and the next second the noble bird was lying on the snow.

A far-echoing "Juchheisa!" blended with the rolling echoes of my shot, rent the air, while with a few strides I was at the side of my game.

Pleasant it is to look back to such moments as these. The fatigues and privations which one undergoes — though in this instance the latter were not worth speaking of — only increase the exhilaration at having succeeded in spite of cold, snow, the difficulties of ascent, and all the other hinderances which obstruct the sportsman's path in Tyrol.

Far different, indeed, are the feelings of the unsuccessful hunter, returning home, perhaps after two or three days of fatigue and exposure, in the character of a "Schneider" (tailor), the nickname given to sportsmen returning with empty Rucksack. Dejected, sullen, and

disgusted, he returns crestfallen homewards. Doubly long, fearfully steep, and strangely unpicturesque and tame, do the path and the surrounding scenery appear to him, while the cold or the heat, as the case may be, seems unbearable.

## CHAPTER VI.

## PRIESTHOOD AND SUPERSTITION.

TO the fact that Tyrol is the most exclusively mountainous country in Europe, — even Switzerland containing a larger relative proportion of open country, — we must attribute most of the peculiarities and customs that strike the observer.

One of the most important characteristics is the exceptional position of the clergy. Tyrol, one of the strongholds of the Roman Catholic faith, is ruled to an astonishing extent by the priesthood; and though in the course of the last ten or fifteen years the Church has lost a good deal of her former influence and power in the three or four larger valleys of North Tyrol, the ignorant natives of the more secluded and poorer Alpine glens are yet terribly in the clutches of the “Blacks,” — the name given to bigoted priests. Superstition and blind belief in the power of their Church are the two firm rocks upon which the clergy have erected their structure of spiritual government, leaving the civil form of judicature far behind in importance and energetic vigilance. In a country where social laws are yet at a low degree of development, reminding us only too often of customs and habits of the Middle Ages, we must be glad that any power exists able to curb the animal passions of a primitive people. At the present moment (and I have no doubt he will do so for many years to come) a peasant dreads the punishment inflicted by his priest — consisting of perhaps a temporary refusal to grant absolution — a hundred times more



than any fine or sentence of imprisonment which the law can inflict upon him. What is a month's imprisonment to a man whose mind is overcharged with the horrible pictures of hell, and the everlasting tortures which are sure to follow disobedience to the ordinances and laws of the holy Catholic Church?

I have hinted at the low scale of morality of the Tyrolese; and without entering into any unpleasant details, it must be remarked that among the lower classes of the population the intercourse between the sexes is decidedly freer than in most other countries of Europe.

There are two or three conspicuous causes to which we can trace this. The most prominent are the municipal restrictions that cumber marriage among the lower classes in the rural districts. Very recently only has the Austrian Government annulled the law which compelled a man desirous of entering into the holy bonds of marriage to prove a certain income, and, further, be the owner of a house or homestead of some kind, before the license was granted. The heads of the parishes, very naturally too, gave the necessary permission reluctantly, if they entertained the slightest fear of having ultimately a pauper family thrown upon the poor resources of the parish. Owing to this, and to the fact that nearly 40,000 Tyrolese, generally young men, leave their country every year in search of employment which keeps them away from their homes for the better part of the year, the majority of couples contracting marriage in Tyrol have passed the meridian of youth.

Next in importance, as a cause, is the lax way in which the Church deals with licentious misconduct. Strict in most vital points, she shows a remarkable deficiency of energy in combating with an evil, which, it is true, does not touch the interests of the Church herself, but yet would be worthy of her most strenuous efforts to abolish. Immoral intercourse between the sexes is, in her eyes, a minor iniquity, expiated by confession. We must remember, too, that the conduct of the priests themselves is not infrequently open to the severest criticism. Free as the

intercourse between the sexes is, we have nevertheless to note one redeeming quality, the sacred light in which the marriage vows are held. Unrestrained as a woman's career may have been before her marriage, she becomes a dutiful, hard-working wife, when once the holy knot is tied.

As in certain rural districts of England (the North and West), where formerly women usually refrained from marrying until they were on the eve of becoming mothers, we find that, on an average, half of the wives of Tyrolese peasants have had children before their wedding-day; and though it is quite true that the lover very rarely forsakes the mother of his illegitimate offspring, and ultimately marries her, we must not ascribe this final act of justice solely to the good feelings of the male culprit, but rather to the power of the priest over the mind of the sinner confessing his guilt. The priest it is who urges him to set right an old wrong by marrying the girl who but for the absence of the holy bond was to all purposes his wife; and were it not for his lively pictures of everlasting tortures in a certain subterranean abode of sinners, the percentage of girls abandoned by their lovers would be far greater than it is.

As in most Roman Catholic countries, the Church in Tyrol counts her most effective and devout disciples and followers among the female portion of the inhabitants. The simple and credulous mind of the ignorant peasant-woman acts as one of the mainstays and supports of the whole structure of absolution, redemption, or, on the contrary, eternal damnation, one and all dependent upon the volition of a mortal man, her priest.

It is only in the course of the last twenty or thirty years that the custom, spread throughout the country, of "Fensterln" or "Gasselgehen," — the introduction of the lover into the bedroom of his lass, — has been stopped in the three or four larger valleys, while in the rest it flourishes to this day.

Priests have told me that thirty years ago the custom of sleeping in an entirely nude state, and crowding all the members of the family into one bedroom, was the con-

stant theme of their discourses from the pulpit ; and even nowadays I have frequently listened to sermons of some well-meaning rural priest, the subject of which was the necessity of washing every day and changing one's linen once a week. Well aware that sentiments of propriety are foreign to the minds of his listeners, the priest does not base his exhortations on the supposition that a clean face once a day and a clean shirt once a week are domestic comforts necessary to the equanimity of the human mind, but rather on the consideration that a dirty face and filthy shirt are obstacles in the path of true love. "For how," I once heard a loud-voiced rural priest hold forth, "can a comely girl feel herself honored with the love of a man approaching her in dirt-begrimed clothes, emitting an effluvium sufficient to knock a man down at ten paces?" The worthy pastor was in this instance urging the necessity of abolishing that filthy custom of the male cowherds, who in the beginning of the summer leave their native village for the more elevated pasturages, and return with their cattle in autumn, having the same shirt, unwashed the whole five or six months, on their backs. The dirtier and thicker the coat of filth on the shirt, the more honorable for the wearer ; for does it not speak for itself, that the owner has been in the mean time busy and hard-worked? This custom, I am happy to say, is confined to those valleys where male cowherds are sent up to the Alpine pasturages, and it is now fast disappearing.

It is in this way that the priest attains his object ; and hundreds of instances could I recite of this indirect and roundabout manner of overcoming prejudices deeply rooted in the hearts of the people.

Thirty or forty years ago brutal and sanguinary fights between rivals in the love of one and the same girl were the invariable finish-up of fêtes, weddings, christenings, and, in fact, all assemblies. The loss of the nose, an ear, or a couple of fingers, bitten off by his foe, marked the vanquished for life. The still more brutal act of scooping out a foe's eye — by a jerk of the thumb — was at one time a very prevalent abuse, and even nowadays in one

or two valleys this barbarous habit still exists, though, thanks to the strenuous efforts of the clergy, it is far less often practiced. Among the several more or less mischievous results entailed by the great supremacy of the clergy, the gross superstition and devout belief in their supernatural powers are about the most harmful.

The two following instances are sufficient to substantiate my statement, and show how solicitously a Tyrolese priest will "dress up" some commonplace event in the garb of a semi-miracle, and how by hook or by crook he manages to impress his parishioners with his power to charm evil spirits.

Two years ago a certain deformed tailor in the village of Vomp (near Schwaz, in the "Unterinthal") was attacked by a somewhat violent fit of delirium tremens, brought on by too liberal potations of spirits the day before. His family, terribly frightened by this hitherto unknown malady, sent for the village doctor. After a protracted examination of the patient, this most enlightened disciple of Æsculapius declared himself incompetent to deal with the mysterious ailment. All he could do was to advise the immediate attendance of the priest.

This piece of advice was of course promptly followed; and ten minutes later the priest in his official capacity, attended by two acolytes with swinging censer and holy-water vessel and mop, was standing at the bedside of the raving hunchback.

Grand opportunity to work a miracle, thought the holy man; and forthwith the solemn declaration that the patient was possessed of the Devil made the assembled household and the mob standing outside the house shake and tremble in their shoes.

The room was cleared of the gaping and frightened crowd; and the priest began his course of *recondite* exorcising manipulations, an interesting description of which is furnished in the following literal translation of an account (which appeared in one of the most popular local newspapers) of the further proceedings of the Devil while closeted in the confines of a narrow chamber with a

priest armed with rosary and censer. I have unfortunately to refer my readers to this piece of second-hand information, as very naturally no mortal but a clever editor could have penetrated the veil of mystery that clung round that dire eight-hours' struggle.

"After four hours of uninterrupted praying and declamation of Latin adjurations and exhortations that filled a handy 'Benedictiones' prepared for like occasions, the holy man, faint with hunger, proposed to leave the Devil for an hour or so in undisputed possession of the tailor, while he, the holy but mortal man, ate his dinner. This intention, however, was not carried out, for with a hellish peal of scornful laughter the evil spirit informed him that if he left, he — the Satanic Majesty — would take perpetual possession of his victim. This threat of course needed a firm answer, and so with renewed vigor the holy man continued his exorcising.

"Four hours more of Latin formularies, hailed down hard and fast upon the Devil-possessed patient, at last brought his Hellish Majesty to bay, and with one discordant whoop of defiance the evil visitor took his departure through the window opened by the priest for this purpose.

"The priest, eager to close the casement, and thus to make a return of his vile tormentor impossible, reached the window, and was just about to shut it when a large dog, lying in the courtyard of the house, set up a howl, thereby indicating very plainly that the Devil, unsuccessful in other quarters, was determined to get somebody or something to accompany him to his hellish retreat. A rifle in the hands of the master of the house speedily put an end to the dog's existence, and thus his Satanic Majesty was deprived even of his canine victim.

"Eight hours of unremitting exhortation were needed to drive the Evil Spirit from that God-forsaken house.

"As soon as the miraculous success of this priest became known to the crowd surrounding the house, loud rejoicings and fervent prayers were offered up."

The next Sunday this event was grandly dilated upon from the pulpit, and after service numbers of holy pic-

tures, representing the heart of Jesus, wreathed round by suitable verses and hymns, were distributed among the parishioners.

These holy amulets against a second visit of the Devil were nailed to the house-door, stable-door, and barn-door of every house in that village; and since then the population have enjoyed a blissful security from his Satanic Majesty. For the truth of this event in all its details, save those of course that occurred in the sickroom, I can vouch, as I was present and saw most of the proceedings myself. The exact date, June 23, 1873. Not so bad for the nineteenth century, my readers will exclaim.

The second instance is much simpler and far less wonderful.

A peasant whose fields were infested with the grub of the cockchafer (they remain three years in their caterpillar state, appearing in the fourth as chafers) complained to the priest of his village of the nuisance, and asked his advice how to get rid of them. It seems that they had already been doing grievous damage to his wheat and corn for three years, and the priest on hearing these details found himself induced to promise their expulsion from his parishioner's fields. The promise of a couple of sacks of corn and a huge wax candle to the Holy Virgin no doubt had something to do with the priest's readiness to comply with the peasant's request. Two acolytes, a basin of holy water, a huge mop wherewith to sprinkle the fields, and some incense, were all that was needed. On the termination of the priest's promenade round the ground (his holy book in his hand and two acolytes swinging the censers in front of him) he declared that next spring the grubs would fly away.

And really, wonderful to say, next year the creeping grubs took wing (as cockchafers), leaving the happy owner of their playground during the last three summers to his meditations on the miraculous power of holy water and incense in the hands of his priest.

A recent able authoress<sup>1</sup> has given a rich store of myths,

<sup>1</sup> "The Valleys of Tirol," by Miss R. H. Busk.

superstitions, and interesting instances of what the Germans call "Volksaberglaube," the superstition of the populace in Tyrol; but there still remain in the remote parts of the country odd customs displaying a devout belief in good and evil spirits, national traits which, with one or two exceptions, have not yet found their way into English, nor, so far as I am aware, into German works upon Tyrol. Looking down the long list of these customs, — we might call them relics of the past, — I find that most of them represent precautionary measures against evil spirits in general and the Devil in particular. I must premise that a Tyrolese peasant never mentions the word "Teufel;" to him any word is better than "Devil." We therefore find him called the Evil One, the Black One, the Bad Spirit, or the "Damned One;" and even the low oaths used by the Tyrolese are conspicuous by the absence of the word which in English, French, German, and most other languages is a common imprecation. I do not by any means put this forward as a laudable characteristic of the Tyrolese; for, like other Roman Catholics, they will make profane use of a Name which, according to our English feelings, is not to be called in vain.

I merely mean to say, that just as the common Tyrolese does not make the slightest difference between Protestant and Jew, but terms every non-Roman-Catholic a Jew, the shunning of the word "devil" illustrates in a remarkable manner that dense ignorance on religious matters, which is deemed by the clergy the best safeguard against any repetition of those dangerous revolutions in religious matters which on one or two occasions were near overthrowing the old faith. Not once, but a hundred times, have I been struck by the uneasy glance around and behind him, when, in joke, I have mentioned the word "devil" to a rustic inhabitant of some remote little village. The sign of the cross and a hasty ejaculatory prayer are on such occasions supposed to be the only preservatives against an immediate appearance of the Evil One himself!

The Tyrolese peasant connects every elementary visi-

tation, such as hail-storms, lightning, earthquakes, heavy rains, or long droughts, with the evil disposition of the Unholy One, or sees in it the punishment for some unrighteous act.

Before he sows his field, he sprinkles it with small bits of charcoal consecrated by the priest. When he drives his cattle to the mountains, his Alp-hut receives the blessing of the holy man.

When his cow calves, she is besprinkled with holy water ; before he enters an untenanted house, he goes over his rosary. When a thunder-storm is approaching, the village bells are rung, and if he has a bell on his house — well-to-do peasants in the fertile valleys very often hang a bell on top of their house, to call to their meals their men and women servants from their work in the fields — it is set tolling with might and main. The object of the ringing is to keep off or charm the dreaded lightning. The peasant population have in this safeguard a stanch belief, which is not shaken even if the lightning strikes that or any adjacent house. “The bell has been bewitched,” they argue, “and requires to be re-consecrated.”

As a rule, the older the bell of chapel or church, the more efficacious it is considered, and one or two in different parts of the country have a wide-spread repute as “Wetterglocke,” or storm-bells. You often will hear a peasant express regret that his village possesses a bell much inferior to that of the next village, and add, “Oh, had we only the bell of Rodenegg !” — a bell enjoying the highest repute as a lightning-charmer throughout Tyrol.

To touch a person killed by lightning, before the priest has spoken a short prayer over the body, is considered highly dangerous.

To counteract the devastating results of a heavy hail-storm, a bunch of twigs of the round-leaved willow, duly consecrated on Palm Sunday by the village priest, is stuck on a pole in the middle of the field.

On Christmas Eve every door in a peasant’s house is marked with three small crosses in chalk, “to keep out the Evil One,” as they would tell you if you asked why.



When a woodcutter fells a tree slightly injured by lightning, he immediately cuts three crosses on the level surface of the stump.

To wash a child before its forehead has been touched by holy water (two or three small vessels filled with it are never lacking in a peasant's dwelling), is highly injurious to it.

To pass a chapel, roadside shrine, or cross, or the wooden beam adorned with a votive tablet, without making the sign of the cross, or taking off your hat, is considered by the peasants as highly improper; and I have known men turn round upon me with an expression of anger or astonishment depicted upon their faces when they remarked my non-observance of this custom.

To give an instance of the peasant's superstition respecting lightning, I may relate here an incident that occurred to me a year or two ago.

In a small and remote village, consisting of nine or ten houses and a small chapel, the priest of the next village, some hours off, used to read an occasional mass for the benefit of the weak and decrepit who were unable to attend the distant place of worship. In this chapel I had discovered four very remarkable pictures of sacred subjects painted evidently by an old German master of repute.

Though eager to purchase them, I knew my customer too well to show any great wish to possess them, but broached the subject by offering four new pictures in their stead. My offer was refused, and it was only after I had doubled the price I had previously offered, and promised to pay for the restoration, viz., whitewashing, of the chapel, that the owner of the edifice would hear of parting with the dusty, hardly visible old paintings.

A week later I had returned to the village accompanied by four men, who carried the pictures which I had bought in the mean time in Innsbruck.

Hardly had I entered the peasant's house when, to my utter astonishment, he told me that he could not possibly part with the paintings I desired so much to possess.

After a considerable time spent in talking, I discovered at last the cause of the sudden refusal.

It seems that for many years lightning had never struck individual or house in that village, — it occupied a very elevated plateau, and was therefore somewhat exposed to lightning, — and now that his neighbors had heard of this proposed exchange, they had united their voices to urge him not to part with them. “It is just these pictures which may have preserved house and human being hitherto from lightning,” my uncomfortably superstitious vendor informed me. All talk on the matter was useless; so, as a last remedy, I assembled the whole nine or ten peasants that evening in the wainscoted low-roofed chief room of the owner of the chapel. My persuasive powers, however, again proved useless, and next day I had to return to more civilized quarters, carrying the new pictures back with me. Naturally I was greatly vexed at my disappointment and the loss of the money spent on the pictures, which now — they all represented gaudily-painted saints, or the Virgin Mary in various poses, in heavy gilt frames — were for the time quite useless. Fortunately, however, I kept them, and did not give them away as I had intended; for, hardly six months later, a flash of lightning fired a house in the village, and killed several head of cattle. On hearing of this mishap, I knew I had won the game; and a few days later I was in possession of my prizes.

Had I got the pictures the first time, the peasants would have said, of course, that my exchange had brought about this untoward event.

In Ultenthal, — to give an instance or two of the belief in local legends, — there exist at the present moment the ruins of the strong feudal castle of Braunsberg, founded by a noble of that name in the early part of the twelfth century. A descendant of the founder, Knight Henry, took a part in one of the crusades of that century, and while on his perilous expedition, undertaken, as we may suppose, for the redemption of a soul laden with a long list of dark crimes, he intrusted his beautiful wife Jutta to the care and protection of his steward.

The latter, handsome Gunibert, proved himself a shameless Don Juan. The virtue, however, of fair Jutta, somewhat exceptional in those days, was deeply ingrafted upon her nature, and his subtle schemes only made him the object of her scorn and disgust.

Learning that his master, Knight Henry, had returned from his dangerous voyage, and was but a day's journey from his castle, Gunibert entered his mistress's chamber, and ruthlessly tore from her fair hand the gage of love, the wedding-ring.

Mounting a fleet steed, he left the castle, and met the returning hero at the beginning of the valley. Producing the ring, he told him a tale of such base and calumnious defamation of his wife's virtue, that the enraged Count swore he would cut off her head.

Jutta, troubled in her mind, and uncertain what to make of Gunibert's violence, mounted the steps of the high watch-tower, overhanging a terrible abyss at the bottom of which a turbulent torrent boiled and seethed.

All of a sudden she perceived a large train of armor-clad nobles and men-at-arms, headed by her husband, riding up the steep incline leading to the gate. At the side of the latter rode brazen-faced Gunibert, evidently bent upon impressing his noble master with the truth of certain facts.

Her quick eye guessed the whole truth of the faithless retainer's revenge, and with a piercing cry she precipitated herself from the giddy height into the dark abyss at the foot of the tower. Wonderful to say, she remained hanging on a bush which none had ever noticed before, overlapping the caldron of foaming water. The Count and Gunibert, riding up to the brink of the precipice, saw her thus suspended, and the latter, stricken by the hand of God, threw himself into the water hundreds of feet below him.

Even now, more than six hundred years after this tragic event, a blue flame marks the spot where the treacherous villain was drowned. Beautiful and faithful Jutta, saved in so wonderful manner by the hand of God,

accompanied by her pious husband, who was overcome by the benevolence of his Creator, left the castle, and entered the cloister of Weingarten, in Bavaria, where they ended their days in a manner befitting this remarkable event in their lives.

The origin of the name, "Hilf mir Gott!" (God help me!), of a castle in the Münster valley, is based on a similar event. A noble lass imprisoned in the castle was one day made the object of the vile attempts of her captor. Fleeing from his arms, she mounted the steps of the tower, and when, pursued even to this point, she saw no means of escape, saved her virtue at the risk of her life by throwing herself from the giddy height.

Unharméd, and not even stunned, she reached the ground; and her pursuer, overawed by this miracle, turned from his life of sin and iniquity, and became a penitent monk in a monastery close by. "The spot is frequently visited at night by a spirit clad in white, and encircled by a halo of subdued light," added the simple rustic who narrated this legend to me.

The peasant population of the country entertains a firm belief in legends of miracles worked by supernatural powers in bygone times; and it would prove highly unsatisfactory to endeavor to make a peasant realize the stupidity and incongruity of most of these miracles.

## CHAPTER VII.

## ALPINE CHARACTERS : THE VILLAGE PRIEST.

IN much the same way in which philosophers divide the human race into two distinct categories, the wicked and the good, we can classify the fraternity of Tyrolese village priests with a view to their religious doctrines and their personal merits, under two distinct heads, the lean and the stout.

Unlike many speculations apparently less vague, we can back our theory with facts of the most convincing description.

Who, for instance, has ever heard a portly, red-faced Herr Vicar descant from the pulpit on the external tortures of hell, in the fiery, we might say thermometrically impossible flow of language that gushes from the grim, viciously compressed lips of the gaunt, Jesuit-faced Herr Cooperator, priding himself upon his terribly realistic language, that never fails to instill terror into the hearts of his audience? Who was ever inveigled to demand religious consolation at the hands of the hypocritically rigorous underling,—his bony figure, from his lantern-jawed sallow face down to the canonical shafts of his boots, wrapt in the somber folds of his Jesuitical garment,—who would care to stake his peace of mind, to jeopardize his happiness, by such a proceeding, if at the same time the jolly and benevolent Herr Vicar were at hand?

Does not his good-humored face, beaming with good fare and better wine, inspire confidence, which vanishes on the spot as we turn to examine the exterior of his assistant?

And what is more natural, also, than that the plump, somewhat plethoric frame of the portly man of God, attired in the shortest of clerical coats, — a standing eyesore of his petulant *confrères*, — his well-rounded nether limbs shrouded by the tightest pair of knee-breeches, should hold forth to the sinner desirous to free his conscience by confession, the promise of a light penance? Does not the very look of the dapper and well-proportioned plump calves whose outlines are visible through the black cotton stockings, betoken the benevolence of mind of which the hardened sinner stands so much in need?

Sins whispered into the ear of a man who has lost sight of his knees lose much of their heinousness; and absolution is far more easily obtained from a personage of well-rounded proportions, than from his spare brother, whose cold, keen, glittering eyes, hidden beneath shaggy brows, pierce into the innermost soul, while his harsh grating voice instills terror as the most terrific threats of damnation and everlasting tortures are hissed forth from the bloodless and cruel lips that have already appalled the unhappy confessor by a refusal to administer absolution.

No playing at hide-and-seek with those eyes, my poor fellow: far better for you had you borne your sins silently, than lay open your soul to the machinations of a clever but unscrupulous man who spares no threat, who fears but the God of the Roman Curia. Such men as these work ruin wherever they go. Base and worthless as are their maxims, they develop an energy and boldness of thought, incomprehensible, did we not know that they were moved by religious fanaticism that shrinks from nothing, if an end favorable to their Church is to be attained.

We must not fancy that men of this stamp form the majority. Happily there are many very worthy priests among the rank and file of the Catholic Church. We have come across not a few who are the very types of good and conscientious servants of God. They are the fathers of their villages, respected and beloved by all, ever

eager to give advice, and to render help to those who are in need of it. A man of this stamp has it in his power to work no end of good. He keeps a fatherly eye on the young generation, advancing their healthful pursuits, and curbing the hot-spirited rivalry that tends to lead them into excesses of every kind. His parishioners place the utmost confidence in him; the quarrelsome among them make him the arbitrator of their disputes, which otherwise would end in costly lawsuits and endless feuds. It is a pleasing picture to watch a veteran priest on his arduous round of duties. He brings consolation and help wherever he turns.

The very fact that he has sprung from the same stock as his peasant parishioners carries every word of fatherly advice he utters nearer to the heart. He can feel with the wretchedly clad herd, and knows the ins and outs of agricultural life; for was not his happy youth spent on his father's alps, tending the cattle and living a royal life of joyous freedom? It is true, his boyish spirits were crushed out of him by the monastic discipline in the ecclesiastic seminary in Brixen, where he passed eight weary years of religious drudgery. But unlike so many of his colleagues, who left the gloomy walls fully imbued with the doctrines of Jesuitical hypocrisy, his character, of too firm a mold to be impressed by the dangerous doctrines to which he had to lend an ear, was purified by the ordeal. He is the servant of God, and not, as the majority of his brethren are, the slave of the Roman Curia. He has the interest of his flock at heart, rather than the sordid aggrandizement of his Church.

Wretchedly paid as priests are in Tyrol, — the income of a curate averages less than fourteen pounds per annum, his lodging and food being found for him by his superior, the Vicar, — they manage to do a deal of good with the pence they contrive to lay by. Their wants are of the most modest description: a suit of clothes, a couple of pairs of strong iron-shod boots, a new vestment every two years, and a few florins for a Sunday glass of wine or for his usual evening pipe, will be all a curate in

a rural district needs. The Vicar's income is double or treble that of his assistant priest, and is materially augmented by the numerous fees which he pockets, generally for work done by his wretchedly under-paid curate.

Many are the small incomings arising from christenings, funerals, weddings, and processions to be arranged and led to distant shrines, while newly-erected châteaux call for the Church's blessing to protect them from the Evil One disguised in the shape of terrific avalanches. Drove of cattle, prior to their departure for their summer pasturages, also require — no less than their bewitched kindred, whose loud bellowing and vicious plunging at unseasonable hours betray the unhallowed presence of some supernatural power — the cleansing which is conferred by the holy-water sprinkle. There are urgent cases, both of birth and death, which require the immediate attention of the holy man, besides sudden calls to the side of some wretched woodcutter who has been fatally injured while at work up high on the mountain slopes. His last moments are full of mental anguish; for his fears that absolution, in the shape of the priest, will come too late, and that he has to perish with his sins unconfessed, do not allow him a moment of rest. Alone, and clad in his threadbare old garments, the faithful servant of God sets out on his mission of mercy. The messenger who has brought him the dire news is faint with fatigue, and has to rest in the Vicarage. With broad snow-hoops on his feet, in one hand his staff, in the other his lantern, while in a bag hung over his shoulder the sacraments are concealed, he sets out in the dead of night on his weary tramp of many hours. Be the snowstorm raging never so hard, be the narrow path blocked by huge masses of snow four and five feet in depth, he does not shrink. He knows that he is awaited with that all-absorbing anguish, that fearful doubt, "Will he come in time, or will it be all over with me?" He quickens his steps, his exertions are redoubled, to be rewarded by the consciousness of having eased a dying man's last hours, and by that one look of intense gratitude as the sick man perceives him entering



the chamber of death. There the man lies, just as he has been brought in from the scene of the accident, — a giant in build, with sinews and muscles of steel. Heart-rending it is to watch strong nature grapple with death. The lighted taper, the crucifix at his side, placed there at his own behest, tells us that hope has vanished from the stricken wife kneeling at his side bathed in tears. His comrades, rough and uncouth, but yet with big hearts beating within their coarse and tattered coats, crowd together in one of the corners of the small room. Their last service to their comrade has been accomplished: they it was who bore him down on their backs from the fatal scene. We hear only the sobbing of the sorrow-smitten woman, but the regular motion of the brawny hands of the men tells us that they are praying the rosary for the soul of their expiring friend.

The door creaks, the painful silence is broken by the "Gelobt sei Jesus Christus" ("Praised be Jesus Christ") of the priest, answered by the usual "In Ewigkeit, Amen" ("In Eternity, Amen"). He dips his fingers into the receptacle for holy water hung up near the door, and the rough men bow their heads as he makes the sign of the cross. He approaches the two benches, upon which, propped by a pillow, lies the injured man. A glance at the drawn face, at the moist forehead, at the eager look of the eye, as yet conscious and clear, tells him that he did well to hurry his steps.

He motions the assembled crowd to leave the room; and the heavily-shod men, uncouth in appearance, unaccustomed to any pace but the heaviest tramp, comply on tiptoe, followed by the sobbing women of the next cottage, who have come to comfort the poor sorrowing wife.

The eager eyes of the dying man are bent upon her who has sunk down on her knees at his bedside; the priest touches her on her shoulder, and she, poor woman, well knows the meaning: a last fond glance, a last embrace, and the bereaved wife totters out of the chamber of death.

The priest now kneels down at the side of the rough

couch, and bends low to bring his ear close to the mouth of the dying man. He lies gasping for breath, his broad strong chest crushed out of shape by that cruel trunk of the tree he had just felled: articulation was impossible from the first.

Poor fellow, not even of that last solace, to cheer his dying moments, can he partake. His glittering, restless eyes are fixed, with a look piteous to behold, on those of the priest, while his trembling fingers endeavor to hold the beads of the rosary. His look, so beseeching in its expression, is understood by the man kneeling beside him. The absolution is granted, and the last sacrament is offered, and received by the poor sufferer. He who a few minutes before was the picture of a sinner dying a hard and tortuous death, now presents the calm features of a man who has closed with life, and looks forward to death with peace of mind traced in every line of his face. The anxious fire in his eyes has expired: he closes them wearily, and sinks back on his pillow with a heavy sigh. The solemnly-intoned prayer of the priest accompanies the fleeting soul.

He rises after some time, and, assuring himself that the man is really dead, proceeds to inform the wretched wife that her husband died a penitent sinner. He opens the door, and there, crowding the narrow passage, are kneeling the dead man's comrades, devoutly praying for the salvation of his soul. It is a solemn picture; the shaggy heads, visibly betraying the rough wild life they lead, bent on the broad massive breasts, covered by naught but a shirt and a tattered coat, both open in front, displaying the hairy, mahogany-hued chest, their hands crossed over it, one holding the hat adorned with that mark of bold youth striving for championship in love and war—the feather of the blackcock—while in the other is clasped the rosary. A flickering pine-torch fixed into some chink in the wall throws a ruddy glow over the scene. The priest, standing in the doorway with the door in his hand, announces to them their comrade's death; and one by one, after making the sign of the cross, the men rise.

While the priest proceeds into the kitchen close by, where the wretched woman is sitting with her hands before her face, while her two little children, alarmed by their mother's grief, are tearing at her dress, the men re-enter the room where their dead companion is lying. One of them steps up to the couch, places his hat at the foot of it, and, after putting into it a couple of pieces of money, retires to the corner of the room without saying a word. His comrades follow his example; and each gives, not what he can spare, for that none of them could, but what his kindly heart prompts him to sacrifice at the shrine of true benevolence.

When the priest returns, followed by the widow, one of them hands the hat, containing perhaps not more than ten or twelve shillings, to her; and she receives it with expressions of deep gratitude. Small as the amount is, it is worth, in the eyes of one who metes charity-gold not by the value a sinful world bestows on it, the thousands and ten thousands of pounds which the rich man expends upon some so-called charitable purpose without ever once feeling the loss. With one of these poor fellows, a couple of florins given away means no less than depriving himself of a pair of shoes, of a new coat to take the place of the tattered old garment which has ceased to keep out the wind and the rain, or of a couple of pounds of flour and lard a week short of the usual ration.

Let us turn away from this sad picture, and follow the steps of our friend the Co-operator, as he follows the urgent call of an anxious father, to perform the *Noth Taufe* upon his newly-born babe. I must premise that the simple people of Tyrol and the neighboring mountainous countries believe that a child, as long as it is not christened, is an infidel, and, were it to die without that sacred rite, its soul would go straight down into hell. Therefore a child is generally christened the very day it is born, or at the latest the second day, — a proceeding not at all conducive to the health of the poor little being.

Very often the child has to be carried for hours in the bitterest cold, in rain and wind, to the parish church;

for children will be born even in winter, when snow blocks up all communication. In its little basket, with a coverlet insufficient to protect it, the babe is exposed to the inclemencies of the rough Alpine clime. It is only when the child is ill from the moment of its birth, and can not possibly outlive the journey, that the parents, who entertain a great horror of its dying before the holy rite can be enacted, send off a messenger in hot haste to fetch the priest, and the christening is performed at home.

In the middle of the night, in snowstorm or rain, it is all the same, Duty calls, and the unfortunate Co-operator has to leave his warm room to face the worst of weather. After a weary march of many hours, the priest finally reaches his destination; the child is taken from its little bed, where since its birth it has been lying quite neglected, to await the arrival of the priest; for in many remote districts the mother is not allowed to give the poor thing the breast, it being the belief of the superstitious people, that to nourish a heathen is an unatonable crime.

After the ceremony is duly performed by the holy man, the nurse takes the child back to its mother, handing it to her with the words, —

“A Jew we took away, and a Christian we bring back to you.”

This strange saying is very common in the eastern districts of Tyrol, but specially in the mountains of Styria.

It is by no means uninteresting to examine the various local legends as to the fate of the unfortunate infant's soul should it die unchristened.

In the Innvalley, and some of its remote branch valleys, “Berchæl” — a good spirit supposed to be Pontius Pilate's wife — fetches the children, and trains them to accompany her on her weird journeys.

In many parts of South Tyrol it is commonly thought that after their death they are carried off, and have to float betwixt heaven and earth till doomsday. In other parts, again, they are brought into the ante-chamber of the Evil One's habitation in hell.

In the western parts of the country, again, the popular belief metamorphoses them into uncanny beings inhabiting the inside of certain peaks; while the inhabitants of the Pasterzenthäl will tell you that unbaptized children will form the stock of a new set of beings, peopling a world that is to be created after the Day of Judgment.

In the Isel valley, and one or two neighboring glens, these unfortunate beings are supposed to change into angels of an *inferior* class; "for no proper spirited angel," as I was once told by an old woman, "will associate with them, they having sprung from a heathenish stock."

A diligent explorer could collect a score or more of the various local legends, every one of which will differ from the rest in some material point.

If the habitation of the peasant to whom the priest has been called to perform the rites of the "baptism in need" lies far away from the village, the priest will combine with the christening the ceremony of "aussegnen," i.e., "churking the woman." Usually this is done on the third or fourth day after the woman's confinement, and in most localities she dare not show herself in public before she has been "cleansed" by the priest's hand. Very strange customs are observed on these occasions, most of which show how deeply superstitious belief in the omnipotent powers of the Roman Catholic Church is ingrafted in the minds of the simple people.

Peasants usually name the child according to their almanac: thus if a girl is born on the day of St. Jacob, a male saint, the parents will often change the name into Jacobina, and *vice versa* Cecilia into Cecilius.

It is amazing to see what stress is laid on that quaint remnant of mediæval times, the peasant almanac, a book made on the supposition that reading is an unknown art. To a stranger, the mysterious signs printed in red and black ink, unexplained by a single word, are totally incomprehensible. Let us inquire their meaning of a friendly village priest. We hear first of all that the small black triangles are the week-days, the red ones Sundays and *fête*-days. We ask, Why are not the names of the

days given? the priest tells us, Because the peasant does not reckon according to them. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc., are names which are unknown to him. He computes time according to the numberless saints, to each one of whom a day is dedicated.

Every one of the hundred and twenty-six saints enumerated in the peasant's almanac (they are dispersed pretty equally over each of the twelve months) is represented by a small picture, about half an inch square, depicting the saint with some distinctive mark or sign, enabling a person versed in almanac lore to recognize him at a glance, and thus doing away with the names which would take up space, and which moreover could not be deciphered. We see St. Paul's Day represented by a man on horseback, stretching out his left hand, the rays of a huge sun striking him on the head. Palm Sunday is marked by a figure astride of a donkey, with a twig of a palm, larger than both beast and rider, in his right hand. St. Romedius is portrayed as a bear walking on his hind legs, and carrying with his front paws a huge barrel. St. Peter is represented by a key; St. Alexius by a ladder; St. John by a cottage, with smoke issuing from the chimney; St. Gallus by an exceedingly seedy-looking bishop; St. Timothy by a vicious dog; St. Vitus by a caldron; and St. Stephen by a sheaf of arrows.

But there are other quaint signs and mysterious marks on that strange-looking sheet of paper. The peasant is not only told when the sun and moon rise and set, but the almanac also prophesies the state of the weather. A series of strange signs is devoted to meteorology. A hand indicates cold; a mouth, wind; a pitcher means rain; a hat indicates warm weather; a wheel, sunshine; a black square, snow; an arrow, thunder; a pyramid, an overcast sky; while a cross inside of a wheel means clear weather.

Coming to the various household offices of peasant life, we find that in these matters also the almanac is the peasant's stanch friend and adviser. It tells him when to use the plow, by marking the day with the picture

of that implement ; when to sow, by a clover-leaf ; when to manure his fields, by a pitchfork ; when to cut wood, by a hatchet ; and finally it tells him when to have his hair cut, by a pair of scissors.

Besides all these enigmatical hieroglyphics, the twelve signs of the zodiac turn up every second or third day : they are of no mean importance, for the peasant stanchly believes in their influence upon the fate of his progeny. A child born in the sign of the lion must needs turn out strong and healthy. A cow calving for the first time in the sign of the twins is considered thenceforth a good breeding animal. Marriages are rarely contracted in that of the Virgin. And so on, to every one of the signs of the zodiac the peasant attaches some hidden meaning.

It is but natural that I should have come across odd characters among the countless country priests with whom I chanced to meet in the course of my wanderings. Shut out from the world, and having no intellectual intercourse whatever, they are left solely to their own resources ; for the schoolmaster, proficient as he is in instilling the A B C into the wooden heads of his scholars, is at best a sad ignoramus on all matters beyond the rudiments of reading and writing, and does not invite cultivation. The four-o'clock morning mass in summer, or the six-o'clock one in winter, once read, the rest of the long day till evening lies as a heavy drag upon the priest's hands. It is therefore not strange, that men of this caliber are apt to cultivate special hobbies of their own with ardent zeal. One man will people his modest little habitation with flocks of birds, imprisoned in cages of artistic shape made by himself ; one will roam about the mountains, on hot summer days, with a big canvas bag across his shoulder, in search of ant-hills to despoil of their contents for the delectation of his noisy flock ; or maybe one is of a mechanical turn of mind, leading him to excel in carving in wood, or, as I know in one or two instances, he will be a proficient in the art of manufacturing church-organs of primitive make. Others, again, are great in gardening : they set the boldest climbers in their villages

to get them the rarest Alpine plants, which they reset in the tidy little patches of garden in front of their modest cottages. Their colleague, again, will make the dairy and cowshed his hobby, taking no little pride in the fine herd of cattle he calls his own. He will don his frieze coat, and, maybe, wear his short leather breeches and green stockings, when he leads his herd up to the Alps, taking a tender farewell from each one of his speckled pets when duty compels him to return to his human flock far down in the valley at his feet.

A good story is told of one of these dairy priests, who, in his eagerness to visit his favorites on the distant Alps, was in the habit of putting on the village church clock for an hour, on fine summer mornings, to the bewilderment of his peasant congregation, who, of course, on these occasions, came too late for morning mass; till one day he found out that his trick had been discovered, and the tables turned upon him by his parishioners. They had posted a boy in the steeple, and when he saw the priest issuing from his house, bent upon his nefarious plans, the boy put back the clock for exactly the same time that the priest was in the habit of putting it on, and the proceeding led to a ludicrous *dénoûment*.

This man was a great cattle-fancier; and when, in the latter years of his life, he was advanced to a higher post, he used to give prizes to further cow-fighting, — a sport much in vogue fifty years ago, in which the strongest cows of rival villages were pitted against each other.

His neighbor, again, will look with contempt upon the doings of his worldly-minded colleague, and make the artistic embellishment of his church his aim in life. He will carve figures, or cut out and make up artificial flowers for shrines, with a skill and diligence truly astonishing. It is his highest ambition to adorn the whitewashed interior of his modest church, so that it may compare favorably with those of his colleagues. He will willingly sacrifice half of his quarter's income to purchase a couple of new wigs, with long flowing curls, for the two life-size statues of the Holy Virgin. He will walk his legs off to collect



a sufficient sum for a new silk bodice (these sacred images are dressed and undressed like helpless invalids, and they have different changes of apparel for holidays, according to their superlative sacredness), or for a velvet skirt looped up with sashes and paste pearls. With his own fingers, he will trim the new every-day dress of the Virgin Mary with the gold lace and the despoiled finery of her second-best raiment, which, after having done good service for ten or fifteen years, is shorn of the best part of its finery, and forthwith degraded to shroud, for the future, the limbs of some less demonstrative saint.

Other priests, of less ambitious sentiments, are enthralled by the spirit of antiquarianism. They visit their parishioners' huts, and turn over their contents from garret to cellar, and when they have completed the round they will begin afresh, and work them through over and over again. Generally they will confine themselves to pictures, and it is astonishing to see what a life-long search will manage to collect in the way of canvas coated with paint.

The collector has been at some time priest in perhaps three different villages, and in each has amassed a rich hoard, piles upon piles, of the most fearful daubs ever seen. The majority of them are "portraits" of saints, with a goodly number of pictures representing episodes in the life of the Virgin Mary, put in as a change.

Here we see her arrayed in superb finery, with strings of pearls, and a jewelled crown on her head, reminding one of our own Virgin Queen as she is depicted by her contemporaries. Her heart, painted somewhere in the region of the pit of the stomach, is of the size of a bullock's and is pierced by seven dagger-like swords, but the ghastly smile that is on her face betrays any thing but pain.

Then, again, she is portrayed attired in flowing robes, holding Jesus in her arms, surrounded by a wreath of beings supposed to represent angels, but who are far more like devils incarnate, nothing but the tails and the cloven feet being wanting to complete the likeness.

Here we find her painted as a Chinese beauty, with slit eyes, and an olive complexion. Dozens of Saint

Georges, Michaels, and Josephs, with a couple of Saint Florians, holding huge pails of molten silver (to represent water) in their hands, are stacked in one corner of the room.

The most astounding positions of the human, or rather of the saintly body, the strangest scenes in mortal life, the oddest anachronistic mistakes, are here displayed.

We turn to another pile, and come upon hell with all its horrors. The most terrific scenes of diabolical tortures curdle our blood. Here we see wretches pulled slowly to pieces by men handling huge red-hot pincers. Then we see heaps of arms, legs, noses and ears, as a sort of background to a scene depicting the process of boiling some miserable creatures in caldrons of molten lead. There we see women pinned down to the ground, being maimed and tortured in the most diabolical manner by a set of grinning wretches.

Whatever be the faults of these pictures, they certainly betray an amazing power of imagination on the part of the artists.

The house is filled from top to bottom, and woe to you if you have been inveigled into the remark that you are somewhat of a connoisseur in paintings! The happy cener will show you Rembrants, Raphaels, Dürers, in fact, masterpieces of all the great masters of the last three or four centuries.

"This picture," he will tell you, "I got from a peasant for christening his baby son;" "That there, in part payment of the marriage-fee of a young fellow who had inherited it from his grandfather," and so on. Every picture has a name and a history of its own.

Now and again you pitch upon a passable daub, and ten years ago genuine works of great masters could be found among these accumulations of rubbish. We know of three instances where masterpieces were bought or exchanged from collecting priests, who, ignorant of their value, gave them away for an old song.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One was a Holbein of great beauty, the second an Albrecht Dürer, and the third a masterpiece of Martin Schon.

Not every priest, however, has the means to cultivate a hobby, be it never so economical a one. Some are so poor that they have scarce enough to provide a decent coat for their backs and a stout pair of boots for their feet. The parish is excessively poor, and probably hid away in the recesses of the Alps, four or five thousand feet above the level of the sea.

Here it is that the good qualities of the lonely curate appear to advantage. I once got to know a man of this stamp. The village, or rather the hamlet, in which he resided, was even too poor to keep an inn going. A barrel or so per annum of beer or sour wine sufficed for the wants of the wretchedly reduced inhabitants. My friend set up shop as innkeeper, laying in a barrel of wine and one of schnapps. I remember well the amazement of another friend, in whose company I visited the village, to find that the good-humored burly host, who attended us in his shirt-sleeves and short leather breeches and green stockings, was no other than the village priest.

Intending to start at an early hour on the morrow, we informed the reverend host that, if it were possible, we would like to have our breakfast at three or half-past three the next morning.

Our host eyed us for a minute or two in a doubtful sort of way, and then informed us that either we should have to start an hour later, and attend the four-o'clock mass, or we could leave at any time we chose, without our breakfast.

"It would be a sin to eat breakfast before mass," said he, and thus he really compelled us to earn our breakfast by attending service.

The ceremony over, and the vestment exchanged for the simpler raiment he had worn the night before, our host placed our breakfast before us, and when, after paying our bill, which for both our suppers and breakfasts and our room came to a sum total of less than ninety kreutzers (about one and ninepence), we took our departure, our host volunteered to show us the path as far as the height of the pass. Before we parted from our

good-natured guide, he showed us the interior of a way-side shrine built on this elevated point. Within the chapel there was a table, and upon it lay a pile of sacred pictures painted in gaudy colors. A board over it informed pious passers-by, that by putting a kreutzer (farthing) into the poor-box, they became entitled to take a paint. Our guide informed us, with evident pride, that there had never been one stolen, as long as he remembered.

Some change from their arduous round of duty is afforded to priests by processions which they have to lead to distant shrines, when any disaster in the shape of rain, droughts, avalanches, or other elementary danger, threatens to overtake their villages. Very ludicrous incidents frequently occur at these sacred meetings. There are, for instance, certain shrines renowned for their qualities as weather shrines; i.e., that any prayer for rain or for dry weather is, if properly inaugurated by munificent sacrifices, sure to be heard by the deity having command over these two branches of heavenly rule.

Not very many years ago, two processions from different parts of the country met at one of these charmed spots. The members of the one prayed for a cessation of a prolonged drought: the other implored the deity to put a speedy stop to flooding rains that were threatening to devastate their fields. During daytime every thing went well, each party believing that the other had come for the same object as they themselves had. As both processions numbered many hundreds of pilgrims, the inns in the place were crowded, numbers of both parties being crammed into one and the same house. A chance word betrayed the secret, and within a few minutes the whole village was metamorphosed into a battle-field. Each party exerted their utmost to drive their foes out of the place, so as to be in undisputed possession of the church, wherein to call down the intervention of the Virgin and her host of omnipotent saints. The battle was a furious one, and was fought with the rage and ferocity of people threatened with the loss of their all in case of defeat.

When, finally, the "drought" men succeeded in routing their antagonists, they had to lament not a few of their companions.

Processions will be undertaken for a variety of purposes. The murrain breaking out among cattle will send off the peasant owners in a stately procession to a "cattle" shrine, distant many weary hours, if not days, from their homes. If you ask a man why he does not honor the renowned shrine close by his home with his visit, he will tell you that you are a heathen not to know that the shrine of the Virgin Mary at Absane is for womankind desirous of obtaining offspring, and not for cattle. "And where are you going?" you will ask. "Why, to St. Leonhardt's, of course, the regular shrine of the saintly protector of 'grown cattle and horses.'" Calves, heifers, and pigs being excluded from St. Leonhardt's patronage, the hapless owner of these latter animals has to wander off to another shrine specially dedicated to small fry.

I once asked a peasant toiling along an Alpine path in the Unterinntal, not far from the renowned chapel of St. Leonhardt, where he was going. "To St. Leonhardt," he replied; and on being asked why he went, he told me that several of his flock were sick, and that three had been killed the week before by an avalanche. I expressed my commiseration, adding that as long as no human lives were lost the damages were reparable.

"Ah!" said the peasant, "the cowherd was killed too; but he is in heaven probably, for he had been down to the village the day before for confession."

In many places, strange customs peculiar to the locality form a sort of by-play. Thus, at Lienz, the usual Palm Sunday procession is rendered a striking sight by a man, representing our Saviour, leading the procession, seated on a donkey, with his face towards the tail.

Agriculture plays a very conspicuous rôle in religious outdoor ceremonies. Thus the crops are "roused" regularly every March by the village priest, by a formal ceremony; or, again, a bundle of straw called the

“Egerthansel,” supposed to represent “Winter,” is buried in the beginning of April. What different meanings are attributed to the very same custom in different localities, is evinced by the fact that in other valleys this self-same “Egerthansel” is a source of great fun to the youths of the villages, it being the custom to “hang him up” in front of the door of the lass who is known to be on the lookout for a husband.

It must not be supposed that the villagers are indifferent to the merits of their priest. On the contrary, his resources and abilities are a matter of vast importance to them. They are subject to constant criticism; and his sermons, vociferous and unintelligible as they often are, find an exemplary audience, provided they are of a character sufficiently realistic to please rural intellects rendered somewhat dense by a strong admixture of bigotry.

You will often hear priests praised by their parishioners for special qualifications. Thus one priest will enjoy the repute of possessing in a pre-eminent degree the gift of subduing evil spirits. No supernatural machination can withstand his potent exorcising formularies. Human beings, no less than cattle, are instantly freed from their uncanny tormentors, as soon as their black-coated adversary, wielding the holy-water sprinkle in his right hand, puts in his appearance. His colleague in the next village, maybe, is a bad hand at this kind of work, and naturally his villagers do not shrink from calling in the services of his talented brother priest when occasion requires; but then, again, there is none like their own priest, near and far, for knowledge of efficacious “Wettersegen,” — “thunderstorm blessings.” Fields that have once been blessed by him have never been known to be ravaged by hailstorms, while those whose owners have neglected to call in his services are laid waste by those elementary disasters. Very like certain church-bells that enjoy a high repute as “Wetterglocken” (storm-bells), throughout the country, his fame will spread, to the advantage of his larder and slender purse. Naturally, each village desires to possess “the best man,” and there is often a good deal

of rivalry brought into play. In one of the small branch valleys of the Pastershal, two villages are situated opposite each other, but separated by a deep ravine at the bottom of which flows a torrent. Not many years ago, in one village a young priest had but recently established himself, while in the other reigned supreme a veteran Co-operator, well known to prefer the cellar to the vestry. One unlucky August day, a severe thunderstorm was seen to approach; and, as in duty bound, both priests repaired to their churches, while the schoolmasters, turning loose their noisy flocks, began to toll the church-bells, as usual on such occasions. Our young friend, as his parishioners brought forth as exculpating circumstances, "had not yet had time to learn his craft," and failed to avert by his prayers the danger that threatened their fields. The full force of a terrible hailstorm swept over the village, destroying the crops, while, strange to say, not a blade of grass was damaged on the other side of the valley appertaining to the parish of the portly old "Co-operator." The great rejoicings on the part of the exulting peasantry whose fields and crops had passed unscathed through the ordeal naturally did not help to remove the sting from the wound of their unfortunate neighbors, though the latter, good-natured as the peasantry generally are, were careful not to pain their unlucky novice by recriminations. Unfortunately, however, his ambitious character would not permit the slur of incapacity to rest upon him; and so, after mass the subsequent Sunday, he launched forth in bitter invectives against his elder colleague. "It was he," said he, "who, by dint of dark practices, had charmed the hailstorm over to our side of the valley; it was he who, in his forgetfulness of the doctrines of God, had caused our fields and crops to be ravaged. Are not my prayers as good as his? and how was it possible, that in spite of them God's punishment overtook us, and not them also?"

These perorations did not fail to go straight to the hearts of his congregation, and created the most unneighborly ill-feeling, not only towards the object of their

priest's wrath, but towards his whole parish. Dire quarrels and sanguinary fights were the immediate result, and finally compelled the Chapter of Brixen, in whose diocese the villages lay, to remove not only the source of all this mischief, but also his elder and innocent rival.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## ALPINE CHARACTERS: THE VILLAGE SCHOOLMASTER.

FOR brevity's sake, I head this chapter with but one of the numerous titles of our friend the village pedagogue. But I hasten to repair the gross injustice, by telling my readers that in his dignified person are coalesced all those parochial and social offices that with us are severally represented by the beadle, the sexton, the verger, the pew-opener, the bell-ringer, the chatty village scribe, the cane-wielding schoolmaster, and, as we shall presently see, by a host of various other village characters.

What an imperfect account of this strange being is it possible to give in these pages!

There is certainly no position in life, in which a man endowed with a variety of talents could find a wider field for his activity. A schoolmaster in a Tyrolese village has emphatically to be "good all round," as a Yankee would express it. His personal address, which would be the first to suffer by the heterogeneous nature of his duties, is happily kept well up to the mark by the laziness of the pompous, over-fed Vicar, no less than by his Curate, the slim hard-worked Co-operator, who both confide in their conscientious coadjutor.

It is impossible to imagine a village deprived of this its chief man. Would not the church organ fall to pieces from mere inactivity, were it not for the schoolmaster's talented touch? The church choir would be a still-born institution, but for our friend's knack of organization—and boundless patience. Fancy the churchyard without

the artist's brush, or imagine a votive tablet painted by other hands than those of the village pedagogue. The old Gamps of the neighborhood would be inevitably driven to distraction, had they not in our hero a friend in need, well versed in all matters connected with witchcraft and sorcery. The horse lamed would assuredly perish, were it not that the village possessed in its most valued inhabitant, an amateur farrier. Pots and numberless stockings full of money are saved by the skillful manner in which our friend performs his part as arbitrator of all village quarrels. Again, picture to yourself a peasant anxious to petition, most humbly of course, the mighty magistrate in the distant town. What would he do, in the name of all that's just, had he not the schoolmaster at his elbow to write out that important document, until it should require but his rude mark as signature?

"Modesty graces the stupid," some clever man is reported to have said; but does it not grace cleverness far more? That modesty is one of the cardinal virtues of a schoolmaster, is proved by the following incident which occurred to me a year or two ago, while on a pedestrian tour with a German professor. On the eve of the last day of our excursion among the mountains, we reached a small Alpine village, where my friend, who had not indulged in a shave since departing from home, inquired if there was anybody in the village who could handle a razor.

"Oh, yes, the schoolmaster shaves!" we learned from the host of the little inn.

Presently we found the schoolhouse, and, walking in, unwittingly disturbed the village worthy in the middle of his discourse to a crowded audience of ruddy-faced, blue-eyed and curly-headed urchins of a remarkably robust cast. My friend, wishing to wait till school was over, beat a hasty retreat. Our schoolmaster, however, being of a different opinion, rushed out, and, on hearing the stranger's request, begged him to "step up the ladder to his study." The Professor's scruples about disturbing the studies of the young students were quieted by the

man's remark, not to "mind the brats," they being accustomed to wait often for an hour or two at a time, while he was away in church attending to his duties as vergers and bell-ringer, or while accompanying the priest to a sick bed with the holy sacrament.

The Professor opened his eyes, for in reality he had but a very superficial acquaintance with the numerous duties of his Tyrolese colleagues.

The schoolmaster, having shaved him, was made supremely happy by a fourpenny-bit (twenty kreuzen) about treble the amount he had asked. The man's heart opened towards the free-handed stranger, and he boldly asked him the "what's and where's" of his residence and profession. Our friend informed him with a smile on his face that they were "fellow-workers."

"And does every one of your customers pay fourpence for shaving?" was his next question, "for then I can understand how you can travel for amusement, and wear gold spectacles and a gold ring."

"No, my friend, you are mistaken: I teach the young as you do," replied the thunderstruck Professor.

"Ah, yes! that's right well possible, for of course you've got to teach your apprentices. That's quite something else than driving the A B C into dull heads, as I have to do."

Finally we got him to understand that the Professor was his colleague in "t'other things." His astonishment was boundless on hearing that a schoolmaster stood before him. "But to give fourpence for a shave," *that* was evidently beyond his horizon. The gold spectacles might be sham, likewise the ring; but the fourpence, they were genuine coins of the realm, and no mistake about them.

We parted the best friends, deeply regretting to leave a neighborhood where barbers were better men than professors.

Men like this original are not to be found everywhere; but I am not very far wrong in saying that the majority of rural Tyrolese schoolmasters are characters in their way. I have found but few whose dealings and thoughts

are not out of the common, or whose individualities are not worth a passing scrutiny.

Would the reader mind being introduced to a *confrère* of the barber? It is true, he is a superior kind of man, not given to making strange mistakes, and therefore his acquaintance will prove less amusing than that of the former; but nevertheless his simple tale will perhaps awake some little interest. Our friend's name is Georg S——, and he is a schoolmaster in one of the most considerable villages in the Passeir valley.

While most villages in their relation to the village tyrant — the schoolmaster — share the fate of the hapless husband in the Scotch saying, "Every man can guide an ill wife weel, but him that has her," our hero makes a brilliant exception. He is beloved by the children, looked up to by their parents, and prized beyond measure by the parochial dignitaries, and by his superiors, the Vicar and the Co-operator.

Georg's predecessor, after a weary spell of more than half a century's cane-wielding and knuckle-rapping, evinced, one fine autumn day, a sad lack of proper feeling and compliance to custom and rule, by departing very suddenly from the scene of his protracted activity among his fellow-beings, — he died.

Unaccustomed to such a flagrant want of decorum, the village authorities were placed in a sad fix. They had not foreseen the possibility of such an event, imagining, very probably, that when once a man had proved to possess a constitution akin to that of Methuselah, there was no earthly cause for making their minds uneasy by speculations on the question of a successor.

Months went by, and, to the great joy of the village children, the post remained vacant. Eight pounds a year for salary was evidently losing, in the dear times, its alluring charms; for, to the untold perplexity of the authorities, no application for the enviable post reached them.

The burgomaster and councilors put their heads together, scratched them very vigorously, and finally decided, after a deal of squabbling, to raise the salary to

ninety-five florins (£9. 10s.) This was an unheard-of piece of liberality on the part of the authorities, for no people shrink more from outstepping bounds drawn by their fathers and grandfathers than your genuine Tyrolese peasants.

“My ancestors did so and so, and spent so and so much for this or that purpose, and I’ll do the like,” is the invariable answer to any proposition entailing any innovation.

To swerve from a time-honored practice, be it ever so ill-adapted to meet the demands of civilization, be it ever so disadvantageous to their interest, is contrary to the nature of the more remote Tyrolese: they stick to it with a strange persistency bordering on pig-headedness, unaccountable in the character of a people by no means inactive or stupid. “Their ancestors, their grandfathers, and their fathers tolled the house-bell when a thunder-storm was approaching, to ward off the lightning, and they’ll do it too: it does no harm, at any rate, and one can’t tell if it may not do good.”

In vain you argue that it does no good whatever, but on the contrary it may do a great deal of mischief. An incredulous smile will be the answer.

We can fancy, therefore, what a sacrifice of feeling it must have cost these venerable village dignitaries to exceed the sum their fathers and grandfathers had for time out of memory expended upon the education of their offspring.

But there was no help for it. A schoolmaster, or, what was far more necessary, a sexton and proper bell-ringer, they must have.

“Why, only last Sunday,” remarked one of the councilors, “that rascal of a cobbler’s apprentice” (on whom the office of ringing the church-bells had been delegated at the death of the schoolmaster) “brought the whole village to church fully an hour and a half too early. It was just gone four in the morning when the third bell rang, and I hurried to church, wondering all the way how it came that I had overslept myself.”

Five months later, our friend Georg had taken possession of the cottage close to the church, containing the large schoolroom on the ground-floor, and two little rooms and a kitchen overhead for him and his sister. The latter, a pattern of a prim old maid, was well versed in household matters, having been thoroughly drilled as housekeeper and cook in that best of schools, a vicarage in a wretchedly poor parish. For her the cottage afforded ample room, but not so for her artist brother and his atelier, without which he could not exist.

An expenditure of some ten or twelve florins — a very considerable sum for Georg, for hitherto he had schoolmastered for eight pounds a year — finally enabled him to convert a sort of garret into an airy and roomy studio.

In peace and content did this couple pass their days in their modest habitation, the brother busy from half-past three o'clock in the morning — for at a quarter to four the early mass had to be rung in — till a late hour in the evening; the sister keeping house for him, and attending to the urgent calls for her services as medicine-woman for man and beast. Her fame as such spread near and far. For every ailment of body and mind, her solace, her simple but efficacious remedies, were eagerly sought. She was the Good Samaritan of the village.

Her weary journeys up to the distant chalet in the depth of winter; her indefatigable nursing of some sick child, or of the poor suffering peasant severely injured by an accident while out on the mountains; or her sage advice to a bewildered neighbor on the treatment of his cattle, who, by their loud bellowing and strange antics, were betraying sure signs of being bewitched, — these, and a host of similar traits of a humane heart, had gained her the love of the whole village.

By the time we make the acquaintance of the couple, they had resided for upwards of twenty years in the village. Both were old and gray-haired, and both had that quiet smile, the unobtrusive manners, the same kindly eyes, which gained my good-will the first time I entered the neat, trimly-kept cottage, in my character of an eager *bric-à-brac* hunter.

In the evening, after an arduous day's work, foraging about in peasants' houses pointed out by Georg as the most likely ones to contain that of which I was in search, I repaired to the village inn. While Georg, whom I had invited to join in a chat and glass of wine, was absent ringing the evening bells, I put some questions relating to Georg to the garrulous old host.

"Ah! we've got a treasure in that couple: there's none near and far to equal them. Georg gained our hearts the first month he came here, by putting us again on an equal footing with the rest of the *Passeierer* villages."

"On an equal footing?" we inquire.

"Yes," replied our informant. "You know," he continued, "we are a poor and primitive people. Many of us have hardly enough to find bread and clothing for our own. The pastures on the Alps are by no means rich, the soil in the valley is exceedingly poor, and our sons and daughters leave their parents, to gain their livelihood by some trade or other, at the very time their hands are most wanted at home. It is a poor valley, but still all of us take a great pride in our churches. We spend on them and their endowment a deal of money, more, perhaps, than we can afford. The inhabitants of the several villages in our valley rival with each other in the fitting out of the sacred edifices, as well as in the gorgeous equipment of our religious processions, which are held at certain periods of the year. Well, the village churches in B—— and in St. L——," naming two neighboring parishes, "set up some twenty years ago a 'Holy Dove' and an 'Ascension of Christ.'"

In answer to my query what that meant, I was informed that the former is an imitation dove, made of feathers and pasteboard, representing the symbol of the Holy Ghost. On Whit-Sunday it is let down, by means of cords, from an opening in the ceiling of the church, while the priests chant the "*Deo Gratia*," and the congregation are on their knees, gazing upwards, and intently watching the holy emblem slowly descending, and then, when nearly touching their heads, rising again, circling

upwards, till finally it disappears through the opening in the arch.

“You can not imagine,” my informant continued, “how devoutly the people watch this religious performance, and indeed it is a grand sight, and one that does one good. The solemn tones of the priest as he chants his prayers, the deep hush that lies over the multitude, the full tones of the organ breaking in now and again, the thin wreaths of incense rising on both sides of the altar, the tinkling of the tiny little silver bells in the hands of the acolytes,—all these unite in producing a vivid impression upon the mind.”

“And what is the Ascension of Christ?” I ask, curious to hear what that meant.

“It’s something very similar. Instead of the dove, it’s the life-size figure of Christ, which on Ascension Day is raised by cords from the altar,<sup>1</sup> amid the devout prayers of the congregation, the burning of incense, and blessings pronounced by the priest, arrayed in the gorgeous vestments they wear on that day.”

I remembered having heard of this before, in connection with a somewhat startling event that occurred years ago in a church at Hall.

The cords by which “Christ” was to be pulled up were old and worn; and one Ascension Day they broke, and the life-size figure of our Saviour came tumbling down, smashing all the appurtenances on the decorated altar. The whole ceremony would have been spoiled, and the pious congregation—numbers of which had wandered many a weary mile in order to witness the renowned ceremony—would have been deprived of the show, had not some person or other connected with the church (undoubtedly he had the blood of a schoolmaster in him, if he was not one himself) pitched upon a happy remedy, with a presence of mind and ingenuity worthy of a higher reward than the mere praise of the Vicar.

<sup>1</sup> In other places, again, the figure of Christ is placed in a shrine in the center aisle, and from thence is drawn up to the opening in the arch used on Whit-Sunday for the “Holy Ghost.”



A large mason's bucket being fetched, the handle tied to a cord, was let down from the hole at the top, and the fragments of the figure representing Christ, such as head, legs, and arms, crammed into the pail.

The "Te Deo Profundi" was recommenced; and amid the chimes of the silver bells, the chanting of the choir, and the full sounds of the organ, the "Ascension" was performed, with the shattered pieces of Christ's figure stowed away in the tub.

"Georg," continued our talkative old host, "seeing that the absence of these two pious frauds was having a decidedly bad effect upon the minds of his fellow-parishioners, determined that the church should possess not only a Holy Dove, but also an Ascension, and in the course of the next fortnight had himself succeeded in constructing the emblem of peace, and wheedling a life-size figure of Christ out of a peasant carver. The next Whit-Sunday the congregation were pleasantly surprised by the welcome sight of the 'Holy Ghost' descending upon them, an occurrence putting them again on an equal footing with their rivals; and from that day Georg's reputation and position were secure."

The conversation with mine host was interrupted by the entrance of Georg himself, who, after his usual greeting, "*Gelobt sei Jesus*," sat down with us, and helped himself to the wine placed before him.

We were soon in deep conversation. Many an interesting incident and quaint passage in his life I gleaned from him. Eager to please the wanderer who seemingly took so lively an interest in the affairs of the poor little village, he naturally, and in the most touching manner, betrayed the desire to exhibit its brightest sides.

His heart was wrapped up in the limited sphere of his activity, and his greatest pleasure was to improve the lot of his fellow-villagers, and to amend the prospects of the community as a whole.

"Ah!" he would exclaim, "were we not so wretchedly poor, a great deal could be done. The ground could be made more productive, were the young not obliged to

leave their homes, and then the children could remain longer at school. What is four months of school in the year for a child, and that only at an age rarely exceeding thirteen? At fourteen they must begin work for themselves, and most likely remain on their father's Alps the livelong summer, where the rudiments of reading and writing, which they had acquired the preceding years, are speedily replaced by more profitable knowledge of milking, churning, and cheesemaking. A comparatively very small sum of money would suffice to better the breed of cattle, to drive new ideas into the thick heads of the inhabitants, and to introduce new trades, as other valleys have."

With these and other subjects our evening passed away very pleasantly; and the next morning I paid his modest dwelling a visit, and was honored with an invitation to inspect his "painting-room," as he termed his atelier at the top of the cottage.

I had been in many a village schoolmaster's "study" before, but in none did it look so tidy and clean. On one side of the wall were ranged, side by side, some twenty or thirty small studies of male and female heads, some of which betrayed a certain talent, though of course the work was rough in the extreme. On the other side of the room were piles of iron crosses such as are placed on the tombs. Over them was a shelf laden with various wax figures, each about three or four inches high, representing, besides men, women, and children, every imaginable limb and organ of the human body. They were for votive offerings to the Virgin Mary, or to some other favorite saint, in acknowledgment of blessings besought from them. The poor woodcutter, who has injured his leg desperately with his ax, on being cured, forthwith purchases a wax leg, and hangs it up at the shrine of the saint whose blessed services he besought in the hour of despair and sickness. This is the very least he will do; others go a greater length in demonstrating their gratitude to Heaven for a miraculous cure. An instance of this came under my notice a short time ago. A huntsman

had been shot by a poacher, and left for dead in the mountains. Two days after receiving his wound, he was accidentally discovered ; too late, however, to save his leg. It had to be amputated, and the sufferer ordered the limb to be buried close to the spot where he had been wounded. When he was cured, he himself presented a votive tablet, and set it up over his leg's grave, and whenever he passed he never failed to sprinkle holy water over it, which he carried with him in a bottle for that purpose.

The mother whose babe recovered from a severe illness, by the help of the Virgin and of her patron saint, spends a part of her savings in the purchase of a wax representation of a baby in swaddling-clothes, and, tying a bright blue ribbon round its neck, hangs it up at the altar of her patron saint.

The poor cripple whose sufferings are at length, after being endured for months or years, relieved by judicious medical treatment, remembers in his gratitude, first of all, the supernatural powers that favored his recovery, and hangs a couple of miniature crutches, or a leg of wax, on one of the walls in his village chapel. Not till afterwards does he recollect the services of the country Æsculap.

With eyes, ears, and all other distinct organs or members of the human body, it is the same way, and many a chapel's interior is more like an anatomical museum than a place of worship. Hearts, we need hardly tell our fair readers, preponderate. In many districts the sex of the one offered can be distinguished at the first glance, the male ones being of red wax, while those of females are of white.

A certain degree of superstition is at the bottom of all votive gifts ; a far greater degree, however, is perceptible in another form of votive offerings, for, not in a few chapels hang, cheek by jowl with hearts, legs, arms, and eyes, toads shaped of wax. Now, the toad is undoubtedly one of the few animals in creation which are universally considered unclean. Our Tyrolese goes farther: he invests it with certain powers of witchcraft and sorcery, inasmuch as all witches and sorceresses are, according to

his belief, turned at their death into toads. It is therefore all the more singular, that this highly suspicious animal should find a place in the sacred precincts of a chapel. The reason is, that the offering of a waxen toad is the sure sign that the person offering it has been the victim of witchcraft, and that his fears, prayers, and the promises of a sacrifice in the shape of a votive gift, were the effectual means of bringing about his delivery.

There are many ways in which a person can become the victim of these uncanny tormentors. Cattle will evince strange signs of brute sagacity, or, by loud bellowing, betray tokens of some unholy spirit's presence, or their milk, after a few hours, will turn sour. Children, specially babies in their cradles, are liable to be "charmed by the evil eye," an event making itself known by long spells of crying and squalling, and by a strange restlessness.

The far commoner circumstances connected with the offering of toads are, however, the non-appearance of heirs to increase the wedded happiness of some young couple or other. What else can possibly cause this sad disappointment of the would-be parents' hopes and desires, but the spiteful "charm" exercised by some witch who for unknown reasons bears them a grudge? They pray devoutly, and perform penance; and, if their means allow it, they will undertake a pilgrimage to the shrine of the Virgin Mary, at Absam,<sup>1</sup> a place of pilgrimage specially favored by persons anxious to be rendered happy by an increase of family. The occurrence of the happy event, the fulfillment of their wish, is followed either by the presentation of a waxen baby in swaddling-clothes, or, if the parents ascribe the delay to supernatural causes, by presenting a toad to the next shrine.

Were we to do justice to all these quaint offerings, many a page could be filled. Let us glance at a few others. A considerable number represent cattle,—cows, with or without calves at their sides, bullocks with huge

<sup>1</sup> A village near Hall, in the Unterinntal.

horns, sheep, goats, and pigs. I once happened to be ensconced behind a pillar in a small chapel in a remote valley, occupied with sketching the altar. At first nobody was in the chapel; but presently there entered a buxom lass of some nineteen or twenty years, whose ruddy color betokened a long stay on the exposed pasturages of the Alps. Not observing me in the corner, she advanced to the railings in front of the altar, and knelt down to pray. Imagining she was alone, she prayed aloud, so that I could hear every word of her simple outpourings. It was really touching, to hear the simple maiden express her gratitude to her patroness, the Virgin Mary, for conceding to her the boon she had besought of her. While tending her cattle in the solitude of the Alps, a cow had slipped down a slope, and had broken her leg. Naught but a miracle worked by the Virgin Mary could save the life of the cow, and the maiden from the disgrace which this untoward event would cast upon her.

In her extremity she resolved to implore the intercession of her benign patroness, and vow to pray a certain number of "rosaries," and also to offer a waxen cow at her shrine, if the animal should recover from her injuries. She remained constantly at the side of the injured beast, bathing the wounded limb with a decoction of certain herbs, and, wonderful to say, at the end of a week the beast could rise, and in a fortnight was able to move about as usual. Now that autumn and snow had set in, she had returned from her exposed summer abode; and, when the animal had long been restored to her, hastened, the very day she descended with her flock from the Alps, to the distant chapel, to fulfill her vow. More than two hours she remains on her knees; and then, rising to her feet, and pulling a neatly-folded handkerchief from her pocket, discloses the waxen effigy of a cow, some three inches in height. A ribbon is tied round the body, and the offering is hung on a nail at the side of the altar.

But what is that strange-looking box, somewhat resembling a large cigar-box, nailed to the wall near the altar?

Let us examine it. We find that it contains about a hundred squares of cardboard, each having a number on it. It is a "soul's lottery," and used by penitent sinners after confession. They draw one of the squares from the box, and have to pray so many prayers as are indicated by the number on the ticket. As they run from one to ninety, and as to pray a rosary is an affair of half an hour, a sinner who has not luck on his side may be condemned to a forty-eight or forty-nine hours' prayer.

But to return to the studio of our friend. Georg was the purveyor to the village, not only of these wax effigies, but also, as we have heard, of crosses for the tombs. More important perhaps than these two articles, were the huge wax candles sold by him to devout and penitent sinners. Throughout all Roman Catholic countries, it is a wide-spread custom to offer up candles for the salvation of one's soul.

There are different ways and means of encompassing this favorable end; the most original, and decidedly the safest at the end, was that of a certain old woman in Brixen, who, after buying three pound wax candles, lighted two before the shrine of the Virgin Mary, and reserved the third for a large statue of St. George, with his customary footstool in the shape of a huge dragon. She stuck the sacred taper, after lighting it carefully, right on the end of the fierce demon's tail, and then retired to her pew to pray. The verger, on entering the church half an hour later, was not a little astonished to find St. George's dragon lighted up in this unusual manner. As he was about to remove the candle, the old woman rushed out of her pew, and told him to let it be.

"For," said she, "I have given two candles to the Virgin, and this one I mean to offer to the Evil One, who, I take it, is meant to be represented by that brute."

The verger, thunderstruck at this piece of sacrilegious profanity, remonstrated with her, but it was futile.

"One can't know, after all, where one comes to after death. Maybe this candle will save me no end of hellish tortures; at all events, it's best to have friends in both places," was her answer, and she stuck to it.

Many a schoolmaster whose lot has been cast in a good neighborhood, which means one containing a goodly number of devout and penitent sinners, or a lack of marriageable swains, turns many a dishonest penny by defrauding the devout of half or a third of each candle burnt by them at the shrine of their saints.

At shrines visited by large numbers of pilgrims, the item of wax is an exceedingly profitable one, both for the seller of the commodity and for those who make it their trade to pilfer half-burnt candles from the altar during the night.

Our friend Georg is not one of these. He lets every soul have its due in the way of salvation called down by the sacrifice of candles. "Hell is hot enough for them, poor things!"

We have not yet finished our examination of the studio. In the center of the room stood a painter's easel, and in front of it a block of wood for a chair. Here Georg passed, as he tells us, the happiest hours of his life. It was odd to hear the old fellow dilate upon the mysteries of the painter's craft. He who had never had the slightest tuition of any kind, who had not even seen a painter at work, spoke of foreground and background, light and shade, foliage and rock-work, with the confidence of an accomplished artist.

While we were turning over the leaves of an old design-book of his, an old woman entered the chamber. Georg, who knew her, of course began chatting with her.

We soon learned that the old dame had lost her son the previous winter: he had been crushed by a tree which he was about to slide down the precipitous slopes of the adjacent mountain. The woman had come to order a votive tablet to be painted and put up on the spot where the accident had occurred.

It was odd to hear the artist inquire of his customer how she wished him to "paint" Franze. Was he to lie, or to stand upright, or to kneel? did she wish the figure to be large, or small? was he to paint "blood," or did she, perhaps, wish to have a portrait only?

Oh, no ! she wanted the accident to be depicted just as it happened, and as regards the likeness it did not matter. And glancing along the several rows of "study heads" ranged along the wall, she pointed to one, and said that face there pleased her ; and though the youth depicted had black hair and black eyes, and her "Franze" was blonde, it did not matter ! It was the only head there that was as handsome as "Franze," and that lay next the fond mother's heart.

The next thing to be settled was the inscription beneath the picture. It took a long time to compose one that pleased the old lady.

One was too short, the other did not speak in sufficiently meritorious terms of her son's virtues ; the third was quite a mistake, for in it was not mentioned that "Franze" had, fortunately, been to confession the Sunday previous to the accident, and that therefore it was probable that he had died without a sin unconfessed and unabsolved on his conscience.

All this had to be put forth with due *impressement* in the inscription.

"And underneath, schoolmaster," the old lady ended, "you must paint the tortures of hell ; but make them as horrible as you possibly can, for then wanderers who pass will be reminded of the terrible fate that awaits the sinner, and will pray a "Vater unser" or two for the salvation of my 'Franze's' soul."

The price of this work of art was moderate in the extreme, being less than three shillings.

In three days the woman was to fetch the tablet.

When she had left, I turned the conversation to this subject, being anxious to hear some more particulars regarding it. I had often been struck by the circumstance, that not infrequently votive tablets are placed in the church, and not on the spot where the accident itself had occurred. I inquired the reason ; and he told me that generally it was done when the relatives of the person who had been killed deemed it likely that he had died with a sin on his conscience.



“You know,” he said, “were the tablet to be placed in the out-of-the-way place where the accident had occurred, it would seldom chance that anybody passed, and thus very few prayers for the redemption of the victim’s soul would be prayed. If the picture, on the contrary, hangs in the church, it is seen by many who are willing, at a cost of praying a rosary or two, to lighten the wretched sinner’s tortures in hell.”

The schoolmaster’s brush is likewise called into requisition on other occasions, to depict scenes in domestic life.

Thus the peasant who has passed the better part of his married life in constant warfare with his wife will, when finally some happy contingency has ended this feud of long standing, order a votive picture to be painted. He need but give the artist the cue “domestic quarrel,” and the latter knows what to do.

He will paint a small altar, on the right side of which kneels the penitent husband, on the other the wife, both in the attitude of prayer, with their rosaries in their hands. Underneath will be written the names and date, and a verse, commonly hinting at the cause of the conjugal dispute. Here are one or two, copied at random from votive tablets in Unterinnthal chapels:—

“Accept this little offering  
From hearts penitent and pure,  
And screen us, while our sins forgiving,  
At night and day from friends.”

The second one runs:—

“Thanks be to you, O Heavenly Mary,  
For hearing our prayers, and joining two hearts  
That now are one, but had been twain,  
By giving us a son.”

The artist has completed his work to the satisfaction of his patron, and after receiving his fee, amounting perhaps to a shilling or eighteen pence, he accompanies the reunited couple next Sunday to the chapel destined to be

adorned by his work of art. A nail is fixed into the wall ; and while husband and wife are kneeling at the altar, the picture is hung up side by side with dozens of others of like import.

There is another contingency in home life that frequently calls for the artist's faithful brush. I have already referred to it when speaking of wax votive offerings ; it is the fulfillment of the long-prayed-for " happy event."

The pictures depicting these pleasurable occurrences of married life might well be termed family pictures, though, of course, their place is on the sacred walls of the chapel, and not, as the subject would indicate, on those of the peasant's best room.

Examining the work of art, we see a woman lying in bed, on each side of which kneel the male and female relations in attitudes of prayer. Over the bed, floating in the air, is a baby of huge proportions, in swaddling-clothes, *à la* Tyrolese ; and right over it, near the top of the picture, which rarely exceeds some twelve or fourteen inches square, we see the Virgin and the Child, seated on her usual throne of clouds, peeping down at the happy family of wooden humanity collected at her feet. Under the picture are usually written some words informing the reader that the picture was presented by So-and-So, in accordance with a vow made at the shrine of the Virgin Mary at Absam, or at any other of the countless places of pilgrimage reputed to work miracles in the " family way."

Now we will descend the steep, ladder-like stairs, and, as we pass the door, cast one glance into the schoolroom.

It has been observed by an eminent traveler, that schoolrooms are like each other all over the globe ; and indeed we can not make an exception in Tyrol. The rows of empty benches are alike dreary, be they in picturesque Tyrol, or in smoke-grilled London or Manchester. The large blackboard in the background is as grim and forbidding in a mountainous country as in a flat one. Were we to examine a little closer into the interior of the Tyrolese schoolroom in a remote valley, a strange-look-

ing contrivance in the corner would arrest our attention. We inquire its use, and learn that between the two vertical pillars are placed the billets of wood which those of the poorer children who are unable to pay the school money — a farthing a day — bring in lieu of it.

In the porch we bid good-by to our host and friend, the venerable and kindly schoolmaster. Let us not forget the appointment we have made with him, to meet him a couple of months hence at the "Ehehaft teidignug" or general assembly of all the peasants in the largest village, that of St. Leonhardt. This is an institution carrying us back to the very earliest times, when the administration of justice was centered in the hands of the high and mighty lord of the territory, who troubled himself but little with the home affairs of his oppressed villains. The old territorial laws that are kept up to the present day with strange persistency, inflict a very heavy fine on those who absent themselves from this annual assembly. It partakes, or rather it partook, — for of late years some of the strangest customs have been done away with, — more of the character of a general settling day, in all matters connected with justice and money transactions, than of any thing else to which we could liken it. Quarrels between neighbors are decided by three umpires, generally mutual friends of the opponents. Debts are paid, sales of stock and wood are effected, extensions of credit are demanded and accorded; in fact, the business affairs of an entire twelve months are decided. It is a grand and excessively busy day for Georg. He has to be here and there and everywhere at once. Contracts and deeds have to be drawn up and witnessed; old charters pored over, and their meaning explained to an anxious audience; legal points in a hotly-debated controversy looked up, and advice upon them given to stubborn peasants. The tithes are collected that day, and outstanding school-money paid: in fact, it is the one and sole business day in the Passeier valley. From an early hour in the morning, the whole village is filled with a gay crowd. All kinds of merchandise are here collected

in one and the same booth,—from the unwieldy felt hat down to the diminutive looking-glass about the size of a five-shilling piece, protected by a wooden casing,—from the ponderous bell for the leading cow on the Alp, down to packets of tin-tacks. The village church bells have been going from an early hour in the morning, and now and again we hear faint echoes of shots, with which well-to-do peasants are fond of announcing to their neighbors that they are on the point of leaving their homes, many a weary mile away, to attend the “Ehehaft teidignug” at St. Leonhardt.

While following our friend’s steps to this re-union, I entirely forgot to mention a second very important day for the schoolmaster guild. It is Candlemas Day, on which it is his and his deputies’ duty to go the round from house to house, collecting money for the wax candles burned in the village church throughout the year.

These collectors have no easy task to perform: they have to possess a glib tongue, and a rich store of information of saintly personages. Not every one is willing to give. While one peasant complains that, notwithstanding the money he gave last year towards St. Sebastian’s candles, his wheat, when just ready to cut, was entirely destroyed by a hailstorm; his neighbor, again, will stubbornly refuse to contribute to St. Leonhardt, the patron of cattle, on the ground that the two florins which he had spent on that saint the previous year had been more than thrown away, as two head of his herd had perished by slipping down a precipice. All manner of threats have to be urged ere a stingy skeptic will hand over his mite. “St. Blasius” will strike him with fell disease; “St. Florian,” the protector against fire, will make a bonfire of his farm; or “St. Apolonia” will torment him with an attack of maddening toothache. No saint will suffer himself to be snubbed or slighted, and woe to the traitor who would jeopardize the welfare of the whole village by his treasonable parsimony! The peasant whose wits have been sharpened by his misplaced confidence the year before is finally won over, and grudgingly pays his

money-offering, leaving the choice of the saint to his woman-folk. The wife, who perhaps has no money to give away, offers the collector a couple of knots of hemp, or a quarter-sack of fine flour, or a stone-weight of butter, as her own special contribution. If there are any lasses in the house, they will secretly press a shilling into his hand, and whisper to him the magic name of St. Kilian, a saint who occupies a somewhat ambiguous position among his colleagues, for he is not only the protector of turnips, but also the guardian of love, and especially of clandestine amour.

Were it not indiscreet to confidentially cross-question the collector, it would be interesting to know into which pocket (for it is but natural to suppose that St. Kilian keeps the change he receives in his twofold character, properly separated) the poor maiden's shilling found its way.

Those that are curious on this point had better step into the village church the following Sunday during service. The bashful look of the maiden, as she bends her eyes upon the life-size figure of the love saint, — whose gilt armor reflects the light of her votive wax taper, — tells its own tale; and to satisfy us that the shilling was not wasted on turnips, we need not stop to catch her furtive glance at her sturdy, bright-eyed lover, who is vainly endeavoring to fix his attention upon his rosary, as he leans against the opposite wall of the church. Ten years hence, when St. Kilian's services are no longer required to keep the flame of conjugal love alive, but when the family's welfare is sorely dependent upon the thriving condition of their turnip-crop, St. Kilian will probably find himself again the object of their prayer. What with love and turnips, and turnips and love, we may suppose Kilian's saintly memory must be put to a sore test.

The collector is about to leave the peasant's cottage, satisfied with his harvest, when out rushes the youngest of the household, a little girl of twelve or thirteen, housed and fed by the peasant for charity's sake, and, running up to the man, presses a penny into his hand, exclaiming in childlike innocence, —

“I have naught else to give you, for I have nothing but a pair of new shoes, and a dear old mother ill in bed at home.”

When asked for what saint the modest offering was destined, she replies, —

“For my patron, to remind him to guard over my flock of goats.”

Poor little thing! What a tale those words tell of an ever-present dread that one of her wild and willful charges should come to harm, — of a constant fear that, by some accidental mishap, she should be deprived of her wretched pittance, amounting probably to no more than fourpence a week. How anxiously her eyes watch her penny-piece disappear into the capacious pockets of the great man, and how her little heart flutters to hear from his benign lips that henceforth her patron saint will guard and watch over her flock! And yet what had she done? Given away a quarter of her weekly earnings—to her a vast sum—which usually procured some little luxury for her poor bedridden old mother.

## CHAPTER IX.

## ALPINE CHARACTERS : THE ANTIQUARIAN IN TYROL.

NO doubt many of the facts mentioned in the preceding chapters, especially those in connection with the religious life in Tyrol, must sound strange to English ears ; and very likely many readers will ask how it is that I have so far penetrated into the mysteries of the clerical, no less than of the scholastic cloth. I divulge the secret of my success with evil forebodings, for I confess to belong to those unintelligible beings whose soul is tainted by a love, not for the modern, but for the old and bygone. In fact, I confess to being an amateur antiquarian — a curiosity-hunter if you will.

How many quires could I fill with accounts of strange adventures and ludicrous incidents which have befallen me while in pursuit of that all-engrossing sport among the mountains of Tyrol !

A glance around the room in which I am writing, a view of the table, one look at the walls, carries me back to the modest little *châlet*, the ruined old castle, the crazy old mansion, the quaint old inn, the tumble-down mediæval church, each the scene of some happy discovery or some spirited barter. I am surrounded by trophies of that chase.

In a previous chapter I endeavored to depict the all-engrossing charms of chamois-stalking. I now want to do the same in respect to curiosity-hunting, for in my eyes the latter is a sport no less keen than the former.

But chamois and antiquities are getting decidedly scarce ; and while the next generation will perhaps be the

one to kill the last venerable old buck in Tyrol, I fear it will be the present one's lot to buy up the last old chest and the last old tankard.

The knack of curiosity-hunting, no less than that of chamois-stalking, can only be acquired by long practice, and one who has not passed a thorough apprenticeship to either sport will assuredly blunder on some important point the very first time he is out.

It will probably amaze our readers to hear that a poor country — and Tyrol undoubtedly is that — should harbor works of art of any sort. In a cottage in England how rarely does one stumble upon a carved or inlaid cabinet, or a curious old book, say of the first half of the sixteenth century!

Twenty years ago, I may safely say, there was no house in the whole Tyrolese country that did not possess some article of vertu. Perhaps it was but an old halberd curiously engraved, or a helmet, or a broad two-handed sword, or a rusty shirt of mail — all relics of the time when the peasant owner of the house was chained to the soil as a noble's "villain." Or, to speak of furniture, no house was without a couple of those curious old wedding chests, generally painted with allegorical designs, often inlaid, and now and then beautifully carved in oak in the rich style of the Renaissance.

Nothing can give one a better idea of the very prominent state of all trades connected with art in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Tyrol, than to hear of the vast amount of the exquisite pieces of workmanship of that period which have been discovered in this country, in the course of the last thirty years.

The South Kensington Museum possesses, to my knowledge, six or seven very valuable objects of Tyrolese origin, which were bought for very considerable sums.

The well-known curiosity trade of Munich and Vienna drew its chief stock from this small country. No wonder that the once immensely rich mine has been all but exhausted. It is only by dint of the most minute search, of the most indefatigable labor, that one succeeds now-



adays in securing a treasure. But then, does not that one piece — perhaps a rare old Gothic cabinet, with a huge lock and queer out-of-the-way drawers, and secret springs, bought for less than a pound sterling ; or a couple of huge halberds, on the surface of which, after carefully removing the rust of centuries, you find the armorial bearings of some well-known noble house etched in first-rate workmanship — repay one for endless trouble? Far greater than the mere knowledge of having acquired a decidedly good haul, does the *souffçon* please you of having succeeded in your endeavors to drive a good bargain.

The owner is stubborn : for instance, he “won’t part with it ; the cabinet,” he says, “has been in his family for centuries, and *he* won’t sell it. His son,” pointing to a lout sitting at the other side of the room, “might perhaps part with it when once he is master of the concern.”

You look at the peasant, and you find him a hale and robust man in the prime of life. Your heart sinks within you ; and if you are a “green one” you turn glum, and leave the house disgusted with your bad luck. This you will do if you are a new hand at it, and have no knowledge of the character of the peasantry, their weak and their strong points.

There is one golden rule which, if it is strictly followed, will very nearly always land you as victor at a fifth of the costs which would have arisen had you pressed on in undue haste. It is patience, — nothing more nor nothing less.

How tantalizing it is to be obliged to sit there and talk to the phlegmatic old peasant, owner of some priceless treasure you have discovered stowed away in the innermost recesses of the lumber-corner in the cellar or under the roof !

“Talk?” Yes, but not of the subject that is uppermost in your mind ; but of the state of the crops, of the weather, of the last *fête* day village fight, in fact, of any thing and every thing save the bargain. While your hand itches to snatch out your purse to give him the

money he may ask for it, it has to wander in your coat-pocket to produce your tobacco-pouch, to be handed to the old villain, who has sniffed the air, remarking, "That's good tobacco you are smoking."

There goes an ounce at least of your prized English bird's-eye, to fill the huge bowl of the peasant's pipe, he stuffing it down with his little finger into the seemingly bottomless receptacle.

Now he lights it leisurely, puffs a few whiffs, and with a solemn "Yes, yes," he sinks back in his chair to enjoy the luxury of a good smoke, with that phlegmatic repose peculiar to the peasant class. What do you care to hear the praise of your tobacco? You know it's good, and that is sufficient for you. You sit on pins and needles.

But patience, patience; the peasant has promised to go up with you under the roof "by and by," to look at that "crazy old lumber-chest," as he terms that priceless Gothic cabinet the son showed you a few hours before.

You are certain it is not only carved, but also inlaid with different kinds of wood; but the thick coat of dust and dirt hid the details of the workmanship from your view; and the presence of the lout standing at your side, half muttering to himself that "it's better, after all, he did not chop it up for firewood, as he did t'other last year," detains you from examining it closer.

You are burning with the desire to convince yourself of the truth of your supposition, but you must not move; the magic "by and by" of the owner chains you to your chair. You answer the tiresome questions in a sprightly chaffing tone, while in your heart you curse the questioner's unbearable phlegm.

To your horror, the buxom daughter now enters the room, and, after placing a napkin on the table, puts the huge pan of Schmarn, the peasant's dinner, in its center. The bell, hanging in the miniature belfry on the roof of the house, is set in motion; the farm-servants file into the room one by one, and stand round the table saying grace prior to sitting down.

You sit by, and watch the contents of the huge pan

disappear. The people seem ravenous; will they never stop eating? you think. "Oh, no! there's yet half of its contents left, but no sign of flagging energy is visible." On they eat, slowly and phlegmatically, as they do most things.

Ah! now the bottom of the iron vessel becomes visible. Another five minutes, and the sides are scraped clean.

"We want fine weather, you see, sir, and now we'll have it," remarks the master of the house laughingly, alluding to an old saying that "a clean pan brings clean weather."

The company rise and say grace. The peasant, while we've been addressing a few words to one of the plump maidservants, whom we happened to meet on an Alp last summer, has sat himself down again, and before we have time to interpose he has relit his furnace.

"Just let me finish this pipe," he says, as with annoyance painted in every line of your features you bite your lips and pull out your watch.

By an almost superhuman effort you restrain your anger, and reply quite sprightly, —

"Oh! my good fellow, don't hurry yourself: that old lumber-chest can wait another quarter of an hour, it has waited patiently so many hundred years."

Your eyes belie your words, for they roll about in an agony of suspense.

"Yes, that tobacco of yours is decidedly first-rate stuff," the old rascal continues. "I should say that it cost at least fifty or sixty kreutzers (a shilling or fourteen pence) a pound, eh?"

What are you to answer to this insult, unintentional as it may be? If you tell him that he is somewhat mistaken, and own that you paid about six times as much, you would spoil all; for the man would then see that your coat need not necessarily be a worn old shooting-jacket, and that if you can afford to smoke such expensive tobacco, you can pay at least treble the sum he originally would have asked for the cabinet.

The old fellow puffs away at his pipe, which seemingly

is never coming to an end. Ah, at last! Slowly knocking out the ashes, he replaces it in his breast-pocket, and rising, proceeds to lead the way out of the room, up the narrow, ladder-like stairs, to the loft under the roof.

You follow with a beating heart, and approach the corner where the cabinet is standing amid a heap of rubbish, pieces of old harness, broken agricultural implements, and cracked pots and pans. "Will he try any game on me?" you ask yourself, as he proceeds to push aside the heap of rubbish in order to get close up to the chest. You are longing to follow, just one rub with the moist finger is all you want; but you dare not. A broken barrel is close by: you sit down upon it, and assume a stoical air of indifference while the peasant is circling about the prized object, now pulling out a drawer, now trying the lock and key, now giving it a rough shove which nearly sends it toppling over.

"Well, peasant," you open conversation, "how much must I give you for it? You see yourself it's a rubbishing old chest, sadly out of repair, and probably it will hardly bear the transport down to the next village, from whence I can have it fetched in a cart."

"Well," he says, "when I was in 'Sprugg (meaning Innsbruck) the last time, four years come Whitsuntide, I saw a chest very like this in a shop-window, and a ticket on it, with two hundred florins marked on the paper." (Our heart is in our mouth.) "But of course there must have been something very valuable inside the chest, perhaps some jewels in one of the drawers."

"Very likely," you press out in an agony of despair; and by a supreme effort you re-assume the sprightly jocular tone, exclaiming that you want but the chest, not the jewels inside.

"I guess there are none in this," the peasant replies, "so we'll say a tener (ten florins, less than a pound), and a couple of pipes of your tobacco."

You breathe again, relieved from the hundred-ton weight that has been resting on your mind since that fatal account of the visit to 'Sprugg. "Well, I don't mind

giving you ten florins, if you will transport it down to the next village."

This the peasant won't do; and after a quarter of an hour's haggling, you buy the chest for eight florins (sixteen shillings), agreeing to take it down at your own expense and risk.

"And for what may you want that lumbering box?" the peasant asks, as you descend the ladder-like stairs into the general room.

In this instance there was no maneuvering to speak of. Quite differently have you to handle a peasant who knows that the old sword, the curious cabinet, has a certain value beyond that of old iron or of firewood. For five and six times you have to visit him, and a year or eighteen months will perhaps have to elapse ere you can close the bargain.

In villages near towns, the peasant population know by experience that antiquities command high prices. Ignorant of the meaning of the word "antiquities," they ask monstrous prices for things perfectly valueless, as, for instance, some picture daubed by some bygone village artist, if only covered with dirt and dust, attains, in their eyes, a priceless value.

Again they will bring you a broken jar, a cracked pot, of the workmanship of some fifty years ago, and demand its weight in gold; and when you inform them that they are worthless, they'll exclaim, quite amazed, "But they are old! we thought you bought every thing that is old!"

To offer an explanation upon the nature of the articles you are in search of, is worse than useless. You have to depend solely upon your own talents at foraging, and then, when you have found something, to manage to buy it up as cheaply as possible. You get laughed at behind your back, whether you give a high price or a low one. The fancy for the old, not alone on account of its being old, but on account of the fine workmanship, the taste, and the interest one attaches very naturally to an object that was in use three or four centuries ago, is wholly inexplicable to the simple minded peasantry, who admire a

plain deal chest daubed with red, green, and blue flowers and ornaments, far more than the finely-chiseled, rare old cabinet in the pure Gothic or in the rich Renaissance style.

The schoolmaster is the first person in a village to whom curiosity-hunters should apply, not only because he is the most likely person to know the whereabouts of "old things" in his village, but also because he is the guardian of the church, and in that character a personage whose complaisant favor one has to secure at any cost.

It must be remembered that though most of the village churches are very old, dating back their history to the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, the outward signs of their age have been ruthlessly ravaged by the iconoclastic improvers of the last century. The disastrous preference for *rococo*, or, as the Germans have appropriately nicknamed it, the pigtail style, superseded by a branch of architectural mannerism, that most vile of all styles, the Jesuit's (called so on account of its gaudy prodigality), stripped the majority of Tyrolese churches of the pure severe lines of the Gothic and of the rich but no less pure details of the early Renaissance ornamental designs that adorned their interior and exterior, and metamorphosed them into the highly inartistic structures that pain one's eyes in some Tyrolese valleys.

One could hardly furnish a more striking instance of the slavish inthrallment of the human mind in the shackles of fashion than by pointing out the bulky, lumbering structures resembling two turnips piled one upon the other, that were created in the Jesuitical era, in lieu of the tapering, needle-shaped spires, so elegant in their simplicity, and so eminently suitable to mountain landscape.

Fortunately for the country, and thanks to the strenuous efforts of the present day, these relics of a very tasteless period are gradually disappearing. The decorations which fell a prey to the ruthless hand of the last century were either thrown or given away, or they were stowed pell-mell under the roof of the church. In the latter

place, therefore, an exceedingly rich harvest of curiosities was to be made some ten or fifteen years ago. Nowadays, I am sorry to say, they have been ransacked over and over again by the greedy hands of dealers from Innsbruck, Munich, or Vienna. There is perhaps not a church in the whole country that has not been visited by some of these.

Rich prizes were to be made — old Venetian candelabra of colored glass, Gothic cabinets of the very best workmanship, life-size figures of saints, carved by the hands of artists, and rare scroll-work in oak and iron. Over all these things the schoolmasters in their character of sexton were the guardians, and as many of them fancied they knew something of “old things” in general, one had to be a good hand to bring over one’s bird without an extra expenditure of powder.

To odd stratagems one had to resort, which, examined by a strong light, would not infrequently leave a tiny but yet perceptible spot on the characters of our heroes. But while groping about in the dark corners of the church-loft, one was not incommoded by the light of day. It was dark work in both senses. I have known four and five big cart-loads of cabinets, chests, candelabra, carved decorations, pieces of iron scroll-work, carried off from one single modest little Tyrolese village church, the whole cargo being sold for a trifle, while a worthless old daub owned by the sexton, or by the priest, if he were of a very meddling disposition, would fetch a hundred florins or even more. The fact that all moneys accruing from church property replenish the foundation’s exchequer, explains the excessive price of the daub.

In many instances, specially in those where the peasant owner of some curiosity of value knows its merits, or has formed an exaggerated opinion regarding the price he can demand, the curiosity-hunter flies to the village schoolmaster. To him he lays open his heart, promising him not only his eternal gratitude, but a handsome *douccur*, if he succeeds in capturing the prized article at a more moderate price.

Stalking chamois and hunting for curiosities — the one a work of nature, the other that of man — are two pursuits that seemingly can never be combined, and yet in Tyrol they can.

Curiosities, it is true, are not to be found among peaks and glaciers, and chamois eschew the haunts of man. If the reader wishes to know how this anomalous end can be brought about, let him follow my steps as I set out on one of my expeditions, which (let us take a common instance) is the result of an invitation to hunt chamois in a distant district, belonging maybe to a peasant community, or perhaps to a sportsman of high rank. Were we to put our best foot foremost, we might possibly reach our goal in one day; but we prefer to take it easy, and decide to cover the distance, some twenty hours' march, in two days. My kit compactly stowed in our ample "Rucksack," a species of haversack, and much preferable to a knapsack, consists only of the most necessary articles, and hence does not interfere with marching efficiency, for as yet it has not been augmented by the dead weight of rations for two or three days' consumption, and, including the rifle, hardly exceeds fifteen or twenty pounds.

By starting before daybreak, we gain three or four hours' rest in the middle of the day. They are, however, not spent in after-lunch laziness, for our six hours' forenoon stroll along pleasant paths over pass and Alpine mead has acted as an invigorating stimulant, and anti-quarian lust has taken possession of the soul. The frugal but ample ten-o'clock dinner dispatched, we leave rifle and haversack at the inn, and stroll down the village to the simple little church. Before we reach it we perceive the village priest, followed by the verger-schoolmaster, issue from the porch. The black flowing robes of the former flutter and stream in the wind, as with long strides the man of God hastens to his dinner. Both recall to us Cowper's lines, —

"There goes the parson, oh! illustrious spark!  
And there, scarce less illustrious, goes the clerk."



They pass unnoticed the stranger, whose individuality is successfully secreted behind the worn country guise and battered hat ; and after watching them into their respective houses, we are free to enter the sacred edifice. A glance at its architecture, and another at its interior decorations, tell us what we want to know. The building, originally of Gothic construction, as is betrayed by the clean-cut arches and well-molded pillars, no less than by the noble fifteenth-century portal, bears in every detail that stamp of fell eighteenth-century Vandalism perpetrated by the Jesuits. The stucco-ceiling daubed with pink and blue, the gaudy altar of gilt woodwork, and countless pot-bellied angels scattered about with terrible profuseness, the chancel, stripped of its old oak paneling, adorned with a glistening coat of varnish and gold, the latter streaked and spotted by the damp, are in keeping with the hideous windows and the whitewashed aisle. We know that very probably the old fittings-up of the church, the chiseled mural decorations, the Renaissance altar, and the carved oak pews were, when the ruthless hand of its fanatic renovator dismantled the edifice, stored away as so much waste lumber in the church-loft, or in the top story of the bell-tower. The door to the latter is open, and we hasten up the gloomy creaking steps, and mount the ladder that gives ingress into the dark, never-visited loft. We are at home in these regions, otherwise it would be breakneck work ; for the numerous holes cut in the floor, through which the workmen are let down when whitewashing the ceiling, are man-traps of a very treacherous kind ; rotten planks cover them, and one false step will send you down the giddy depth. Alas ! the first gleam of the pocket-lantern, which I always carry on these occasions, shows that others have been before us, and that the treasures have been carried off by the marauding hands of a dealer, or by one of the many private collectors of Innsbruck or Munich. We grope about the dismal place ; dust an inch in depth covers the huge cross-beams and the floor. Our light divulges to us vast emptiness wherever we turn. The

group of dusky figures we presently spy out looming forth from one of the corners, we discover, to our infinite disgust, to consist of armless and headless saints of last century's hideous make, piled up in ghastly array. Their gilt carcasses, astounding in anatomy, await the day of resurrection which will furnish them with new heads and arms, and place them as a special favor in the sacred precincts of some remote little chapel too poor to provide new ones. Next to them stands a Virgin Mary of saintly memory. It is the cast-off figure of that personage once used at processions, but some years back forced to yield up her supremacy to a larger and if possible more gaudy image. Her waxen face is blanched, and the vacant smile about her mouth is rendered all the more specter-like by her eyeless sockets and her hairless head, for with her retirement from public life she had to relinquish her azure glass orbs and her full wig of blonde curls, and both now grace the head of her successor and rival.

We descend the steps disappointed mortals; and our ill-humor is not allayed, when on meeting the verger-schoolmaster in front of the church, we put him under cross-examination, and elicit that the loft was cleared by a Jew dealer in antiquities a year or two back.

"We were very glad, I can tell you, to get rid of the rubbish; and though he gave me but a trifle for the whole lot, it must have cost him a good deal to get the things away, there was such a quantity. Far better that the loft is once more nice and empty, and not filled with old wood and worm-eaten bits of carving."

We are too vexed to say much, so let the old idiot talk on.

Presently his eldest grandchild, a boy of some ten or twelve years of age, comes running up, giving him the huge bunch of enormous keys he had forgotten when he left his home.

This reminds us that we have not yet seen the sacristy, and, slipping some trifling coin into the man's hand, we ask him to show it us. This the talkative old fellow does most willingly.

Our eyes, sharpened by our cantankerous mood, are on the look-out for stray straws ; and presently we detect, in a corner under the steps leading to the bell-loft, a large frame covered with dust, and tattered beyond recognition.

We walk up to it in our most fastidiously leisurely manner, and after removing some of the dust, we perceive it is a Renaissance altar-cloth of leather (*Antependium*), used in Roman Catholic churches at that period. Its exquisite workmanship, the first-rate designs embossed upon it in gold and color, convince us that were it not for its wrecked condition it would be a very valuable prize.

“ Oh ! that was left behind by the Jew ; he said it was torn beyond reparation, and no wonder, for I well remember, when I was a boy, we used it as a target ; but since the Jew was here I discovered another one just like it, but not a hole in it.”

“ Well, and where is it now ? ” one of us demands in as steady a voice as he can command.

“ Oh ! the leather being thick and perfect, I took it home, scraped the gold from it, and gave it my daughter, who, you must know, has a lot of brats, and can use it capitally for mending her boys’ trousers.”

A shiver goes through our bodies as we hear this, and for the rest of our interview with the verger we are silent.

“ Perhaps there is a bit left which I could show you, as you seem to take interest in these things,” are words which recall us to ourselves, and we hasten to notify our assent.

We reach the cottage, and enter the general room, where sits, busy at her spinning-wheel, the buxom daughter.

“ There is nothing left of the leather, father,” she replies to the old man’s query, “ for I used the last to make Johnnie a new pair of house shoes ; but here,” cries she, and, opening the door, calls in two or three of her male progeny, playing in front of the house, “ come here, Franzel,” and poor Franzel, trembling all over, is taken in hand by his mother, and laid across her knees, and lo ! a large patch of leather of gorgeous coloring and design, is seen where little boys first tear their trousers.

A square of this self-same leather, much smaller, it is true, than either of the three or four patches that were exhibited to us on the persons of the leather-bound little fellows, has found a last resting-place among my miscellanies, and will always recall that ludicrous scene.

But to return to our foraging. Not always, fortunately, are dirty hands and dust-begrimed faces the only rewards for patient and thorough exploration of church-lofts.

Now and again the lantern throws its friendly rays upon rich treasure-trove. Many and various are the spoils thus obtained. The beautifully-tinted antique Venetian glass chandelier, in perfect preservation, which some fifty or sixty years ago had to give way to some gilt abomination, and has since hung up here unnoticed and undusted; rich pieces of carving; graceful caryatides in rich mellow oak of the sixteenth century, once part of the Renaissance pulpit or chancel, — all are found in these ecclesiastic lumber-rooms.

Discoveries of this kind, when they are made, require a deft hand. An invitation to a quiet glass of wine in the cozy wood-paneled "Herrenstube" in the village inn, extended not only to the priest, but also to his second self, the verger-schoolmaster, and, if circumstances are such, also to the housekeeper-cook of the former, will be the first thing you do. At a late hour, when all is conviviality and smiles, the subject is broached, and the bargain struck, comprising the whole contents of the loft.

Exchanges are by no means without the pale of priestly dignity. Here is an instance: Some years ago I was the happy possessor of a hideous statue of Saint Michael, in wood, more than life-size, and weighing something over four hundredweight. His exterior was such as would please rural tastes; for though, being originally intended to occupy an elevated position, his nether limbs were small, out of all proportion, this slight blemish was far outweighed by his gaudy attire, his brazen helmet, his gilt armor, and, as a clerical friend of ours hinted, by the well-rounded and comfortable "continuation of the chest."

I had used him for divers purposes. His life-like

shape made him a capital target for long-distance pistol practice — “potting our saint,” as friends used to term that sportive amusement. His enormous weight once caused him to be used as counterpoise for the house crane, and an amusing sight it was to see him bob up and down. Then, having one fine day discovered that his huge inside was hollow, and, after a prolonged search, detected that there was a door in his back, hidden by a coat of thick paint, I forced him open, but found him empty. After that he was used to hang my wet shooting-coat and flannels on to dry. He was decidedly of an imposing exterior, but never more so than when heading, in military fashion, my twelve apostles — life-size figures, creatures of the same abominable period, carved also in solid wood, of which I became the happy owner by one of my wholesale church-loft purchases. His top-heavy appearance was in perfect keeping with that of his similarly afflicted comrades, who further were distinguished by very extraordinary deformities of the body, and facial contortions. The waggish leer of St. Luke, the sportive wink of St. John, the knowing look of St. Mark, and the whining glance that marked St. Matthew, were not less comic than the gouty exterior of Simon, the convulsive grasp of Peter’s hand on his abdominal regions, the plaintive not to say simpering manner in which James held a dove to his breast, or the “all-over-the-place” look of Andrew’s disjointed body.

Some little time did this distinguished company abide in one of my empty rooms, and I was seriously thinking of handing them over to the tender mercies of the wood-chopper to convert them into firewood, when an American friend, in a weak moment, expressed the wish to possess them, and to take them to his own country.

The next moment I had presented him with the twelve apostles, reserving to myself, however, very useful Michael.

They were to be sent in cases, each man having a separate one for himself. Unfortunately, pressing business called me away, preventing my superintending the pack-

ing: so after ordering the twelve cases from a country joiner, I also deputed to him the duty of fixing them in. When I returned, this operation had already been completed; for securely screwed down in their coffins, the lids only wanting to be nailed down, lay the twelve corpses in solemn state.

I passed along the file, but suddenly started back, for what — oh, horror! — did I see?

The cases were all of the same size, but unfortunately the bodies were not. How was gouty Simon, with his arms akimbo and one leg miles away from the other, to adapt himself to the same-sized box in which slim Andrew fitted easily? How was crane-necked Peter, who, in the agony of his digestive disorder, protruded his abdomen in a most unwieldy fashion, to match St. John, clothed in long robes, and his arms hanging down in a most exemplary manner at both sides of his body?

In my absence, the joiner, a modern Columbus, remedied this short-sighted error in a radical manner. His saw lopped off all obstructions; “for,” said he quite quaintly, “it is much easier to glue the pieces on than to make new packing-cases.”

Very true, but what havoc had this fallacy worked! Here was St. Mark minus his toes and the dog-like lion that had been squatting at his feet. There St. John had lost half of his eagle, while St. Luke had been deprived of several fingers of his right hand, and the book they held. Poor Simon had both his elbows chopped off, and half of his leg. Colicky Peter had lying at his side a slice of his faulty organ, and half his head, and the tip of his nose, carefully wrapped up in paper; while Philip, Thomas, and Bartholomew, all three rather stout personages, could only, as our joiner remarked, be cajoled to fit into their respective coffins by having their backs planed down.

I turned away from the impressive scene a wiser if not a better man; and half an hour later the twelve victims of country ignorance were carried down each by four men to the long file of one-horse sleighs that were to take them

to the distant railway-station. Six weeks later I received the following laconic letter from the New York shipping agent, to whom the parcel had been addressed : —

“DEAR SIR, — The s.s. ‘Adele,’ from Rotterdam to this port, arrived here the 16th inst. As per instructions, we cleared your parcel as ‘old woodwork of no value,’ but the local Custom House authorities, after appealing to the Upper Board, and consulting two experts, defined your goods as ‘art statuary,’ and as such they come under schedule seventy-seven.

“We are,

“Dear sir,

“Yours very obediently,  
“\_\_\_\_\_.”

So much for the twelve apostles, their journey to a distant clime, and their difficulties with schedule seventy-seven. They are now at rest, half a dozen in a brand-new Roman Catholic chapel, and six adorning our friend’s house in the same State.

St. Michael, after losing his company, retired to an empty lumber-room, where he remained confined for a year or two, till finally a priestly amateur of eighteenth-century statuary, on being led through the room, exclaimed, enraptured of his vast proportions and august demeanor, —

“Ah, had we but such a figure for our new chapel ! and here,” he added with sly meaning, “here he is, stowed away in an empty room where nobody ever sees him.”

I did not like to tell him that I was of the decided opinion that Michael’s present abode was the only one befitting his extraordinary exterior ; and, not having any further use for him in either of his former characters, I gracefully presented the delighted priest with this valuable and ponderous piece of some benighted last-century wood-carver.

My free-handed generosity will be perhaps understood all the better if I betray that the priest, or rather his church, was owner of one or two *chefs-d’œuvre* in seventeenth-century silk and gold-thread embroidery, upon which, for some time past, I had fixed greedy eyes, but

hitherto ineffectually. My expectations were not disappointed ; for now we easily came to terms, and a few days later I was in possession of the articles. Not so, however, the priest, for Master Michael was an awkward customer to deal with ; the chapel lay in a remote locality, very difficult of access, no carriage or cart road leading to it. It was decided to transport him up to his destination on the back of a mule, but no sufficiently-strong animal could be found ; twice it was tried, — the statue strapped lengthwise to the animal's back, but both times the beast broke down ; and Michael returned to his home to be hoisted up by the crane, to which in bygone days he had acted as counterweight, and replaced in his lumber-room. His owner maintains that the next severe winter will enable him to take him up by sleigh ; but though three winters have elapsed, he is yet in his old corner. I feel rather grateful to Michael !



## CHAPTER X.

## ALPINE CHARACTERS : THE WOODCUTTER.

THOUGH I have not laid special stress on the fact that Tyrol possesses certain characteristics not to be met with in other parts of civilized Europe, the reader will no doubt have gathered this from the preceding chapters.

The survival of an ancient type is in no class of the population so apparent as in the fraternity of the woodcutters.

Cut off from the world, working in solitude amid the grandest of Alpine scenery, rough and uncouth in their exterior, inured to every danger, and hardy to quite an amazing degree, the "Holzhacker" affords a most interesting study not only for the artist, but also for those who delight in laying bare the vein of quaint originality mixed up with the other characteristics of a people untouched by that species of civilization which follows in the wake of tourists.

The immense tracts of forest which are still to be found in the northern and central districts of Tyrol, and which afford the staple resources of those parts, are, generally speaking, the property of the Crown.

A large number of men are employed by Government in felling the timber, in cultivating new plantations, and in keeping in repair the huge wood-drifts which are established in these parts.

From 3,000 to 4,000 men thus find sustenance in connection with the "Forstwesen," or management of the forests, in Tyrol.

These laborers are generally natives of neighboring valleys, and in most cases they are younger sons of peasants, — farmers who own the land they till, — whose miniature homestead, consisting perhaps of a few acres of the very poorest soil, or a patch of meadow sufficient to keep three or four cows, proves inadequate to sustain an increasing family. The eldest son usually remains with the father, nominally inheriting the whole property at his death.

I say nominally, as, by virtue of the old laws of inheritance passed in the end of the last century, a division of the property is inadmissible, and the happy nominal owner is not a whit better, if he be not worse, off than his brothers; for on the death of the father a Government appraiser values the property, fixing the estimate rather higher than the real value. This sum is divided into as many equal shares as there are sons, each of whom receives a mortgage on the property for the amount of his share.

The eldest son, in lieu of his share, takes possession of the property, and endeavors, by dint of the greatest economy and care, to pay off mortgage after mortgage. If he fails in this, or if he is a spendthrift, his children, if he has any, are doomed to be paupers, as a further division of their father's share does not take place, and the property is sold. Not infrequently the mortgagees, unwilling to let their home pass into strange hands, club together and buy it up; or, if they cannot muster a sufficient capital between them, they with one consent cancel the debt, and install as master of the concern the one who has the most knowledge of farming, and in whom they have the most confidence, or, if none are willing to undertake the charge, one of their nephews.

The daughters of a peasant either receive a certain sum as dowry, or, if they are unmarried at their father's death, the few hundred florins which have been saved up by their parents fall to their share.

It shows well for the Tyrolese, that, in many of the remoter valleys, the peasants date the history of their family

and that of their property back for many centuries ; and the old crossbows and pieces of armor, which are frequently to be found among the rubbish in the loft under the roof, tell tales of former bondage and serfdom to the person of the next knight or baron.

Returning to the lot of the younger sons, I must here mention that the choice of their profession depends entirely upon the customs which are prevalent in their valley. Some few valleys furnish the wandering hawkers of carpets and manufactures of plaited straw, that turn up at large fairs throughout Europe ; and I am speaking from experience when I say that no capital in Europe is without a few of them. The inhabitants of some glens have acquired the art of carving figures in wood ; other valleys produce hawkers of gloves and articles of chamois-leather. While one Alpine glen is celebrated for its "Kirschwasser," a spirituous liquor distilled from cherries, another is renowned for a particular kind of cheese.

Three or four centuries ago, Tyrol was the richest mining country in the world ; but now most of the prolific gold, silver, and copper mines are exhausted, and only two or three valleys contain mines that pay.

In each of the valleys I have enumerated, the whole population, save perhaps the peasant-farmer, is interested in the special branch of occupation which is the distinctive feature of the place, and which tends, in a more or less injurious manner, to make the people acquainted with the outer world, its ways and its habits ; thereby occasioning that gradual loss of the ancient typical customs whose partial survival I pointed out in my introductory remarks as one of the attractive characteristics of Tyrol. In those valleys where forests form the chief resource of the inhabitants, the results of contact with the outer world do not appear. The occupation of a woodcutter, the scene of his thrifty labor, and his own predilection, take him far out of the way of railways and tourists.

For seven or eight months he is out among the mountains ; the rest of the year, when the huge quantity of snow makes outdoor occupation impossible, he retreats to

his home, now doubly and trebly secure from any attempt of a tourist to push his way into these nooks and corners of the Eastern Alps.

Many of these hardy fellows have never seen a railway, and Bismarck and Moltke might conquer the universe without their knowing any thing of it.

Have any of my readers ever been asked, as I have, if London is a village in Welsch-Tyrol (the southern part, where Italian is spoken), or if England is a town in Bavaria? Borrowing the phrase from our American cousins, I venture to say, "I guess not!"

After this digression, which was needed to place the character of the woodcutter in the proper light, let us return once more to his occupation. The youngest and strongest men among the three or four thousand who, in one way or the other, find employment in connection with the forests, are the fellers of timber.

Their vocation is one in which dangers, arising from the most varied causes, and from exposure to all the inclemencies of a rough Alpine climate, make an iron constitution, a clear head, and powerful body indispensable. What would my reader, be he a retired backwoodsman or not, think of living from March or April till November on a mountain slope, in the close proximity, perhaps, of vast snowfields, and rarely at a lower altitude than 5,000 feet above the level of the sea, in a hovel, the roof and sides of which are of the thin and porous bark of the pine-tree? Yet thus they pass the summer months; and more content and cheerful fellows than they are it would be impossible to find.

The dangers which beset their rugged path are numerous. They arise either from their own recklessness, from avalanches, landslips, or from elementary causes such as lightning and water-spouts.

Tourists are often astonished at the wonderful number of sacred pictures, shrines, and votive tablets which line the highways and byways of the country. In nine cases out of ten, they simply commemorate a woodcutter's violent death, or some other fatal accident which has taken

place on or near the spot. In the larger valleys these votive tablets are generally some fearful specimen of the brush of the local stonemason, who in his leisure hours turns artist, and "paints" sacred subjects to order. In the more remote valleys, similar fatal occurrences are commemorated by pictures representing the accident itself.

Underneath the painting a few lines acquaint the passer-by with the name of the unfortunate victim, and add a request to pray a couple of "Vater unser" (Paternosters), for the benefit of his soul. The wording of these epitaphs is, if it were possible, even more ludicrous than the style of the picture which heads them. Two or three samples, literally translated, will corroborate this.

In the first we see a falling tree, under which, spread-eagle fashion, lies a man. The epitaph runs: "Johann Lemberger, aged 52 $\frac{3}{4}$  years. This upright and virtuous youth<sup>1</sup> (Jüngling) was squashed by a falling tree on the 11th December, 1849. Pious passers-by are implored to say three Lord's Prayers to redeem his tortured soul from the fires of purgatory."

The second represents a woman falling down a precipice; the epitaph runs as follows: "On that rock yonder perished the virtuous and honored maiden, Maria Nau-ders, in her twenty-second year. The kind wanderer is begged to release 'two' purgatoried souls from the tortures of hell.

"This wench was with child."

A third, rather more laconic, runs: —

MICHAEL GERSTNER,  
"Climbed up, fell down, and was dead."

The picture of a man falling down from an *apple*-tree made it clear *why* the unfortunate Michael had climbed it.

A very comical picture near the "Kaiserclause," a large wood-drift, depicts three men sitting, one behind the other, astraddle of one large block of wood, which is in

<sup>1</sup> Unmarried men are called "youths" all their lives.

the act of being drifted down the turbulent and foaming waters. Each man has a cross over his head, and the expression of the faces is comicality itself.

This epitaph is one of the best of its kind, and shows a good deal of humor on the part of its author: "On this spot did Johann Memmen, Christoph Müller, and Alois Hausler, on the 24th June, 1838, set out on a long and perilous journey. They hoped to find the gates of heaven open."

Underneath this is a picture of the three men in the furnace, and below that again is written:—

"In case their journey ends in hell, the pious wanderer is requested to say the rosary to save them from some of the tortures which await them."

Were it in my power to add the orthography of the epitaphs, it would greatly heighten the effect of these primitive and curious remnants of a very ancient custom.

The reckless daring which is a prominent feature in the character of a woodcutter is the natural result of a hardy confidence in his own powers and a long immunity from accidents, and makes him look upon the most urgent precautions dictated by his craft as needless. The felled tree falling a moment too soon, or the sharp axe glancing off from the hard-frozen wood, are only too frequently the origins of votive tablets.

Drifting the wood, too, though apparently a very safe occupation, is the source of many accidents, as we have seen by the fate of the three travelers, the subject of the last epitaph.

A short sketch of the opening of a drift will give my readers an idea of the sort of work which falls to the lot of these fellows.

The timber which has been felled in the course of the autumn and spring on the slopes of a valley is brought down to the waterside in May and the commencement of June. Important wood-valleys have a wood-drift of their own, erected by Government. It consists of a huge barrier of the strongest timber at the upper end of the valley, right across the drift-stream. On the upper side of

this structure a deep reservoir is excavated, in which large quantities of wood accumulate, thereby considerably raising the water-level. As soon as this artificial pond is filled with timber and water, the ponderous iron-bound gates of the drift, thus far tightly closed, are sprung open, and with a terrific roar, making the earth around shake, the water and huge blocks of wood rush through the barrier on to their destination, frequently ten or fifteen miles farther down, and close to the conflux of the drift-stream with a larger one, when the wood is caught up and piled in huge stacks. Drifts are necessarily erected only in streams in which the ordinary water-power would prove inadequate to float timber measuring from three to eighteen feet in length, and from two to five feet in diameter.

If the drifting stream takes its course through narrow gorges and defiles of walls of rock several hundred feet in height, the floating of timber calls for great exertion on the part of the men engaged in it. In these places the timber is very liable to get jammed together. In a few minutes the whole bulk of the wood, very often 2,000 or 3,000 "klafter" or "cords," may choke up the narrow passage in one stationary mass, while the water runs to waste, either in channels underneath the mass, or by overflowing it. When one of these "blocks" occurs, the men have to be lowered by ropes from the brink of the chasm above; and with saws and long poles, provided with ponderous iron hooks at one extremity, they strive to bring the whole mass into motion by sawing through the timber which has produced the block, or if this fails, by working off block after block, which latter often requires the incessant labor of months.

The dangers which attend this occupation are very obvious. If the mass should begin to move again before the men standing about in different positions on the blocks are prepared for it, and before they have regained their ropes, they are inevitably crushed to pancakes by the bumping and crashing timber.

There are instances in which a whole party, numbering twelve or fifteen individuals, has perished in this manner.

Where, again, the stream covers a large surface, and is dotted here and there by huge boulders that have tumbled down the precipitous slopes of the valley, the drifted wood is sometimes caught ; or if the banks are shallow, a huge block will get stranded or shoved up high and dry by the impetuous rush of the blocks in its rear. In such cases the men have to stand up to their waists in the icy-cold water the livelong day, while endeavoring to push block after block back into the turbulent stream, the least inattention or carelessness on their part being followed by disastrous consequences. The fellers of the timber, on the contrary, have, by the time the drifting begins, already been for some time high up on the mountain slopes, preparing a fresh stock for next year's drift ; and if my reader will follow me on an unsuccessful chamois-stalking expedition, which brought me into a woodcutter's hovel high up on the Tyrolese Alps, he will make the acquaintance of as quaint and primitive a set of human beings as can well be met with this side of the ocean.

A thunder-storm in the High Alps is a somewhat hackneyed subject, numerous authors of Alpine literature having been caught by thunder-storms which surpassed every thing of the kind hitherto known.

It was during one of these grand spectacles that I was picking my steps down a rugged and steep Alpine path, after my unsuccessful chase. A stay of three days and two nights among the peaks and grand snowfields had exhausted my provisions, and I was obliged to seek hospitable quarters in the little Alpine valley lying some five or six thousand feet below me.

Securing the lock of my rifle, and covering my "Rück-sack" with a waterproof hood, I cared little for thunder and lightning, and the heavy downpour of rain which accompanied them.

Soon after reaching the line of vegetation, my path led me through a dark and gloomy forest of huge patriarchal old pine-trees, coated with gigantic moss beards yards in length, which imparted a vivid appearance to many an



oddly-shaped tree. After having walked some time down the steep slope, vaulting now and again over the prostrate form of one of these giants of the forest, I came upon a large clearing. The huge stems, like hoary monsters slain by a dwarf's hand, lay scattered about in reckless confusion, while the fresh surface of the stumps indicated that ax and saw had been but very recently at work. Proceeding down the edge of the clearing, and making mental calculations of how many thousand per cent profit one would derive by the transmission by fairy hand of a batch of these huge trunks to any of the large timber-devouring cities in England, I perceived a few minutes later the miserable hovel of the destructive dwarfs, the wood-fellers.

A thin wreath of blue smoke curling up, in spite of the rain, from a hole cut in the roof, convinced me that my anticipation of finding the dwelling inhabited was correct.

Well aware that no other human habitation was within a five or six hours' walk at the very least, I gladly availed myself of the hospitable "Geh eina, Bua" ("Come in, boy"), — young men up to the thirtieth year are invariably termed boys, — which greeted me on showing my dripping head inside the low doorway.

Four men, all woodcutters, were sitting round a roaring fire; and though it was hardly half-past five, they were busy preparing their evening meal, the appetizing odor of which reminded me in a most inviting manner that I had not tasted a warm dish of any kind since leaving home some three days before.

The usual questions, "Who art thou?" and "Whence dost thou come?" having been answered by me to the satisfaction of my hosts, I had in the twinkling of an eye divested myself of my dripping coat, shoes, and stockings, and placed them as near to the fire as the arrangements of the party permitted.

I may as well mention that on such occasions I carefully refrain from playing the fine gentleman. For the questions who I am and whence I come, I have suitable answers; for were they even to learn that I am not a

native, but a stranger, shyness would take the place of frank open-hearted mirth, and suspicion of the probable purpose of my presence in so outlandish a place, divest a meeting of this kind of all its characteristic features; and to make myself accurately acquainted with these characteristics had formed, to speak plainly, one of the causes of my attachment to Tyrol.

The primitive interior and exterior of this hovel call for a few words of description. To begin with the construction of the building, which, it must be remembered, is the work of a few hours for three or four men, we first of all find four stakes driven into the ground. They are the corners of the edifice, and, in order that the roof may receive the necessary incline, one pair of stakes are left longer than the other two; or they are of equal length, but the upper two stand on rising ground. The tops of these four stakes are connected by stout poles, and across these rows of laths, or, if they can not be procured, fir-branches, are laid. On these again the roof, consisting of large sheets of the bark of pine-trees that have been soaked for some time in the next streamlet, is nailed with wooden pegs or weighed down by heavy stones: the sides or walls are of the same material. Woodcutter's huts are rarely more than nine to eleven feet square, except when they are erected for permanency, and then they are log-cabins varying in their size according to the numbers which are to live in them.

The present one was not larger than nine feet square. The fireplace, a heap of stones raised to about two feet from the ground, occupying the center; the outlet for the smoke, a square hole in the corner, opposite the low and narrow doorway, unprotected by a door of any kind; and finally, the four slanting boards in lieu of beds,—were the chief objects that struck the eye as one entered.

Each man had his haversack hanging on a peg over his board; the latter, covered by fir-branches and a rough blanket, must have proved a somewhat hard, uncomfortable, and cold couch for six or seven months of the year.

The huge iron frying-pan, filled to the brim with

"Schmarn" (flour, water, butter, and salt), suspended by an ingenious mechanism over the roaring wood fire, was beginning to utter signs of welcome import.

Plates, dishes, tables, and chairs are unknown luxuries in one of these dwellings. The pan, placed on a huge log measuring some three feet across the level surface, was our plate, dish, and table in common; the spoon, invariably carried along with the sharp knife in a separate pocket of the owner, conveyed the steaming mess from the pan to the mouth; and a small barrel holding some eight or ten quarts of water, with a hollow piece of wood an inch or two in length placed near the bung-hole, was our glass and jug.

It requires a very formidable appetite to be able to eat any quantity of a genuine woodcutter's "Schmarn." Terribly greasy, it satiates with marvelous rapidity; and one can only look on with astonishment at the incredible quantities which these men will consume. They eat it three times a day; in fact, it is their only food, save a hunch of bread, and perhaps now and again a few slices of bacon.

A small bag-full of tea invariably forms part of my chamois-stalking kit, and so, after the dispatch of our supper, I proposed to indulge in the inestimable luxury of a panful of tea. Now, to the mind of a Tyrolese the word tea (or "Thee") conveys any thing but an agreeable impression. Teas are with them the simple decoctions of herbs and leaves of certain trees and bushes, used only for medicinal purpose. Thus they have a tea for coughs, a tea for pains in the chest, another for bile, rheumatism, and even, strange to say, a tea for sprained ankles or dislocated joints! My proposition therefore called forth the usual inquiry, "Wo felts?" ("Where is the ailing?") My explaining to them that this was Chinese tea, and that certain nations drank it once or twice every day of their lives, created a general laughter, and the covert hint that no wonder the "Städtler," or people from towns, were such pale-faced and spindle-shanked individuals.

Filling the pan with clean water, I re-adjusted it over

the fire, and looked about me for a second vessel into which to pour the boiling water. My inquiry to this effect brought forth a somewhat odd "teapot." It was a tin wash-hand-basin, knocked in and beat into a hardly recognizable shape. The traces of lard on its sides indicated very plainly to what use it had been put, namely, for the conveyance of their store of this indispensable commodity.

Well cleaned with hot water, it was a capital substitute for a teapot, and often I have not even had one so serviceable.

After placing a handful of tea in a muslin bag expressly reserved for this purpose, and putting the latter into the "teapot," I poured the boiling water over it; a few minutes later, a steaming bowl of tea, free from the leaves, which remained in the bag, was standing on the log.

Sweetening it with some sugar from my store, I invited my companions, who had been watching my proceedings with a half-comical, half-serious expression of face, to partake of the "Chinese tea."

A few drops satisfied them; and they put down their spoons with the hint that they were not ill.

Well knowing their tastes, I first of all drank as much as I wanted, and then poured an ample allowance of "Schnapps" into the tea. This produced a great change for the better, as my hosts informed me, and they finished the basin with great relish. Far more, however, than the tea, did they admire my tobacco; and soon the hut was filled with dense clouds of my bird's-eye (smuggled into Austria at the cost of great trouble and stratagem), of which, being an inveterate smoker, I always carry a goodly store with me on expeditions of like kind.

Tea and tobacco had loosened our tongues as only those two comforts of life can do. Merry songs, gay stories of sporting exploits or serious adventures, told in a quaint, pleasing fashion, that attracts the listener in an inexplicable manner, went round, making very frequently the frail structure over our heads resound with our merry peals of laughter.

The cold night air — we were at an altitude of considerably over 6,000 feet — and the splashing of rain that found an easy ingress through the unprotected doorway, the smoke-hole, and various clefts and holes in the sides and roof of the hut, made me glad of my coat; while these marvelously hardy fellows, in their shirt-sleeves, open shirt-fronts, and short leathers displaying limbs of truly gigantic power, and knees as scarred and scratched and mahogany-hued as one can possibly imagine, seemed as comfortable and warm in their scanty attire as if the midday sun of a summer's day were shining upon us.

Two of the four woodcutters turned out to be noted poachers; and after I had gained their confidence by means of several little knacks with which long practice has made me acquainted, they came out with some of their adventures while following that dangerous craft. They produced their rifles, — hidden among the dry branches of the roof, — and showed me their simple but effective mechanism. The stock, namely, could be unscrewed from the barrel, and thus the whole rifle could be carried underneath the coat or in the "Rucksack," without awakening suspicion in the mind of any keeper who happened to meet them. The older of the two, a man of about thirty-two, had had several very close encounters with the keepers of the neighboring Bavarian preserves. A terrible cut, disfiguring his whole face, was one of the wounds, while the brawny back he exposed to my view to corroborate his tale bore in numerous holes the marks of a gunshot wound.

On my asking him when and how it happened, he replied, with a somewhat grim smile, that he was willing to tell me the story; "For," he added, "that shot," meaning the one in his back, "was the last one that — (keeper) fired. Why did he miss me with his rifle? As if I cared much for these peas at a distance of more than forty yards!" The fact that many keepers carry double-barreled guns, one barrel rifled for ball, the second for shot, explains these words. The keeper had missed the poacher with his first barrel, and, instead of keeping his shot till

closer quarters, had fired it when the poacher was yet some forty yards distant. The latter had turned instinctively when he saw the keeper intending to fire, and thus received the small-sized shot in his back, doing but little injury, and without preventing him from taking vengeance in too summary a manner on the person of the foe, who, I must add, had shot at him on a previous occasion.

The second poacher, my neighbor to the right, I knew by reputation.

Of gigantic build, rare power and agility, he one time succeeded in beating off three keepers. They had just left an Alp-hut in order to fetch some wood to make a fire, and had left their rifles in the inside of the *châlet*, when all of a sudden "Dare-devil Hans" (the name by which my friend went) appeared on the scene. Perceiving that they were armed only with their alpenstocks and a hatchet, he placed himself with his back to the outside of the closed door of the hut, and defended himself so bravely with his alpenstock against his would-be captors, that he not only injured two very severely, but actually put them to the rout, bagging their three rifles and a chamois as his legitimate spoils. Two years after his relating me this tale, the poor fellow had to pay with his life for his daring raids in strange preserves. Like numbers of his brethren, he fell a victim to the hatred of his relentless foes, the keepers. Shot right through the body, he had yet sufficient strength to outstrip his pursuers; and, faint with loss of blood, he made his way to the distant Alp-hut tenanted by his girl, only to expire in her arms the following day.

To show how close temptation lay to my hosts, I may mention that they had simply to cross a sort of gorge, ascend the opposite slope, and they were within the boundaries of a royal Bavarian preserve splendidly stocked with game.

Saturday afternoon and Sunday are the woodcutters' days of recreation. The men either follow their perilous sport, or they visit their sweethearts in their solitary *châlets*, or they descend from their lofty perch and make their

way to the verdant valley, whence, staggering under the potent influence of strong liquor, with bags filled with flour, bread, butter, and lard, — their provisions for the next fortnight or three weeks, — they re-ascend late on Sunday night. Their wages, I may add, vary between 90 kreutzers and 1 florin 40 kreutzers (1*s.* 10*d.* to 2*s.* 10*d.*). The proceeds of poached game are generally ridiculously low, for the innkeeper who buys it knows very well how they have come by it, and the vendor has to accept quite nominal prices. Thus a roebuck fetches 2 to 3 florins (4*s.* to 6*s.*), and a chamois even less.

We retired to our couches at a late hour; quite soon enough, however, for me to pass an uncomfortable night, wedged in between two of my strapping hosts. At half-past four we were up cooking our breakfast; and while they were buckling on their crampons (these men hardly ever work without them on their feet) I examined my rifle, intending to enjoy a stalk on my way home.

The rain was still coming down in torrents; and the rivulet, quite an insignificant watercourse the night before, was now a swollen and roaring torrent.

We were just about to set out on our different vocations when in rushed a man dripping with water. It seems that about two hours off another gang of woodcutters were at work. Their hut, built on the brink of a rivulet, had been torn away in the night, while they were sleeping, by the rushing and roaring masses of water of the rivulet, now a mighty torrent. Two of them had been injured, — one rather severely, the man told us, the other but slightly. He had come to ask us to aid him and his comrade to transport the injured men to the nearest houses, where medical aid could be procured.

Of course we were all ready to accompany him, and putting our best foot foremost, we reached the scene of the disaster within an hour and a half from the time we started. Not a stick or vestige of the hut remained to indicate the spot where it had stood.

The poor fellows were in a sad plight: they had lost their provisions, bags, axes, and crampons; and though

the two latter articles were subsequently recovered some considerable way down the bed of the torrent, yet their loss was for them a very severe one.

By means of a litter made of two long poles, some pine-branches, and my blanket, we transported the severely-injured man to the next house, five hours off; while his companion, who had been stunned, had recovered himself sufficiently not to require our help. He and one of his *confrères* remained at the scene of the disaster in order to raise another hut in a more secure spot. About noon we reached our destination, the first house of a straggling little hamlet.

The doctor, who lived in a large village some fifteen miles off, was immediately sent for, and about ten o'clock at night he arrived, accompanied by our faithful messenger.

The injuries which the man had received were severe, but his strong constitution pulled him through; and when, some four or five months later, I had occasion to pass through this hamlet again, I was told that he had joined his mates some weeks before.

It must seem strange to readers surrounded by luxuries and comforts of every kind, to hear that a patient had to wait ten hours for medical assistance. This, however, is by no means a particularly long delay in the arrival of medical aid. I have known forty-eight hours to elapse after an accident before the doctor or surgeon came. In winter it is often quite impossible to cross the mountains between straggling hamlets and the next village which boasts of a doctor. That the duties of a medical man in the rural districts of Tyrol are excessively arduous, — and they are shamefully underpaid by Government, — we can well fancy.

In many of the villages the doctor has to leave his bed, winter and summer, at half-past three o'clock in the morning to attend to the peasants who need his advice. They come from the surrounding heights and mountain slopes, their homes, to attend the four-o'clock early mass; and prior to their entering the church they look in upon the doctor, state their ailings, and then at half-past four,



when mass is over, they fetch the medicine which the doctor has made up in the mean while.

To return to the wood-fellers: I have yet to relate a little adventure which I once experienced along with three of these rough, original beings.

We had been shooting in the preserves of my companion's native village, skirting the Bavarian frontier for many miles. I had been unsuccessful on both days, when at last, towards the evening of the second one, I got a shot at a splendid stag carrying fourteen points. He had come up a short ravine, and was just breasting the top when my ball entered his chest, striking it, however, in an oblique direction. My ball, a large one, failed to penetrate the animal, but nevertheless brought him down upon his knees. The Bavarian frontier was not more than a hundred yards off, and should the stag succeed in regaining the use of his limbs and crossing the frontier line, he was lost to us, further pursuit involving great danger on account of the ever-watchful Bavarian keepers. Hastily reloading my rifle, I made for the spot where my victim was kneeling. To reach him I had to scramble down some very precipitous cliffs, at the bottom of which a small stream ran. Intending to ford this stream at a certain point, I rushed down the cliffs. On reaching the bottom I saw that I had mistaken the site of the ford; but it was too late to stop my headlong course, and, the streamlet being too broad to be crossed by a flying leap, I and my rifle were floundering a second later in a deep hole worn in the solid rock by the action of the water.

On regaining the shore, a matter of some difficulty, owing to the smooth, polished rock that surrounded me on every side, I put aside my now useless rifle, and, armed with my knife, I hastened up the steep cliff flanking the gorge to the spot where I expected to find the stag. He was gone, and the gory track left no doubt in what direction, — of course down the ravine, right into the Bavarian preserves. My mortification can be fancied: a "fourteener" — a rare piece of good luck — to be lost at the very moment of success. The wounded hart could

not have gone far, very probably not farther than a few hundred yards, and there, breaking down, would die a lingering death within a few paces of the frontier.

My three companions, attracted by my shot, soon made their appearance. To pursue the wounded stag would be certainly a very risky undertaking, and yet we could not leave the noble animal to its fate. My companions, though woodcutters, were in this instance no poachers, and entertained a wholesome dread of the sharp practices of the Bavarian keepers, who often follow their call to surrender by the sharp bang of their dreaded rifles. We decided to refrain from taking any decisive step that evening, but rather to await the morrow. By that time, we hoped, any keeper who might have been attracted to the spot by my shot would have left, leaving us free scope to pursue the wounded hart. Dawn of day found us tracing the track of the stag across the frontier down the slopes of the ridge, along the height of which ran the boundary line. We had not proceeded for more than a mile at the utmost when we came upon the stag, stretched out below the overhanging boughs of a huge pine; he was yet living, though evidently in a dying state. The "Knickfang" with my hunting-knife, i.e., the severing the spinal cord at the point where neck and back join, soon put the poor animal out of its pain. To enable the reader to understand the details of the following incident, I must mention that the tree under which the wounded stag had taken refuge stood in the center of a clearing, flanked on two sides by high bluffs, while steep precipices hedged it in on the two other sides. We were just preparing to brittle the noble animal, intending to quarter it afterwards, in order to carry it off in this way, when, without the slightest notice on the part of our assailants, two shots were fired at us. The distance was, however, fortunately so great—the keepers were ambuscaded behind some bushes on the top of the bluffs overlooking the level clearing—that both struck the ground some yards from our position. We did not give our foes time for a repetition of the volley, for, with sundry angry oaths,

my three companions collected their rifles and the sacks they had laid aside, and, following in my wake, we gained the sheltering wood, and some minutes later our own preserves in safety. Of course the stag was lost to us, the keepers not only obliging us to retreat, but being rewarded for their watching by a noble "fourteener."

## CHAPTER XI.

## ALPINE CHARACTERS : THE SMUGGLER.

FIVE and seventy years ago smuggling was one of the chief resources for many of the inhabitants of remote valleys and glens in Tyrol, adjoining either Bavarian or Italian boundaries.

The Tyrolese smugglers were renowned in those days, not only for the bold and cunning manner in which they carried on these dangerous trades, often on an amazingly large scale, but also for the daring courage with which they resisted the armed excisemen. Nowadays the decrease of duty on the two or three articles that were smuggled, such as tobacco and silk into Tyrol, and gunpowder, schnapps (spirits), and salt, out of it, renders it far less remunerative than formerly.

Nothing proves the decrease of smuggling more strikingly than the fact that, while formerly forty and fifty smugglers and customs officials were annually killed or severely wounded in nocturnal encounters in the by-ways of the Alps, nowadays scarcely four or five men fall victims to the rifle of the officer or of the smuggler.

Pitched battles between small bodies of the detested "Grenzwächter," or "Finanzer" — customs officers — and well-armed smugglers were of yore by no means rare occurrences ; but now, owing, as I have said, to the decrease of duty, they happen but very rarely, and no doubt the next ten years will witness the total extinction of an interesting race, that of the "Schwärzer" or "free-trader."

In speaking, therefore, of Tyrolese smugglers of the

old and genuine type, hardy and dauntless mountaineers, wily and resolute foes of the Government officers, we are speaking of beings of the past ; and just on that account it may, before their existence becomes a matter of tradition, or at the best of hearsay, prove of some interest, perhaps, to touch upon the manifold dangers that beset the path of these daring fellows.

In the course of my wanderings in Tyrol, and among the queer people met in odd, out-of-the-way nooks and corners, I have come across not a few smugglers and ex-smugglers. A little practice and close watching of a man's behavior soon enables one to say, after a quarter or half an hour's conversation, if he is or was a member of the fraternity in question. In many instances I have succeeded in drawing out my victim by the dark hint that I was aware of his present or former avocation ; and my assertion, based, I need hardly say, upon my impression only, has been generally rewarded by the mention of one or two interesting adventures, told with that trusting sincerity and quaint humor, entirely free from bravado or exaggeration, which, when once you have known how to gain their confidence, distinguish friendly intercourse with Tyrolese in remote districts.

The most interesting man of this stamp I have ever met with was, beyond doubt, Johann K——, whose acquaintance I happened to make in an odd manner.

Eight or nine years ago, in fact, one of the first summers I spent in my second home, Tyrol, I was making a pedestrian tour among the medium-sized mountain ridges that skirt the Achenthal, close to the Bavarian frontier. One day, while I was yet high up on the peaks, night overtook me ; and not being acquainted with the ground I intended to pass, and no Alp-hut being near, I had to make the best of a small log-hut erected by the owner of the elevated pasturage as a storehouse for the winter's fodder.

On entering by the square hole about three feet by two feet, cut in the solid timber, I found the lower partition of the hut, measuring perhaps thirteen or fourteen feet square,

empty. A ladder leading up to a square opening in the boards that formed the ceiling invited me to a closer inspection of the top story, in hopes of finding a couple of armfuls of hay for a bed. The roof, shelving down on both sides, was in the center only three feet from the floor, so that, an erect position being quite out of the question, I had to crawl about in search of the hay. In one of the corners I at last came upon some spread out and flattened down by its frequently having been lain on.

Finishing the remains of a very frugal dinner, I was soon in possession of this soft corner, and shortly afterwards fell asleep with my head resting on my Rucksack.

Two or three hours might have passed, when all of a sudden I was awaked by a heavy weight bumping against my side. Lying quite still, I soon became aware that it was a man who had thus disturbed me. Five minutes later loud snoring proved that he was fast asleep.

Now only did I rise upon my knees, and, creeping forward, take a peep down the hole, to which I had been attracted by the light of a fire and the loud voices of several men.

The sight that struck my eyes was odd and fantastic, forcibly reminding me of the thrilling scenes in tales of robbers and brigands, with which a boy's youthful mind is enthralled. A bright fire burning in the center of the hut on the bare floor showed me five stalwart men, with soot-blackened faces, lying in various poses round the burning logs, with their rifles at their side, and six huge packages piled up against the hole which served as doorway. No doubt was left in my mind that the occupants of the hut, whose mysterious arrival I had not heard, were smugglers, and the hut their rendezvous. The manner in which this trade was formerly carried on required that there should be a place of meeting in some remote and inaccessible part of the mountains close to the frontier. Here the smugglers would meet, the Bavarians bringing tobacco and silk stuffs; the Tyrolese, schnapps, salt, or gunpowder. After settling their accounts, each man paying for what he received, they again parted, the

Bavarians returning with the salt or powder, the Tyrolese with tobacco and silk, on their backs. These meetings occurred at certain intervals, were conducted with the greatest caution and secrecy, and always took place at night, in order that both parties might reach their starting-point before daybreak.

My position, of course, was not the most agreeable. Had I been discovered by them, and suspected of espionage, my lot might perhaps have been a somewhat tragical finish to a pedestrian tour.

Retreating to my corner when my curiosity was satisfied, I took up my *Rucksack*, and hid it and myself in the opposite corner of the hut.

Lying down *ventre à terre*, and squeezing myself into the angle produced by the shelving roof and floor, I was not only pretty safe from discovery as long as darkness reigned around me, but was also enabled, through a chink in the floor, which I cautiously widened by means of my knife, to watch the company lounging round the fire a few feet below me. For more than two hours did I watch the group. Merry stories, snatches of lively songs, and tid-bits of the last village-ball scandal, went the rounds when once business and shop had been talked over, and the money for the tobacco and silks brought hither by the Bavarians paid by the Tyrolese; the salt and schnapps which the latter had brought being naturally of much less value, the balance owed by them was considerable, in one instance amounting to more than eighty florins (£8), the man in question carrying the enormous weight of 120 German pounds, or about 150 pounds English.

It must have been some time between twelve and one o'clock when they rose, and began their preparations for starting. One of them, running up the ladder, poked his head through the hole and called his sleeping companion.

A couple of grunts and an audible bump of the head against the rafters of the roof were the signal that my bed-fellow was leaving his somewhat confined resting-place.

On emerging from the darkness, when he reached the bottom of the ladder, I was astonished to perceive that he

had not blackened his face, an omission which he, however, made good by pulling out a black mask and fastening it by strings before his face. In the few minutes that elapsed prior to his doing so, I had ample time for a close scrutiny. A man of about fifty-four, of large proportions and evidently great muscular strength, he seemed to exercise a sort of command not only over his two companions, but also over the three Bavarian smugglers. Taking up his huge package on his back, and his rifle at half-cock under his arm, he made his exit through the low and narrow hole that served as a door. One of his companions had gone before him to see if the coast was clear; and on his reporting that every thing was safe, the fire was raked out, the bundles taken up, and a few seconds later the hut was empty.

Just five years after this adventure, I was one day sitting in the bar-room of the village of A——, drinking a glass of beer after a somewhat hot and dusty tramp of many hours on the scorched high-road leading from Tegersee to the Achensee, when a man entered the room, and sat down close to me. I knew his face; but when and where I had seen him I could not say. I began a conversation with him, asking him point-blank if he did not remember me. A sharp glance from beneath his shaggy eyebrows, and a curt "No," was his answer. After a few more words my taciturn *vis-à-vis* rose, paid for his beer, and with a short "B'hüt di," for a good-by, left the room and the house. Asking the "Kellnerin" if she knew who the man was, she told me in a mysterious sort of way that he was now a well-to-do peasant, having once been but a poor penniless lad; but how he had amassed his wealth—a man with eight or nine hundred pounds' fortune is considered rich—nobody knew; nor could they say why pretty Nannie, the only daughter of a well-to-do peasant, could have married taciturn and even morose Johann twice as old as herself. On pressing her a little further, she hinted that people said he had been years ago a daring smuggler, and that Nannie's father was supposed to have been one of his comrades in this dan-



gerous trade. She had hardly pronounced the word "Schwärzer" — smuggler — when the whole scene of that night in the hovel flashed across my mind. My curt *vis-à-vis* was none other than my bed-fellow in the hay-loft five years before. A couple of months after this second meeting I succeeded, not without some difficulty, in making the acquaintance of Johann K——, the rich peasant and ex-smuggler.

One evening, on returning from deer-stalking in the forests close to Johann's house, which latter I had made my night-quarters, on purpose to have a quiet chat, I was sitting alone with him, in front of his house, under the broad awning of the balcony running the whole length of the first floor, when I led the conversation to the ridge of mountains — about six hours off — the site of my first *rencontre*. Knowing it would be useless to endeavor to gain the confidence of my reticent host by any other means, I shortly afterwards told him that I knew what his former occupation had been, and related to him how the whole thing came to pass. Jumping up, he placed himself in front of me, and offered me his brawny palm. My bold tactics had gained the man's trust; and the reticent smuggler, evidently convinced of my sincerity by my having kept his secret, was now a grave but frank man, of that bold and firm character which, in Tyrol, is frequently hidden under a mask of suspicious moroseness repelling the approach of strangers.

That same night, sitting in the roomy parlor, uninterrupted by wife or child, he related to me his whole life's adventures and exploits.

"My grandfather," he began, "and my father were both engaged in the smuggling trade between M——, my native village in Bavaria, and Tyrol. The former, owner of an inn, chiefly confined himself to concealing the goods smuggled in by others, and selling them secretly to peasants, grocers, and innkeepers. One night a descent was made on his house by the custom-officers, and before the sacks of powder and kegs of spirits that had just

been brought could be concealed in their usual hiding-place, the armed officials had effected an entrance, and my grandfather and two of his mates were taken prisoners. Condemned to a long term of imprisonment, my grandfather died before its expiration. My father, a lad of twenty at the time, leaving the management of the inn to his mother, left for Tyrol, where he found employment as a cattle-driver. Detesting his country, he enlisted as a common soldier in the Tyrolese ranks on the outbreak of the French war in the last year of the last century. He fought at several battles, and in one — that of Berg Isel (1809), near Innsbrück — where less than 18,000 Tyrolese peasants routed more than 26,000 Bavarian and French troops, he distinguished himself in so marked a manner that Hofer, the Tyrolese general, made him a lieutenant on the battlefield. At one of the last engagements of that memorable war, he was severely wounded, and while he lay at the point of death in a peasant's house, the news of his mother's death reached him.

“He recovered, and subsequently married the peasant's daughter who had nursed him through his illness.

“Fearing to return to Bavaria, lest he should be prosecuted for espousing the Tyrolese cause in the late war, he sold the heavily-mortgaged inn, and dividing the proceeds with his brother, invested his share, amounting to a few hundred florins, in cattle. He made one journey to Central Russia with his breeding cows, but on his way back was robbed of every penny, and he gave up this business. As I had been born in his absence, he decided, on the earnest wish of my mother, to turn to farming. Renting a small peasant's cottage and three or four acres of land, he recommenced life. His hopes of succeeding in his farming, however, were destined to be disappointed, for hardly had he been on his farm a year when the murrain killed his two cows, and he was at starvation's door.

“In this moment of need his brother, who, it seems, had kept up a connection with the smugglers with whom my grandfather had been associated, succeeded in enti-

cing my father to join him and three or four other daring fellows, to establish a regular smuggling trade between Kufstein and a small townlet in Bavaria.

“The Alpine passes traversed by these intrepid free-traders were high and steep, rendering each venture or expedition a fatiguing march of some ten or twelve hours. All went well for a year or so, till one unlucky night my father and three others were successfully waylaid by a party of six customs officials. The ‘Halt, or we shoot!’ ringing out in the dark night at a few paces’ distance, brought my father’s rifle to his shoulder—he usually walked with it under his arm at half-cock—and before the aggressors had the opportunity to act upon their threat, my father had fired at the dark form of the leader, hardly five or six paces off. The path was at that point very narrow, and skirted on one side by a high wall of rock, on the other by a diminutive precipice some twenty or five and twenty feet in depth, ending, as my father knew, in ground covered by the dense brushwood of the latschen. The moment he fired, he leaped down the precipice, four or five shots passing over his head. The weight of his load saved him, for he fell on his back, the strong wicker-work ‘Kraksen’ in which he carried the gunpowder, the article of his venture on that occasion, breaking his fall.

“The man in his rear was shot, while one of the remaining two was taken prisoner, the third escaping.

“Hastily hiding his goods under some brushwood, my father took to his heels, and reached home in safety before daybreak. This unpleasant *rencontre* naturally cast a deep gloom over the members of the ‘company’ [as my informer naïvely termed it]. The man who had been shot died the same night. The official whom my father had shot at was wounded in the arm; while the second member, who, as I have related, was captured, proved ‘game,’ and resolutely refused to mention the names of his comrades, though he well knew that his sentence would only be the severer by his reticence.

“Notwithstanding this, however, suspicion fell upon

my father, and the house was ransacked by customs officials. They not finding any thing of a suspicious nature, my father escaped with a solemn warning. For nearly two years their trade was at a standstill ; and it was only when dire want stared us in the face that my father thought of resuming his dangerous traffic.

“ This time, however, he undertook it alone, and on his own account ; and by dint of great caution, and by leaving an interval of more than a week between each journey, he managed to escape detection for a considerable period. Once, indeed, he was on the point of being discovered. The man who always met him on the frontier to exchange tobacco and silks for the spirits or salt had been prevented by some reason or other from keeping the rendezvous.

“ After waiting the whole night for him in the usual place, a cave, my father determined to pass the frontier, and repair to the man’s habitation, an outlying peasant’s cottage four or five hours off.

“ Having washed his blackened face at a brook, — as in daytime it would tend to attract attention, — he secreted his rifle in the cave, and then crossed the imaginary frontier line, formed by a high ridge of mountains, and entered Bavaria, his native soil, untrodden by him for many years, though his ‘ trade ’ brought him to within a few yards of its boundary forty or fifty times in the year.

“ He had not proceeded far down the slopes on the Bavarian side when he perceived, a short distance off, a Bavarian ‘ Grenzwächter.’

“ Trusting he would let him pass under the supposition that he was a peasant on a legitimate errand, and seeing that flight was impossible, he continued to walk on.

“ Whether it was that some remnant of soot on my father’s face, or some other sign, roused the officer’s suspicion, certain it is that on coming up to him he ordered my father to show him the contents of the ‘ Kraksen ’ on his back.

“ Resistance to this command, unarmed as he was, would have been madness, the official having his gun at full cock in his hands, ready to shoot at the first sign of resistance.

“My father, pulling down his Kraksen, and playing the part of a pig-headed peasant lout, replied that ‘he well knew that there was no law compelling a peaceful peasant, carrying his butter from his *châlet* to the village, to show the contents of his Kraksen to every man who might desire it. If he wanted to see what was in it he would please kindly open it himself, for he would not.’ The officer, though assured by my father’s quiet tone that he was not a smuggler, but rather a stubborn peasant boor, thought he would punish this saucy demeanor by turning the contents of the Kraksen upside down, and laying aside his gun, bent down to unfasten the divers strings that held down the lid. This was just what my father had waited for; and with one sledge-hammer stroke of his enormous fist he floored the unfortunate officer.

“My father, of course, decamped with his Kraksen; but before doing so he broke the officer’s rifle, sword, and bayonet across his knee, leaving the pieces in a pile by the side of his senseless foe. Strange to say, he never heard any more of this affair; but he vowed that he would never again cross the Bavarian frontier, and he kept his word.

“Several years passed, and I was about fourteen, when one day my father called me aside, and told me in his abrupt manner that he would take me with him on a ‘journey’ that night. My father’s manner and serious tone assured me that my accompanying him was no ordinary occurrence of life, an impression rendering superfluous the caution that I was to keep all that I might see or hear a profound secret. ‘If you behave well and do all that I tell you,’ my father continued, ‘you need not attend school any longer.’ Now, this was a grand and joyous vista to a boy who detested school work as I did; and though as five months of the year were holidays, and I was in the last year of school, my joy was perhaps foolish at my sudden promotion to manhood, yet nevertheless that day was the happiest of my life.

“Full of impatience and curiosity, I refrained from retiring to my bed at the usual hour of eight or half-past,

but waited up for the return of my father, who had gone out when he had finished his tilling for the day. I need hardly tell you that my father's occupation as smuggler had been kept a dead secret ; only my mother knew of it, and when now and again I met him returning home at an early hour in the morning, I never troubled my mind about it.

“At nine o'clock my father returned, and bidding me follow him, led the way into the dark night. For two hours he walked on with his usual quick and long step.

“We had passed up through a dense forest, and on emerging from it crossed a small plateau, on which were scattered here and there log-built huts for hay.

“The one highest up belonged to the peasant property which we rented. A low whistle of my father was answered in the same key, and we jumped through the hole giving entrance to the hut.

“By the light of a small lantern, which my father lit, I perceived three men sitting on logs. Only when two of them accosted me by my name did I recognize my uncle and one of our neighbors, their blackened faces disguising them completely. The third man was a stranger to me.

“Pulling out a box full of soot, my father proceeded to blacken his own face and mine. While we were busy, two of the men had pushed aside a heap of hay in one of the corners, and after removing a few inches of earth, they laid bare a sort of trap-door. Opening it, they both disappeared in the cavity below it, re-appearing in a few seconds with two large Kraksen.

“This maneuver they repeated twice or three times, bringing to light two more large Kraksen, a smaller one which was apparently empty, and four rifles.

“The smaller Kraksen being filled with hay, and the lid carefully bound down, my father told me to take it on my back, and proceeded to give me his instructions. According to them I was to proceed at a moderate pace up a certain path leading towards the Bavarian frontier, and passing a deserted *châlet*, about two or two hours and a half from our starting-point.

“On approaching this hut I was to sing a certain ‘jodler.’ A whistle from within would be my signal to enter the hut, but before entering I was to ‘jodeln’ in a loud voice. On my way up, my father continued, I should at intervals of five minutes give the signal that all was right, by singing. I may mention that I was by no means a bad singer, being not only a strong boy for my age, but possessing great taste for music, and a strong voice.

“The four men were to follow in my wake, leaving a certain distance between me and them.

“The nature of the business was now no longer a riddle to me; and thus my father’s hint, that in case I should be stopped by anybody I should desist from ‘jodelning,’ and so give them a negative warning, was quite superfluous.

“A little before half-past eleven I started in my new character as scout; and right merrily did I make my ‘jodels’ ring out in the dark night, the surrounding heights and precipices returning the sound two and three-fold.

“In the allotted time I reached the hut; and my merry ‘A braunauged’s Dirnd’e h’an i’im Herzen’ (‘A brown-eyed maid is in my heart’), — the song indicated by my father, — was answered by the preconcerted low whistle. The inside of the *châlet* was very similar to the one I had left two or three hours ago, the only difference being that a fire was burning on the ground, round which four men were taking their ease. The single window there was boarded up so that not a ray of light would betray them, and with their rifles at their side the men were evidently prepared for danger.

“All of them being strangers to me, my position was for the first moment somewhat embarrassing.

“For the first moment, however, only; for, slapping my back, and praising my accurate observance of the instructions received from my father, they offered me a bottle of schnapps, and, after I had a good pull at it, the owner invited me to share his seat beside the fire. How grand it seemed to me thus to be treated as a man and

fellow-smuggler ! How elated I was at the few words of praise that fell from the lips of my ‘companions !’

“ My father and his three confederates shortly arrived ; and now for the first time I learned that the venture of that night was one of especial importance, the smuggled goods being of great value. The Bavarians, for such were the first occupants of the hut, after paying for the goods and leaving their bales of tobacco, departed shortly afterwards, it being later than usual.

“ Our return was performed in a manner similar to our journey thither ; and having deposited our Kraksen and rifles in the usual hiding-place, we reached our respective homes shortly after break of day.

“ Thus ended my momentous *début* in the character of smuggler. The sense of danger lurking at one’s heels, the free life, and, lastly but not least, the animating influence of the constant state of alertness which must distinguish a smuggler successful in his craft, engendered in me the resolution that henceforth free-trading should be my occupation, and success in it the goal of my ambition.

“ For two years I acted as my father’s scout, and on two different occasions did my tactics save him and his companions. When I was stopped in my nocturnal wanderings by the usual ‘Halt, or we shoot !’ of the ‘Grenzwächter,’ you can paint to yourself their disappointment and mortification when the supposed smuggler turned out to be but a poor ‘Wurzengraber’ — digger of roots — and the contents of my Kraksen, the object of their researches, proved to be roots of the *Gentiana*<sup>1</sup> — or other Alpine plants.

“ My two years’ apprenticeship had made me an expert and daring smuggler ; and you can conceive my pleasure when one day my father announced to me that henceforth I should participate in their gains, and ‘carry my own goods.’

“ To enable me to buy the necessary stock for my first two or three ventures, my father handed me a compara-

<sup>1</sup> These roots are used very largely for distilling purposes, a strong and bitter spirit being manufactured from them.



tively ample sum of money, making me, however, promise that I would pay off my debt by installments.

“For two years our trade went on swimmingly, and I was laying up money for the proverbial rainy day. Sooner than we thought, did it make its appearance. One night on our return from the usual place of meeting, as we were hurrying down the narrow path leading to the hut where we used to conceal our goods, the ominous challenge of the *Grenzwächter* brought us to a dead halt. From the front and from the rear we were inclosed, and the formidable precipice at our side prevented any escape in that direction.

“My father, who was leading, fired, I following suit a second later. Of what happened afterwards I can give you no clear description. A fierce struggle with one of the *Grenzwächter* occupied me for the next few minutes. My great strength enabled me to rid myself of my foe very soon. Not so, however, of one of his mates, who, larger than I, made a fierce rush at me the moment I had regained my breath. I closed with him, and a terrible struggle began. Hither and thither we swayed, both of us trying to use our knives, but each firmly grasping the arm of the other. At last my firm grasp with my free hand upon my foe's throat began to tell, and a few seconds later he was lying half-dead at my feet. My father, who had shot the leader, had been himself wounded by a bullet, but not so severely as to render him *hors de combat*. One of our two confederates was disabled: the other was engaged in a fierce combat with two officials, who were endeavoring to get at him with their swords, while he kept them off with his clubbed rifle.

“Matters were terribly critical; but there was yet some chance of escape for those who were not disabled, when, to my dismay and horror, I heard shouts of approaching men, and a second or two later three shots rang out, and my father, to whose aid I was just making, fell to the ground with a groan. The feeble moonlight enabled me to perceive that a re-enforcement of three men, probably stationed farther down the road, had arrived.

“They were standing two abreast, the third at their rear, when, maddened by my father’s fall, and knowing that this was my only chance of escape, I rushed at them, and by the mere impetus of my attack sent one sprawling to the ground, while the second gave way, and the third, at his back, was floored by a blow of my clubbed rifle. Pursuit was vain: my limbs and sinews, strung to their utmost, would have defied much fleetier men than they. I reached home covered with perspiration, and nearly out of my wits at the fate of my father. Help of any kind was out of the question; and the only thing that remained for me to do was to inform my mother of his fate, and collect such trifles as I needed, together with the money I had saved. I knew that in a few hours our house would be closely searched for me. Bidding a tearful farewell to my mother, and telling her to write to me to her brother living in South Tyrol, I was off within twenty minutes of my arrival.

“Skirting the high roads, and keeping to forest-paths, I was fortunate enough to reach the next town within fourteen hours of my leaving our remote homestead.

“I slept in the hayloft of one of the houses outside of the town, and proceeded on my weary tramp the next day at sunrise.

“Eleven days of marching brought me finally to my destination, my uncle’s house, where I found a letter from my mother, in which she informed me that my father had died shortly after receiving his second and fatal wound, that one of our companions was severely wounded, and the other captured.

“The Grenzwächter had two dead and three wounded: you see, therefore, that our resistance was a vigorous one.

“For more than five years I stopped with my uncle, aiding him in his timber trade, and extending a helping hand wherever it was needed. On my uncle’s death I inherited half his modest fortune, which I embarked in cattle. In the course of the next fifteen years I made a number of journeys to Russia with varying success, so that at the end of this period, on getting tired of my

wandering life, I found myself the richer by nearly 2,500 florins (less than £250). I gave up my cattle business, and being then nearly forty, I resolved to marry.

“My mother had died years before, and the residue of my father’s savings, his brother had received.

“On visiting my old home, I could not refrain from seeing if my smuggler comrade, who had been taken prisoner that disastrous night, was still living. On entering his house, quite close to my home, now in strange hands, I learned that he had died ten or twelve years before, and that his widow had married again. His daughter had accompanied her mother to her new home some distance off, that peasant’s house yonder. Having nothing better on hand, I determined to visit the widow of the most intimate friend of my youth. On this visit I made the acquaintance of Nannie, now my wife. Young, very pretty, gay, and well aware that she was the heiress to a goodly fortune for a peasant-girl, she lent any thing but a willing ear to the courting of a somewhat mysterious personage, more than double her age (she was then seventeen), with no home over his head, and, for aught she knew, a penniless beggar; I had refrained from telling her or her mother of my savings. Twice I asked her if she would have me, and twice I was refused. Humbled in my own eyes, and mortified at the girl’s disdain, I left her dangerous neighborhood shortly after my second repulse.

“In my frame of mind, dissatisfied as I was with myself and with the world in general, the recollection of my youthful life as smuggler had a strange charm; what if the mature man, long past the giddy days of youth, should exchange a life of daily drudgery and poor returns for the free and animating avocation to which I had served my apprenticeship twenty long years before? More and more did this plan attract me; and from day to day the life of a smuggler, with its constant danger, seemed the only way to dispel my discontent. Determined and impulsive as I am, it did not take long to ripen my plans. My money placed in safe hands, I at

once made overtures to a set of smugglers by reputation more daring and bold than the ordinary run of men of this stamp. A week later I was a member of their 'company,' and had opened my campaign with an expedition of more than usual importance.

"Chopping and changing from one place to another, just where my fancy and the promise of large returns led me, I passed seven years. A lull in my trade enabled me to pay a visit to the house of Nannie's stepfather. I had not seen her during the intervening years. Handsomer than she was at seventeen, sedate, and more attractive than ever, the girl enchained my heart a second time; this time, however, my wooing was crowned with success, and a few months later I led my bride to the altar. My savings and the returns of my seven-years' smuggling ventures had nearly quadrupled the original sum. I bought the house we are sitting in, and the twenty-five acres surrounding it. For several years I lived the life of a steady-going peasant, happy and content. Gradually, however, my quiet humdrum life began to pall upon me, and an irrepressible longing to return to my old life came back. Rich, with all the comforts of life I desired, a loving and devoted wife at my side, and two children at my knee, I might well have been thought mad to endanger my life by exchanging my present position for that of a smuggler. Still, do what I would, the recollections of my old life were for ever dazzling my eyes.

"My former confederates, eager to win me back to my old course, succeeded at last in their endeavors. On and off, leaving often an interval of a month between ventures, I left my home for the two or three days necessary to reach and return from the scene of our smuggling operations. Fortune seemed to favor me, for not once were we stopped. My three companions, who looked upon smuggling as the means of gaining their daily bread, and not, as I did, as a pastime, had been fortunate in their transactions, so that one by one they dropped off, settling down in each case as steady peasants. The time you saw us we had lost only one member, the second one

following his example a short time afterwards. My wife, to whom I had confided my design, was of course greatly against it from the beginning, imploring me to desist from my ruinous procedure. Four years ago, when my third and last companion resolved to bid adieu to the trade, she at last succeeded in making me promise never again to put the mask before my face.

“Since that day I have lived a happy and contented life; the youthful fire has burnt out, and the wreck of the former smuggler is stranded high and dry on the shore of home life.”

It was late when this simple narrative of a life of restless adventures came to a close, and the stalwart, broad-shouldered man of sixty, rising from his seat, proffered me his brawny palm. With mine resting in his strong grip, and with glistening eyes, while pointing to the door of the next room, where his wife lay asleep, he remarked with deep feeling, “My life’s gratitude can not repay my debt to that woman: she it was, and she alone, that saved me perhaps from an ignominious death, and made me the man I am.”

## CHAPTER XII.

## ALPINE CHARACTERS : THE MOUNTAIN BELLE.

AN old German proverb, oft quoted by sixteenth-century authors, says : “ If thou wilt be jolly for a day, kill a pig ; if thou purposest to spend a festive week, have thyself bled and thy skin well scoured in the bath ; if thou wishest to be happy for a month, take to thyself a young and buxom wife : but if thou desirest peace for the rest of thy days, do neither.”

What a vast field for the pen plowshare of a fastidious critic does this quaint saying present ! Strange as it may sound, I would, however, humbly suggest to the carper intent upon caviling at this emanation of mediæval moralists, that before he puts pen to paper he spend a summer holiday on a visit to any one of the hundred remote Tyrolese villages nestling among somber pine forests, and overshadowed by craggy ridges of Alpine peaks far out of the track of the busy throng — a primitive little ant-hill world by itself.

An intimate acquaintance with the robust inhabitants — manly, not to say defiant, in their bearing, hardworking, but strangely vigorous and healthy, poor, but oddly content and satisfied with their lot, would prove to our *frondeur* that in this sprout of the dull mind of our forefather moralists, lies embedded a pearl of truth.

Poverty, or rather Dame Nature herself, by bequeathing to this hardy race a wretched soil and an inhospitable clime, has providentially taken care that the jolly days spent at the cost of pigs' lives are of a limited number ; and likewise has she, by instilling into their minds a

wholesome horror of all doctors, and, alas ! of water also, guarded against the frequent return of festive weeks ; and, lastly, have the people themselves — their primitive good sense deserves all comment — recognized, perhaps unwittingly, perhaps after bitter experience, the striking truth in these momentous words : “ If thou desirest peace for the rest of thy days, then do neither.”

True, impaired digestions, and minds morbidly alive to the so-called blessings of *Æsculap*'s craft, are decidedly more according to the dictates of civilization, than frugal habits ; for dirt, mind you, is eminently healthy, provided it is not that of civilization, but rather the cobwebbed mustiness of primitive habits — the dirt, in fact, of those generations of our forefathers, who knew not what soap was, and yet were men of a stamp which our modern civilization but very rarely manages to produce.

It is, however, not so much with the nice discernment evinced by the Tyrolese in regard to what is good for them in the way of eating, and respecting the degree of cleanliness which is beneficial to their vigorous health, that we wish to deal, but rather with their wonderful acumen that led them to recognize the sophistic meaning of those words, “ then do neither.”

If on examining the idiosyncrasies of this old and common-sense race we are lured into the belief that, apparently, they fail to act up to the letter of the warning, or, in other words, that a certain percentage of the males do take unto themselves wives, this discovery, on further consideration, turns out to be a chimera ; for though a number of luckless wights commit that act of self-abnegation, for, as Mr. Pickwick would say, the good of their race, they withal act upon the old proverb, which, without their really ever acknowledging or clearly knowing of its existence, has made them what they are ; for they but rarely take unto themselves that article against which the old romancers waxed wroth, namely, a young and buxom wife, but rather lead to the altar what was once upon a time young and buxom, but now is middle-aged, — a person, in fact, of whose qualities of character they have

assured themselves by long experience, who in the hey-day of her youth rewarded her future husband, the bold champion of many a sanguinary contest for her favors, with the free love of impulsive youth.

The Tyrolese are a stanch old race, strong in their desires, and, as everybody knows, singularly attached to their soil, and the customs of their forefathers. Hitherto they have resolutely turned their backs upon civilization; and Nature, hiding them away among the remotest recesses of the Alps, has herself helped very naturally in warding off the advances, good and bad, of the idol to which we all bow down.

Their lives are a true mirror of the thoughts and features, not of the late Middle Ages, as has often been remarked, but of centuries preceding that period, when man was man, however uncouth, and perhaps, to a civilized eye, uninviting in aspect.

All this is on the eve of radical changes. Civilization is making rapid strides in its endeavors to level the people to the common standard of half-educated clodhoppers who know how to handle a steam-plow, and equally well how to cheat their neighbors. The change will soon be rung; but for the people's character, and I maintain also for their moral tone, it is a Welsher's ring. Their manly uprightness, their primitive yet honest dealing between themselves, will soon be a thing of the past, and in future will be replaced by "civilized" sharpness; and for their characteristic features, their love of the soil and independent tone, will be substituted the uniform 'cuteness of a new world, where man — his specific idiosyncrasies — is whitewashed by a degenerating coat of selfish greed of gain, while the counterbalancing merits of enlightenment and real civilization are thrust from the site of this regeneration by the hand of Nature.

But what, the reader will exclaim, has all this to do with the heading of our chapter? what connection can there possibly exist between a mountain belle and cogitations of such a dismal cast? And yet there is a link, and a very strong one, between the history of a rural beauty and our



speculations respecting the future of the country ; for, kind reader, you must know that much of what I am going to tell you of the fair one's life belongs already actually to the past, or stands, at least, on the verge of oblivion, awaiting that self-same civilization's sarcastic sneer to consign it to the grave, or to the rambling memory of some old hag, who some years hence, perhaps, will astonish interviewing Cookites with a garbled account of her youthful love and folly.

There are, however, one or two spots left — favorite resorts of mine — where many of the old customs are still to be witnessed, not by the casual tourist, it is true, — for successive generations of bold young champions guard them most vigilantly against prying eyes, — but by those who have succeeded, by dint of assimilation to their habits, customs, and language, in penetrating the outer coat of reserve, and in gaining their confidence.

Will the reader be introduced to one of these favored spots? If so, he had better accept the proffered invitation of the robust young giant dressed in his Sunday best, in his hat a bunch of bright carnations, and a bold feather of the blackcock, the latter "turned" in the most approved champion fashion, to accompany him on his walk up to yonder Alp, whither "business" takes him.

It is a balmy summer Sunday morning. Every thing around us appears fresh and green ; the snowy peaks that ride overhead look enticingly cool, as they stand out in bold relief against the blue — the Alpine blue — of the heavens : far, far below us stands, amid a group of timber cottages, the little cleanly whitewashed village church, a speck of white in the vast expanse of various tints of verdant green. The eight-o'clock service is being rung in, and the soft melodious tones are wafted up, intermingled now and again by the distant echoes of a joyous jodel, issuing from the massive chest of some stalwart young swain, climbing, miles upon miles away from our own point of view, the steep declivities leading to the upland pasturages, and bent, as he would tell you, were you to ask him, on precisely the same errand as lends such length of

stride, such vigor, to our companion at our side, — some mysterious business, brooking no delay, in the lonely Alp-hut on high. We have to put our best foot foremost to keep up with our eager young friend, who scales the steep declivities, who vaults the swift Alpine streamlet coursing down from the snow-fields above, with a rapidity and ease such as only muscles born and bred to Alpine work can command.

“But, pray,” we are half inclined to ask of our companion, “what might be the nature of this pressing errand that lures you away, the only day you have to yourself, from human haunts, from your boon companions; that prompts you to exchange the gay scene of the shooting-match held this afternoon in the village, and where you were sure of winning a prize, or the no less exciting skittle-match where are pitted the best players of two rival villages, for the lonely Alp-hut on high?” Shall we press him to divulge the true reason? We had better not, methinks; for were we to do so, we would hear that a cow now about to calve, a bull suddenly to be fetched from the highland pasturages to be slaughtered, or some other equally innocent beast in sore exigency, required the presence of our guide; and after all a very Simon Pure would soon detect the real nature of the errand, even without the tell-tale flowers, the elated air, and the long-drawn, far-echoing jodler, that now is sent forth into the tranquil morning air. What dullard could mistake the import of that strain, so full of exuberant life and vigor, so full of tell-tale longing, and yet withal from the first note to the last so strikingly melodious and pleasingly harmonious in its varied cadence?

The echoes are yet ringing from side to side of the valley, when from far above us floats down the answer, emanating not from a rival's stalwart breast, swelled by jealous wrath, but from the full lips of the buxom lass for whose ear the strain, so full of appealing import, was intended. A note or two higher, in the full sweetness of a woman's silvery voice, it strikes the ear yet more sweetly than did the more sonorous love-cry of the man. At last

the echoes have died away, lost in the somber forests at our feet, in grand Nature, herself; they have returned to her that created them.

Our companion jerks his hat more on one side, and throws his jacket jauntily over his shoulder, while a smile of elated pride spreads over his face, as we resume our upward march.

"Ah, sir!" he presently, in the fullness of his heart, will begin, "she's all that I have, she's more than life itself to me; she's the truest, the prettiest lass in the village."

We let him talk on, for his heart is brim-full of joy: he has a happy twenty-four hours before him.

His mind is free from trouble and care; for before setting out, like a good Christian he attended four-o'clock mass, and afterwards confessed the last fortnight's sins and transgressions. Absolution was accorded him, and he started on his lover's errand with a clean bill of eternal health. Won't it please his pretty dark-eyed "Kati," when he tells her that the good kind Herr Vicar granted him absolution so readily, no penance to speak of was imposed; for the three "rosaries" he got will be prayed in the company of his lass, kneeling at the large weather-cross standing beside her elevated summer residence, where one short twelvemonth ago he plighted his troth. From that day the dark-eyed lassie was his sole though perhaps not undisputed property.

Long strides and powerful lungs take us up the last steep incline in double-quick time, and presently we gain the eminence, and sally forth from the somber pine-covered forest into an undulating Alpine plateau covered with verdure from end to end. There yonder stands the lowly little hut, the timber browned by time and weather; and in front of it sits the pretty queen of this Alpine retreat, fair "Kati." Our steps quicken, and soon we are at her side. Her dimpled cheek of a healthy brown is permeated by a pleasant smile as she extends her hand to us. We turn to watch the greeting between the two lovers; but beyond a warm smile, and perhaps a shade more color on her face, nothing betrays that he is

more to her than we the strangers. She does not give him her hand, nor does he seem to expect it ; and where more demonstrative mortals would have gushingly evinced their mutual delight, they turn aside from each other reticent and self-possessed. But so they are, these mountain-bred children of stern nature. Reserved to a degree, they are only too prone to exhibit to the curious gaze of the stranger their cold rugged outside, gnarled by hard work and privation. To him it is enough to know that he is near her, that presently under the cover of some kindly shelter he will press her to his heart, while to her — who for the last fortnight has most probably not seen any human face, much less set eyes upon the constant object of her thoughts — the bunch of bright carnations which she has stolen from her lover's hat will in the mean while be the visible proof of his presence. We sit down on the narrow bench while our hostess hurries to her underground dairy to fetch milk, butter, and bread. Presently she returns, picking her steps daintily over the large stepping-stones that enable one to reach the hut dry-shod ; for like all these primitive huts — Arcadian temples we have heard them called — a quagmire of not the sweetest character surrounds the dwelling. Usually she is not as careful, but to-day, the day of rest, she has five or six hours to herself ; so after finishing her morning work of milking, and settling up the cowshed, she has washed and scrubbed herself, has platted her long tresses, and for the bright hours of repose has donned her Sunday gown and shoes and stockings. The milk and butter are rendered all the more inviting by the kindly way she presses us to partake of them, by the finely-formed hand stretching across the table, a hand seemingly incapable of the hard masculine work it has to do, and by the dark, quiet eyes that are bent upon us with a winning smile. Again she disappears into the hut, returning presently with a hoarded bottle of kirsch, or some other kindred spirit she herself has distilled in a most primitive fashion from some Alpine fruit. She tastes of it, and then presents it to her lover, who, after a hearty pull at its contents, returns it with a

contented mien ; for, let it be mentioned here, this pōtation means much.

It is a love-draught, and none but a lover will ever be offered the like by fair hands. It is the first token by which the charmer evinces her preference, and hence the saying, "He has drunk of her liquor," is tantamount to — well, never mind to what ; certainly to more than is good for the young people. Once that magic drink has wetted the manly lips, the house of the fair one, be it the lonely Alp-hut or the more substantial peasant's house in the village, is open to him ; and the peasant in whose service the lass stands concedes to him free ingress when, after the hard day's toil is over, the womenfolk sit round the wood-paneled living-room spinning or straining flax, while the men lean half recumbent, with their backs to the stove, smoking their evening pipes. He drops in then, and, sitting at the side of his lass, will add his quota of chat to the general conversation.

Or, again, on Sundays he need not ask her master's consent, if a village dance or shooting-match attracts rural crowds to the chief inn, to take his girl hither. Their relationship to each other is tacitly understood ; and till the lass herself gives him the go-by, he need not dread any interference on the part of the peasant.

It is different if the girl is at home, and the parents have by a quiet hint evinced their disapprobation of the lover's advances. Maybe the girl is the daughter of a rich peasant, while the swain is a poor lad solely dependent upon his hands for a living ; or, again, his worldly prospects may be such as would entitle him to a friendly reception on the part of her parents, but then strange whispers respecting his character are abroad, — report points him out as having already tasted of several maidens' liquor ; or tattlers will know that the free chamois on yonder mountains have too great attractions for the wild young poacher who is quite willing to stake his life in the forbidden pursuit.

In such cases, all the stratagems of love are brought into play ; the iron-grated window of the fair one's cham-

ber is the nocturnal trysting-place, and the important flask, endowing the bold suitor with prerogatives so long desired, is handed through the bars which only too often prove inefficient barbican in the hands of vigorous youth inflamed by hot passion.

In the case before us we need not inquire if the swain's advances met the approbation of his love's friends. The girl is a poor lass, earning her bread as dairymaid to a peasant. Her mother, once a beauty like her, is long dead; she never knew who her father was, beyond the suspicions awakened in her mind by scandal-loving old women.

Like so many of her sisters, she is the offspring of passion. Sent up to the lonely Alp for a long six months, at the tender age of seventeen, this was her second season on high. Cut off from the world, rarely seeing a human face beyond the gruff features of a stray keeper who sees in her a willing helpmate of his enemies, or the blackened visage of a poacher, and the morose old "knecht" who every fortnight brings her bread and salt for the cattle in exchange for which he returns with a heavy load of butter and cheese, she is left entirely to her own resources.

She has to tackle the vicious bull single-handed; she has to tame the cow, no longer, since her calf was taken away from her, the docile creature that would come when she called her name. The fierce thunderstorm, the no less trying heavy fall of snow in September, the swollen torrent that threatens to carry away her hut, all have to be met by ready defense and prompt means of warding off the threatening danger. Heavy stones have to be piled on the shingle roof of the hut to keep it from being blown away; the snow, accumulated to an astonishing depth in the course of one night, has to be cleared off round the hut, and a path made from the cattle-shed to the water-tank. Timber has to be felled to stave the foaming, angry watercourse. Sick cattle have to be treated with physic and poultices; the calving cow, the heifer that has broken its leg by an unlucky slip, have to be attended; the wild

goats have to be kept from straying too far ; and besides all this, her daily round of heavy work in the hut, milking twice a day some twenty head of cattle, churning, and making cheese, cleaning the shed, and keeping her milk-pails, boiler, and churning-machine scrupulously clean.

And what does she get for all this, — for six months of the roughest work, and privations of all kinds, to be followed by the winter, with the various household duties in the peasant's home in the village? Why, two pounds in money, a pair of shoes, and two hempen skirts of the coarsest texture, per annum !

And yet a happier young lassie, more brim-full of spirit and love for nature, it would be difficult to find out of Tyrol. The day — a long day too — from three or four o'clock in the morning till long after sundown, is one round of work ; the evening passes quickly, spent either before her open fire on the primitive hearth, or sitting in front of her *châlet*, watching the last pink tinges dying out on the snow-peaked old friends that start up on all sides in gallant array, or singing some of her favorite "*Schnaddahüpfler*" songs ; and by half-past eight or nine she is in her hay berth.

She knows not what fear is ; and if perchance in the dead hours of the night a sudden commotion in the cowshed will awaken her from her sound slumber, she will fearlessly step out into the darkness, and find her way to the adjoining shed, and allay the playful or maybe vicious liveliness of her kine by her word, or by the help of a stout cudgel.

Can we grudge her — the victim of so many lonesome hours — the happy moments spent at the side of her stalwart lover? or can we, considering all we have said, blame her, when, forgotten and apparently forsaken by the rest of the world, the friendless maiden goes one step — a short step, in her eyes — farther than the codes of civilization, than the laws of society, permit?

I say no, decidedly no ; for, reader, remember before you condemn her, that from her earliest youth no guiding hand, no tuition, except the primitive instruction of the

village schoolmaster as he drummed into her head sufficient to write her name, was extended to her. And, more, the law itself, by raising nigh insurmountable obstacles in the path of the poor desirous of marrying, lends its right hand in bringing about the deplorable state of things to which I allude.

Pretty Kati was no exception to the rule: poor as a church mouse, her fortune was not worse than that of her lover. She knew that there was no hope of their being able to marry for fifteen or twenty years ahead, for as yet our friend had a long seven-years soldiering before him: so, to cut a long story short, she trusted and loved.

But let us, before we leave this quiet retreat, and rid the young couple of our presence, cast a passing glance at the interior of her bower, poor and primitive as it is. There, in one corner, is her berth filled with hay,—bed we hardly can call the box-like inclosure, and one thick blanket for a cover. Underneath or rather beside it, are ranged on a shelf half a dozen bottles. They contain her ready remedies for sudden sickness or accidents among her dumb charges. Beside them, nailed to the wall, is a crucifix, surrounded by a wreath of freshly-picked rhododendrons, edelweiss, and the azure-tinted gentians of the Alps. On a peg below it hangs her hat of green felt, worn and stained. Stuck in it coquettishly is a single feather of the blackcock. How prettily it sits the well-shapen head with its wealth of auburn tresses! Jauntily set on one side, it admirably suits her air of half-modest, half-daring grace. It's her Sunday hat, too,—a hat that has served as best for two years, and perforce must last a third, for on work-days she can not afford that indulgence; a handkerchief tied under her chin does just as well, and saves a lot. On the foot-board of her couch is fastened a tiny looking-glass, not more than two inches square; it is the only one luxury of civilized life we perceive in the hut. Beside it are a comb, kept perfectly clean, and a bit of soap—her Sunday soap—for on week-days she makes a few handfuls of wood-ashes do in its stead. A rosary and a much-worn old prayer-book—



not to forget the huge peasant's almanac with its red and black hieroglyphics—are all that remain to be mentioned. The deal box, very like a seaman's sea-chest, containing her Sunday gown, the silver string of beads (the sole remembrance of her mother), and the ring with a gaudy glass jewel in it, the gift of her lover, not to omit a change of linen, viz., a shirt, is stored in her underground milk cellar; the only receptacle that can be locked, not so much on account of thieves, but on that of the goats, who will stray into the hut in expectancy of their wonted handful of salt. The fireplace, sunk lower than the floor, is surrounded by a trench; here one places one's feet, while the floor itself is the seat. The huge copper caldron, so necessary for cheesemaking, its outside crusted with soot, the inside bright as a mirror, hangs on a crane-like machine, enabling it to be swung round when not used.

The low door, provided with a wicket, gives ingress into the cowshed, where are ranged into two rows her charges. Each one has its name, and answers to it: the bell cow, however, being the queen over all. Adorned with the largest bell, she leads the long file, and is as proud and jealous of her position as any human being could be. When a cow strays from the herd, and the Alp-girl sets out on a wearisome search, she accompanies her, bellowing from time to time to recall the lost one.

Such is the empire over which this lonesome queen exercises unlimited control.

Dusk is beginning to set in as we bid good-bye to the young people, and turn our back upon the quiet little dwelling, the harbor of two hearts beating high and fast in all the joy and fire of ardent passion, such as only is the gift of uncontaminated natural youth.

Three long months will the lassie still have to endure on high till Rosenkranz Sunday, the day when they all return from their Alpine pasturages, comes round. I say endure; for while formerly she loved her summer abode above any thing, and delighted in the free life amid her mountains and kine, she now somehow begins to envy her more fortunate companions who all the year round

remain in the village near their sweethearts and their friends. A pang of jealous fear crosses her mind as she pictures to herself her handsome lover, the best wrestler, the keenest shot of the village, exposed to the allurements of some dangerous and unscrupulous rival beauty. Not all, as she well knows, are as loyal-hearted as she; and many a mountain belle holds court in her upland dominion, not only to one, but to half a dozen ardent swains. Her favors are contested for in sanguinary fights; for the passions of the mettlesome youths once roused, their hatred is as fierce as that of Red Indians. In some parts of the Alps, in fact, the knife is, on such occasions, only too often called in requisition. Wielded by hands as strong as they are ill-intentioned, it generally leaves one or the other of the combatants a bleeding corpse on the ground.

At last Rosary Sunday—the 16th after Trinity—comes round. The preceding day the two burly sons of her master, and the old “knecht,” go up to the Alp, and help the lass to bring down her traps. One of them will carry the huge caldron, filled with milk-pails, and pots, and pans, tied on a “Kraksen,” upon his broad back, the other two dividing the rest of the lumbbersome domestic paraphernalia between them. They go first; then come the cattle with their heavy bells on broad leather straps adorned with embroidery, and each animal sporting a wreath of fresh Alpine flowers wound round its horns, trooping in stately array to the lead of the bell-cow, who walks in dignified solitude at the head of the file. The wreath that adorns her is larger than the rest, and its flowers are the best and brightest that the lass could find.

Behind the last calf, jogging along at a half-trot, comes the girl, decked out in her Sunday finery, her hat for this occasion being adorned with a bunch of edelweiss and gentians, for, alas! the bright rhododendrons, her favorites, are long faded. At her heels again trips the wayward little flock of goats, bucking and scampering about in gleeful ignorance of the dark months that are to follow, of the close confinement in their shed through the long and dreary winter.

The weather is fine, — one of those glorious autumn days that make one's heart bound in vigor, called forth by the keen and yet balmy air on high. Every thing around us seems full of life and enjoyment: the bells of different tone keep up a constant though not unmelodious chime, while from the vanguard, who are already far ahead, consecutive peals of merry jodlers reach our ears, answered by the silvery voice of the lass, who before she turns the last corner, shutting out from her view her now deserted little creel, sends forth a last farewell, so plaintive and yet so joyful of cadence, that involuntarily we halt to hear the last note die away; a tear glistens in her eye as the next step takes her out of sight of the spot where withal she has spent the happiest hours of her young life. She has not gone far when the bushes suddenly part, and from his ambush leaps her lover. Poor fellow, he has sacrificed a whole day's earnings to be able to walk with her for a few hours; for long before they reach the village he has to disappear again, lest a chance passer-by should see him, and some stinging sarcasm greet his ears when next he steps into the inn or meets any of his boon companions.

Oft have I watched couples in similar plight tread side by side hardly perceptible paths, and it has always struck me that at no time do the specific lineaments of the race come to the front as much as just then. The man carries himself high; and the eyes, that to the casual observer seem usually perhaps a trifle too lifeless, light up, and an expression of bold defiance permeates the face. The woman, too, shows features of her own. No false shame or vapid sentimentality is portrayed on her face: she looks what she is, a fearless woman, who well knows, if occasion requires, how to thrust back the advances of a man whose character she does not trust.

Long before the flock reaches the first outlying houses, the bells of numbers of other herds, all returning from their summer pasturages in the same gay array, are heard, all joining in one continued chime.

The whole village has turned out to watch, with critical

eye, the different flocks all converging to the one center. Opinions vary; and half-angry discussions between the richer peasants — each eager to be the owner of the finest cattle — are heard in the momentary pauses in the general uproar and din.

By the next morning the excitement of the rural crowd has cooled down, and the eight-o'clock service unites the populace, filling the church with nigh double the number that formed the congregation throughout the summer.

In a corner of the edifice, in front of the altar devoted to her patron saint, kneels pretty "Kati," praying in the full gratitude of her heart; for has she not every cause to be grateful? Not one cow has she lost by sickness or accident. Did not the sleek condition of each beast redound to her praise? Had she not found a true-hearted lover? Was she not loudly praised by her master? But where is he, the object of her thoughts, and maybe prayer, all this time? Ah! in yonder corner, leaning against a pillar, lost in thought evidently of not the most agreeable kind. There she is quite close to him; and yet he dare not be seen at her side, lest people should be set talking, and he be made the butt for their caustic quizzing. He is no coward, no! for he would face any danger unflinchingly; but the chaff of his companions, that is something beyond what he can endure. It seems a hard, a very hard struggle he is fighting with himself. He knows how pleased would be "Kati" if she were to walk out of church across the open green, through the throng of chattering neighbors, with him at her side as her acknowledged lover; but the man who fears no foe, who risks his life in deadly combat with the revengeful keepers thirsting for his blood, trembles and turns hot at the thought that he would be making a fool of himself in the eyes of his devil-may-care loose-tongued associates. At last he seems to have arrived at some determination: his mind is made up one way or the other, for his brow is knit, and his hand clinched. He steps forth, and walks up to where his girl is still kneeling. A touch on her shoulder, and the short word "come," is all; but as she

rises and silently places herself at his side, she knows what is meant. A happy smile steals over her face, and she glances up to her lover with a glistening eye. He does not see it, for his head is bent, and his long stride does not halt.

As they pass under the old porch, out into the sunny world, his manner suddenly changes: his head is erect, his face set, but not in anger, his eyes sparkle, and his whole bearing is proud and defiant. His arm steals round her waist, and thus they meet the gaze of their neighbors. Sterling nature has vanquished.

Where the girl is under the protecting influences of home, the love-making proceeds in different fashion. In order to give the reader a faithful picture of the period of engagement, we will follow the steps of fair young Gretl, one of the Unterinntal peasantry, as she returns home from church on a fine Sunday morning, and, after carefully laying aside her Sunday finery — her silver chain necklace, her bright blue kerchief, and her gold-tasseled hat, — stealthily leaves her chamber, and gains the adjoining granary, where in a few minutes she is joined by her lover, bright-eyed Hansel.

The two have made it all right between them; for only the week before, at the wedding of a mutual friend, Hansel took advantage of a quiet five minutes to assure himself that his courtship was welcome to the object of his desires. They are now consulting about the next step, asking the permission of Gretl's mother to visit the house for the Hoamgart, i.e., to chat. They are not long about it; for presently they part, Hansel to leave the granary, and put in his appearance at the front door, and Gretl to regain her chamber.

Five minutes later we see Gretl opening the house-door, and giving Hansel a short, formal welcome, for she knows her mother is in the kitchen close by, and has sharp ears.

“Mother!” she presently cries, “Mother! let me tell you that Hansel is outside.”

“Who wants him? I did not call him,” replies the sharp-tongued mother.

“Oh, come, mother! don't let him stand waiting out there,” pleads the daughter from under the house-door, while she gives Hansel a sly wink.

“I did not call him, nor did I fix him to the spot by a spell (*Festbannen*): for my sake he need not be lounging about,” replies the suspicious dame.

“Do come out, mother, and talk to him,” cries the daughter.

“I don't want to talk to him: you talk to him out there; I have something better to do:” and, as if to confirm her words, she begins to scrape and clatter with her iron frying-pans.

“Now, don't be uncivil, mother, he is such a well-spoken fellow. Do come out, I beg of you.”

“You tiresome wench, come in, then, and stir the pancakes, while I talk to him,” ejaculates the parent. And so she does talk to bright-eyed Hansel; and the upshot of the conversation is, that Hansel is invited to enter the house, and take a seat in the family room, where he is joined by happy Gretl.

My reader will ask, But why so much fuss about nothing? But it is by no means nothing; for Hansel, by soliciting the permission to pay a visit, has virtually asked for fair Gretl's hand, and, by granting the wished-for leave, the mother has evinced her approbation. The happy lover may now come as often as he likes to pay open court to Gretl. There is an odd custom in connection with this important step; for, the very first time he pays a visit as avowed lover, he brings with him a bottle of wine, of which he pours out a glass, and presents it to the object of his desires. If she accepts of it, the whole affair is settled. Very often the girl has not yet made up her mind; and then she will take refuge in excuses, so as not to drink of the wine, and yet not refuse it point-blank, for that is considered a gross insult, proving that she has been merely trifling with the affections of her lover. She will, for instance, maintain that the wine “looks sour,” or that wine disagrees with her, or that she is afraid of getting tipsy, or that the priest has forbidden

her to take any ; in fact, she makes use of any subterfuge that presents itself at that moment. The purport of these excuses is, that she has not yet come to a decision, and that the wine offering is premature.

This strange custom, dating very far back,<sup>1</sup> is called "bringing the wine," and is, as I have heard, synonymous with the act of proposing. Shy lovers, loth to make sure of their case beforehand, find it, as we may suppose, a very happy institution. Not a word need be spoken, and the girl is spared the painful "no" of civilization. If any of the wine is spilt, or the glass or bottle is broken, it is considered a most unhappy omen : in fact, there is a peasant's saying for an unhappy marriage, "'They have spilt the wine between them."

For Hansel's happiness and peace of mind, we will assume that his wine was not found sour, but, on the contrary, was relished by fair Gretl. The wedding is arranged to take place some months hence, "when the hay has been brought in, and the fields set with the autumnal crop," as the careful old housewife remarks. About a fortnight before the wedding, bride and bridegroom undertake the usual pilgrimage to some sacred shrine, to cleanse their souls from "bachelor" sins, as the saying naïvely terms those delinquencies that are committed by unmarried adults.

Maria Stein, near Worgl, is a favorite place of pilgrimage on those occasions. Let us metamorphose ourselves into the shadows of Hansel and Gretl, as at daybreak, on a fine September day, they set out on their pious errand.

They have a long walk before them, a reason on account of which they chose Maria Stein, for the longer the pilgrimage the more efficacious is the excursion supposed to be. They watch for roadside chapels, votive tablets, or sacred pictures, for it is part of a pilgrim's duty to pray a certain number of prayers at every one of these sacred symbols. If it be a chapel, they enter it and kneel down,

<sup>1</sup> In not a few of the Minneclays of Oswald Wolkenstein, Walther von der Vogelweide, we find this custom mentioned. According to one account, it was known as early as the ninth century.

he on the right side, she on the left of the diminutive chancel. If it be but a votive tablet, or sacred picture of the Virgin, fastened to a tree or to a simple cross, they merely stand in front of it, rosary in hand, and pray half a dozen prayers for the salvation of the soul of him whose dire fate the inscription laments.

It is a pretty sight to see them standing side by side, both attired in their picturesque national costumes, framed in by the somber branches of the gaunt pine-trees. Presently they bring their devotion to a close; and, after making the sign of the cross, they turn away, and the next minute the youthful couple are deeply engaged in a very worldly conversation.

At midday they reach the first outworks of the sacred shrine, the goal of their pilgrimage.

It is a tiny chapel, and just as they are about to enter it we hear a silvery little bell being tolled in the miniature spire.

“It is St. Anthony’s bell,” remarks Gretl.

“I wonder who is ringing it, and what he has lost,” responds Hansel.

St. Anthony is a saint whose powers to return lost articles to their owner are supposed to be unlimited. If a cow strays, if a calf is lost on the mountain slopes, if an economic housewife loses her chickens or her goat, St. Anthony’s bell is forthwith set going. But what can the wizened old woman have lost, who, as we enter the chapel, stops tugging at the bell-rope, which is hanging at the side of the porch, and looks at us with anxious expectation in her face? We think to ourselves that probably the old lady has, by our appearance, detected the town-bred heathens who would deride her did they know that she was calling upon St. Anthony to find her lost spectacles or the prized snuff-box she has mislaid.

Alas! we are mistaken, for we learn presently that the old woman is half-witted, and daily rings the bell till her arms drop. And for whom and for what does she ring? we ask. For her only son, a curly-headed young fellow, who left his home one day some ten years ago to pursue



the fleet chamois, and never returned. The fell bullet of the keeper, that overtook the daring young poacher, wrecked also the fond mother's life. Since that day she is what we see her now, — the ruin of her former self. Of all the numberless hands that tugged at the worn old rope, there were probably none but hers that pulled the death-knell of two lives.

The rope is yet swinging to and fro when our friend, fair Gretl, passing it within reach, thoughtless of harm, gives it a violent tug, to which the bell over our head responds with a stroke or two.

Hansel, who has been brought up a "good" Catholic, turns round, and with an expression of wonder depicted on his face, asks her why she rang.

"You know it's wicked to pull at that bell if you haven't lost any thing. And to-day, of all days, you ought not to have done so," says honest Hansel, full of reproach.

"And pray, how do you know that I have not lost any thing?" replies Gretl, with eyes brim-full of sparkling fun, for she is the smarter of the two, and is not going to let a petty quarrel darken the festive day.

A pause of a second or two, and Hansel, dull of comprehension, also sees the point.

"Did she want to have her heart back?"

"No; a thousand times no," she muses to herself, while Hansel clinches her hand tighter in his, as they walk up the aisle towards the altar.

The young people are alone in the quaint little chapel. A few short prayers, and they rise to continue their pilgrimage. Maria Stein, their goal, is soon reached, and they trudge up the crazy old stairs that lead to the chapel containing the miracle-working picture of the Virgin. The stairs are lined with old votive tablets, some of which are of antiquarian interest, for they date back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Let us read one of the quaint inscriptions, in old German characters. The one we choose is of the year 1617, and informs us "that in that year the honorable and sage

Hanns Jacob Schwalher, Justice of the Peace in Rattenberg, was attacked by a fearful pain in the inside of his body, whereat he thought he must burst. While suffering thus terribly he vowed, in case he recovered, to make a pilgrimage, with his wife, to Maria Stein. After making this vow he soon got better. On the 17th October, he and his wife performed the pilgrimage."

Our pious young couple, while ascending the stairs, glance over the row of veteran votive tablets; but their effort to decipher the quaint old-fashioned characters is not crowned with success. Before they enter the church, they inform the white-headed old verger that they want to confess, and beg him to inform the priest of their presence.

While waiting for the holy man, they inspect the interior of the church. Countless votive tablets, the work of generations upon generations of rural schoolmasters, cover the wall.

The allegorical pictures, in the worst style of the Rococo age, that decorate the arched ceiling, next attract their attention; but it requires trained eyes to make head or tail of the motley collection of ill-shapen bodies, hideous faces, and limbs out of all proportion.

At this moment the priest enters the church through a side door, and, bending his knee as he passes the altar, walks straight towards one of the confessionals. The wicket closes on him as he disappears in the center partition; and the two lovers kneel down, one at each side, but so that the whispered confession of the one remains inaudible to the other.

It would be indiscreet, were we to endeavor to penetrate the veil of secrecy that shrouds the words whispered into the priestly ear. Let it suffice to know that confession took up the best part of an hour.

Absolution granted, our young friends leave, and retire to separate nooks in dark corners of the church, and there pray for some time.

This brings their pilgrimage, in so far as it concerns the Church, to an end; for now they can eat and drink at

the adjacent inn with the zest resulting from the consciousness of possessing "cleansed souls."

Our lover friends are not slow to restore their exhausted frames by a very hearty meal, partaken of in the large, stately hostelry which evidently has seen better days of "piety and jollity." We greet its appearance with pleasure, for does not the very look of dejected emptiness stamped upon it prove the decrease of superstitious bigotry among the populace? Where formerly scores upon scores of weary pilgrims sought nightly shelter, a whole week passes now without bringing more than a couple of dozen.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## A PEASANT'S WEDDING.

CARNIVAL, in most Continental countries a period of general festivity, is distinguished in the secluded Alpine valleys of Tyrol solely by the circumstance that weddings arranged in the course of the preceding year are, if it be possible, celebrated in that period.

Now, carnival is in winter, and winter in Tyrol is a season specially adapted for the observance of quaint old-fashioned customs, hallowed by the use of centuries. These striking mementos of a past age specially characterize a rural peasant's wedding; and it is in order to introduce my reader to one of these merry-makings that I have to request him to follow me, on a bright but uncommonly cold February day in 1875, to the village of Brandenburg, a little Alpine hamlet in the valley of the same name.

Though exceedingly heavy falls of snow had made the narrow bridle-path leading from the broad Inn valley to Brandenburg almost impassable, I had faithfully promised to so many of the frugal inhabitants of that vale to honor the wedding of a charming young peasant-girl with a special *protégé* of mine, that I was determined to surmount all difficulties, and prove myself a man of my word.

Where in summer it would have required but a two-hours' walk to reach my goal, now, in the depth of winter, it was a seven-hours' battle with snow that covered the ground to a depth of three and in many places of four and five feet, before I found myself in the roomy inn

of the village. Countless outstretched hands, brawny and muscular, small and plump, clean and dirty, were immediately offered to greet me. As it was Sunday, and the eve of the wedding-day, the "Gaststube," or bar-room, was crowded with Brandenburgers, young and old, fair and ugly. My arrival, and a few minutes' conversation with my old patron, the "Herr Vicar," in which I sought his permission for a few hours' dancing (it is usually not the custom to dance on the eve of a wedding-day), very soon put the musicians into requisition. A couple of florins (about four shillings) for the evening's music brought a broad grin of satisfaction on the honest faces of the three "Musiker,"—a flute, a trombone, and a guitar.

Repairing to the dancing-chamber, a narrow room about thirty-five feet in length, I was immediately surrounded by a group of young fellows, offering me, as a mark of courtesy, their bright-eyed lasses. Choice was not difficult; and the next minute I was dancing the "*pas seul*," that is, one dance round the room, while the other couples line the wall, and fall in at its termination.

The striking character of the national dances of the Tyrolese calls for a few words of description.

In Brandenburg, and in some other valleys, the male dancer encircles the waist of his partner with both arms, while she, standing up as closely as possible, embraces him with both arms round his neck. A peculiar and ungraceful shuffling motion is the necessary result, and were it not for the frequent intervals of separate dancing, the dance would be ungainly in the extreme.

For the first minutes of every dance the motion of the whole group is slow, and the floor trembles beneath the heavy tramp of the strapping fellows with immensely heavy ironshod shoes.

All of a sudden the music changes, and the whole aspect of the room is changed with it.

The man, letting go his partner, commences a series of capers and jumps, and gymnastic evolutions, displaying an agility very remarkable, and quite unlooked for in their heavy, solidly-knit frames.

Various as these movements are, I will endeavor to describe the most striking. One of the commonest is to throw one's self on one's knees, fold both arms over the chest, and bend back till the back of the head, touching the floor, gives a few sounding raps on the hard boards, and then, with one powerful jerk, without touching the floor with the hands, to regain one's erect position.

In another, the man kneels down, and with his bare knees beats a sounding rat-ta-ta-ta on the floor, and then with one agile bound he has regained his feet.

I have tried innumerable times to imitate some of these figures; but, although I am a fair gymnast, I seldom succeed with any but the easiest.

To touch the floor with the back of the head only, with arms folded over the chest, and the knees resting on the ground, is a feat which many an athlete of repute could not imitate save by long practice.

To jump high up in the air, and come down upon the knees with the full force, is very common.

All these capers, jumps, and evolutions are accompanied by loud shrill whistling and peculiar smacking sounds of the lips and tongue, in imitation of those emitted by the blackcock and capercali. Indeed, many of their movements, too, are performed with a view to out-do the capers and circling jumps and spinning motion performed by these lovesick birds of the mountains.

The accompanying sounding slaps on the muscular thighs and on the iron-shod soles of the heavy shoes by the brawny horny hands of these fellows, the crowing, loud shouts, snatches of songs, intermingled with shrill whistling, ferocious stamping on the ground with the greatest possible force, create a din and a roar of which only they who have heard it can form any conception.

The floor rocks, the wooden beams of the ceiling tremble, the windows—if there are any—clatter as if an earthquake were shaking the very foundations of the house.

The pushing and crushing before the separation of the couples has occurred, and the whole company is yet

dancing the valse in a fashion more or less akin to the one seen in our own ballrooms, are often terrible, and the bumps against the wall or doorway are generally of huge force; but nobody shows any ill-feelings or anger, be the push ever so hard, or the heavy tramp on the foot ever so painful. All is mirth, gay and rollicking fun.

While the male dancer performs his odd antics, his partner, holding her short but ample skirts with both hands, continues to dance in a circling motion round him, smiling approvingly the madder and higher he jumps, or the more difficult his gymnastic evolutions.

In Brandenburg, and one or two other Tyrolese valleys which boast of a particularly muscular fair sex, the girl at the conclusion of her swain's fantastical jumps catches hold of him by his braces, and hoists him up bodily (aided of course by a corresponding jerky action of her partner), and while he, balancing himself with both hands on her shoulders, treads the ceiling of the low room to the tune of the music, she continues her dance round the room, displaying a strength and power that can only be appreciated if one has seen the strapping six-foot fellows that are thus handled by their fair partners. If many dancers crowd the room (more or less confined, if it be not a large barn), this practice is fraught with some danger, as of course when swinging himself down the dancer very frequently pitches upon some unfortunate couple who may at that moment be close to the spot where this singular gymnastic dance is about to terminate. This figure affords, of course, a very striking sight; and though there are rarely more than four or five men "hoisted" at one time (not every one of the girls has the power, nor every dancer the requisite agility), it serves, taken as a whole, to increase the remarkable features of a "Fanzboden," or dancing-room, in the remote valleys of the country.

It is a somewhat erroneous impression, that there exists a dance called "Schuhblatteln" or shoe-slapping. The term denotes merely that movement — introduced into the valse, polka, and any other of the few dances

these people know—in which the male dancer strikes the soles of his shoes and his thighs with the outspread palm of his hand, accompanying this movement with the antics and the sounds I have described. Those who are unable to do this continue the round dance.

In many of the valleys the girls are passionately fond of smoking; and it is an odd sight to see many of the comely lasses pace it with a blazing cigar or pipe between their chubby lips. It is quite consonant with the etiquette of one of these rustic ballrooms to smoke while dancing; in fact, the man who can perform any agile feat while smoking increases thereby his reputation for agility.

Now and then young fellows from the neighboring valleys visit a ballroom for the express purpose of creating a disturbance, ending in a fight, often of alarming dimensions, if the natives are not in sufficient force to eject the rioters from the precincts of the house. I once had the luck to get mixed up in one of these affrays. Even the musicians were drawn in; and one of them, I remember well, distinguished himself by dealing heavy blows with his brass trombone, leaving it at the termination of the disturbance a useless, misshapen mass of metal.

To place one's hat on the head of one's fair partner is synonymous with the declaration "Thou art mine;" and beware of danger if the girl has allowed this distinction, having at the same time another swain! Of course a native will not commit himself in this way before he is quite certain of his case, or if he has not the express desire to call his rival out to fight; but strangers, or such as may be unacquainted with this odd custom, are not unfrequently entrapped. I have seen several strangers and tourists very roughly handled indeed by the enraged rivals—in fact, the majority of fights among the hot-headed young fellows of a village are caused by quarrels originating on the "Tanzboden." Jealousy is in the Highlands of Tyrol no less a feature of ardent youth than in the most civilized country of the world; the only difference between the manner in which these differences are settled being that in the former the fist, the teeth, and unfortunately also the knife, play a conspicuous rôle.



I have actually witnessed only two fights that terminated fatally, one on the frontier of Bavaria, the other near Schwaz, in the Inn valley. In both instances the knife was used; and the victim was in each case the stronger of the two combatants, as fine specimens of stalwart youthful manhood as one could see.

In the Highlands of Bavaria, as I have said once before, the use of the knife is far more prevalent than in Tyrol, and I have known as many as three young fellows fall its victims in one village in one year. These knives are worn in a small sheath sticking in a separate pocket in the leather trousers; and as the handle protrudes, it is a dangerously handy weapon, though the blade commonly does not exceed four inches in length. It is not very long since the use of knives was prohibited by law, and any one carrying one was fined. This salutary measure, however, did not long remain in force, and the abuses of the knife are now in Bavaria as frequent as ever.

Returning to our ballroom, we find that the dances are short, and follow each other closely, the interval between each being filled up by a "Schnaddahüpfler," — a short song, or rather series of rhymes, expressing sentiments either of defiance or derision destined for some rival's ear. It is sung by one of the dancers, standing in front of the slightly raised platform upon which the musicians are seated; his girl stands at his side, generally with cast-down eyes, and profuse blushes mantling her cheeks. It is marvelous with what rapidity the object of the affront or scoff will compose his reply, replete with imputations of like or worse kind, and in this manner two rival bards will continue for a considerable length of time to take turns in casting impromptu slander or scornful contempt at each other. The girl, if there is no refrain to her swain's off-hand poem in which she can join, has to remain silent; the pre-occupation of the poet's mind while raking together those incidents of his rival's life which he fancies he can turn to account, and the mental labor of composing while dancing, excluding very natu-

rally the possibility of repeating the brand-new "Schnaddahüpfler" to his partner in the five or six minutes each dance lasts. Love, of course, furnishes by far the greater portion of subjects for this modern "troubadouring."

A girl changing lovers, or refusing the hand of an ardent wooer, will be the welcome subject of scores of "Schnaddahüpfler" at the next dance or wedding; and though they are generally of a very dubious morality, these songs furnish a capital illustration of that poetic vein which marks the inhabitants of most mountainous countries, and the Tyrolese pre-eminently.

Not every young fellow ventures to fling one of these daring compositions at the head of his rival. Want of skill, or the fear of giving out after the first or second song, obliges him to be satisfied with one of the usual national lays, in which his girl, and very frequently sundry other voices, join.

At twelve o'clock the priest, carrying a huge stable-lantern in his hand, entered the room and ordered the music to cease. Retiring in a body down to the bar-room, we awaited the departure of the conscientious guardian of order; and as soon as his back was turned out came a Zither and a Hackbrettel, and five seconds later several couples were pacing it to the charming tune of a genuine "Landler." Zither and Hackbrettel are two instruments unknown in England; and though the first may have often been seen by tourists in the hands of Tyrolese, the latter is much more rarely met with. Rows of small oblong pieces of a particular kind of wood are fixed on plaits of straw. The pieces of wood, being of different length or shape, emit different sounds when struck with a small wooden mallet, of which the player holds one in each hand. Though this instrument is very primitive, and never can rival the Zither—in my opinion the most charming musical instrument existing—it does very well for dancing purposes, and hundreds of times have the two little hammers been in motion the better part of a night, while I and two or three natives were "kicking up our heels," making the barn or the low-

roofed bar-room resound with our vigorous "Schuhblateln." In this instance, as both instruments were in use, the tunes followed each other with rapidity, and, making us very thirsty, increased our beer-consuming powers to an astonishing extent.

At four o'clock we separated, each dancer accompanying his girl home, — a precaution in this instance at least necessary, as fresh snow had fallen, and some of the girls had come a good distance.

Four hours' sleep in a bed — for a wonder comfortable, and not more than about eighteen inches too short — was a welcome refresher; and as I well knew the next night would be a sleepless one, I was glad to get at least that rest.

Repairing to the church at a few minutes before nine, I was just in time to see the two "happy" couples enter the edifice. I say "two" couples; for in this instance the ceremony was a double one, the parents of the bridegroom celebrating their golden wedding the very same day their son was married. The old couple, having the precedence, were led to the altar, a wreath was placed on the old lady's head, and the whole marriage ceremony gone through as it had been just fifty years before. After the two old people had been duly and solemnly re-wedded for the rest of their days, the young couple were led up to the priest standing on the steps of the altar. There is nothing very striking to us in the marriage ceremony of the Catholic Church, so we will accompany the whole festive party back to the inn, where a substantial meal was awaiting them. On leaving the church a bunch of artificial flowers adorned with gold and silver tinsel was presented to each of the "guests," or persons invited to partake of the meals at the table of the bride and bridegroom. A huge specimen placed by fair hands on my hat corroborated my fears that I should have to share their meal, in lieu of taking part at the shooting-match that was then just about to commence. A refusal on my part to "dine" with the rest of the guests would have been considered the height of rudeness or the result of

great pride ; and as I did not wish to incur either of these reproaches, I had to make the best of it, and accept the seat of honor between the bride and the "Herr Vicar." My late breakfast had reduced to a minimum my capabilities of partaking of a ten-o'clock forenoon dinner, and enabled me all the better to watch the feats of eating accomplished around me on all sides. Meats cooked in various manners, in all of which, however, fat and grease predominated, were the chief features of that early dinner ; and even considering that these frugal people rarely touch meat more than twice or three times a year, their appetites for this delicacy were amazing. The last dish consisted of huge cuts of bacon swimming in a sea of molten butter, and the hearty way this "plat" was attacked could not fail to increase the astonishment of an observer unaccustomed to appetites *à la* Brandenburg. Dinner lasted three hours, and finally, after drinking the health of the old and the young couple in numerous glasses of wine, the party rose and made their way to the dancing-room, where music and dancing had been going on for three hours already, for the benefit of those who had not been invited to dinner. After looking on for a few minutes and applauding the two old people's performance in a steady valse, I retired, eager to join the rifle-match.

To the mind of a Tyrolese, the shooting-match is by far the most important feature of any fête, wedding, or feast-day that may have charmed him from his cottage. Rain, wind, hail, thunder, cold, or snow, is incapable of keeping him at home when he knows that at the next village or lonely country inn a rifle-match is going on.

In this instance the innkeeper had arranged the match : two "running stags" and two fixed targets had been placed in the rifle-range, and the markers at each target paid by him. He had even gone farther in honor of the occasion, and had given three prizes, consisting of silver florins sewed on large bright-colored handkerchiefs. The priest had added another prize, and a citizen from the next townlet had sent a huge pipe, while another had presented a new rifle. Adding to these prizes the few

silver florin-pieces with which I had provided myself for this occasion, I took my stand in the little shed, open on all sides, from whence the competitors fired.

My hand being still rather shaky from the wine at dinner, I confined myself at first to the fixed targets at 200 yards, presenting a bull's-eye six inches in diameter, provided with three rings each an inch apart. The center, a pin's head, counts five; the first ring, measuring two inches in diameter, counts three; the next, four inches in diameter, two; and the last ring in the bull's-eye, only one point. The white space round the bull's-eye is not subdivided into rings, as any shot striking blank counts nothing. Thus it will be seen that a man who can not hit every time the No. 1 ring at least, or, in other words, who cannot pierce at 200 yards a saucer measuring six inches in diameter, has very little chance of winning a prize at a Tyrolese shooting-match. In the larger valleys, where the same attention is not given to rifle-practice, a stranger would have a better chance; but in the more secluded glens, where the rifle is constantly in the hands of a man, he must be indeed a good shot to get even a minor prize.

An hour's practice steadied my nerves, and I changed my position to the next partition of the shed, set apart for the marksmen firing at the stag. The "running stag" consists of the wooden figure of a stag rigged up by means of a huge pendulum in such a manner that when loosened it would dart across an open space eight feet in width, between tall and dense bushes. The pace at which this imitation stag traveled was about equal to that of a living specimen in full flight. A bull's-eye, painted on the "Blatt"-region of the heart, had to be hit in the same way as a fixed target, but of course this was a hundred times more difficult, considering the rapid movement of the mark; and yet there were three or four men present who had, out of six shots, hit the bull's-eye five times,—a marvelous feat, seeming well-nigh incredible, as, at a distance of 140 yards, you saw the stag flash past you. One of the stags was for practice; the other was,

however, the mark upon which nearly all the prizes were staked. A large number of competitors being present, it was found necessary to restrict each man to six shots at the "grand count;" and fortunately for me, I determined to shoot my six shots that day, and not keep any over for the next (the match was extended over both days), as I dreaded "wild" shooting after a long night of dancing and drinking. The sequel proved that I had done very wisely, as all those men who had not followed this precautionary measure shot in such bad form the next day, that, at the termination of the match, I pulled off sixth, with a prize.

After firing my allotment I was glad to get back into the house, as loading and shooting at a temperature of 4° Fah. were rather uninviting occupations. I dare say many of my readers would have been amazed to see these men, with bare knees and open shirt, and in many instances even without their coats, just as they came out from dancing in the heated atmosphere to fire a few shots, stand there for an hour, and hardly remark that "To-day it is a bit cold."

Dancing, which had commenced at ten o'clock in the morning, was now at its height, and was kept up without intermission till six o'clock, when supper was announced. At the morning dinner the relatives and next friends only, not mentioning myself, had been invited. Now everybody present, and there were considerably over 250 people, ate and drank at the expense of the "happy couple." Huge long tables with benches on both sides were fixed wherever there was room; and the dishes, consisting of "Knödel," huge balls of cooked dough, with small pieces of fat bacon, and "Geselchtes," a sort of smoked pork boiled in fat rather than water, were placed in huge bowls, as large as a moderate foot-pan, on each table. Those who had no plates helped themselves direct from the dishes, while large stone jugs filled with beer, or, if the marriage is "rich," as they say, with wine, passed from mouth to mouth. At our table, where the same company assembled as in the morning, we had a repetition of the

“dinner” dishes, and the long interval had given me the necessary zest to enjoy the rich viands. The din and roar throughout the house was something terrific. Here a man, elated by his happy shot right in the center of the stag’s bull’s-eye, was singing a “Schnaddahüpfler,” in which he was deriding an unlucky companion who had lost two Mass wine — about three quarts — in a bet on that shot; there a man had recommenced an old quarrel with his *vis-à-vis* about a certain chamois which both swore they had hit, and still there was only one hole in the carcass. In one corner a man was bawling for more drink; while in the opposite one two young fellows, stretched across a table, were endeavoring to settle the question of their relative muscular strength by a game of “Fingerhackeln;” there two lasses lighting their pipes with one match, and vieing to outdo each other in producing the most dense clouds of vile tobacco-smoke.

Though mirth was at its height, and wherever one looked laughing faces might be seen, there was no drunkenness among the two or three hundred guests.

Supper lasted for more than two hours. Fresh pans of “Knödel” and huge platters of meat were forever appearing, and their contents disappearing, with a rapidity most wonderful to behold. My neighbor to the right, the brother of the bride, whose capacities in the way of “Knödels” and “Speck” I had watched at the morning meal, fairly outdid himself in the evening. To my certain knowledge, fourteen of the former, measuring each at the very least three inches in diameter, fell by his hand, not to mention sundry hunches of the very fattest bacon; and it was not astonishing that at the termination of his repast his head sank on his breast, his eyelids drooped, and five minutes later he was fast asleep, with his shaggy head resting on the festive board.

At about half-past nine, when most of the people had left for the dancing-rooms (a second room had been emptied of chairs and tables, and devoted to dancing) the “Ehrengang,” an institution of great antiquity, in use as early as the fourteenth century, began.

It consists of the presentation of money to the newly-married couple by each person, be it man, woman, or child, present at the wedding.

The chief table, where the couple had sat during supper, being cleared, a large brass or pewter dish, covered by a clean napkin, is placed at the head in front of the godmother of the bride—the mother is rigorously excluded from being present at any part of her daughter's wedding. At the side of the former sits an uncle or brother of the bride, a sheet of paper before him, and a pencil in his hand. The gift of each guest has to consist of at least two florins (about four shillings), one florin being a present, the second one is supposed to pay for the supper. Those who are present at both meals are expected to give at least three florins, while those who come in later and have no share in the eating and drinking give one florin. The money is placed in the hands of the godmother, and is hidden by her underneath the napkin, while her neighbor scribe notes down the name of the donor and amount of his gift, a proceeding which, though somewhat business-like and odd, arises from the reciprocal custom, that when the giver marries he expects the exact amount of money from the bridegroom that he had given at the occasion of the latter's wedding.

The bride and her affianced stand a little apart from the table, she with an ever-full wineglass in her hand, he at the side of a gigantic basket filled with huge buns of coarse flour, and unpalatably greasy. As each guest emerges from the crowd hovering around the "pay-table," the bride presents the full wineglass, the bridegroom a bun; the former is drunk off to the health and prosperity of the couple, the latter forthwith disappears in the coat or dress-pocket of the well-wisher, to be hoarded up for the next Sunday cup of coffee, or any other propitious occasion.

I was highly amused in watching the various expressions of the guests' physiognomies as they tendered their hard-earned florins to the steady matron, who just bowed her head in a stately manner as each individual pressed the



two or three pieces of crumpled paper or silver florins into her hand. Now and again, when a "fiver" made its appearance, a smile of welcome would hover round her lips; but never a "thank you" or other expression of gratitude passed her lips. As the money is not hers, the thanking is left to the rightful owners, the happy couple.

No less amused would a stranger be to watch the solicitude with which the elderly female relations of the couple collect in the ample folds of clean napkins the pieces of meat, bacon, or pastry that have remained in the dishes.

Neatly packed up, they are carefully carried home, and furnish a Sunday dinner; or, if they happen to be of an imperishable nature, they are hoarded up for years as mementos of the fête.

In other parts of Tyrol presents in the shape of furniture, such as a bed, a chest, or a table, are given; and though such gifts as these are commonly restricted to relatives of the couple, the same law of returning, at the proper occasion, exactly the same description of "cadeau," holds good also in these instances.

A much more singular custom in the way of wedding-presents is to be met with in several of the remotest Tyroïese valleys, — the presentation of a cradle to the bride by each one of her discarded lovers.

At the wedding of a rustic belle, who for a series of years has held court in her summer palace, the Alp-hut, and who can boast of a whole train of ardent admirers, frequently five, six, and seven cradles, of the very roughest construction, are found in front of the house-door, on the morning after the wedding.

Very often it happens that just those girls who have enjoyed life to the utmost ultimately marry some man much older than themselves, who can offer them what most of their lovers could not, a house and home; and though it may not exactly be conducive to the serene conjugal happiness of the husband to find, on awakening on the morning after his wedding, his doorway blocked up with these tangible proofs of his wife's *faux pas*, they

tend, no doubt, to set at rest any doubts he may have entertained as to their exact number.

The "Ehrentanz," or the dance of honor, takes place immediately after the last guest has presented his gift. This is the solemn dance of the bride and bridegroom, the nearest of her relations, and any guests whom the bridegroom desires to honor and distinguish. All the rest of the dancers line the wall, while the host of the inn and his wife stand near to the musicians. As each couple, slowly waltzing round the room, pass the host, a full glass of wine is presented to the man, who has to present it to his partner, and only after she has drunk of it may he drain the glass. Upon the brother of the bride, or, if she has none, upon the bridegroom's, devolves the duty of singing a short "rhyme" in praise of the occasion after each of his rounds; and now comes the most comical feature of the whole. If the bridegroom has been a gay Lothario in his day, or the bride a little too fond of her male admirers, or if, worst of all, there are any tangible proofs of her former misconduct, any one of the dancers lining the wall can stand forth, and in a gay rhyme accuse him or her of any incidents that are of questionable character.

To these the brother, the champion for both bride and bridegroom, has to answer, and if possible retaliate with some severe cut. In Brandenburg this custom is not so generally observed as in several other valleys; I have seen as many as fifteen and twenty of these public accusers tell tales of former sins. As they are invariably of a highly questionable character, I must refrain from giving instances.

For a rejected lover, or one that has been thrown overboard in lieu of a richer or handsomer one, this is obviously the best opportunity possible for revenging himself; and very frequently scenes of former love come upon the *tapis* that seem to civilized ears, to say the least, unseemly.

In the Bavarian valleys they have long dances, each one lasting frequently an hour at a time, which have their distinct names:—the "Bride's dance," the "Hunger dance,"

the "Drink dance," the "Cabbage dance," and several others, among them the "Kranzl," or "Wreath dance," which corresponds to the "Ehrentanz" of Tyrol. It is the last in which bride or bridegroom participate. The former dances it with the "best man" — who, as we see, is till the very last a plagued individual — as her partner, while her newly-wedded spouse performs "the steps" with the "honorary mother," an aged dame who represents the mother on that important day. In Bavaria, when the company chaffs the bridegroom, his aged partner gets her share too, and in a feigned paroxysm of rage he bundles her on to a wheelbarrow (which has been secreted, expressly for this purpose, underneath the musicians' platform), and trundles her out of the room amidst loud laughter and vociferous cheers. On his return he is surrounded by the bridesmaids, who have robbed the bride of her bridal wreath. A sprig of rosemary is torn from it, and, placing it on a wooden platter, after having broken the sprig in two, they present it to the husband, accompanying this performance with the somewhat prosaic words, "And now, Mr. Bridegroom, we all wish you a good appetite."

After the "Ehrentanz" the newly-married couple depart, and the musicians, whom thus far they had paid, are now entirely dependent upon the public. True, not quite so entirely as one might suppose, for if the receipts do not come up to their standard, they begin to scratch the fiddle, and display in other ways their contempt for the close-fisted public.

The way in which they are paid by the dancers is singular. A plate is put in front of the musicians, and after every dance one or the other of the dancers is expected to accompany his "Schnaddahüpfler" song with a ten or twenty kreutzer piece (about twopence or fourpence). After the "Ehrentanz" the dancers settled down to real good earnest work, to be kept up the whole night. Merrier and merrier got the crowd, and oftener and oftener did the glowing couples disappear to quench their thirst in quarts of beer or gills of "Schnapps."

A novel and certainly dangerous way of cooling one's

glowing face and throbbing heart is put into practice by these hardy fellows. Coat and waistcoat have long since been discarded as too hot; and so in their shirt-sleeves, accompanied by their partners, they adjourn to the well in the courtyard. While he breaks off the long icicles that crest the spout, the lass lays hold of the pump-handle, and in the icy-cold water that spurts forth he bathes face, neck, and chest! And yet consumption or any complaint of the chest is, if not quite unknown, of very rare occurrence in these valleys.

Dancing ceased at six o'clock in the morning, for the tolling church-bell announced early service in honor of the saint whose "day" it happened to be.

At seven o'clock, when service was over, we were again at it with fresh vigor, obtained, in my case at least, in the shape of a very solid breakfast. An hour later shooting in the range commenced; but on trying my luck, when I finally got tired of dancing, I found that a night's "spree" does not tend to steady one's hand. I gave it up as a bad job after firing some ten or twelve rounds.

Re-commencing dancing with a batch of fresh fair dancers, — who had not been up the whole night, — the fifteen or twenty young fellows, including myself, who had determined to hold out as long as there was a nail in our shoes, were animated with fresh strength. We kept it up, with an hour's intermission for dinner, till six o'clock that evening; or in other words, we had accomplished the feat of dancing more than thirty-two hours, with the sole break of the four hours that had been given up to sleep the first night.

After indulging in a hearty supper we commenced our preparations for our start homewards. Three young fellows, natives of a village close to my home, had decided to accompany me that night rather than to stop the night at the inn and return next morning.

Provided with huge bundles of pine torches and a bottle of "Schnapps," we started at about eight o'clock that evening.

Heavy falls of snow had obliterated every trace of the

steps that had been imprinted in the deep snow the previous day, thereby materially increasing the difficulties of our task.

Though we had, all four of us, broad snow-hoops on our feet, we sank far beyond our knees in the yielding mass of snow.

Had I not been so fatigued by my uninterrupted dancing the two previous days, our march home would have been a pleasing and interesting finish to my midwinter expedition to Brandenburg.

Silently we pushed on for many hours. The glare of the torches, the mysterious silence of nature under a heavy pall of snow, the ghostlike appearance of the trees, the odd and fantastical shadows on the white background, and finally the dull thud and roar now and again when a tree, giving way under the weight resting on every portion of it, snapped asunder, were all features of my nocturnal return home from a peasant's wedding.

In many of the larger valleys, as for instance, the Unterinntal, Zillertal, and Brixenthal, which, as the German phrase has it, "are licked by civilization," the old wedding customs have of late years, to a great extent at least, been done away with. In some instances innovation in these quaint and pleasing relics of bygone ages were a source of contention for that part of the population who, though the shriek of the locomotive was within earshot, were not ashamed to continue to do as their forefathers did.

Several years ago an instance of the general unpopularity in which the modernized wedding customs were held came under my immediate notice. A wealthy young "Wirth" — who had been for several years in Munich and Vienna, imbibing there a predilection for town manners and habits — had his wedding with a damsel of his native townlet conducted strictly on "town principles," inviting only a limited number of guests, doing away with the usual public dancing, and, in fact, turning the usual merrymakings at a rural wedding into the torturously wearisome ceremony prescribed by the rigorous code of civilization. The young fellows and fair lasses of his

native townlet took this remodeling of time-honored customs, and particularly the fact that they were deprived of their dance, greatly amiss. Not content with showing their dissatisfaction in various ways, they determined to carry out the bright idea, proposed by one of them, of arranging a "blind wedding" on the very day and in the very inn selected by the object of their wrath for the solemnization of his marriage.

The indignation and wrath of the pompous bridegroom can be fancied when he perceived taking place an exact counterpart of his own ceremony, going into every detail, such as the same number of carriages, and the same number of "pöller" shots — small cannon. Short of the actual marriage-scene in the church, the comic farce was an exact copy of the genuine ceremony and the subsequent festivities. The roomy Wirthshaus, the site of both wedding dinners, was divided into two antagonistic strongholds, the genuine guests occupying the rooms on the ground floor, the sham ones disporting themselves in the upper apartments. A band of music having been provided by the latter, dancing commenced shortly after dinner; the male guests of the bridegroom, numbering about a fourth of their uproariously gay enemies, and being obliged therefore, in view of the heavy odds that would be brought to bear against them if any quarrel arose, to keep very quiet, had not only to pocket the insult of the whole proceeding, but actually were constrained to stand by and witness their sisters, daughters, or sweethearts carried off to the dancing-room by their rivals.

The sham bride, a dressed-up man, brought the matter to a head by entering the room tenanted by the bridegroom's party, and going up to him knocked the hat off his head, and picking it up placed it on his own. I have said what the act of placing one's hat on a girl's head means. The bride, bursting into tears at this further indignity, upbraided her affianced for his conduct. The latter, stung to the quick by the whole affair, was just about laying hands on the fiend in woman's shape, when

a body of gendarmes — the rural police — entered the room, and put a stop to any further disturbance. The host, well aware that a fight on a grand scale would very probably be the finish-up of this whole farce, had dispatched a messenger on horseback, at an early hour in the morning, to the next town, to fetch a body of these peacemakers. Their arrival in the evening occurred, as we have seen, in the nick of time: a few minutes later, and they would have found the whole house a scene of fierce fighting, on a scale rendering even the intervention of twenty or thirty gendarmes of but little use. As it was, three gendarmes, posted at the foot of the stairs, cut off all communication between the two hostile parties, and were able to keep the peace for the rest of the night.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## MORE ABOUT WEDDINGS IN THE ALPS.

I HOPE the last chapter has not entirely forestalled the interest in some other wedding customs of which I learned on other occasions.

A fashionable marriage solemnized at any of our aristocratic hymeneal altars, and a wedding celebrated in a primitive little mountain hamlet in Tyrol, are both spectacles unique in their way; but only those who have chanced to witness both can know what an unfathomable source of interesting speculation is afforded by a contemplative comparison of the two ceremonies. The moralist could fill a short volume with collations of social features of the two respective countries; the national economist could do the same with interesting deductions; a mental equation could be worked out, in which England's wealth and love of display, and Tyrolese appetite and intellectual stagnation, formed the unknown numbers. The antiquarian, again, would be enabled to throw strong light upon the origin and gradual development of tail-coats and wedding-cakes.

I, however, belong to neither of these classes, and content myself with having given a few useful hints for the benefit of the learned.<sup>1</sup>

Foremost in all matters connected with a rural wedding is the *Hochzeitlader*, or best man; in fact, his position is, generally speaking, of far greater consequence than that of the happy bridegroom himself.

<sup>1</sup> Wedding customs differ considerably throughout the Tyrol. For some reasons and minor details, see appendix.



Dressed in his Sunday best, bright many-colored ribbons on his hat, a nosegay composed of carnations in his button-hole, he sets out, four or five weeks before the wedding, on his round of visits. His duty is to invite relations and acquaintances to the wedding of his friend.

Let us follow his steps as he enters the house of a well-to-do peasant, a "Freund" of the bridegroom. ("Freund," or friend, means with the peasantry a person more or less distantly related.) He walks into the chief room, and, without saying a word of greeting, immediately commences his set speech of invitation. "Bride and bridegroom," he begins, "send me hither to convey to you their good wishes, and it is their simple behest, and my pleasant duty, to ask you to be present at the pleasures and merrymakings at their wedding. They ask you to partake of a breakfast in the bride's paternal house. Subsequently you will have the goodness to accompany them on the roads and on the paths, across woods and meads, across the country and the fields; across the mountains and the hills, to the village church, where resides St. Jacob. There you will find present a reverend priest, who will tie the knot sacred and indissoluble save by death. After this holy ceremony we'll accompany the bride and bridegroom back to the 'wedding house,' where a rib of beef, a forkful of 'kraut,' a spoonful of soup, a glassful of wine, and a bit of bread, such as God Almighty has placed in cellar and kitchen, will be offered to us. As long as the hackbrettel will stick together, and as long as there's a string left on the guitar, we'll dance, jump, and be merry."

The invited party answer this polite invitation by accepting it, not in word, but by placing before the exhausted best man a dish of rich pancakes and a bottle of wine. This act of hospitality signifies their acquiescence. If, on the contrary, they thank him, and say they will come, without offering him his well-earned reward for a tramp of many hours across mountain and moor, he knows that the festive board on the wedding-day will not be honored by their presence.

In other valleys, again, etiquette requires that the invited persons should simulate the utmost astonishment when informed that their "friend" is about to enter the holy bonds of matrimony. They cross-question the messenger, and exhibit a feigned surprise at every word he tells them, that speaks well for their talent as actors. They accept the invitation with the most profound expressions of gratitude, but it is left entirely to the wily eye of the best man to detect if their acceptance is meant as such, or is simply to be taken as a ruse to get him away as quickly as possible.

This is a very critical point for our friend. His sharp eye and practiced discernment must guide him through it; for woe to him if the estimate of the number of guests who attend the wedding proves to be wrong! If less people come than he expected, he and his friend, the bridegroom, must pay for the covers that were ordered for the defaulters. If, on the contrary, more people come than he expected, the case is no less awkward, for offense is easily taken by the peasantry, and though perhaps they will not show it at the time, a lifelong grudge is the result.

The price of a cover at a rich peasant's wedding frequently runs up to five and six florins. The cost of the cover is included in the money-present every guest, be he a relation or only an acquaintance, has to make to the bridegroom and bride. Many a man, not disposed to purchase a day's carousal at the cost of eight or ten florins, will therefore endeavor to get out of it as best he can, without actually declining the invitation point-blank.

We see that the difficulties that beset the path of our friend are not a few. In many places — as, for instance, in the majority of the Bavarian Highland valleys — professional "best men" are employed, rather than personal friends of the bridegroom. These men are the wits of their villages. They are but rarely duped, for their natural sharpness, and especially their long practice, make that nigh impossible; and the estimate made by a professional best man will hardly ever be at fault.

In poorer valleys the bridegroom imitates the example

of some of his Tyrolese *confrères*, and does the inviting business himself. In others a *persona comica* in the shape of the so-called "Hennen Klemmer" (we might render this word by "hen-prigger") appears at the side of the "marriage-broker" when on his rounds of festive import.

This character, usually the brother of the bride, has the prerogative of stealing a hen from every peasant's house his companion enters for the purpose of inviting any one of the members of the family. If he can manage to do so unobserved, the booty is his; but if, on the contrary, he is discovered, nothing but immediate flight will save him from a ducking in the large pump-troughs, or a sound beating.

Let us skip the fortnight that intervenes between the last invitation and the important morning.

The day has hardly dawned when we are startled by loud pöller<sup>1</sup> shots, accompanied by far-echoing jodlers and the shrill blast of sundry musical instruments.

The paternal house of the fair bride begins to fill with crowds of gayly-attired peasants, to each of whom wedding favors, in the shape of bunches of artificial flowers, are given.

Presently the "best man," accompanied, if the bride is the daughter of a wealthy peasant, by two assistant groomsmen, is perceived by the watchful mother, wending his or their steps, as the case may be, up the steep path leading to the house.

The company assembled is hushed, the people sit down in formal rows on chairs or benches, to await the coming ceremony, in dignified silence. The best man enters the room, and, without taking any notice of the rest of the crowd, he walks up to where the bride's father is seated, and addresses him as follows:—

"When we were here last we appointed a maiden to pick rosemaries, and to darn her torn linen: we would like to see her now, and to convince ourselves if she has

<sup>1</sup> A small cannon.

done her duty; for, otherwise, we won't pay her her wages."

The peasant nods smilingly, and tells his wife to bring in the maiden. Instead of complying with this order, the oldest and the ugliest of the maid-servants of the peasants is ushered in. A broad grin lights up the wrinkled face of the hag, as she steps up to the best man, and, holding up her skirts, makes a dainty little bow to that august personage, saying —

"I have done what you told me; here is a fine nose-gay of rosemaries," and, holding up a bunch of nettles, she waves it to and fro under the very nose of the man, whose part compels him to feign supreme astonishment. "Aren't they fine, and don't they smell sweetly?" the old hag continues, while she uncovers a huge basket filled to the brim with rags and shreds of household linen. "Here is the linen I have darned," are her words, as she brings a handful of rags under the close inspection of the bewildered "best man," who now pulls out a huge pair of imitation spectacles of wood, and, after fixing them on his nose, cries out, —

"Why, you have aged amazingly since I last saw you," and, catching hold of her, he turns her round, examining her closely. "Why, you are humpbacked, and you squint, and your hair is gray, and your face is wrinkled, and you haven't a tooth in your mouth. I fear you have been bewitched by Mistress Trude," exclaims the "best man;" "but I have got a salve which will restore your beauty, and make your hump vanish from your back;" and forthwith he draws from his pocket a piece of paper, in which is wrapped a shilling or two.

The old hag, wagging her head, says, —

"It's no use." She knows well that she never can be made young again, but to please him she'll try; and with these words she collects her rags and nettles, and hobbles out of the room.

The best man then repeats his speech to the father, who now gets up and leaves the room, saying he will look for his daughter himself. Presently he returns, leading her.

In her right hand she holds a bunch of rosemaries, and in her left a shirt of homespun linen made by herself. Both of these she presents to the best man, as a reward for his pains. The whole party then sit down to a "breakfast" of somewhat substantial dimensions, consisting of broth, several meats dressed with a sauce of melted butter, and bacon swimming in grease.

While this meal is partaken of, the musicians of the village arrive, and station themselves outside of the house, where they set up a discordant peal of shrieks and blasts. Nothing but a piece of money and a jug of beer or wine will tune their instruments. At last the party breaks up, and headed by the band, now restored to good-humor, the train slowly wends its way down the steep slope, across the meads and woods, on their way to the village church. It is a charming sight to see the gayly-attired crowd, full of mirth and fun, glide along the quiet lanes, traverse somber forests, as yet untouched by the morning rays of the sun. The merry strains of the music wafted up to you by the cool morning breeze, the splendid landscape round you, the rolling echoes of the pöller-shots and the loud melodious jodlers, all unite in forming a very pleasing scene; which, if you are in the least a lover of nature and of the stalwart merry people who inhabit the less-known mountain recesses, will remain impressed upon your mind for many a day to come.

The harmonious sounds of the distant village church-bells, as they "ring in" the couple, float up to our point of view, and startle us from the deep reverie into which the sight of the merry train, of the unspeakable beauties of nature, has cast us. We hasten down the steep winding path towards the church, where we arrive just in time to witness the "salting of the kraut." This ceremony is a very common one all through the Alps, and is decidedly a remnant of the customs that were peculiar to the Germanic tribes more than a thousand years ago.

The hostess of the inn where the wedding-meal and the dance are to be held posts herself near the church-door, and, when the bridal train approaches, she catches

hold of the bride, and obliges her to accompany her into the inn. They enter the large kitchen, crowded with busy women, cooking and preparing the numberless dishes which are to appear on the festive board.

A huge iron pot filled with kraut — a sort of cabbage — is presented to the bride, the person doing this accompanying the act by the rhyme, —

Jungfer Braut,  
 Loss dar a guade Lehr geben :  
 Salz dei Kraut  
 Ober versalz dein Monn nit's Leben.

Which translated means, —

My maiden bride,  
 Take heed of my advice :  
 Salt well thy cabbage,  
 But not thy husband's life.

The blushing bride has then to throw a handful of salt into the pot ; and the women in the kitchen chant a song, which finishes the ceremony.

The whole company then repair to the neighboring church, where the sacred knot is tied.

What a bright blush mantles the girl's fair cheeks ! What a smile of perfect content plays about the well-shaped mouth of the stalwart bridegroom, as hand in hand they descend the church steps, to be received by salvos of pöller-shots, loud rejoicings, and tremendous blasts of the trumpet and clarionet ! Wine in large two-quart bottles is produced, and amid laughter and jollity it is drank on the spot.

The party then repair to the inn, where the dinner — the reader must remember it is hardly ten o'clock by this time — is spread on numerous tables. It begins with two kinds of soups, followed by from eight to twenty different courses of meat, bacon, pastry, &c. It is frequently four and five o'clock in the afternoon when the last guest leaves the table, only to return to it in the course of the

next two or three hours, for there are yet two meals to be cleared off that day.

At the termination of the last meal, at a late hour of the night, the usual toasts on the bride and bridegroom are drunk: a good harvest, a fine breed of cattle, and finally, but not least, a tubful of children, are wishes which are rarely omitted.

The toasting finished, the best man rises, and, taking a glass of wine in his hand, addresses to the company a comic speech, running as follows:—

“My dear married couples, and boys, and wenches, I drink this glass to your health. Were I to-day, for once, God Almighty, I would present you with all the riches of the world, and a long life to enjoy them. To the couple yonder I would give two dozen children into the bargain; or, were I Joshua, I would command the sun to remain on the sky above us for ever and ever, so that this day’s feasting, dancing, and singing would never come to an end; but as I am neither the Creator himself, nor his henchman Joshua, I can’t forbear to remind you all, who are here present, that you’ve eaten like wolves, and have drunk like beasts, and yet nobody has thought of the ‘Wirth,’ and of paying for this feast. But our kind entertainer makes you a present of the meats, and of the soups, and of the wine— not that you deserve it; but he requires to be paid for the bones of the meat, for the salt in the soup, and for the water you drank. The males present are all rascals and drunkards, forever at the pot-house, the Evil One’s chapel, and so he’ll let you have the lot for two florins each: but the women here, who are rarely to be seen in the inns, they, by the name of St. Michael, must pay double the amount for their meal; they each must pay two hundred kreutzers (which is exactly the same as two florins) slap down upon the table.

“And now, because I have come to an end with my say, let’s join in a prayer to Jesus Christ to honor this wedding with His presence, in the same way as He did the one in Galilee, so that we all, the bride and the bridegroom, the village and the vale, may receive the ‘Holy Virgin’s’ most gracious blessing. Amen.”

The company then rise and adjourn to the large Tanzboden of the roomy inn. This, the dancing-room of the house, is frequently a semi-detached shed, with large openings, but no windows, all round, in order that a thorough draught may refresh the indefatigable dancers.

The Ehrentanz, the dance of honor, is then performed, and a series of comical by-plays are enacted by the gayest and wittiest of the young village bucks. Now the bride is suddenly carried off and hidden.

The sharpest lads of the village are selected for this exploit. The attention of the bridegroom is diverted by various means, and while he is lending a willing ear to some tale of mortal combat between poachers and keepers, or retaliating some sarcastic attack, the bride is carried off by her captors. If the bridegroom is not liked, and there is any cause for spite, she is borne in a carriage to another village and brought to the inn, where the gay party set to work to run up as large a bill as they possibly can. The best the kitchen and cellar contains is ordered up, and by the time the angry bridegroom has tracked their steps, a prodigious figure is summed up on the slate tablet of the Kellnerin. The bridegroom has to square accounts, or he will not get possession of his bride till all hours of the night, or maybe he will find his cart overturned, or his horses unharnessed and turned loose. If, on the contrary, he is a popular personage, the captors will content themselves with carrying off their prize to the next inn of the same village, or, if there be only one, to the house of some friend of the bride.

Sometimes during the festivities a sack is thrown over the head of the bridegroom, and he is not released till he guesses the name of the malefactor. For every name he calls out he has to pay a certain quantity of wine or beer.

At eleven the couple generally leave for their distant home. The boys of the village have, however, not been idle in the mean while. When the couple arrive at their house, they find the doorway blocked up by a huge tree fresh from the wood. This is the so-called "Wiegenholz," wood for the cradle; if the bride has had a little mishap



prior to her nuptial day, the tree is coated with pitch, obliging the angry husband to sully his hands in his efforts to clear an entrance.

This tree plays also another rôle in the history of village life. Peeled of its bark, and decorated with flags and flutter of the most heterogeneous kind, it is placed at night-time in front of the bedroom window of the lass whom the village "bucks" desire to distinguish very particularly.

It is the highest honor that can be conferred upon any damsel, and makes her queen of the village, but, we must in justice add, the object of the bitterest envy of the female rivals, who leave no stone unturned in their endeavors to overthrow the supremacy. Sarcastic remarks, dark hints, and backbiting are, it is needless to say, the arms employed. In the Unterinntal, it is also customary for the male friends of the bridegroom to play him some trick on the wedding night. He will find his house-door nailed fast, or some sharp lad will have found his way into the bedroom and sewed the quilt to the sheet, or he will be douched with a pailful of cold water as he enters his house. These tricks, disagreeable as they may be at the time, are accepted by the bridegroom in a demure spirit. He knows too well that a show of ill-humor is of no earthly use, and can bear but evil results.

Badly does the bridegroom fare if he be a widower who is reported to have dealt unkindly towards his first wife, or if he be generally unpopular. He is then made the subject for the so-called "Buhu musi" — owl's chant, we might translate it—to which formerly the blind or wild wedding served as introduction. The "owl's chant" is very much the same as the German "Katzen music," or cat's concert, to which unpopular professors at universities have not infrequently to lend an unwilling ear. It is performed on old kettles, empty barrels, cowbells, and a host of other domestic and agricultural instruments.

The noise is something terrific, and continues as long as brawny arms can make it; for, unlike other occasions where discordant strains are *de rigueur*, no bribe will silence this outbreak of popular indignation.

Of the "blind" wedding, to which I have referred, a specimen has been given in the preceding chapter. Generally the proceeding is meant to hit off the conduct of some unfortunate couple who have delayed the wedding day till, in the eyes of the population, it is too late to repair mischief. Thus, to give a second instance which came under my special notice, the host of a village inn, a widower himself, had promised to wed his fair young "Kellnerin," or waitress. The wedding, however, was not to take place too soon, for our widowed Lothario postponed the ceremony from month to month, till finally the populace, roused to indignation by the evidently intentional dilatoriness of the faithless widower, determined to oblige him to fulfill his promise by performing the "blind" wedding.

The next fête-day was chosen. At an early hour of the morning a gay wedding train moved through the village, amidst festive music and volleys of pöller-shots. In the course of the night some handy young fellows had erected a sort of altar right opposite the victim's house. Here a man dressed as a priest awaited the train, which presently reached the selected spot. In front marched the two "pot-carriers," bearing huge beakers filled with water instead of wine. Behind them walked the usual company of gayly-attired guests, in the midst of which were the fictitious couple, made to resemble as much as possible the veritable malefactor and his confiding victim. At their side were four beardless young fellows, dressed as bridesmaids, holding huge bunches of nettles in their hands. When the assembled company were duly stationed at their several posts, the priest asked the couple if they would marry each other "for worse and not for better." Both replying, "Yes," he handed the husband a wooden clog and the wife a broom, and proceeded to preach the sermon he and his companions had compiled specially for the occasion. In it he recounted all the vices and failings of their victim; he warned his audience against tampering with wine and women—"Both turn sour," he says; and, in fact, not a word nor an act of mine host was left hidden by his tormentor.

A fortnight later, the fictitious wedding was followed by a genuine one ; and, as I was told later on, the husband turned out to be quite a model.

The reader will join in praising these "blind" weddings. Their bad sides — and they have decidedly some weak points — are fully atoned by their good ones. Popular feeling is by no means so generally at fault as we civilized beings take a pride in believing.

But to return to the more cheerful ceremonies. In the Ampezzo valley, hardly is the wedding company out of the village, on their way to the distant homestead, when they are met by a troop of horsemen, armed with swords, halberds, and every species of antiquated arms that can be found. This troop is composed of those of the bridegroom's friends and neighbors who have not been invited to the wedding.

While three or four of the horsemen dismount, the others surround the party, so that escape becomes impossible. A fictitious fight ensues, the resistance offered by the bridal train being of the weakest. They are overpowered, and the bride is borne off in triumph.

While her routed companions make the best of their defeat, and continue their walk towards the bride's house, the captors proceed to the church, and oblige their fair prisoner to walk three times round the center aisle, whereupon they take her to the next inn, and treat her to wine and cake at the expense of her husband, who, we may presume, not infrequently makes a sour face when, later on, he has to pay for his defeat. The body of cavalry escort the bride back to her own home, but do not release her until the bridegroom has promised to pay for a substantial meal as a fair ransom.

After the wedding feast in the inn, the party breaks up, and repairs to the future home of the bride, — her husband's house, where a second repast is awaiting them. But before they have time to finish it, their tormentors of the morning, the cavalry, appear on the scene. The house-door is locked and barred, but the valiant assault of the horsemen, who dismount for this purpose, renders

it dangerous to hold out any longer. The besieged begin to parley with the enemy, who declare that there is contraband in the house, and that they don't believe the couple who were in church that morning are really married.

A large basketful of eatables, and jugs of wine, are handed out to the ferocious and voracious foes, with the words, "That's all the contraband we've got;" and the kiss which the bridegroom bestows upon his bride convinces them that "all is in order." A merry dance in which the cavalrymen join finishes the day.

Now let us glance at the wedding day in any one of the large well-to-do Bavarian villages north or north west of the Tyrolese frontier, surrounded by wooded hills, the spurs of the Alps. We see plenty around us. The substantial broad-roofed houses are stone-built, with wooden balconies running round the first floor; the huge barns are filled to overflowing with corn; the ample sheds are stocked with herds of well-kept cattle; the very dress of the peasantry, with their silver pieces as buttons on their coats, betokens wealth. The swift Inn sweeps past the village, bearing on its majestic waters rafts laden with timber, salt, or general goods. The roads connecting one village with the others are good, and every house is accessible by carriage, or else how could that huge "fedelwagen" — dowry-cart — upon which are piled the numberless odds and ends of the bride's dowry, reach its destination, the young wife's new home?

It is a strange sight, shortly before the wedding, to see one of these gigantic machines, drawn by four and often six black horses, decorated with boughs, flowers and ribbons, toil along the high road.

Amongst the load we discover the "Hochzeitstruhe," a chest filled with homespun household linen; another chest containing the bride's dresses, &c.; a huge double bedstead, the nuptial couch; a large crucifix for the bedroom; several of those terrible plumots — feather-beds — in their red and white coverings; and finally, quite on the top of the huge pile, we perceive the spinning-wheel,

with its distaff adorned with red and blue ribbons and gay tinsel, and cheek by jowl to it is the symbol of marriage, the new rocking cradle ! In front of the pile a seat has been prepared for the bride, who, in the character of future mistress, guards the transport of her dowry.

In some parts, the bride, instead of sitting on the cart, follows it on foot. On her head she balances the new gayly-painted milk-pail, filled with flax and hemp instead of milk. In one hand she holds the distaff, while with the other she leads the bell-cow, the prize animal of her herd. A charming picture ! The laughing face, the long plaits of her golden hair hanging down to her waist, she might be likened to the goddess of domestic happiness.

As invited guests, we have the right to follow the cart, bearing company maybe to the merry-eyed lass who leads the stately cow, a parting gift of the indulgent father. But no, our company is hardly recommendable ; we are evidently *de trop*. That stalwart young fellow in his picturesque attire, shouldering a glittering ax, has evidently more chances to find favor in the eyes of the damsel than we, the invisible followers. But who is he ? we ask, and what's the meaning of the ax he carries ? Oh ! he is but the village carpenter, who, in the hopes of a free share in the wedding meal and a glass of "schnapps," offers the services of his craft to make up and put together the nuptial couch, that *chef-d'œuvre* of his art, the several parts of which we have noticed amongst the rest of the load. Up hill and down dale the heavy cart travels on its festive journey. Swinging to and fro, it seems to us in great danger of being turned over, and landed in the deep ditch at our side.

All of a sudden the caravan comes to a dead halt ; we hear the oaths and heavy cracks of the enraged wagon-driver's long-lashed whip ; we hasten forward to see the cause of all this hubbub, and lo ! what do we perceive ? A huge barrier of heavy beams, spars, and sticks, interspersed with the tough branches of the "latschenbush," is constructed right across the road, where it makes a sharp angle. The bride smiles, the driver swears and

cracks his whip threateningly, and the fair lass leading the cow spies about her into the dense shade of the wood, trying to discover a trace of the mischievous waylayers.

But what does the barrier mean? Are we not living in the nineteenth century? And who dares to obstruct the high road in this scandalous manner? We join in the driver's maledictions, and declare ourselves willing to lend him a helping hand in removing the barrier, for the beams are covered with pitch and rosin; but our hands rue the rash offer, and when we finally have managed to wrench them away, we look at them ruefully. Peals of scornful laughter greet our ears: we look round us to discover the insolent scoffers; but they are so cleverly hidden at the top of the dense trees and behind clumps of latschen-bushes, that we fail to discover the slightest trace of them.

But what are we to do? The carpenter, the only person who could remove the barrier by a few strokes of his sharp adze, declares he dare not risk the anger of the waylayers, who would inevitably revenge themselves were he to defraud them of their legitimate ransom. Nothing is left but to fetch the bridegroom: a horse is detached from the cart, led round the barricade, and the carpenter, mounting it, rides to the bridegroom's house, where the latter has been anxiously awaiting his bride's arrival for the last hour.

He sees the horseman toiling up the road, and guessing very rightly the cause of the delay and the import of the messenger's mission, hastens down to meet him. His fears are confirmed: the bride's dowry-cart is "locked," and nothing can open that pitchy lock but a ransom of a couple of florins.

When the bridegroom approaches the barrier, the evil spirits suddenly appear; their faces blackened, or painted with red stripes, or hidden behind gauze masks. They commence a dance of rejoicing, and jodel right merrily; when their victim, flattered and pleased in reality, but feigning displeasure at the delay that his bride has experienced, reluctantly distributes the ransom in the shape of

two or three pieces of silver. A few strokes with the sharp hatchet, and the barrier, which has been most ingeniously arranged, falls asunder, leaving a free opening through which the carriage continues its progress, whilst from the surrounding heights pistol-shots and songs give out a pleasing echo.

The bridegroom hastens away, for country etiquette requires that he should be stationed at his own house-door to receive his bride's dowry. When the lumbering cart finally reaches its destination, pöller-shots and loud jodlers announce the happy event.

He awaits the caravan, standing on his doorstep. A stalwart, handsome man, dressed in his Sunday best; the glistening row of silver buttons shine in the rays of the sun, round his well-shaped mouth plays a smile of satisfied pride. Is it the goodly dowry, or the handsome merry-eyed lass, which calls it forth? Rather than examine this question, let us watch his elastic step, as he approaches the cart, and, placing his hands underneath his bride's ampits, swings her down from her high perch in approved style, right on the doorstep of his house.

He knows that the lookers-on lay stress upon this act, for does it not signify the actual taking possession of the bride and her goods and chattels? The bystanders applaud him, and a smile of flattered pride again plays round his mouth. The carpenter lends a helping hand in unloading the cart, and when every thing is down he proceeds to put up the nuptial couch.

Every thing but the ungainly straw mattress for the bed has been put in its proper place. The former, however, the bridegroom himself must carry to the bedroom, a proceeding which is lustily cheered by the company, who immediately afterwards assemble in the parlor to witness the formal act of "giving over." This consists in the bride handing to her future husband the keys of all her treasures, accompanying them with a gift of a homespun shirt and a pair of new shoes.

The bridegroom then shows his bride and the train of followers over the whole house; he brings them in to the

milk-cellar, where long rows of huge wooden bowls tell of the number of cows in the stalls; he takes them into the roomy kitchen, the store-room, the cowshed, the granary, the flour-room; in fact, no nook or corner of the house is left unexplored. While this is going on, the priest has made his appearance: he is hospitably received, with wine or beer, bread, butter, and cheese. After partaking of these, he proceeds to bless the house, the nuptial couch, and the stores which the bride has brought, according to the old Roman ritual, “*Benedictio thori et thalami.*”<sup>1</sup>

For this ceremony the priest receives a half-florin piece (1s.), which is placed together with a new pocket-handkerchief on a plate, and thus both are presented to him.

A pleasing custom is connected with this transport of the dowry; whilst it is taking place, the parish priest is paid to read a mass for every one of the lately deceased relations of bride and bridegroom. Elsewhere the day is brought to a close by a visit *en masse* to the village graveyard, the bride and bridegroom kneeling down and praying a certain number of prayers at the graves of their relations.

The wedding eve was formerly a night of revelry in the bride's home. Work over, the youths and maidens of the village repaired thither, each one bringing something in the eatable line.

From the stores thus collected, a simple repast was prepared; and when justice had been done to it, the whole company repaired to the barn or granary adjoining the house, where the real *fête* was to take place.

The smooth floor, sloping slightly, is carefully swept, a few wooden benches placed here and there in the dark corners for lovers' seats, and the huge stable-lantern attached to one of the center beams overhead is trimmed and lighted. The musical entertainment, duly provided by the village lads, is of modest description, but it is nevertheless more than sufficient for the merry youths

<sup>1</sup> In other districts this blessing takes place in the bride's paternal home, before the goods and chattels constituting the dowry are removed.



and fair lasses who have begun to pair off in loving couples. The Zither, accompanied by the stirring bell-like tones of the Hackbrettel, has begun to exercise its resistless influence: the heavy tramp, the gay jodel, the agile figurè, the shrill whistle, and the peculiar tones of "Schuhblatteln," betray the zest and vigor of the young dancers.

Unrestrained by the presence of elderly lookers-on or anxious mothers, the fair lassies are, with one or two exceptions only, encircled by the strong arms of their respective stalwart young lovers.

It is not very many years ago that a strange custom was the chief feature of this evening. It was called the Cock-dance, though in reality it was rather a cock-fight than a dance. The two largest cocks of the village were the actors. One represented the wife, and to this end his proud tail-feathers were cut short, and his comb tied down and hidden by a linen rag: the other cock, playing the part of the husband, was left in full possession of his manly attributes. The two birds were then incited to fight. If the "wife" beat, loud cheering and a host of sarcastical rhymes, deriding petticoat government, made the hapless bridegroom wretched for the rest of the evening. He was obliged to tie an apron round his waist, and to undergo various indignities; and a huge imitation key of wood was formally presented to the bride as a token of her future supremacy. The whole evening was one succession of merry-making and gayety; in fact, it was the symbol of the last maidenly pleasures of the bride. No dancing hereafter, no love-making, and no Schnaddahüpfers intoned by dauntless lads in her praise. If she ever did enter the dancing-room again, it was on the arm of her husband at a formal Ehrentanz, at the wedding of some near friend or relation.

And now, to make good our lengthy introduction, let us don our hats, gayly decorated, and take our stand among the crowd of guests. The selection of the day upon which the wedding is to be solemnized is by no means left to the free choice of the couple, but is strictly

regulated according to local custom. In Tyrol it is generally Monday, in Styria Wednesday, while in Ampezzo and Bavaria they are usually held on Tuesdays.

Tuesday is a *safe* day ; it portends no foreboding evil ; on Tuesday, no witchcraft, nor sorcery of any sort or kind, can throw a shadow upon the future of the happy couple ; on that day no malicious act of jealousy can be enacted by envious persons. A couple, in fact, married on that day, have no need to disquietude on the score of supernatural visitations.

The substantial "Morgensuppe" (morning soup), a meal consisting of several dishes of rich viands, opens the campaign at an early hour of the morning, — in many places as early as five and six o'clock. Only the very nearest relations and most honored guests partake of it. We are received by a hearty shake of the hand by the bride's parents, attired in their stately parade dress — a fashion getting from year to year more out of use. The bride, with her wreath of rosemary already in her hair, stands behind her sturdy parents ; a smile of welcome is on her face, as she extends to us her hand, with a merry "Grüss Gott !" ("God greet thee.") Her winsome blue eyes, sparkling with pleasure, enhance the beauty of the rosy-hued face, fringed by a halo of naturally-curling golden hair.

The bridegroom and his party are rigorously shut out from this morning meal. We need not give way to qualms of conscience as we seat ourselves at her side ; for are not the company and conversation of a charming young lassie far preferable to those of her stiffly formal elders, who, in a series of ludicrous compliments, outvie each other in exhibiting a proper sense of the importance of the day ?

The time for starting has arrived : our undertone *tête-à-tête* with the fair bride has to terminate, for with a hem and cough the Procurator rises from his seat, and proceeds to "out-thank" (*ausdanken*) the bride.

This means nothing but a speech in which the Procurator, in the name of the bride, thanks her parents for the love, forbearance, care, &c., that they have bestowed upon

her in her childhood and youth. Very quaint and odd this speech sounds to us, and, though the sentiments betrayed therein are pleasing, we can not but smile at the manner of expressing them, and at the words in which they are clothed. This ceremony concluded, the "Ehrengürtel" is fastened round the bride's waist by the two bridesmaids.

This "Ehrengürtel" is a broad girdle of leather, plated with silver, and highly ornamented. Every village in certain districts possesses or possessed them formerly. The girdle, after parading for the day on the bride's waist, is carefully returned to the keeping of the village sexton, together with a present for the poor. Lax as the moral sense of the peasantry throughout the Bavarian Highlands, Tyrol, and other mountainous countries is, the privilege of appearing with the "girdle of maiden honor" was rigorously refused to a bride whose former conduct led one to suppose that she had forfeited her right to it.

Happily this was not the case at our wedding; and though the fair lassie, blushing deeply when her companions encircle her full waist with that honorable eirelet, has had a score of lovers after her, she knew how to repel their dangerous advances, and even then, when she had singled out her future husband from the ranks, she abstained from jeopardizing the great privilege of pure maidenhood.

Every thing is prepared for the final leave-taking preceding the bride's departure from her home.

In the prosperous Bavarian valley, the bride has to "feed in" the horses that are to take her to church. Laying a slice of bread for each horse, on a plate, after besprinkling the former with salt and "holy water," she steps up to each of the huge beasts, and gives it its share. When she has done this with all four, she walks thrice round the carriage, and after the third time she dashes the plate against the right hind-wheel of the vehicle.

The carriages, for here the roads are good and each house is accessible to them, are waiting at the door. The four stately dray-horses, her father's pride, are pawing the ground. Their long silky tails and glossy manes, carefully braided into numberless little plaits, are adorned with

red and blue ribbons and bows. The carriages, for there are four or five, are but modest Leiterwagen — ladder carts — the sides of which are formed by rows of slanting laths, resembling ladders. They are festooned with wreaths of flowers and garlands of yew-branches, and furnished with planks to sit on, offering accommodation to ten or twelve people on each vehicle. The bride is swung on to the cart by her father, or, if he is weak and old, by the stalwart Procurator, who takes an inordinate pride in the knack of heaving her up with elegant ease.

Salvos of pöller-shots fired off behind the house make both us and the horses start ; we scramble up on the last of the four carts, and down the sloping hill we go at full gallop. If the distance to the church is not too great, this pace is kept up the whole distance. Cheers, loud jodels, and smart cracks of the long whips wielded by strong arms, mingle with the thundering peals of the pöllers. In the pauses we hear the village bells chiming in right merrily. Joyous mirth, laughing faces, merry songs, half-comical, half-sarcastical rhymes in countless Schnaddahüpfers, meet eye and ear. It is a merry sight, combining the picturesque features of nature with the novelty, to a town-bred person, of seeing around naught but pleased faces. Mirth is depicted in every look and feature of man, woman, and child who crowd down to watch the gay party drive past, and to shout a last “B’hüt Gott !” (“God protect thee !”) to the happy bride.

The merry strains of a band are heard as we approach the village itself, for the paternal house of the bride was a lonely peasant-dwelling situated some distance from the village. Again salvos of pöllers awake the rolling echoes of the hills ; this time they are fired off by the host of the inn, who does not grudge a few pounds of powder wherewith to honor the couple.

In the doorway of his house stands the portly host, who doffs his green velvet skull-cap as we pass him at full gallop on our way to the bridegroom’s house. Here we draw up in grand style ; the Procurator jumps down, and nimbly swings the bride in his approved style to the

ground. The whole party enters the house in order to receive the wedding favors, which consist in these parts of a red and white ribbon, which is knotted round the right arm. The bridegroom's favors are of violet silk, and he sports moreover a large bunch of rosemary on his hat.

The bridal train begins to form: it is close upon ten o'clock, and no time to be lost.

The men of both parties head the train; they are led by the bridegroom, attended by the Procurator and the "hen-prigger," that clown-like personage whose duties we have before alluded to.

The female contingent follow; they are led by the bride surrounded by her "Kranzeljungfern" bridesmaids.

In front marches the band, with long ribbons fluttering from the various instruments and hats of the men.

The Procurator's duties by no means terminate with the drive to the church: it is he who has to act the chevalier in the sacred edifice; he is the only person beside the Ehrenmutter — honorary mother — who accompanies the couple up the altar-steps. Hardly is the usual church ceremony over, when his duties recommence. He has furnished himself with a bottle of white wine, which the officiating priest has now to bless, when some of it is poured out in two glasses, one of which is handed to the couple, who have to nip thrice at its contents, while the other goes the round of the guests present.

When this has been done, the organist intones a sacred hymn; the party return to their seats, while the priest reads a mass for the recently-deceased relatives of the couple, for which "a sacrifice," i.e., some money, is laid on the altar-steps by the bridegroom. This finishes the sacred part of the ceremony, and the party now leaves the church amid loud rejoicings. In front of the principal inn on the village green, the usual "Brautlauf" (bride's race) is held, in which the fleetest runners among the invited guests participate. The distance is about four hundred yards, and the goal is represented by two bundles of straw, which the competitor who first

reaches them has to take up in his arms and carry back to the bride.

The bride then enters the inn, and "salts the cabbage;" after which, the usual heavy meal is begun between eleven and twelve o'clock, and is followed by the dancing and the "Ehrengang" with the money contribution as already described.

In the Bavarian valleys, the happy couple have yet to undergo another ordeal before they can take their departure. The musicians, the cook and her attendants, the maidservants, and in fact every servant in the house, must be presented with a "trinkgeld," or *douceur*. This is done in a comical manner. The musicians, for instance, will assemble round the couple and begin a serenade; all of a sudden every instrument gets out of tune, — the strings creak, the flute squeaks, the trombone gives forth a discordant roar, and so on. The bridegroom produces a small piece of money, but the caterwauling continues till finally he satisfies his tormentors with a couple of broad silver florins. The cook and her attendants present broken pots, cracked glasses, and smashed pottery of all sorts, while the housemaid and "Kellnerin" bring up the rear with broken brooms, and bundles of rags. Every one of these articles must be "mended" by a handsome *douceur*. This ceremony is the last of the many the plagued couple have undergone in the course of the eventful day. They are now free to depart for their home, — a liberty of which, as we may suppose, they are not slow to take advantage.

We will not follow them on their homeward walk, along the rippling stream, and through the dark gloomy forest; nor will we listen to their words, intended only for themselves. We prefer another dance or two.

## CHAPTER XV.

## A TYROLESE "KIRCHTAG" AND RIFLE-MATCH.

UNLIKE our own sports — cricket, hunting, and horse-racing — rifle-shooting in Tyrol is one in which the poorest native can participate. The fact that it would be difficult to find a more telling illustration of the tenacity to old customs that distinguishes the Tyrolese, than the quaint and humorous manner in which rifle-matches are conducted, renders this sport doubly interesting to the stranger accustomed to see it conducted in a business-like manner, unrelieved by the amusing originality that marks its pursuit in Tyrol.

We all know that the Tyrolese are noted for their skill at rifle-shooting ; and the large but generally uninteresting international rifle-matches which have been held of late years in most of the Continental cities have proved that the Tyrolese, as long as they are permitted to compete with their own rifles, rank among the best Continental marksmen.

It is not, as might be supposed, at large assemblies of marksmen, that an observer has the opportunity of witnessing the quaint by-play to which we have alluded, but rather as matches in the remote and secluded Alpine glens, to one of which, the Wildschönau valley, in North Tyrol, I intend asking our reader to accompany me on a fine October day.

A long and tedious tramp of four hours from Rattenberg, a small townlet at the foot of the chain of mountains we have to traverse on our way to this out-of-the-way nook, has brought us at last to their eminence. Before

us, bathed in the lovely rays of the morning sun, lies an Alpine valley, terminating, some two thousand feet higher up, in a row of snow-clad peaks, while broken ridges of somber pine-clad mountains form the foreground of the open, emerald-green Alpine mead upon which our goal, the charming little village of Oberau, is situated.

Its amazingly slender, needle-shaped church-spire, rising as if to rival the glistening domes of Nature in the background, is just visible over groves of dark-green trees, between which peep out here and there picturesque Tyrolese cottages of velvety-brown timber, with balconies under the eaves of the broad, projecting roof, garnished with rows of bright-colored flowers, the whole picture forming a charming contrast to the grand but barren impending peaks.

Turning our backs on this pleasant scene, and looking once more down to the sunny stretch of the Inn valley — our starting-point that morning — some four or five thousand feet below us, we see the broad silvery band of the river, innumerable villages scattered about, each one clustering round a sharp-pointed church-spire, groves of fruit-trees, and finally a straight white line, drawn by the ruler, — the path of that omnipotent harbinger of civilization, steam.

A far-resounding “jodel” awakens grotesque echoes among the precipitous slopes of the little glen up which we have just climbed, and we hasten down the gentle incline leading to our destination.

The heavy, cumbrous rifle, in its leather sheath, slung over my shoulder, and the gay bunches of carnations in my hat are, in the eyes of two comely country lasses, whose company we joined a few hundred yards before reaching the village itself, signs investing them with the privilege of making us the butt of their chaff.

“How often do you intend missing the target?” “Did your mother place that bunch of carnations on your hat?” this being the prerogative of a young fellow’s sweetheart. “Will you promise to share your prizes with us?” and finally, alluding to the weather-beaten condition of my



short leather nethers, they hint very plainly that "a chap visiting a strange valley on the 'Kirchtag' (the great fête-day of the year) might don his best Sunday 'Gwandl' (clothes) ; or have you, perhaps, none?" they continue, while with laughing faces they nudge each other, and smile approvingly ; when, stung by their satire, I endeavor to retaliate their slander by a bold Schnaddahüpfler in which I embody, as well as I can, the most stinging criticism of the female sex in general, and of our two tormentors in particular.

Presently we reach the village inn, a cozy, clean-looking house, right opposite to which is the shooting-range, decked out with gay festoons of pine-branches, and surmounted by a large black and yellow flag — the pride of the village.

The church-bell tolls out the hour of nine, and the church, crowded to excess by throngs of peasants, begins to empty itself.

The "Kirchtag," as I have said, is the grand fête-day of the year in the secluded valleys in Tyrol. Falling in the latter half of October, those of the primitive inhabitants of the vale who have spent the six spring and summer months high up on the Alps, tending their cattle, making butter and cheese, felling trees, and drifting them down to their village, have by this time returned from their elevated summer residences. Brother and sister, father and son, mother and daughter, the lover and his sweetheart, meet again, after a parting of nearly half a year.

Laughing faces, merry jokes, a deal of hand-shaking, chaff, and fun, are to be seen and heard around us, and betray the high spirits of the crowd, which, on issuing from the church, takes its stand on the open green in front of the sacred edifice.

For the next half-hour the events of the past half-year are eagerly discussed. While one peasant is engrossed in a tale of woe, how his "Glocknerin," or bell-cow, was killed by a fall down a precipice, his neighbor relates his piece of luck in selling his two black cows at a remarkably high price, "in fact," as he said, "making a clean forty florins (£4) by the two."

Considering the man had fed and tended them for six months, a profit of two pounds per head would be deemed very insignificant by English farmers, who in the same space of time would probably expect to realize just ten times as much.

Strange as it sounds, Tyrolese peasants entertain a great aversion to black cows, and they are quite willing to make a sacrifice if they can find a purchaser for them. Of this circumstance the foreign cattle-dealers, who buy very largely in Tyrol, are perfectly aware, and by keeping the credulous native in his belief of the inferiority of black cows, they succeed in realizing much larger profits than on cattle of another color.

Business discussed, the crowd follows the one or two leaders who had adjourned to the inn immediately on leaving church; and in the course of five minutes the spacious bar-room, furnished with long benches and proportionately long tables, is filled by a laughing and singing throng of men, eager to wash down the dry morning sermon with a glass of beer or wine ere they returned to their distant homes.

Most of the women have gone straight home. Our two buxom lady friends who had made us the victims of their chaff that morning were, however, among the more emancipated who deemed their sex no disqualification for a forenoon "drink;" and as we re-enter the bar-room, after enjoying a hearty breakfast in the kitchen, they proffer us, according to the custom of the country, their full glasses.

Sitting down at their side, to the evident annoyance of their lovers, who eye us askance as highly suspicious personages, — for are we not strangers to them, and apparently poaching upon their preserves? — we are soon engaged in a fierce battle of pointed jokes, and returning a heavy cross-fire of sarcastic raillery, in which very shortly our sullen neighbors, drawn on by the spirit of the gay damsels, are not loth to join. Nobody is spared; but the tone of good-humored hilarity that reigns over the company heals instantaneously the wound inflicted by the sharp arrow of personal raillery.

Blow for blow, chaff for chaff; the harder you hit, provided you keep within certain bounds, the more your company is appreciated. Be your coat of the finest, and your manners the most elegant, you will find, unless you can hold your own in the duel of chaff which you have challenged, no pity at the hands of your neighbor, the poorly-clad woodcutter.

In the more secluded valleys fairs are usually held on the "Kirchtag," for it must be remembered there are no shops or stores of any kind where the necessary household goods can be purchased. The "Kirchtag" is therefore the grand day of purchase for these primitive people, who hardly ever leave their secluded homes, and have, therefore, no other opportunity to supply themselves with those necessaries of life that are not produced at home.

Fortunately, fashion in Tyrol is not subject to the strange, not to say fantastic, changes before which we civilized beings bow down and worship. The stout frieze bought by the ancestors of the present generation has remained the same in texture and color. The blue cotton stuff that made up the Sunday best gown of the great-grandmother is still the fashion with her little grandchildren; the very same caps of fur trimmed with velvet, worn by the mothers of the heroes who helped Marlborough to vanquish the French, are nowadays still the treasure of the rural belle.

Let us approach one of the dozen or so of wooden sheds run up of light unplanned planks, rather more with the view of examining the contents of the primitive shop, than with the intention of purchasing any of the wares exhibited therein.

We find that a strange medley of articles are thrown together higgledy-piggledy. A huge iron caldron, of the shape used on Alps for manufacturing cheese, is turned into a receptacle for sundry articles of apparel. Gay ribbons of fine texture but of the most glaring hue, colored pocket-handkerchiefs of sheet-like proportions, having painted on them bird's-eye views of some celebrated place of pilgrimage or of some sacred shrine

endowed in the minds of the simple people with miraculous powers, piles of rosaries, dozens upon dozens of small metal crosses, charms to be worn round the neck, glass beads enough to delight a whole tribe of Mr. Stanley's African friends, — these and a host of other articles, too numerous to be enumerated, are stored away in the spacious, brightly-polished caldron.

Next to it we see parcels of various implements for domestic as well as agricultural use. The tailor's scissors, the cobbler's hammer, bradawls, plowshares, pickaxes, ax-heads, nails of all sizes, cradle-saws, small saws, large saws, wooden cooking utensils, parcels of red and green suspenders, piles of rough gray frieze, and rolls of coarse homespun linen, cover the primitive counter ; while above it, hung on the poles that serve as rafters for the support of the primitive roofing, are exhibited gaudy silk neckerchiefs, scarfs, and gray and green felt hats, with gold and silver tassels, for the women. Underneath the counter are chests filled with boots and shoes of the roughest make, the leather being in an untanned state.

In the next shed, a "Herrgottmacher" (Lord-God-maker, as the literal translation would be) is exhibiting his wares, consisting, as the name implies, of images in various sizes carved in wood, representing, one and all, our Saviour on the cross. He has made them all himself. The gnarled old Zirbentree (*pinus cembra*), occupying the very outskirts of vegetation high up on the Alps, was felled by his own hand, cut up and dragged down to his lonely cottage by his wife and children ; and when, after being duly seasoned, the blocks were ready for the saw, his knife and paint-brush metamorphosed them into the rows of "Saviours on the cross," in all sizes, we see before us.

It is true that the same ghastly expression is stamped upon all the faces : the same weird, emaciated body, the same deformed position of arms and legs, calling forth an involuntary shudder, is common to every one, be the figure a miniature one hardly a couple of inches in length, or be it a life-size representation of our Lord. The sim-

ple-minded artist has made hundreds of dozens in his life, and it is not surprising that his imagination has long given out, and his labor is reduced to a mere mechanical application of his knife and brush.

His stall is surrounded by a crowd of pious natives, all eager to examine and admire the holy wares. The expression of the face, the position of the body and the wounds, if they are represented sufficiently ghastly for their taste or not, is criticised; and finally, when a particularly "fine" image has been selected, and they think that its price will suit their purse, the artist dealer, who has been looking on in stoical indifference at the crowd criticising his wares, is asked the cost. After several minutes of haggling, the peasant produces his money, takes his figure, maybe a "Christ" some two or three feet long, under his arm, or stows it away in the ample folds of his "Rucksack," with its head adorned with the usual crown of thorns sticking out, and marches off to complete his purchases prior to his return home.

And what does a "Christ" cost? You may get one for twopence, and you may actually spend a pound on a life-size figure. The latter, however, are usually purchased by priests only, who want them for decorating the interior of their churches, or for the village cemetery.

The figures bought most commonly by the peasants are from one to two and a half feet high, and cost from sixpence to five shillings. If you ask the purchaser where he will put the sacred image, he will most probably tell you, in the corner of his living-room, right over the table, where he and his family and his servants meet at meal-times. "That figure has such a painful expression, it is really beautiful," he will add, and perhaps he will inform you that the "Christ" that hitherto occupied that honored position will henceforth grace the doorway of his Alp-hut, or mark the spot where one of his "Knechte" (male servant) was accidentally killed by a falling tree some years ago, and which spot was hitherto but marked by a votive tablet. "No doubt the poor wretch's soul will enjoy a little respite in hell by that pious gift," the

superstitious peasant adds, and rejoices within himself that the exceptionally favorable sale of his cow enabled him to spend a shilling or two for the devout purpose.

These Tyrolese carvers are, generally speaking, in a mild way, great humbugs. Women, particularly old maids, addicted to piety, — the German nickname calls them “*Betschwestern*,” — fall easy victims to the glib tongue of most “*Herrgottmachers*.” Among them are certain men that enjoy the reputation of being surrounded by a halo of miraculous power. The man before us is one, and ten words spoken by him in praise of a “*Christ*” convince more old women of the emphatic necessity of purchasing a third or fourth graven representation of our Lord than thousands of words spoken by others of his calling.

But how did he gain his renown? That evening an acquaintance of mine, the liberal-minded doctor of *Wörgel*, the next village in the Inn valley, who had come up to attend a patient, told me the man’s story. One night, some ten or twelve years ago, this dealer in art and humbug was returning from a fair in the company of a couple of convivial spirits. The liquor they had drunk and the pitchy dark night, no less than the dangerous nature of the path, were too much for our party, and our hero was pitched down a precipice more than a hundred and fifty feet in depth.

Fortunately for him, he had at the time his huge wicker basket filled with his usual stock-in-trade, hundreds of “*Christs*,” on his back ; and, wonderful to say, his fearful fall was so broken by pitching back foremost from the hard rocks, that he soon could arise not much the worse for his fall. His business-like mind, however, saw in the miraculous escape he had just had a heavenly omen portending great renown for him, and the bright idea flashed across it to turn his accident to account. He emptied his basket of its contents, and, placing the “*Christs*” in rows on the ground, lay down in the midst of them, and a few minutes later was asleep.

His companions in the mean while, shocked beyond

measure at the terrible fate of their companion, hastened back to the distant village to fetch lights and assistance, never once hoping to find him alive. What was their astonishment, therefore, when they returned after three or four hours, to find him peacefully asleep in the midst of his sacred images !

The men who had accompanied them would not believe it at first ; but the fact of our hero's hat being discovered, when morning broke, hanging on a bush half way up the precipice, convinced them of the truth.

"That was the making of him," added our informant, laughingly ; "since then he has the odor of sanctity hanging around him, and, were it not for his partiality for drink, he would be a rich man by this time."

My informant refused to tell us how he had come by the accurate information he possessed ; but we heard some time afterwards that he had attended our hero through a very severe attack of D. T., in the course of which he most likely made him his confidant.

The crowd is thinning rapidly, for by far the greater part have a long walk homewards before them, and they have been on their legs since three o'clock in the morning ; for we must remember that these early-rising people count the day as half over by nine o'clock, and hence the busiest time at a fair is at about six o'clock in the morning.

The village church bells toll twelve o'clock ; and hardly has the last stroke resounded, when a thundering salvo of pöller-shots announce the commencement of the rifle-match. A "Kirchtag" without rifle-shooting would be something like Christmas without a plum-pudding with us.

The rifle-range, we have said, was situated opposite the inn, and so after partaking of some solid refreshment as a lunch, or rather as an early dinner, we step across the road and enter the range. It is a low narrow timber-built hut, provided with a long table in the center, at which the marksmen load, and with three boxes or partitions open in front, taking up the side of the hut towards the targets. The center box is reserved for the "schreiber" or score-keeper, the two others are for the marksmen to fire from.

The targets are placed at a distance of 150 yards. They have already been described on p. 239.

Our readers, though they may understand nothing of rifle-shooting, will nevertheless become aware of the surprising accuracy of Tyrolese marksmen, when we mention that we have seen the pin's head shot away six and seven times in the course of one day's match, and that we have known as many as five *consecutive* marksmen taken at hap-hazard, firing one after the other, to hit each a mark of the size of a sixpence, at a distance of 150 yards. Considering that the marksman may not support any part of his body or his rifle, but has to stand free, holding the heavy rifle in his outstretched arm, feats like this are wonderful.

I remember once leading a friend into a shooting-range in North Tyrol. A stranger to Tyrol, he entertained a prejudice against rifle-practice, notifying his dislike with the observation "that it was simply a waste of powder and lead, and that if it came to trying the steadiness of one's hand, a much simpler test could be furnished on scientific principles." He watched some of the peasant marksmen closely, and told me afterwards, that, had he not seen it with his own eyes, he would never have believed that human muscles and nerves could remain so rigid, and apparently motionless, as some of these men's. He left the booth an ardent admirer of Tyrolean rifle-matches.

The "zieler," or marker, who is stationed at the target, and has to plug each shot-hole, is an important personage. Attired in a jacket of checkered colors, wide baglike pantaloons, of two colors generally, — one leg red, the other white, — while a huge felt cone, adorned at the top with a bunch of many-colored ribbons, serves him as a hat, he cuts a highly comic figure. In his hand he holds his "spoon," a short stick, at the end of which a disk about the size of a saucer is fastened. One side of the latter is white, the other black. This instrument is used to indicate the exact position of each shot to the marksman, anxious to see where his ball has hit. If the shot has hit "black," — the bull's-eye, — the white side ; if outside of



the black, the black side of the spoon is turned towards the range. In the former case, the number of the ring or circle within the bull's-eye, which has been hit, is indicated by a series of preconcerted signs by the "zieler," thus obviating the necessity of having a telegraphic communication, a contrivance entirely unknown at Tyrolese rifle-ranges. If the number three ring, having a diameter of less than two inches, is hit, the "zieler" dances, that is, he jumps once round the target, accompanying this performance with a "jodler." If it is the number four ring, — the size of a sixpence, — which the lucky marksman has hit, the "zieler" exhibits frantic excitement.

On perceiving the position of the shot, he will crouch down, and creep, clown-like, back to his hut some paces off, to fetch his "spectacles." These are huge imitation spectacles of wood; and, with them fastened to his head by a string, he issues forth to assure himself, as it were, if the shot is really a "four," the whole performance being of course only a farce, enacted so as to prolong the pleasant excitement of the marksman; a couple of joyous "jodlers," two dances round the target, and other not the less comic evolutions, bring his pranks to a close.

A "centrum" shot is followed by a series of the above antics in an exaggerated degree; if the "zieler" is an agile youth, we have seen him reach the shooting-range by a succession of the most extraordinary summersaults, holding all the time the bull's-eye, which can be detached from the board, in his hand. A quart of wine, or half a pint of strong schnapps, are invariably the reward given by the happy marksman to that most abused of mortals, the "zieler." I say "most abused of mortals," with good cause, for, with the innate injustice peculiar to the human race when failure has attended its endeavors, a bad shot is laid to the door of the unfortunate marker.

"Won't he dance? I'll make him fetch his spectacles, the infernal rascal! marking my shot two inches short! d—n him!" or when an unlucky marksman, jealous of his luckier neighbor, who has sent a quart of wine to the "zieler" in consequence of a "centrum shot," he will exclaim angrily. —

“As if the man were not tipsy enough! Now he will be quite blind with liquor;” and grumblingly adds, “Of course he won’t find my bullet-hole!”

These and a host of other ejaculations of anger, often of a worse kind, are constantly to be heard from marksmen, who in the heat of the moment blame the marker for the effects of that last glass of brandy, or for that most minute, but yet in its result very perceptible, unsteadiness of the hand, or for the decreasing keenness of the eye.

Hundreds of excuses there are besides, in which an indifferent shot will take refuge, to explain to his maliciously smiling neighbor that it was not his fault that he missed the bull’s-eye: everybody and every thing is to blame rather than he himself. “That infernal wind, just blowing its strongest when I fired;” “I told you I would miss it, I followed your advice of aiming more to the right;” “There! look at that shot, just three inches too short — that beastly powder is getting worse every day;” “that dunce of a zieler must have overlooked my shot-hole.” Now the wind is blowing from the wrong direction, now it depresses, then again it elevates, the bullet’s flight. Now it is the bad liquor which makes his hand shake; then again the daylight is delusive, bringing out the target in too strong a light, now leaving it in darkness when an inopportune cloud obscures the sun. His personal bad luck comes in for its share of blame too: “why did I come?” while, if the truth were known, naught but his own wish influenced him. His wife would have gladly seen him stop at home, rather than know him risk his hardly-earned money in competing with numbers of better rifle-shots than he is.

Let us look about us in the shooting-range. More than a dozen strapping young fellows have arrived before us. Their hats, decorated with bunches of carnations, set jauntily on one side of their heads, their picturesque national costume, and the gay “jodel” which now and again breaks forth from a lucky marksman, all unite in producing a charming *ensemble*. Here in a corner two

or three are loading their rifles; there a couple are engaged in an earnest consultation as to the exact effect of the wind: "was it blowing from right to left," — east and west are expressions unknown to them, — "or was it blowing steadily from the hills," and thus, instead of effecting the ball's flight from right to left, depressing it? The majority of those present are, however, clustering round the three partitions the use of which we have mentioned already.

Let us watch for a moment that young fellow, whom, nodding to us as he takes up his rifle, we recognize as one of our two fair tormentors' most assiduous swains.

Glancing at the sheet in front of the score-keeper, we see that he has a number "three" and a couple of "two's" to his score.

Standing like a statue of bronze in his little partition, his broad back turned towards us, we have a capital opportunity to watch the steadiness of his aim. Once at his shoulder, the rifle remains as if fastened in a vise — no tremor, no budging whatever; a slight click tells us that he has set the hair-trigger; half a second later the sharp crack rings out into the crisp air.

"Black it must be!" he says, as he lowers his rifle; and we have little cause to doubt his assertion, if perfect steadiness of hand be a fair criterion. The "zieler" is at the target; all of a sudden we see him crouch down, while with his cap drawn over his eyes he crawls back to his hut, emerging from it with his spectacles that hide his whole face. Approaching the target, he wags his head, and imitates the movements of a short-sighted person looking intently at something; finally, after spending a minute or two in this make-believe examination of the target, he suddenly leaps up, and a piercing jodler tells us that he is on the track of the bullet. "A centrum, by Jove!" exclaims the excited crowd; and so it is, for by a succession of wild leaps the "zieler" has reached the small flag, stuck in the ground in front of the hut to indicate to the marksman the direction and force of the wind, wrenches it out of the ground, and runs back to the target with it in his hand.

A smile of satisfaction and pleasure has settled upon the face of the lucky marksman ; the score-keeper who sits at his elbow, and who has been watching the capers of the "zieler," proffers him his full bottle of wine, and adds his congratulation to those of the other young fellows crowding round their lucky companion.

"The first centrum that day!" He hopes it may be the last one too ; for does it not entitle him to that lovely blue and red silk pocket-handkerchief of gigantic dimensions, which, together with seven or eight minor prizes, is hanging on a board right over the scorekeeper's head? "Won't the six silver florin-pieces which adorn it — the first prize — be jolly? He and his girl will be able to dance as often as they like that evening ; and won't she, the belle of the village, be proud to see her lover's hat adorned with its gaudy folds, after the shooting-match is over? What lover's request will he tag on to the presentation of that resplendent silk handkerchief, when, in the small hours of the morning, he and his 'Gretl' are returning to their homes?"

All this, and more perhaps, passes through his head, as he retires to the corner to load his rifle afresh.

Alas ! his hopes are destined to be rudely shaken ; for who should make their quite unexpected appearance, but two noted "Raubers !" This word means no less than robbers ; and in this instance it is applied to the very best shots of the country, who, on account of their unerring marksmanship, are dreaded competitors, carrying off generally the first prizes in each match.

They travel from village to village, cross mountains, and find no distance too great if it comes within the scope of a stout pair of legs in a day's or even two days' march. As long as their hand retains its amazing steadiness, and their eye its keenness, they live by rifle-shooting. Hundreds of prizes, stripped, however, of the gold or silver pieces that once adorned the gaudy handkerchief of silk, the bright ribbon, or the bunch of gayly-colored artificial flowers which are hidden away in their cottages, attest the remarkable skill of these men.

No wonder, therefore, that the unexpected appearance of two very noted robbers at a match in a secluded little valley was more than unwelcome to the native marksmen, each eager to carry off a prize himself. But there was no help: a "Freischiessen"—that is, a match open to all comers—it was, and they had grumblingly to ascribe it to their bad luck, that these men had heard of the match, and, though the amount of the prizes was in reality insignificant, had taken the trouble to cross mountains and valleys to reach the place in good time.

Together with them arrived three portly, jolly-looking country priests, each carrying his rifle in approved fashion.

It is a strange sight to see priests, dressed in their canonical garb, handling rifles, and shooting with an activity unsurpassed by the peasants themselves. Some of them are by no means bad shots; in fact, there is a large monastery in Oberinntal (Stams), boasting of several excellent shots among its becowled inhabitants.

Strange to say, the peasants delight to see their village priest compete with them at the rifle-range, and it is quite a matter of jealous rivalry for the villages in the larger valleys to be the possessor of the best clerical shot. Though these sporting priests put themselves on an equal footing with the rest of the company while shooting, the peasants rarely forget their presence; and if a hasty oath at a piece of exceptionally bad luck does escape the lips of one, he will turn round quickly, with his hand up to his mouth, as if he intended to wipe away from his lips the wicked words that escaped them, and assure himself that they were not heard by his spiritual counselor.

While the peasant does not forget that he is in the presence of his priest, the latter likewise remembers what is due to his position as a man of God; and you will often see one of these black-coated and top-booted competitors praying his rosary to himself, or reading his breviary, while he is waiting for his turn to shoot.

The man before him has shot, the marker has made his capers, and it is his turn to step into the box from

whence he is to fire. The book of hours, the prayer-book, or the rosary disappears in one of the ample pockets, and the man of God takes up his rifle, and steps into the little den, no longer a priest, but rather a marksman passionately fond of the sport.

Of course, rifle-shooting priests are the exception in Tyrol, but I have always found that they are general favorites among their flocks.

Unfortunately, there are only too many valleys and districts in fair Tyrol where the spirit of the population is broken by the austere rule of the Roman Catholic Church, centered as that rule is in the hands of rank Jesuits.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### A VISIT TO A TYROLESE PEASANT WATERING-PLACE.

HAVING passed a day with my readers at a Tyrolese "Kirchtag," I now propose asking them to join me on a trip to a scene equally favorable to the study of the quaint sayings and doings of the Tyrolese peasantry, namely, a genuine peasant watering-place; and for this purpose, though I know it to be a most preposterous request, I boldly invite them to accompany me in a third-class compartment on the recently-constructed railway through the Pusterthal, one of the chief Tyrolese valleys.

We can enjoy a good view of the grand landscape, of the verdant hillsides and wooded mountain-slopes, along which our train is slowly creeping towards the remote little station, from whence a bridle-path and stout legs will in three short hours bring us to our goal,—the primitive little watering-place of S——, hid away among Alpine fastnesses, at the extremity of one of the small and very steep Alpine glens branching off from the above-mentioned mother valley.

Traveling in Tyrol in third-class carriages has its good and its bad points. Jostling you up into your corner is a weather-beaten young fellow of gigantic proportions. His short leather trousers are old, and patched in so many places that scarce any of the original hide can be distinguished. His bare knees are of a mahogany hue, and are as scarred and scratched as his breeches are patched.

His bare feet are stuck into huge shoes of formidable

weight. The weather being hot, he is in his shirt-sleeves, his coat hanging jauntily over his right shoulder. The shirt, open in front, gives you the opportunity to glance at his magnificently-built chest and breadth of shoulder, both of Herculean cast. The healthy complexion of a ruddy brown, his sparkling eyes, his glistening white teeth, and, above all, the torn and battered old hat, adorned with the inevitable blackcock feathers, set jauntily on one side of his well-shapen head, betray the genuine son of the mountains.

There is something noble and manly about these fellows, though their exterior be more like that of a footpad in come-down circumstances. The firm tread, the upright bearing, the keen glance, the fearless eyes, and, above all, the manly self-assurance betrayed by each gesture, tell of the splendid stuff they are made of.

Between his legs he holds a large cradle-saw some four feet long, and a bright, glistening ax, round the head of which are slung a pair of enormous crampons, polished to a silvery brightness by constant use. These implements tell us his vocation at a glance.

He is a woodcutter, fresh from the mountains. It is Saturday afternoon; and after a six-weeks' spell of hard work clearing some gloomy old forest situated some three or four thousand feet over the valley, on the impending slopes of a peak, he is about to return to his home, to his wife and child maybe, or to his coy sweetheart.

He will tell you presently he has never traveled on a railway before, for the route on which we are traveling has been quite recently opened. Every thing is new to him. His bright eyes are turned here and there as if seeking to unravel the supreme mystery of that marvelous power able to propel heavy cars filled with people, cattle, and goods, at twice the pace the fastest horse he has ever seen could travel.

He scratches his head, and a look of bewildered curiosity steals over his face; for there is nothing about the newly-varnished seats and walls, nor, as far as he can discover, about the freshly-painted outside of the car, that gives him a clew.



He sits lost in a maze of thought. He can see no horses pulling, no machinery, and yet the heavy train is going along at a rapid pace.

“Ah!” thinks he to himself, “maybe the priest was right, after all; it is the Devil’s work, and nothing else. What fools we all were to be enticed by the high wages offered by the contractors! Did not our worthy guardian warn us from lending our hands to this evil undertaking, and did he not tell us often that the road to hell was broad and smooth, and that you went down it at a sharp pace?”

These are the thoughts of our neighbor, — thoughts instilled into an active mind by a set of intriguing schemers, in whose interest it lies to keep up the barbarous ignorance of the populace, well knowing it to be one of the mainstays of their power.

Let us see if, by an application of a little common sense, we can not banish the ghost of superstitious ignorance from an otherwise intelligent and active mind. We endeavor, first of all, to explain to our neighbor the nature of steam, and the enormous power dormant in that element. It is a difficult undertaking; for, to go to the very root of the question, these simple people do not even know what a teakettle is, thus rendering an illustration of Watt’s wonderful discovery, by that homely simile, impossible. But, after all, we succeed far more easily than we anticipated at the outset; for the man’s mind is open to common-sense argument, and when he leaves us at the next station, the intelligent smile on his bright face confirms us in our agreeable conviction that we have won over to the cause of the nineteenth century a disciple of the bigoted ignorance of the sixteenth.

In his place an entire peasant family rushes into the carriage in a state of excitement bordering on frenzy. They are from primitive Enneberg: they have never seen, far less traveled on, a railway before; and the very motion of driving is new to them, for their roads, except for the springless carts used in Tyrol, are far too steep and too wretchedly kept up.

As we listen to their rambling talk, expressing the most vague notions respecting the origin of the moving power, we are reminded of days long past, and we wonder whether everybody was at first a victim to the speculations and doubts to which our neighbors are a prey. Presently our thoughts are interrupted by a loud shriek, and at the same moment the train is engulfed in a tunnel.

When, after a minute or two, we emerge into daylight again, the whole family is discovered in a state of collapse pitiful to behold. They gaze about them, quite astonished that nobody seems the worse for the ordeal they have just undergone. Fright makes them all the more eager to enter into conversation with the traveler sitting quietly in his corner, coolly smoking his cigar, while a veritable smile is flitting about his face.

It might be the Evil One himself, come hither to amuse himself at their abject terror. My voice is therefore greeted with joy; and very shortly I find myself engaged in a conversation with the party, who, I hear presently, are traveling to the same place as we are. Feeling conscious that I have but a very hazy idea of the medicinal qualities of the waters of S——, I determine to acquire some more definite knowledge by questioning our fellow-travelers.

My hopes, alas! are not to be fulfilled, for all I can get out of them is that the water "scours you out." I pitch upon a more roundabout but surer way of getting at the information, by questioning them regarding their ailments. "*That* must lead to it," I fondly imagine, but again am disappointed. The father, a broad-shouldered, keen-eyed man, past his first youth, tells us he is suffering from an old wound in his leg, inflicted by an Italian rifle-ball. The wife, healthy and robust as she is looking, complains, on the other hand, of rheumatism in her whole body; while her daughter, a girl of nineteen, is subject to fainting-fits that have defied all quacks. The two boys, one of fourteen, the other of twelve, are described by the parents as "appetiteless,"—a statement belied by the appearance of the apple-checked, sturdy little fellows.

“And will all of you use the waters of S——?” I ask, for as yet we have not arrived at any clear idea as to their quality.

“Oh, yes, certainly! why would you have us go thither, a long way off from home, if we did not use the baths?”

Our short “Of course” ends the conversation, and we are left to our own thoughts.

In due time we arrive at the station, from whence we have to proceed on foot to S——. We watch the happy family being pulled out one by one by the impatient guard, for we are the only passengers alighting at the remote little halting-place, and the man is impatient to give the signal to move on. But he is not to get off so quickly; for now one small boy rushes back to the train, and endeavors to scramble up to the door in quest of the family umbrella that was intrusted to his care, and which he thinks he has forgotten in the train. He is dragged off the step by the angry official, while he orders the bewildered father to show his tickets, for which the latter has been vainly searching for the last two or three minutes. His pockets are turned out one by one; and their contents, consisting of the most heterogeneous odds and ends of household and domestic life, piled up into the hat which the hapless peasant has taken off his head for that purpose. The tickets are not to be found, and the guard is swearing lustily at the perplexed paterfamilias. Suddenly the wretched man remembers that he has put them between the lining of his hat; and, not waiting to empty that receptacle by restoring each article to its proper pocket, he turns it over on the ground, and fishes the tickets triumphantly from the secret folds of that strange hiding-place.

The train moves on, leaving ruin and confusion behind it. The mother of the family has had apparently her share of trouble too; for there she sits on a heap of stones, bewailing the fate of a large iron frying-pan, the handle of which, protruding from a well-filled haversack, has been bent out of all shape by a fall from the railway carriage. Anxious to see what other damage has been done

to her precious bag, she unties the strings, and out bulge half a dozen or so of cooking-utensils of a size that clearly show they are intended for family use.

We ask ourselves why on earth these people carry their kitchen about with them. Did they not tell us that they were bent on a visit to a watering-place? Maybe they know no better, poor wretches. We smile at their ignorance, and flatter ourselves with the thought that, after all, there is nothing like knocking about the world to teach a fellow *savoir faire*, and endow him with the faculty to do the right thing at the right place.

Who would think that we, and not they, will be the laughing-stock of the visitors at S——? We certainly not, as we glance at the modest size of their luggage, very apt to make one entertain some suspicion that they are, after all, a company of wandering tinkers, and not the respectable, well-to-do peasant family they led us to believe them to be by their conversation.

What on earth can three little bundles, tied up in blue cotton pocket-handkerchiefs, contain in the way of linen and clean clothes for the use of five persons? We look around us in the hopes of seeing some trunk or box; but our search is in vain, for, in truth, no luggage whatever was set down on the platform.

We shoulder our knapsacks, and proceed on our way to S——. A three-hours' charming walk through shady forest, where we meet not a soul, brings us to a cluster of modest little châteaux, standing in the middle of a grand extent of Alpine meadow-land, hedged in by a belt of dark somber pine forest, over which again tower the glacier-clad giants of the Tauern. We sit down on a convenient boulder, and examine the picturesque landscape. The fresh bracing air (we are at an altitude of considerably over five thousand feet), the grand sweep of glacier in close proximity, the faint wreaths of smoke curling up from the simple log house, disappearing very nearly under roofs weighted with heavy stones and projecting several yards on all sides, and the distant lowing of cattle, and the murmuring of an adjacent rivulet, all tend to carry us into dreamland.

Separated from the settlement by a grove of beech-trees, stands the diminutive chapel erected by some pious visitor. It is a simple structure of logs, neatly whitewashed in and outside, and will hold some thirty people closely packed. The steeple, some forty feet high, is of the same material, and sports two bells of silvery tone.

But where is the bath-house, the hotel, the Kursaal, and the other buildings that greet the visitor in most watering-places of any repute? There are no more than five or six huts visible.

We leave our post of observation, and approach the dwellings by a narrow path meandering through the meadow. Presently we reach the first house: it is a log-cabin like the rest, though covering, perhaps, a slightly larger area than its neighbors. Two rows of benches and tables in front of the hut are occupied by a laughing merry crowd of peasant-folk. All of them are types of their respective homes. We see the inhabitants of Enneberg, Ahren, Taufers, Lappach, St. Georgen, Ehrenburg, and a number of other valleys that branch off from the expansive Pusterthal.

Each valley owns some distinctive feature in dress. If it is not the hat or the cut of the coat, or the color of the waistcoat and braces, it is sure to be the excessive width or strange trimming of the pantaloons, or the color of the coat, that betrays their homes.

Some thirty peasants are here assembled, playing at cards, or chatting together in groups, emitting clouds of tobacco-smoke in the pauses of conversation. We have the visitors of the baths of S—— before us. A wooden tablet with "Bath-house" written on it, in a hardly legible hand, is fixed over the doorway, where, engaged in a lively conversation with a stout old priest, stands the master of the establishment. He is evidently a person of some importance. He owns the surrounding fields, and farms them himself; he has a dozen head of cattle, attends personally on his guests, aided by an old male attendant (a very tyrannical Sultan we find him to be); and, finally, he does not mind turning stray pennies by his skill and repute as veterinary surgeon.

We look around us, hoping to find some traces of inhabitable quarters. The two buildings adjoining the bath-house, of the interior of which we shall make a nearer examination on the morrow, form evidently part of the establishment. We are curious to see what their inside is like ; and we peep into the first, and find that it contains naught but a row of fireplaces and shelves upon which are placed, in formidable array, rows of frying-pans, pots, and plates.

This is the kitchen common to all visitors. He who wants to eat must cook his food himself ; for it is the utmost that mine host does to furnish the raw materials, such as flour, bread, and now and again a haunch of beef. Now only do we understand the strange outfit of our happy family. We retreat to the kitchen, and crossing the path enter the third habitation. It is a barn with two tiers, one for the women and the other for the men. Rough blankets and a few sheets are hung on pegs along the wall, while the ground itself is covered by a layer of sweet-smelling hay, the mattress in common to all visitors.

Our walk has made us hungry and thirsty, so we boldly attack mine host with a demand to furnish us with food. He eyes us from top to bottom, evidently taking stock of our personality, and making a shrewd guess at the ailings to which our poor flesh is prone, and which probably have brought us hither.

“The Herr can have flour and salt, and bread and wine, and maybe some of the men at that table will lend him a frying-pan,” was the answer we got.

We are doomed to turn cook, and woe to one who has neglected his education as such ! The host disappears, coming back, after the lapse of a few minutes, with a bag of flour, a handful of coarse salt, a pannikin full of milk, and a couple of eggs.

“Maybe you’d care for an egg or two,” says the man, wondering all the while if the price he intends to ask for each (about a halfpenny) will meet our approval ; for eggs, you must know, are decidedly luxuries in S——.

We pay for the articles the host has brought ; and, after

borrowing a frying-pan from a young fellow at our side, we disappear into the dark gulf of the kitchen. Wood is plentiful hereabouts, and everybody can help himself to as much as he likes.

In ten minutes a savory omelet is standing before us, side by side with a bumper of country wine. Have any of my readers ever tried to cook their own supper? Those only that have, can appreciate the relish that seasons the dish, be it ever so simple.

Before the evening has closed in, we have undergone a thorough course of cross-examination at the hands of our neighbors as to the object of our visit, from whence we hail, how long we intend to stop, and as to the nature of our ailments. Was there any thing the matter with our digestion, or did we suffer from rheumatism? We do our best to satisfy our companions' curiosity.

Presently the stout party in a Franciscan's cowl, who has been standing near the doorway, engaged in conversation with several peasants, honors us by sitting down at our side, again putting us under a strict cross-examination respecting the whence and wheres of our journey, nationality, &c.

While we are thus engaged, the happy family, our fellow-travelers of the morning, arrive. They are evidently more at home here than on railways; for the father masters the position at a glance, and, after getting a supply of flour and milk, the family disappear in the kitchen, where they take formal possession of a fireplace and of a shelf. Early hours are the rule. The evening bell has tolled, the stout priest has prayed the rosary, the whole company, standing up with uncovered heads, joining devoutly in the responses. It is hardly quite dark yet, when the majority of the company retire to their roosts in the hay-loft. Two couples remain behind; they are deep in a game of cards, and the heavy bangs of clinched fists on the table betray the excited state of the men, hardly warranted by the exceedingly moderate stakes for which they are playing.

Soon afterwards the men finish their game, and retire

to the bedroom shed. We are loth to leave the comfortable seats and the balmy evening breeze; but the host informs us that at nine o'clock the stable-lantern which lights the barn is put out, and that without its friendly but exceeding dim rays we will find it impossible to discover an unoccupied corner for ourselves, without stumbling over dozens of sleeping forms. We each pay the five kreutzers (one penny) demanded by the host for the night's accommodation, and hurry after the men who preceded us. We find the inside of the barn full of life and commotion. The women are on the upper tier, the men on the ground floor; when the last woman has mounted the ladder, and has disappeared through the square hole, the ladder is drawn up, and all further communication is thus cut off. This is always the signal for numberless jokes on the part of the men, answered by biting sarcasm from the upper story. We have just had time to ensconce ourselves in the farthest corner, under a mountain of sweet-smelling hay, when the light is put out, and darkness reigns supreme. The gurgling and splashing sound of the spring, close by the barn, lulls us to sleep; and after as comfortable a night's rest as we could wish, we rise with the sun.

We are among the last to leave our barn dormitory; for our companions, both male and female, have left nigh an hour before us, eager to engage in the fierce combat that decided the ownership of each one of the available tubs, some fifteen or sixteen in number.

Our limited knowledge of Tyrolese peasant watering-places leads us to commit a second mistake of far more disagreeable consequences than those attendant upon our late rising. Ignorant of the excessively long time these people stop in their tubs, we put off our breakfast, or rather we delay the irksome duty of preparing that meal ourselves, in order to enjoy a good dip in the invigorating waters of S—. We enter the crazy old doorway giving entrance to the log-built bath-house, intent upon our anticipated plunge; but we proceed no farther, for rooted to the ground we gaze thunderstruck at the strange sight



that meets our eyes. Imagine a long chamber, lighted by half a score of windows, cut in the timber, but unprotected by glass. The roof of the hut is the ceiling of the room ; and hanging from the rafters, at regular intervals of some five or six feet, are sheets, so arranged that they serve first of all as screens, and then as towels to dry. A screen larger than the rest divides the chamber into two unequal portions, the larger one with nine tubs being reserved for the males, the smaller with six tanks for the females. Beyond a few chairs and a table in the center, whereupon are placed the watches and purses of the bathers, the building contains no furniture whatever. A low doorway leads into an out-house, where the water is heated in several large boilers. We perceive all this at a glance ; for the curtains are drawn aside, and the whole chamber, male and female division, is free from end to end.

In each of the large tubs, some four feet in length, is confined a human being. I say confined, for nothing but the head peeps out ; a close-fitting covering of boards, with a semicircular hole at one end for the neck, shuts you in as completely as were you a Jack-in-the-box. A brisk conversation is carried on. Here a husband, his bronzed face at a red glow, is scolding his demure wife at the other end of the long chamber ; there two peasants, late partners in a game at cards, endeavor to settle a disputed point in a high-pitched wrangle.

Others again, highly shocked by the hilarity and depravity evinced by their companions, are conscientiously following the advice given to them by their spiritual adviser. They are praying the rosary in most devout fashion. Their hands, rendered invisible by the lid, are busy telling their beads lent to them by the master of the establishment ; for unlike the common rosaries, they have to be of some substance that withstands the effect of an immersion of several hours in hot water. Look at that picture of human frailty yonder ! By dint of a close examination of each feature we finally recognize in the miserable object before us the stout monk of yesterday.

His face is of a coppery red, reminding us of a person convulsed by an apoplectic fit ; heavy drops of perspiration are coursing down his forehead, and from thence shaping themselves into a veritable cascade down his puffed-out cheeks. His eyes, starting from his head, stare at you with a wild expression alarming to behold. His sufferings must be intense ; for, with the rest of his superstitiously ignorant flock, he firmly believes that the hotter the water the speedier the cure. Poor fellow ! he has even forgotten his rosary, for the words that now and again slip from his lips are decidedly no sacred ones. In the tub next to him a peasant is descanting upon his sufferings in a more rational manner, but suddenly forgetting totally the heinousness of his words, especially if addressed to a servant of the Holy Church, he remarks to his neighbor, — who as we have seen is not in that frame of mind to appreciate a joke, — “that if hell was as hot a place as this, it must be as good as a bath !” Hardly have these words escaped his lips, when he is struck by their wickedness, and forgetting his bondage, and eager to atone for his crime by making the sign of the cross, raps his knuckles severely on the boards of the lid. Unhappy wretch ! Glance where we will, we see misery in the most comic form. The attendant of the bath, an elderly man of imperturbable nerves, goes his rounds in a business-like manner, that betrays his unimpressionable heart hardened against all human feelings. The placid nod, saying as plainly as words could do, “You fool,” is dealt out most sparingly ; in fact, quite as scantily as the penny fees of the guests.

The watchful guardian of order in this primitive establishment has nearly arrived at the end of his round, when, to his astonishment, he perceives that from the lid belonging to the tub last in the row, project two human heads, one of which suddenly disappears as he turns his eyes in that direction.

He approaches the tub, and finds, to his utter astonishment, that a second hole has been cut at the foot end of the lid. He plunges his arm down into the hot water,

and finally drags forth, by the hair of the head, a young urchin, highly frightened, and crying very freely.

It seems that our friend of the day before, the pater-familias with whom we traveled part of the way, anxious to save the fifteen kreutzers (three pence) for a bath for his youngest son, had, in an unobserved moment, cut out with his pocket-knife a second opening in the cover of the tub where his elder son was already seated.

The simple-minded father trusted that his stratagem would escape the notice of the watchful Cerberus, and ordered his surreptitiously-introduced offspring to duck down whenever the "bath-man" passed that way. The poor little fellow, in an agony of fear all the while, had difficulty enough to squeeze his head down through the hole; but, as we have seen, the lynx-eyed attendant discovered him nevertheless.

Loud mirth greeted his violent expostulations, that were met on the part of the father by a stoical indifference. The extra bath money, and thirty kreutzers for repairs, were demanded from our friend; but finally the claim was settled by a fourpenny-bit.

Our own thoughts are naturally diverted from the object of our visit by the amusing scene before us. We had been some time in the bath-house before the thought recurred to us that we were here to bathe. The company, however, evinced not the slightest sign of bringing their immersion to a close.

We asked the attendant, and learned from him that at nine o'clock the company would leave their tubs, and adjourn to dinner.

"And don't they breakfast?" we ask; and are answered in the negative,—"They eat all the more at dinner."

Not inclined to forego our breakfast in lieu of a nine or ten o'clock dinner, we tell the man to reserve us tubs, and leave the hot atmosphere of the bath-house, for a walk through the bright green meadow-land and shady pine-forests that inclose the little settlement on all sides.

In an hour's time we are back,—just in time to watch the closing scene of that morning's bathing.

Punctually at nine o'clock the attendant pulls the curtains, transforming the whole space into two distinct divisions; and each of these again into as many little cabinets as there are tubs. A passage is left free between the two rows, and from thence you can watch the violent movements of the curtains, while they are being used as towels.

The whereabouts of the portly priest was easily discovered; for presently we saw the coarse linen sheet bulge out, and then, wet as it was, mark the outlines of his formidable corpus.

On going out, each person pays his fifteen kreutzers, and gives his orders respecting the afternoon. Some of the poorer visitors, not being able to afford a second hot ablution, take advantage of the privilege accorded to them by the owner, namely, of being allowed to use the water of the morning a second time in the afternoon. In the course of the four hours that intervene between the two baths, the water has got quite cold; but there is no help for the poor wretches who are driven to these straits.

While the first half of the visitors are eating their dinners, the second batch, among whom we find ourselves, adjourn to the bath-house. This only occurs in the height of the season, when the press of visitors is great. We astonish our attendant by stopping in the water but half an hour; and he gives vent to this feeling by remarking to us that we must nevertheless pay three pence, "as if you had stopped your three hours in it."

We do so very willingly, for the bath is a delightful one. Not so was our breakfast; for we have to wait for more than half an hour till one of the fireplaces in the kitchen has become vacant, and then, it being Friday, and no meat obtainable for love or money, we have to appease our appetite with a plate of "Schmarn."

After breakfast we are joined by the owner of the establishment, a simple peasant, as unrefined and rough-looking as his visitors.

One question leads to another, and very shortly we are deep in an interesting conversation with the man. His

father, it turns out, had built the two log houses, and had increased the number of tubs from three to twelve. On the death of his parent, he and his sister inherited the establishment and a valuable Alpine pasturage with two huts, on yonder mountain slopes.

“She is up there now tending our herd of cattle, and sends down, twice a week, milk, butter, and cheese for the visitors at the bath.”

From this our conversation turns upon other topics, amongst which are some questions we put to the peasant regarding his visitors.

“Are they all peasants? Does he really think the waters of S—— have such beneficial results? or is it not perhaps the perfect rest, and the regular way of living, that accomplishes the cure?”

In answer our host gives us some startling instances of cures effected by a visit to S——.

We then proceed to ask him why he does not make some suitable arrangements for the accommodation of his visitors, — a separate hut, with a few little rooms containing a bed or two each, and a woman to cook for those who could not handle a frying-pan themselves.

We are told that these improvements would be the ruin of the place.

“This is but a peasants’ watering-place, and it is arranged especially for them. We do not want ‘Herr-enleut’ (gentlefolk) to come here. There are enough watering-places for them in Tyrol. Wherever purse-proud town-folk are, living is dear, and peasant-folk are therefore shut out. Beds, cooks, and *table d’hôte* are all very well for those who can afford such luxuries. Here a man can live as economically as at home. He pays five kreutzers for his bed, the same sum for the use of the kitchen, and fifteen for his bath, and say thirty kreutzers a day for his food, making a sum total of fifty-five kreutzers (about thirteen pence).

“These are different prices from those that town-folk are willing to pay; why, I have heard that at many watering-places a man is obliged to pay as much as two shil-

lings for his bed and room, and not much less for his dinner! Were I to make any improvements such as you referred to, I would have to raise my prices; and while this out-of-the-way nook would be rarely visited by people who could afford paying for these luxuries, I would drive away my peasant customers. We rejoice that we are left to ourselves; and, as long as I live, the place shall remain as you see it now."

At this moment the tiny bell in the chapel, which we noticed yesterday on our journey hither, begins to toll.

"'Tis Friday mass," says our host, and explains subsequently that a rich peasant, who had been cured from a severe ailing in S——, had left as a pious legacy a munificent sum wherewith every Friday a mass is said for the salvation of his soul. A part of the foundation was appropriated to repair the chapel and furnish it with a regular supply of wax candles.

"But have you always a priest stopping here?" we ask.

"Oh, yes! that's the most important personage in a bath. Why, not a single peasant would stop scarcely twenty-four hours, were there no priest to read morning mass every day. I generally get them from some of the monasteries in the Pusterthal or from Brixen."

"But do you mean to say you order them?" we inquire.

"Oh, yes! at the beginning of the season I write to the prior of one of these establishments, telling him that for that and that month I want a Capuchin, or a Franciscan, or a Benedictine *pater* up here, and he tells me if he can let me have one. I am always kept supplied with them, for they have every thing free here except flour and wine; I don't charge them for their hay couch, the use of the kitchen, nor for their bath, nor for what they eat, except flour. They like coming, for they lead a much gayer life up here than down in the gloomy cells of their monastery. I often get two at a time; and then I make them each pay for their food, and give them every thing else gratuitously. Father Cœlestin" (referring to the stout party whose miserable plight in the steam-bath

I took occasion to note) "has been here for three weeks the last twelve or fifteen years ! but, poor fellow, he leaves the bath every year stouter than he arrived. He was pretty slim at first, but now he has grown very stout-bodied ; and though he bathes in water four or five degrees hotter than any of the other visitors dare use, the good fare and the jolly life counterbalance the effects of the torture to which he submits twice a day. He is the favorite among the peasants : his sermons are of the best, for he describes the tortures of hell with a reality and force that none of the other priests can equal, and you will know yourself that peasants love ' strong ' sermons. Pater Cœlestin's words go straight to one's heart, they say, and one really gets convinced of the terrible fate that awaits sinners."

Our host leaves us to join the crowd that is hurrying towards the chapel. Let us follow this simple-minded congregation, and cast a glance at the inside of the way-side shrine. The edifice is crowded to suffocation, and there is hardly a foot of free space intervening between the altar-step and the first row of devotees.

There is no vestry, nor any other free space for the officiating priest to dress in, and we wonder how the stout father will manage to crowd through the densely-packed congregation. Presently we see the slip of red curtain at the side of the altar pushed aside, and the portly monk squeezes himself out sideways through an opening in the wall barely sufficient to allow a lean person to pass through comfortably. A titter runs through the congregation, for the sight is ridiculous in the extreme. While our friend reads mass, and the little boy of the owner tinkles a cracked bell, we examine the walls of the sacred building. There are numberless votive offerings lining them. Here we see rows of crutches of all lengths and sizes, each adorned with some faded ribbon ; yonder a rank and file of arms, legs, eyes, and ears, shaped in wax ; there dozens of little pictures, horrible daubs, the work of village schoolmasters or rural stonemasons. They are all the gifts of peasants whose ailings have been cured by

the waters of S——, and who demonstrate their grateful acknowledgments by offering up the very crutches by the aid of which they reached the miraculous source ; or by presenting a miniature image of the diseased limb or organ, shaped in white or red wax. Let us read the inscriptions on one or two of the pictures close at our side. On one we see a man and woman kneeling at an altar : they are dressed in the old-fashioned many-colored garb of the Ehrenbergers. Above them, floating on a throne of clouds, is the Virgin and the Child. In one hand she is holding a crutch, in the other a pail of water, the insignia of watering-places. Both devotees at her feet are in the attitude of prayer ; and underneath is written, that Johann Klausner and Gertraud his housewife were healed and cured of terrible sickness with the aid of the Virgin Mary, and that, as a token of gratitude, they have offered up this picture, and have vowed to make a pilgrimage to Maria Shrine : “Thou blessed and immaculate mother of mankind, thou wife of God, thou source of all blessings, be with us, and protect us for ever and ever.”

Underneath the picture and this quaint inscription, is a lively representation of hell. Three youths and two maidens are immured up to their waists in a caldron filled with molten lead ; and a select company of imps and young devils are dancing round the martyrs.

The other picture, hanging just below the one we have described, shows us a peasant in the same attitude and with the same surroundings as those of the couple in the preceding picture. The inscription is more laconic ; but betrays humor on the part of the owner :—

“God and the Virgin Mary give us sudden good luck,  
And protect us from costly fare !”

What the donor meant by these at first quite unintelligible words, was explained to us later on by the monk. The man had fallen down a deep precipice, and instead of breaking his neck he had but broken his arm : that was the “sudden good luck.” The “costly fare” meant



physic. He had been dosing himself with quantities of quack medicines ; but nothing availed him till he came to S——.

The mass is finished ; the congregation files out of the low porch, leaving us to our quiet contemplation of the motley array of waxen arms and legs. Why is it, we exclaim, as our glance ranges along the walls, that in this strange and fantastic display of superstition only bodily shortcomings of mankind are represented? Surely the human mind, so much more delicately framed, has equal claims to a peg in the walls of Tyrolese wayside chapels.

The peasant invalid deposits, when cured, his now useless crutches in the next shrine. And why, we ask, could not the unsuccessful critic-damned author, in his frantic endeavors to propitiate a never-satisfied public, devote his scribbled-out nibs, as a cheap sacrificial offering to the deity? He certainly would be doing no more than the peasant, who, by a judicious contribution to the priest's stock of firewood, encompasses such big ends.

Speaking of baths in Tyrol, and their singularly primitive arrangements, I am forcibly reminded of a highly-amusing pamphlet I once came across. The owner of it, an old peasant, who studied it with the greatest assiduity, was loth to part with it ; but finally I managed to overcome his scruples, and the little book is now lying before me.

Printed in Brixen, in the year of grace 1681, its language abounds with Latin words and phrases, then so much in vogue. Its author, a certain Dr. Johannes Tilemann, writes for a Tyrolese public ; and as he deals with watering-places in that country then in existence, I venture to lay a few extracts before those of my readers who may be in want of a thorough "renovation," as our author puts it, or for the benefit of those who may feel some curiosity as to the "*experientiæ præsertim sine Indico, ac ratione verarum causarum factæ,*" of the sanative waters to be found in Tyrol, A.D. 1681.

Our author commences his "Instructions" with the advice : "Before you go to a watering-place, it is best to

reconciliate your soul with the Lord, and to wash and cleanse your body thoroughly. Should you require it, you can have yourself bled, in order that the impurities of your former life may go off. Those who are of a very weak constitution, and fain can not 'endure,' had better not remain longer than four hours in the water for the first three or four days. They can then increase it to eight or nine and even ten hours a day. It is best to arrange your journey to the watering-place you have chosen so as to commence the actual cure when the moon is on the decrease, and if you suffer from a skin-disease, not to cease till you are quite cured. I would advise you, *in copia humorum*, to get into your bath with an empty stomach at an early hour of the day. If you bathe of afternoons, too, you must wait three or at least two hours after your dinner, in order that the food you have eaten may get *in fundo Ventriculi*" — a novel expression for digestion.

"If you are so excessively weak so as not to be able to endure for at least two hours and a half at a time in the water, you may take some hot broth as a stimulant, provided your 'Medici' has not ordered you to drink hot bath water."

Our authority continues to inform his readers that in most of the watering-places the patient is left entirely to his own resources, no "Medici" residing there. In consequence of this circumstance, he advises his readers to procure for themselves a medicine-chest before visiting one of these spas of the Middle Ages. To enable them to do so, he proceeds to fill half a page with a list of such drugs, draughts, and medical instruments as formed, according to the fearfully-neglected state of the medical science of those days, the most necessary attributes of the profession. Among a number of the most filthy draughts, and check by jowl with certain deadly drugs, we find enumerated as the contents of a properly-filled out medicine-chest: boiled eggs, manna, palm-oil, sweet apples, and raisins. Dr. Johannes, evidently forgetting that not every one of his readers was acquainted with the use of the

drugs, instruments, &c., he tells them to provide themselves with, omits to give them directions how to use the latter, or in what quantities the poisonous drugs could be taken without danger.

“It is better to eat well than to drink well. Before your meals take some exercise, but in every case keep your mind as undisturbed as possible by ‘musica,’ cards, and the chords of the harp.”

It is a remarkable sign of the morbid craving for monstrous quantities of rich food, to which most people in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were given, that by far the most numerous ills of mankind enumerated by our authority in the pages of his pamphlet arose from an impaired digestion. Not more than a page is given to other illnesses, the whole subject being dismissed by a quaint admonition, “that, in case the waters do not produce the desired effect, it is high time for help.”

To give my readers an idea what “doing a spa” meant in those days, I will pick out one of the six “Day and Hour Tables” given in Dr. Johannes’ erudite work.

By the aid of these tables, a person visiting a watering-place, and knowing beforehand how long it would take to accomplish his cure (!), could fix upon the time he should remain in his bath every day.

Choosing the shortstone, i.e., the tablet for a cure of twelve days, we read that, —

On the first day he has to bathe for five hours; on the second, eight; on the third, eleven; on the fourth, twelve; on the fifth, twelve; on the sixth, twelve; on the seventh, twelve; on the eighth, twelve; on the ninth, twelve; on the tenth, twelve; on the eleventh, ten; on the twelfth, six.

This is for the shortest stay, the other tablets giving the hours for a visit of thirteen, fourteen, sixteen, twenty-five, and thirty-two days.

“And people were really so idiotic as to keep to these monstrous instructions?” my readers will exclaim. Dr. Johannes took good care that they did; for, in a solemnly-worded admonition which precedes these tablets, he

warns his readers that "vomitu," severe pains, and swellings in various parts of the body, are sure to punish irregularity.

A right pleasant life it must have been in one of these baths!

Our author then gives a list of the principal watering-places in Tyrol. Two, or at the utmost three, lines contain all the information he has to give of each. He says, for instance:—

"The baths of Vähren, for leprosy (a common disease at that time), to be taken cold, also one can bathe in the water." Of another, that at Lisru, he says, "A good bath for mothers, used internally cold, externally warm."

Dr. Johannes closes his little volume with the exhortation to his readers "to thank the Almighty, — a 'Medici' evincing greater solicitude for the healths than for the pockets of his patients;" but spoils the whole by tagging on, "if you leave the bath alive and hale."

In another way this bit of goody-goodism is somewhat out of part, for in the sentence preceding the one I have mentioned, he says, "This book is for the rich only."

A year or two ago, I had occasion to examine a most interesting manuscript, dating from the year 1479.

It was nothing less than a diary kept by a noble knight while on a visit to Pfäfers, in Switzerland, at that time one of the most renowned watering-places on the Continent.<sup>1</sup>

By all accounts Pfäfers was at that time in very bad repute. In fact, in the later Middle Ages, all watering-places and public bathing-houses in large towns were places where licentiousness was more or less rife.

Knight Iörg, for that was his Christian name, begins his diary very much in the same manner as he would have done a deed:—

"I, the virtuous Knight Iörg, have undertaken the perilous and long journey from my native country (Ty-

<sup>1</sup> Pfäfers is in St. Gallen. Its waters were first discovered in the thirteenth century, and, owing to several marvelous cures, it quickly became celebrated. The Benedictine Abbey in the village of Pfäfers was founded as early as 789 A.D.

rol) for the sake and for the benefit of my health, so that the running wound of the lance-point may perish."

Let us hope that he succeeded in routing the lance-point and curing his wound, received, probably, in battle. Knight Iörg then goes on to give a description of the place, "how males and females from large towns bathed in excavations in the rock," &c. He next gives us a list of his wearing-apparel. By it we see how very simply, and not to say scantily, the wardrobe of a nobleman was then stocked: —

"One shirt (*pfleit*) for best, with collar and strings; one pair of Spanish hose, dark blue and striped; item one, pair of Flandish hose, not for best; item one, doublet of red stuff and velvet, very beautiful, for best."

Underclothing was not worn in those days.

Pfäffers had a doctor of its own, for on the third page of the diary we find him mentioned, —

"To-day, on Tuesday after Peter and Paul (in July), paid the 'Medici,' a very handy man, three kreutzers ( $2\frac{1}{4}d.$ ) for a medicine-bottle, three goodly pills, for bleeding me, and for cutting my toe-nails."

Very shortly afterwards, his services are again called into requisition, though this time our visitor seems to have been less satisfied with the handy man.

He calls him in to have one of his teeth extracted, and remarks very naïvely: "Though I could have done it much better myself, his charge was moderate. It was a bad job."

Very amusing is the description of the gay life led by many of the visitors, evidently to the great and ill-disguised astonishment of our friend Knight Iörg, who, judging by the length of time he remained in his bath every day, meant business, and could not imagine anybody coming to a watering-place for pleasure alone. Some of his remarks are worth quoting: —

"A strange lot of people I see in this place. Some care little for their health, but only for amusement. They troop together, they swear and drink, and never think of their God. Worst of all are the dansels from large towns"

(evidently the fashionable *demi-monde* of that day). "They wear gaudy dresses and immense trains, and put on strange manners, but they are without virtue. They single out the rich; and, as long as their pockets and bellies are kept filled, they care for naught. Gambling, drinking, swearing, and 'piggery' is their day's work."

"How is it," our author exclaims, "that these creatures have escaped the Lord's judgment?"<sup>1</sup>

Knight Iörg seems, however, to have grown tired of his virtue, for on the day before he starts on his homeward journey, he enters into his diary: "This day I put seventeen kreutzers and four perner into the devil's pocket," meaning thereby, we suppose, that he lost that sum at cards. Probably one or the other of the "light damsels" at Pfäffers managed to mark the "odd trick."

The next day's entry betrays that Knight Iörg "felt bad," for he closes his diary with the remark: "The Lord be thanked that I leave this God-forsaken, devil-beset Sodom, a hale man!"

What with twelve hours in the bath, and the constant eyesore in the shape of those light damsels, he had forthwith every reason to be grateful that he left Pfäffers alive, and, let us hope as charitable Christians, virtuous.

Pfäffers of A.D. 1479, and Monaco of A.D. 1878!—what a difference, and yet what great resemblance! Civilization, whatever be its merits, has certainly failed very materially as long as the eye and ear sores of Knight Iörg are left in the flourishing conditions of to-day. There is, however, one point that calls for the most profound applause on the part of the nineteenth-century man. It is that four hundred years hence no preying hand, rooting about the ruins of the West End or of Piccadilly, will by any mortal chance find occasion to expose to the public of A.D. 2279 meditations and sentiments similar to those of our virtuous Knight Iörg of 1479, when describing the horrors of gay Pfäffers. Let the reader compile to himself a diary kept by a fashiona-

<sup>1</sup> He evidently refers to the plague, one of the most common scourges of mankind in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

ble "knight" of any of the swell clubs, while out on a tour through the "devil-be-ridden" Pfäffers of our own day: he will arrive, very probably, at a more complete stock of wearing-apparel, but I am afraid the sum total of virtue will be in exactly the inverse ratio to the increase of shirts and coats.

As a sequel to this sketch of the life led by knightly visitors to Pfäffers, and as a befitting close to this chapter on watering-places in Tyrol, I may narrate a not uninteresting adventure that some thirty years ago befell an obscure country squire, at a small peasants' watering-place called Mitterbad, in the Ulten valley in South Tyrol.

In the year 1841 a young Prussian country squire visited this remote little watering-place, and for several years afterwards was one of the little flock of strangers that came hither. Josepha Holzner, the daughter of the then owner of the establishment, though yet in her teens, was a beauty, and hence the object of the flattering attentions of most male visitors. Our squire, then in the first prime of youthful manhood, was for the first year or two among her most assiduous swains, repelling not a few of his faint-hearted rivals by his austere manner. The flirtation — for we must presume that at first it was naught else — soon ripened into something more serious. Old Hoisl, the attendant at the bathing establishment (who a year ago was still alive) tells numberless anecdotes of this courtship: how one after the other the rivals dropped away, abashed by our squire's austere and overbearing *hauteur*; of the innumerable love-letters that passed through his hands in his character of *postillon d'amour*; of the stolen rendezvous that took place under his immediate supervision — for Josepha's father was from the first against the "heretic Prussian's" attentions, and of course in a small place like Mitterbad the utmost caution was necessary to outwit the father's vigilant eyes and ears.

This lasted for some time, the strangely-matched pair growing fonder of each other from day to day, and con-

vincing our hero that life without Josepha would be a blank. It must have cost a terrific struggle with himself to come finally to the determination to marry fair Josepha. He was a Prussian "Junker" *par excellence*, who, we must presume, at that remote period of his life had not yet had occasion to cast from him the belief, so marked a peculiarity of Prussian nobility, that an immeasurable gap divides the noble from the burgher classes, and that a union with a member of the latter entailed, to say the very least, a loss of caste.

The decisive day arrived; and our hero, never dreaming that the simple peasant would refuse him the hand of his daughter, visited old Holzner for the purpose of asking fair Josepha in marriage.

Old Holzner, amazed beyond description at the thought of uniting his daughter with a heretic, stormed and swore, and once for all declined the honor. The old faith to him was more than worldly advancement, and the stanch Catholic peasant sent the noble wooer, with a peremptory "no," about his business.

The squire left Mitterbad the next morning, and Josepha was married several years afterwards to a petty official of the Episcopal Court of Justice in Salzburg.

This tale would be hardly worth telling (for its kith and kin are out of number), were the hero (though at the time, as I have said, an entirely unknown country nobleman of the lowest rank) not at present the most renowned man this century has produced; in fact, no less a personage than Bismarck.<sup>1</sup>

How vastly different might have been the course of Bismarck's life, had the "no" been a "yes"! Might not his life have run in channels far removed from political strife? Might not the charm of a country life at the side of his first love have outbalanced his greed of fame? What would Prussia have been without him? Would Sadowa and Sedan have been the turning-point of the Fatherland's fate? Would the little chapel in Chiselhurst

<sup>1</sup> This event is strictly true in all its details. Not only has it found its way into several books, but I have taken occasion to verify the details myself.



have been the last resting-place of Napoleon? These and a host of other questions arise when we read this simple little love story. Does it not seem that the work on which the great man is at present engaged is part of an act of retribution? The bigoted creed that deprived him of his love seems destined to fall by his own hand.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE GOLDEN EAGLE AND ITS AERIE.

NEXT to the poacher, the golden eagle (*Aquila Chrysaetos*) and the l ammergeier (*Gypaetos barbatus*) are the two greatest enemies of the chamois and roedeer. Far less noble than the eagle in his proportions and build, the latter does not develop the exclusive appetite for blood and live flesh which distinguishes the eagle among the rapacious birds of prey.

The eagle, the tiger of his race, bears off his prey in triumph. The geier very seldom attempts to remove it, but devours it on the spot: indeed, his grasp is too feeble to permit him to manage effectually any but a comparatively trifling weight. The eagle, on the contrary, rarely touches carrion; and his terribly-powerful wings and talons enable him to carry off the strong-limbed chamois, or a full-grown goat or sheep weighing considerably over thirty pounds.

If the animal singled out as his prey is too heavy, the eagle will swoop down upon it with resistless fury, and by mere force of the concussion will hurl it down the abyss at the brink of which it happened to graze or feed.

Several times have I had occasion to watch a golden eagle carrying off a young chamois or roe. The great weight of his prey would oblige him now and again to loosen his hold upon it, while circling at a terrible height over ravine and peak. As it falls, the eagle will dart after it; and, catching it up in his claws, allow himself to sink for twenty or thirty feet by the mere impetuosity of his downward flight, and then, spreading his mighty wings to

their widest, resume his circling ascent with his prey firmly clutched.

Tyrol, judged by what I have seen of it, does not harbor more than eight or ten pairs of golden eagles; and Switzerland, I am told, is quite rid of these noble but terribly destructive birds of prey. The scale on which a pair of these birds will carry on their depredations among the game stocking the ravines and glens near the site of the eagle's home, the aerie, is incredibly large. Quite a halo of celebrity is therefore thrown about the lucky shot who has brought down one of these royal highwaymen of the Alps. Far more exciting and difficult than shooting is the extraction of a young eagle from his nest or aerie.

Eight or ten years ago I assisted in an attempt to rob an eagle's aerie of its young inhabitants, in a remote glen in the Bavarian Highlands. Owing to the inadequacy of our means for approaching the goal, the attempt failed; but it left so vivid an impression on my mind that for four or five consecutive springs I was continually on the lookout for a repetition of this adventurous exploit. The difficulties of tracing one of the parent-birds home to the aerie are, however, so great, that the site of one of these royal homesteads is seldom discovered.

On my return to Tyrol from a tour in France and Spain in the first week of July, 1872, the very first person greeting me at Kufstein, the frontier station, was destined to be the bearer of the most welcome news, that the site of a golden eagle's aerie had been discovered in one of the side glens of the broad Inn valley.

Old Hansel, my informant, was one of the gamekeepers on a large imperial preserve close by Kufstein. Some years previously, I had on more than one occasion shared a hard couch with him under the stunted pines, when inopportune night overtook us high up in some Alpine wilderness, or near the glaciers and huge snowfields, while in hot pursuit of the chamois.

Hansel had heard of the discovery of the aerie and was just about to take train to the small railway-station, about an hour's walk from the opening of the B—— valley,

at the remotest extremity of which, some ten or twelve hours' walk off, the ærie had been found.

Telegraphing to my friend, who was awaiting my arrival in Ampezzo in order to make some ascents in the Dolomites, that I should be detained for three or four days, I re-entered the train that was to carry us to our destination.

The next morning long before sunrise we were on our eight-hours' tramp to our goal for that day, — the small cottage of a drift-keeper, in close proximity to the very wild and well-nigh inaccessible ravine which was to be the scene of the coming adventure.

Few of my fellow-travelers of the day before would have recognized me as the town-clad through passenger from Paris to Kufstein. An old time-worn country-made shooting-coat of the very roughest frieze; short leather trousers, as patched and discolored as the poorest wood-cutter's; gray stockings, displaying to the critical glances of the natives my knees, still bronzed from the exposure attendant on a long course of Alpine climbing in the previous years; and a seasoned hat, which had been originally green, then brown, and had now turned gray, on my head, — would, I presume, at least have rendered recognition a matter of difficulty.

Tonerl, the keeper of the wood-drift, was an old acquaintance of mine, whose qualities as a keen sportsman had shone forth when, four or five years previous to the date of the present exploit, I had quartered myself for a month in his secluded habitation; spending the day, and not infrequently also the night, on the peaks and passes surrounding his modest cottage. To buxom Moidl, his pretty young wife, I was also no stranger; and her smile and blush on welcoming us assured me that she still remembered the time when, reigning supreme over her father's cattle on a neighboring Alp, she had ministered on more than one occasion to the wants of the young sportsman who sought a night's shelter in her lonesome chalet (distant at least five hours' walk from the next human habitation), in which she, a young girl of nineteen or twenty, did not shrink from playing the hermit for four or five months of the year.

Many a merry evening had I spent in the low, oak-paneled "general room" of Tonerl's cottage, when he was still a gay though middle-aged bachelor. No changes had since been made in the aspect of the apartment.

In one corner stood the huge pile of pottery, which, being used for heating the room, one might by mistake have termed a stove. Over this singular masterpiece of pottership, about two feet from the ceiling, was fixed a sort of shelf, four feet broad and six long. This represented the nuptial couch of the couple. "In winter," as Tonerl laughingly remarked, "it is warm and cozy; and in summer it has the advantage of being a bed taking up but little space." Running the whole length of two walls of the room was a broad bench, in front of which were placed the two strong oak tables, round which, on Sunday evening, such of the woodcutters as were at work in the near neighborhood used to congregate, to laugh, sing, and quarrel over the glasses of home-brewed "schnapps," which Tonerl, in utter defiance of the excise-officers, ventured to sell to them.

We arrived at Tonerl's cottage just as they were beginning their twelve-o'clock dinner. A second edition of a huge iron pan, filled with the savory but somewhat too greasy Schmarn, very soon made its welcome appearance. Amid laughter and merriment our repast came to an end; and we began our confab as to the best means of attaining our end, viz., the young eagle.

Two woodcutters, whom we had found seated at one of the tables on our arrival, were dispatched to a neighboring woodcutter's hut in order to fetch the four inhabitants of the same, whose presence at our consultation was a matter of vital importance.

As it was Saturday, they had knocked off work in the course of the afternoon, and had adjourned to the hay-loft for a few hours' sleep, prior to setting out for a poaching raid to the distant Bavarian preserves.

On learning the object of my presence, they immediately hurried down to Tonerl's cottage; and half an hour later I was in possession of all the facts and information

regarding the whereabouts of the "horst," or aerie, the difficulties which would have to be surmounted, and the manner in which the discovery had been made.

Their vocation as woodcutters, it seems, had brought them, while decimating a forest distant about nine miles from the hut, to the extreme end of a narrow and wild mountain ravine, just opposite the aerie, which, with the usual parental care, was built in one of the small crevices by which the Falknerwand, a peak the side of which towards the valley is a perpendicular wall some 900 or 1,000 feet in height, is riven.

The evening was spent in discussing the details of the exploit, and getting our various implements in order.

We were up in the morning by three, and an hour later we were ready to start.

Our force consisted of six woodcutters, — who were only too glad to give up their poaching expedition for the more exciting one on which we were now bent, — Tonerl, Hansel, and myself. After shouting a last jodler to his wife, who returned the greeting with her clear, bell-like voice, though her heart was doubtless beating fast under her smartly-laced bodice as she waved us a last adieu, Tonerl took the lead of our long file.

Three hours later we had reached the base of the wall, the site of the aerie. I immediately saw that, besides being a more adventurous affair than I had anticipated, nothing could be done from this side of the peak. Indeed, the precipice seemed not only perpendicular, but actually inclining forward in its upper part; and this impression seemed to be borne out by the fact of our finding, close to the base, numerous blackened remains of fires which had been lit under the shelter of the cliffs by belated keepers, or, what seemed even more probable, by poachers.

By a circuit of considerable length we finally gained the summit of the peak, and, throwing down our various burdens, we began to reconnoiter the terrain, which we did *ventre à terre*, bending over the cliff as far as we dared.

Great was our dismay on perceiving, some eighty or ninety feet below us, that a narrow rocky ledge, which had

escaped our notice when looking up from the foot of the cliff, projected shelf-like from the face of the precipice, and shut out all view of the crevice which we supposed contained the aerie.

After consulting some time we decided to lower ourselves down to this rock band, and make it the base of our further movements, instead of operating, as we had intended, from the crest of the cliff, where every thing, but for this obstacle, would have been tenfold easier. Posting one of the men at the top of the crag to lower our heavy fifty-fathom half-inch rope by a cord, after we had gained the ledge, we descended one by one, hand over hand, to the site of the coming exploit.

The ledge was of varying breadth: in some places it was less than two feet, in others again it widened to about seven or eight feet; but at the place right over the crevice, where the men handling the rope had to take up their position, it was from three to four feet in width. Of course this was a somewhat embarrassing circumstance, necessitating extreme caution in all our movements, besides causing the disagreeable feeling of standing at the very edge of a yawning gulf some eight hundred feet in depth, and nothing to lay hold of for support but the smooth face of the rock.

We had lowered ourselves in the order which the men had to occupy during the ensuing operations. First came Hansel, then the five remaining woodcutters, then myself, and finally Tonerl, the first and the last provided with their rifles.

On reaching the ledge we immediately began operations by driving a strong iron hook into the solid rock at a point some two or three feet above the ledge. Through this hook the rope was passed, one end pendent over the cliff; and to obviate the peril of its being frayed and speedily severed by the sharp outer edge of our platform, we rigged up a block of wood with some iron stays, to serve as an immovable pulley. By means of the hook the rope was directed sideways to the spot where the men told off for pulling were standing in single file, a space of about three feet between each.

After completing our arrangements I turned my attention to the broad leather belt, similar to the one worn by our fire-brigade men, that was to fasten me to the rope.

To fasten the belt round my waist, to run the rope through the strong iron ring in front of it, and knot it securely to a strong piece of wood, my seat, were our next proceedings. This manner of fastening one's self to a rope is preferable to the orthodox way of binding waist and both legs to the rope, as it impedes free movement far less; and even if I were to slip off my wooden horse, I could not fall, the wood preventing the rope from passing through the ring.

A large hunting-knife was in my belt, a small but powerful Smith revolver in my pocket, and in my hand a long pole, shod with iron at one end, and at the other fitted with a strong boat-hook, which we had forged the night before in the miniature smithy of Tonerl's cottage.

The five woodcutters took hold of the rope, while the two keepers, *ventre à terre*, began their duties as my guardian angels by cocking their trusty rifles, in case of any attack of the old eagles while I was engaged in my work of spoliation. On their watchfulness and on their unerring aim my life would, in case of such an emergency, depend, just as much as on the muscular arms of the five shaggy-headed woodcutters.

Laying hold of the pole, I gave myself a gentle push, which sent me clear of the edge into space. Although it was not the first time I had been in a similar position, the prodigious height was, for the first two or three minutes, not without a sort of exciting effect on my nerves.

Five minutes later I had quite recovered; and, hanging on a rope, scarcely thicker than a man's finger, over an abyss of nearly 1,000 feet in depth, I enjoyed the novel position. Any new and hitherto unknown sense of danger charms the minds of men fond of rough Alpine climbing and mountaineering in the strict sense of the word.

The descent lasted not more than ten or fifteen minutes; and when I arrived opposite the crevice, where the



existence of the aerie was plainly indicated by a mass of dry sticks and refuse of all kinds strewn about, I stopped further progress by two distinct jerks at the signal-line.

The distance separating me from the aerie was, owing to the projecting nature of the ledge on which the men holding me were standing, and to the overhanging formation of the entire precipice, some ten or twelve feet; but by the use of my pole, the hook of which I caught on a projecting stone, this difficulty was soon overcome.

At first the bulwark of dry sticks, the interstices between them being filled with dry moss, prevented my seeing any thing. Cautiously crawling up an inclined slab of rock that led to the aerie, and slowly raising my head over the side of the latter, while with my right hand I guarded my head and face against any attempt of the young eagle to attack me, I looked in. My surprise and pleasure on finding not one, but two young eagles therein, may be imagined.

A peal of shrill shrieks, and sundry rather ominous-sounding hisses, greeted my unlooked-for appearance.

Vainly flapping their enormous wings, while with their small but inexpressibly wild eyes they kept staring at me, they opened their beaks—hooked at the end, and already of an alarming size and strength—to their widest extent, plainly indicating that their breakfast-hour was nigh.

Detaching from my seat the stout canvas bag with which I had provided myself, I proceeded to bag one of my young prisoners. While he was yet struggling in the ample folds of the bag which I had thrown over his head, I pinioned his formidable talons, and then, unbagging him, I proceeded to secure his wings and beak by means of a piece of cord. I then deposited him in the bag, which, although a good-sized one, he entirely filled out, thus excluding the idea of putting the other bird into the same receptacle. As it is a rare occurrence that two young eagles are found in one aerie, I was unprovided with a second bag, and consequently was placed in a fix regarding the means of securing my second prisoner.

After a good many ineffectual trials, I at last managed to secure him by flinging my coat over him, and then slipping a running-noose over his feet, after which it was easy enough to bind and prevent him from doing any mischief.

The bag containing the first bird I tied to the signal-cord hanging by my side : the other I resolved to carry up in my hand, there being little danger of his hurting me if the cords of his shackles held out against his vigorous efforts to get free.

I was glad to get out of the aerie after having brought my expedition to this successful termination ; for the stench created by the putrefying flesh strewn by the parent-birds about the adjacent rocks was something dreadful and overpowering to any senses more delicate than those of a bird of prey. These relics, which I had the curiosity to count, consisted of a half-devoured carcass of a chamois, three pairs of chamois-horns, with corresponding bones of the animals, the skeleton of a goat picked clean, the remains of an Alpine hare, and the head and neck of a fawn. Arranging myself on my seat, I fixed the hook of my pole in its old place, and gave the signal to hoist me up. The bird I held in my left hand, while with my right I intended to let myself gradually swing out till I reached the perpendicular position.

As the sequel shows, I had reckoned without my host. The first hard pull of the men at the rope, nearly two hundred feet over my head, which, contrary to my instructions, was much too vigorous, wrenched the pole out of my grasp, sending the latter to the bottom of the precipice, and me at a fearful pace outwards. My position was, as anybody can imagine, most dangerous. The velocity of the retrograde movement would dash me with terrible force against the solid wall of the rock. There was only one way, and that a very dubious one, of saving myself. Fortunately my presence of mind did not forsake me in this critical moment, and I grasped at this only chance of preserving my life and limbs. Tilting the upper part of my body backward and my legs forward, I

awaited the dreaded shock, taking, of course, the chance of my striking the rock feet foremost as the only way of saving myself.

The retrograde movement of the pendulum, to which my weight supplied the velocity, set in, and a second afterwards I was saved, having struck the rock with my feet, which, well protected as they were by my immensely heavy iron-shod shoes, were the only part of my body which could have effectually resisted the shock. The only bad result of the contact with the rock was a paralyzed feeling in my legs, and a prickling sensation in my back and loins.

Need I say how thankful I was that I had not followed the promptings of my companions to take off, before leaving the ledge, my shoes and stockings, in order to facilitate the climbing, which, as we supposed, would be a matter of necessity to enable me to reach the aerie?

For what reason I refused to follow this advice, and do a thing which, in the course of my chamois-stalking experience, I had done so very often, is a mystery which I do not care to solve; the fact of my life having been thus saved being sufficient for me.

While the above incident occurred I had remarked that a dark object had flashed past me, so close that I distinctly felt the pressure of the air, and heard the whistling sound it created, as of falling from seemingly a great height. Thinking it was a stone, I paid no further heed to it, my attention being moreover attracted to a sharpish gash in my thigh, which the bird placed under my arm had managed to inflict, although his beak was bound with my pocket-handkerchief. Some loose gunpowder strewn into the wound was an effectual if somewhat painful cure; and it was only after having applied it that I remarked that, instead of being pulled upwards, I was quite stationary.

It appeared afterwards that the object which flashed past me a few minutes before was the block over which the rope ran, and which was of vital importance in securing my safety. This of course I did not know at the time,

and consequently my anxiety grew from minute to minute. An hour and then another passed, and still I remained in my most helpless position.

The boulder of rock, projecting a few feet over my head, prevented any view of the ledge; and my shouts asking the cause of the delay received indistinct answers, the words "patience" and "wait" being the only intelligible ones.

These words might have been consoling, but for the fact that Nature, to cool my impatience and make my position more ridiculous in her eyes, destined me for a cold bath, the water being supplied by one of those short but terribly grand thunder-storms, which victimize Alpine regions in summer-time.

My position exposed me to its full fury, without any possibility of escape; and ere long it burst over my head, drenching me to my skin in the first five minutes, while the lightning played about me in every direction, and terrific claps of thunder followed each other at intervals of scarcely a few seconds.

What heightened the danger as well as the absurdity of my situation was the chance that one or both of the old eagles might return at any moment, under circumstances that must render a struggle, if any ensued, a most unequal one. Supposing my guardians to be still at their post, the distance of the ledge was such as to make a shot at a flying bird, large as it might be, any thing but a sure one; and the tactics of the golden eagle, when defending its home, do not allow of any second attempt. A speck is seen on the horizon, and the next moment the powerful bird is down with one fell swoop. A flap with its strong wings, and the unhappy victim is stunned, and immediately ripped open from his chest to his hip, while his skull is cleft or fractured by a single blow of the tremendous beak. Instances are however known in which the cool, self-possessed "pendant" has shot or cut down his foe at the very instant of the encounter. Happily my own powers were not put to so severe a test: the old birds were that day far off, circling probably in majestic swoops over some distant valley or gorge.

I was forced, however, to be constantly on the alert ; and my impatience and perplexity may be imagined as hours elapsed, and there were still no signs of my approaching deliverance. The storm had long since passed over, and darkness was settling down, when I felt a pull at the rope, and my ascent, begun nearly four hours before, again went on.

It was of the utmost importance that the whole party should regain the top of the cliff before night had fairly set in : I therefore deferred, on my arrival at the ledge, all questions till we had gained a place of safety. The heavy rope, fastened to the cord, was hauled up by the man on the top, and after it had been secured to a tree-stump we swarmed up without loss of time.

We had still before us a somewhat perilous scramble in the darkness down the steep incline ; but the exhaustion attendant upon the fatigues and privations we had undergone made it necessary that we should first recruit our strength by means of the food and bottle of schnapps we had brought with us. While we were doing justice to the bread and bacon, and taking gulps of undiluted spirits, the tale of the different mishaps of the day was told, now by one, now by another, of the sufferers.

It seems that as soon as the accident which sent the block to the bottom of the Falknerwand was perceived by the men engaged in hoisting me up hand over hand, they desisted from their task, lest the rope, now unprotected, should be injured by the sharp-edged stones, and thus place my life in imminent danger. They communicated the mishap to the man on the top of the cliff, who immediately went to get a substitute. Descending to the base of the peak, he felled a young tree, and shaped a block similar to the one lost. As he was returning to the crest of the Falknerwand with the block on his shoulder, the thunderstorm overtook him ; and one of the vivid flashes of lightning playing around him cleft and splintered a rock, weighing hundreds of tons, that had stood within thirty paces of him. He received no injury, except being thrown on the ground, and partially stunned by the terri-

ble concussion ; but it was not till after a considerable time that he was able to rise and continue his ascent. What would have become of us, and me in particular, had the man been killed by the lightning, it is difficult to say ; most probably starvation would have been our fate. The next human habitation, excepting old Tonerl's cottage, was eight or nine hours' walk from the Falknerwand ; and as Tonerl's wife did not know the direction of the aerie, the chances of her finding us in time for mortal help were small, — indeed, so small that when I hinted the thought to my sturdy companions, the momentary gloom and dark frown on their shaggy brows told me but too plainly that they concurred in my dark anticipation.

Our meal ended, we placed our pinioned prisoners in a large hamper specially provided for their transport, and after some trouble contrived to manufacture two torches, in the ruddy glare of which we wended our steps down the steep incline to the bottom of the Falknerwand.

From some dry wood found beneath the sheltering precipice, we made some more torches, and finally reached Tonerl's cottage at a late hour, rather worn and hungry, but highly satisfied with our success.

A steaming "Schmarn" and "Speck" (bacon) — the latter a great treat for the men — soon appeased our hunger ; the thirst, however, seemed to me to be of a more formidable nature, for it was close upon two o'clock when the last touch on the chords of the "Zither," which accompanied the final "Schnaddahüpfler," sent us up our ladder to the hayloft.

On my return next morning from my morning stalk, with a roebuck on my back, I had full leisure to look at the young eagles, who, released from their shackles, had been placed in a small barn, the door of which had been unhinged, and in its stead stout wooden laths fixed across the opening. Before their fetters were untied, the wings had been measured, those of the hen-bird being fully two or three inches larger than the wings of the cock-bird, though the latter had the finer head. The hen-bird measured six feet eleven inches in the span, and when

full grown the breadth would very probably reach eight feet, or eight feet six inches.

The "Aufbruch," or entrails of my buck, together with two live rabbits, furnished a luxurious breakfast for the young captives. The rapidity with which it was dispatched made old Tonerl, who was standing at my side watching the proceedings, shake his head, and ask me how on earth he could find the wherewithal to feed these two voracious babies.

A week after their capture they were "feathered" for the first time. This process consists in pulling out the long, down-like plumes on the under side of the strong tail-feathers. These plumes, which, if taken from a full-grown eagle, frequently measure seven or eight inches in length, are highly prized by the Tyrolese peasants, but still more by the inhabitants of the neighboring Bavarian Highlands, who do not hesitate to expend a month's wages in the purchase of two or three, with which to adorn their hats, or those of their sweethearts.

The value of a crop of plumes varies somewhat; generally, however, an eagle yields about forty florins' (£4.) worth of plumes per annum.

Six weeks after this incident I again found my way into the secluded B—— valley, and found that the hen-bird had been sold to a neighboring head-keeper of a large ducal preserve, for forty-five florins (£4. 10s.) The cock-bird I found alive and kicking. Being curious to see if his confinement had subdued his wild and ferocious spirit, I removed one of the laths, and entered the barn. An angry hiss, similar to that of a snake, warned me of danger, but too late to save my hands from severe scratches. With one bound and a flap of his gigantic wings he was on me; and had it not been for Tonerl, who was standing just behind me armed with a stout cudgel, I should have paid dearly for my visit.

Tonerl's predecessor, an old man when the latter succeeded him in office, knew of but one single family of eagles, though earlier the Vomperloch very likely gave shelter to many a couple of these noble birds. The

aerie of this single family, however, neither he nor Tonerl could discover. Often and often had both these veteran sportsmen sacrificed a night's rest in order to be out on some prominent point long before daybreak to watch the movements of the paternal birds as they proceeded to feed their voracious offspring. But it was just as if a telegraphic dispatch had warned the sly old robbers of their foe: the eagles were sure to remain invisible that morning, much to the annoyance, as we may suppose, of their famished progeny. Tonerl, who would have given a good deal to discover the object of his highest ambition, even went as far as to stop out two days running, at a period of the year—the beginning of July—when the young birds must have been very nearly fledged, and hence developing an appetite truly amazing. But be it that the eagles' larder was well stocked, or that the parents half starved their young ones rather than betray the site of the aerie, certain it is that up to the year 1863 no one ever knew the exact locality of the robbers' den. In that year, on one of the last days of June, Tonerl by dint of constant watching at last succeeded in discovering the aerie's site, and for three consecutive days did he, aided by six or seven men, endeavor to get at the nest. The third day, after endless trouble and danger, he got within reach, and was hauled up with the young eagle—measuring close upon seven feet span—securely shackled in his hands. The young prisoner was transported to one of the keeper's cottages, and placed in a large covered pigsty. At first he flourished; but one day the door of his cage was left ajar, and he got at some water, which, so I was told by the keeper, brought about his death. I have been assured by several people, who had had experience with the treatment of golden eagles, that water to them is a deadly poison. If this be really the case,—a fact which I have not assured myself of,—it would be a strange phenomenon in natural history, and one that deserves investigation. The next year the parent-birds built their aerie on a spot of easier approach, and the young heir to the Vomperloch domain was again cap-



tured, this time by the head Jäger, Leiter, who like Tonerl, had to be let down attached to a long heavy rope. The young captive survived for nearly a year. In the turmoil of a fire in the keeper's house, where he was confined, he mysteriously disappeared.

The two captures, following as they did closely upon each other, served as a warning to the old birds; and not for four years afterward was the aerie discovered. At last, in the spring of 1873, it was detected by a young Jäger, in a minute cleft in the middle of a stupendous precipice some five hundred feet high. I heard of the discovery in time to attend the attack; but though my eagerness to participate was wrought to a high pitch by my having quite recently played a conspicuous part in a similar exploit in another part of the country, as just narrated, I was unfortunately compelled to remain a mere looker-on from below; for I had neglected to take my crampons, and the ascent proved to be such a stiffish bit of work, that I dared not follow my companions, who were all armed with this essential help in rock-climbing. The attempt proved quite a success; for two young eagles were captured by the intrepid keeper, who was let down the giddy height.

The very next year witnessed the destruction of the whole family. The male eagle was shot by the same Jäger who had robbed his home the year before, while the female bird, the larger of the two, and a splendid specimen, measuring close upon nine feet in the span, was trapped. This occurred a few days before the young birds were fledged; but nobody knew the exact locality of the aerie. By dint of constant watching, it was finally discovered by the cries of the famished young ones. The site, however, was so ingeniously chosen by the parent-birds, that approach was impossible. The aerie was built in the middle of a very high wall, the top of which projected so far out that a distance of at least thirty feet intervened between the aerie itself and the man who, on being let down, reached its level. Nothing was left but to shoot the young inmates from the opposite heights.

The distance being very great, a considerable number of shots were fired into the aerie. The deadly effect of the bullets could be easily seen by the aid of a telescope ; and when finally both young eagles were lying stretched out, with their heads hanging over the bulwark of boughs that formed the sides of the nest, the successful party left the site of their exploit.

What was the astonishment of one of their number, on casually visiting that neighborhood, about a week later, to hear both young eagles crying vociferously for food ! The young dodgers had evidently simulated death, and had thus gained a respite of some days. This time their fate was more disastrous than before ; for my friend's sure rifle picked them off very quickly, and so exterminated an ancient and noble race, whose ancestors for centuries had made the Vomperloch their home.

I know of no instance in which human skill has subdued, in the slightest degree, the haughty spirit of the free-born golden eagle. An untamable ferocity is the predominating characteristic of this noble bird, more than of any other animal. Circling majestically among the fleeting clouds, he reigns lord paramount over his vast domain, avoiding the sight and resenting the approach of man.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## AN ALPINE WALK.

THE Vomperloch<sup>1</sup> and its many branch glens are, in the opinion of the very few who have ever visited our favorite mountain haunt, the most remarkable locality for barren wildness of scenery in the whole range of the North Tyrolese Alps.

It is a grand wilderness of stupendous crags, huge walls of rock piled upon each other, their pinnacles, thousands of feet overhead, crowned by needle-shaped spires and the boldest ridges. The whole territory is cut up by a number of ravines of apparently unfathomable depth. Entering one of these — “Graben” as they are called in the local idiom — by the narrow portal, invisible till one is quite close to it, you hold your breath, over-awed by the grand solitude, by the terrible barrenness, by the death-like silence that reigns around. Wherever you glance, you see naught but huge cliffs rising heavenwards: no tree or patch of green breaks the ashy tint of the rock. You are cut off from the world. You look around, startled perhaps by the hoarse shriek of the golden eagle, the monarch over all you see, as he holds a survey over his vast domain, sweeping in majestic circles high, high overhead.

You pick your way over huge boulders, over water-worn stones, marking the course of the fierce torrent, that evil first-born of an Alpine thunderstorm, when, brooking no

<sup>1</sup> Situated in the heart of the wild chalk chain, variously called Northern Chalk Alps, Karawendel Gebirg, &c., in formation very similar to the much better known Dolomite range in South Tyrol.

resistance, massive pieces of rock share the fate of the smallest pebble, and are piled over each other in fantastic array.

Presently you come to a standstill: the smooth surface of a rock of wall stares you in the face, and blocks up the passage.

Perchance, if you are a good climber, and do not shrink to divest yourselves of shoes and stockings, or if you have a trusty pair of crampons buckled to your boots, you can manage to scramble up the high perpendicular wall. You have reached the top. You gaze in amazement around you: a second "Graben," precisely similar to the one you have just left, opens out before your eyes. Prompted by a vague sense of mystery, you proceed on your journey of investigation. The bleached bones of a chamois, picked clean by the eagle, who also was most probably its murderer, meets your gaze. You shudder, as you remember that, were you to perish in this desolate wilderness, a similar fate would befall your corpse. And how easily an accident could occur to you! A slip, a boulder crushing against your feet, a sudden giddiness, or a fall down some small height sufficient to break your leg or to sprain your ankle, and you would be lost, — lost as surely as had you tumbled down that precipice, six times church-steeple deep. And far better had it been for you to be lying there, an ill-shapen mass of flesh and splintered bones, than to linger on in the fearful agonies of death by starvation, to hear the monotonous shriek of the eagle, as from day to day you watch him circling nearer and nearer, kept off but by the wild movements of your arms. Lucky are you, if your rifle has escaped injury, and you can put an end to your misery, when once the fierce pangs of hunger become unbearable, or your senses are veiled by delirium. "Why suffer these fearful tortures when a touch on a finely-set hair-trigger effectually ends your agony? Another twelve hours you will wait, and then" — None but those who have lived through hours and days of this supreme mental anguish, who have clutched the rifle as they would clutch the hand that

saved from drowning, can realize the agony of hopeless hope. It is in places like this that the chamois-hunter's heart beats with freshening vigor. To none but him does the supreme silence, the ghastly barrenness, partake not of the terrible. To the painter, to the poet, to the tourist, and to the mountaineer who is not a sportsman, scenery of this kind is void of interest. Far different emotions do the ashy cliff, the slip of blue sky overhead, and the utter silence, call forth in the hunter's mind.

Approachable only from one side, the Vomperloch can be entered by but one little path, where the pellucid stream deriving its name from the gorge, after a prolonged journey through countless terrific gorges, somber and icy cool even when the sun stands at his highest, leaves its home to join the swift Inn. The path worn by the feet of the keepers who have to guard the vast domain brings one, in two or three hours, to where the first side glen branches off. Here it stops, and from thence the whole vast range of mountain is one grand pathless wilderness of craggy peaks.

Very lovely has always seemed to me this primitive little track, winding along through varied scenery, now passing dense forests, or traversing the gently-sloping verdant meads that, ere the locality became sacred to game, appertained to a small "Alp" which was allowed to conceal itself in this desolate district. Then it again disappears from view as we proceed to ford a limpid, insignificant little brook, that finally finds its way to the stream at the bottom of the gorge. It is walled in by huge masses of rock, and so shallow as hardly to float a quarter-of-a-pound trout.

But what agency brought hither those huge blocks of stone, each bigger than a cottage, or those water-worn skeletons of giant trees lying scattered about on the banks? Surely not the tiny brook, so sleepily meandering down the rocks. And yet it was the very same streamlet that wrenched the boulder from the mother rock, and uprooted the trees of centuries' growth from the soil where, from time out of memory, they had defied the elements.

The ghostly grandeur of a raging torrent in the high Alps, when swollen by one of those terrific thunderstorms, was once demonstrated to me in a marked manner, at precisely this spot. I happened to reach it when the storm was at its height, scarce ten minutes after the first drop had wet my hands. The foaming waters were roaring down the deep gully with amazing force, and had attained a depth of three or four feet, rendering it utterly impossible to ford its angry masses.

A bold buttress of rock projecting far into the surging waves offered a safe resting-place from whence I could watch the turmoil around. A quarter of an hour later, while the rain still continued to pour down in quantities unsurpassed, my point of observation was cut off from the bank, and I was standing right in the center of the raging torrent.

Though I knew I was perfectly safe, as neither the water nor the trees, which now were commencing to come down in mad flight, could ever reach my post, elevated some thirty feet over the angry element, yet it was with a peculiar feeling that I surveyed the surroundings, and became convinced that I was completely cut off from the world.

An unspeakably grand scene it was, and one well adapted to strike awe into the stanchest heart. The mighty thunder-claps, whose echoes were thrown from side to side of the narrow, rock-bound cleft, followed so closely upon each other that they were blended into one continuous roar.

The darkness which had so suddenly set in was lighted up by flashes of lightning, whose intensity I have never seen equalled; the roar of rushing water was no longer distinct, for mixed up with it was the rumbling of huge boulders careering down the bed of the torrent, or the crashing sound of splintered wood. It was a scene giving one a true sense of human frailty in comparison with Nature's anger.

Had a kingdom awaited me on the other side of the waters, I could not have passed them to grasp it.

Though wet to the skin, of course, and shivering with cold, I enjoyed amazingly the four or five hours on that crag.

Very different is it as we now step across the limpid brook, on our way to the recesses of the Vomperloch.

We are not pressed for time, so we saunter along, now peeping down the precipitous slopes of the mountain-side, to discover if possible a wary chamois out on his evening graze on the cliffs forming the opposite side of the deep ravine, then again sitting down on a log or a stone to scan with our telescopes the bluffs and huge crags overhead.

How charming the walk seems ! how delightful it is to be back again in free Nature, rid of worldly care, of the dust, din, and roar of town-life !

Our eyes feast on the gaunt forms of the bold peaks, on the deep green of the silent, somber pine-forests, and by the aid of the telescope we bring close to view the lonely little Alp *châlet*, standing in the center of an emerald isle of verdure on the opposite range of mountains. We watch the speckled cattle roaming about, and the white-aproned, burly young Alp-girl moving from beast to beast as she milks them on the open green.

We fancy we can hear the tinkling of bells and the mooing of the kine. But how could we? More than ten miles intervene between the lonely watcher and the no less lonely watched.

The sun had gone down behind the crags ; the delicate purple tint which filled the ravine at our feet and which had been diffused over the giant peaks, coloring forest and mead, has given way to the dull ashy pallor peculiar to the chalk formation after sunset. The deep gully, at the bottom of which a short half-hour before we had watched the limpid, bright, sparkling waters of the Vomperloch, is filled with evening mists, gradually obscuring the view.

Slowly they rise, like ghosts called up by the meditations of an evil mind ; and we know it is high time to proceed on our walk, and get under shelter for the night, for in half an hour darkness will overshadow all.

We have not far to walk, for our goal, the Zwerchbachhütte, a primitive log hut erected for the benefit of the keepers in this inhospitable neighborhood, lies just round that corner in the first of the side ravines. We cross a couple of steep "arrêtes," and enter the tiny copse of beech-trees, right in the center of which, in a small clearing, lies the hut.

We are standing in front of the solitary little *châlet*, and I ask myself, as I invariably do on reaching this precise spot, "How often have you been here?" It is a nook which exercises a spell over my mind. I have visited it at all times of the year,—in spring, when that copse of beech-trees, transplanted to this otherwise strangely barren locality, as if by some fairy hand, has burst out in fresh green buds, and formed a lovely contrast to the few giant pine-trees that dot the steep declivity around it; or in summer, when the heat, though tempered by elevation, invites delicious repose under their shady boughs. Many an autumn day have I passed, basking in the warm sunlight, or sitting on a crag, telescope in one hand, and rifle in the other, watching for hours some wary old buck as he treads his favorite paths on the face of a sheer precipice, or again, acrobat-like, posing for half the day at a time on some needle-shaped prominence. And winter—why, even winter has seen me here, though the treat of viewing Nature in her dense white robe had to be purchased by hours of wading in deep snow and other exposures no less severe, not to speak of the risk the invader has to run of being snowed in, with escape hopeless.

I once passed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, like a mole, in this very log hut, burrowed under five feet of snow. And though the fare was of the very simplest, and the solitary toasts had to be drank in "*schnapps*," I look back on those two days with pleasure.

But the reader will exclaim, "What is it that lends this spot such surpassing charms? Is it the grand landscape? Is it the utter silence, the strange solitude that reigns around? Or is it the awe-inspiring height of the rocky



walls that rise in steep precipices thousands of feet on every side? Or is it the fantastic shapes and the weird forms of the crags overhead? Or, again, is it the consciousness that we are invading one of the very most lonely territories in the whole stretch of the Alps, and that solitude, such as can be found in few spots in Europe, if in any, surrounds us?" No paths, no track, cross the peaks before us. The very native, be he never so bold a climber, shuns to enter the trackless wilderness.

The last *châlet* is far behind us: there is not a single human habitation in the vast mass of mountains that faces us. No forest nor scanty growth of Alpine hay tempts the all-invading woodcutter and daring "Wildheuer" to turn his steps hither. The very poacher, not easily daunted we are assured, turns back before the difficulties of access, the entire absence of *châlets* or sheltering huts wherein he could pass his lonely nights, and the great danger to him from the facility for the keepers overlooking very large tracts from prominent eminences.

Nature and man have combined to make this district as solitary a spot as well can be.

Let us enter the hut after a long absence of nearly a year, and cast a glance at its primitive interior, — at the deal table, fastened by a hinge to the wall; the two cots filled with hay; the pewter spoon, knife, and fork, stuck in the crevice, and the glittering ax for chopping wood beside them.

We prepare our simple meal on the open fireplace outside, protected from rain by the overhanging roof. The dish of somewhat greasy "Schmarn" is washed down by a large jorum of strong tea, boiled, it must be confessed, in the very same pan (the only one the hut contains) in which our more solid dish was cooked.

Our pipes lit, and fresh fuel thrown on the fire, we settle down to a reverie. We are recalled to our senses by the chill night wind coming straight down from the neighboring glaciers. The full disc of the moon has risen over the walls of our prison, and her mellow light adds a new charm to its picturesqueness.

Some of the snowfields, worn to a high polish by a hot August sun, reflect the light with mysterious brilliancy, while others left in the shade assume ghoulish forms, and seem to stand out from the dark background like gigantic hobgoblins.

Break of day has to see us up: so, rather than dally any longer, we retire to our cots, and, after throwing aside coat and shoes, stretch ourselves comfortably on the fragrant bed, which, after a nine-months' experience of more luxurious couches, seems, for the first moments, somewhat strange.

The bright moonbeams stealing sideways through the window, the dead silence withal (for the ear has long become accustomed to the monotonous, low rumbling of the seething Zwerchbach), lull eyes and ears, a haze steals over the senses, and in the next five minutes sleep has conquered.

Some seven or eight hours before the conventional time for rising in town, we leave our couches, and complete our toilets, which, however, does not take us very much longer than it does a Central African; the lacing of our boots, perhaps, giving a black competitor the only chance to win a dressing race.

But what on earth have we to do, you ask, at this unseasonable hour? for it is only three o'clock, and as yet no faint tint of light on the sky betrays coming day.

I propose to visit a saltlick for chamois, and for this purpose have to be up betimes. Everybody knows how fond sheep and goats are of salt: less known is the circumstance that chamois often betray, at certain seasons, a great partiality for it.

Most of the large preserves in Styria and Tyrol have regular "Sulzen," or saltlicks, constantly provided with that attraction. The cavity in the rock, into which the blocks are fastened by iron stays, is worn and polished by countless hoofs; and it is one of the most fascinating sights to watch, from some favorable ambush close at hand, the playful gambols, the amazing jumps, the endless gymnastic feats and tricks, of a whole herd at one of these places.

The one I am about to visit is not far from the hut, in one of those stupendous cross-ravines which I endeavored to describe in the commencement of the chapter.

Some distance from it, I have to divest myself of shoes and stockings, in order to pick my steps noiselessly along a narrow ledge running at some height over the gorge. I have not more than perhaps two hundred yards to go, yet it takes upwards of a quarter of an hour. Now creeping along on all-fours, now rising cautiously in order to leap the gap where the ledge has been worn away by a watercourse, then again lying still, hardly daring to raise the eyes, or now bending over the edge as far as I dare to assure myself that no chamois are in the ravine below, I finally reach the miniature platform which is the point of view. A few stones are piled up, and through the chinks the watcher can look down at the saltlick, some thirty yards below, without being seen by the chamois.

*Ventre à terre*, after throwing aside my hat, lest the blackcock feather on it might protrude over the stones and thus betray me, I approach the pile. The first glance through a chink shows the whole slope beneath peopled with chamois! The eyes feast upon the scene; chamois of every age and size, from the giddy little kid up to the sedate and wary old buck, who raises his head from minute to minute to scent. But the wind is dead against him, so he lowers it again, wholly unsuspecting of my close proximity.

Generally speaking, the sportsman abstains from shooting or disturbing the game at saltlicks; for if he does so repeatedly the animals are loth to return to it, and thus they are deprived of the luxury conducive to vigorous health.

Exceptions to this rule are, however, now and again made; as, for instance, in the case of well-known old bucks, who have managed, by dint of their marvelously keen scent and watchfulness, to elude the fell bullet for years upon years.

Every preserve contains some of these patriarchs

among chamois, the object of countless plots and tricks on the parts of the sager stalker, all of which have failed; the buck has escaped from combats out of number unscathed, or, at the very most, but slightly wounded. He has become notorious by his marvelous good fortune. He instinctively seeks the most secluded spots, and selects the most impassable cliffs for his hiding-places. What Nature has left undone for his protection, he supplements by his wary caution. There are, however, seasons of the year when even these grandfathers of their tribes have perforce to leave their seclusion to mingle with the gay young herd whose giddy company they carefully eschew the rest of the year.

In July and August, when the days are the hottest, and the poor animals know not whither to turn for shade, the saltlick, whose luxuries are enjoyed long before the sun has breasted the cliffs overhead, offers a temptation none can withstand. While watching the fascinating sight, all of a sudden the heart stops beating, and the whole body grows rigid, for with a couple of strides an old foe—a very notorious buck whose tracks I have unsuccessfully followed times out of number,—steps into sight.

It is a moment of supreme excitement; my hands tremble as I grope for the rifle. Could I be mistaken? No! for there, his head thrown well back sniffing the air, I can plainly see the stump of his right horn which one of the keepers shot off more than ten years ago. I cautiously draw back from the wall, cock the rifle, stick the barrel through a chink, and proceed to take steady aim. The slight click of the hair-trigger, as I set it, and the next moment is to be the last of the longed-for prize. But no, it was not to be, for the hammer strikes the nipple without exploding the cap. What a scene of confusion that slight noise produces! with a loud whistle of alarm, the whole company disperse in all directions, as if they were chaff chased by a strong wind. Of the fifty or sixty chamois assembled at the saltlick, the greater part pass just underneath the place of ambush, while two or three, not knowing at first whence the danger threat-

enèd, actually make for my platform, and approach within three paces before they perceive my prostrate form, and with a shrill "whew" are down the precipice to seek safety elsewhere.

Again that old buck had escaped his doom, for by the time I had placed a fresh cap on the nipple he was out of sight. For the next two years he disappeared entirely; none of the keepers set eyes upon him, until finally one fine day, at a large drive for chamois in this district, we discovered him through the telescope, standing as if hewn in stone on the knife-edge of a pinnacle some thousand feet over our heads, and watching the goings-on of the sportsmen and beaters below him. His size and crippled horn removed all doubt respecting his identity. The rolling echo of the shot, announcing the commencement of the drive, roused him at last, and in a few minutes he was lost to our eyes in the maze of crags; and there, secure from even the very boldest pursuers, he may be roaming at the present moment.

A bunch of his long hair in one's hat, and his fine though crippled "head" in one's hall, would be the proudest trophies one can fancy.

I return to my hut, naturally not in the best of humors with myself; but a plunge into the icy waters of the adjacent torrent, which at my usual bathing-place forms a caldron of some depth, does much to console me for the failure. One who has never enjoyed a dip in a mountain-stream early in the day can little fancy its delights, ending as they do with a sharp run back, that reminds us in its speed of the last exciting home-spurt of that healthy exercise for boyish lungs, — a well kept-up paper-chase. A large dish of "Schmarn," of one's own cooking, lays a capital bottom for a hard day's work, particularly if you eat it with appetite sharpened by a previous cold tub.

What is it, I often ask myself, that steals over you, when, after establishing a substantial "fonde," you sling the trusty rifle over your shoulder, light your pipe, and start off for a long stalk? Does the native, I wonder, enjoy that delicious feeling of mental ease, that con-

sciousness of active power, shrinking from no obstacle? Does he too feel that exuberant wish to "do" something which nobody else can do, — "to outshine" his companion, be he even his best friend? Is it the result of youth coupled with sound bodily health? or is it perhaps the product of the sublime scenery surrounding us? or again is it the vista of good sport? or possibly could these joyous spirits be born and reared in that greasy pan in which we cooked our substantial breakfast? No: an instinct tells us that they are inborn, that they are the happy prerogative of "meat, ma'am, meat," as Mr. Bumble would describe that "something" which distinguishes the buffed Britisher from all other nationalities, and, fairy-like, endows him with the gift to enjoy intensely a pleasure which to the rest of mankind — to the slothful Russian, the brain-fed German, the Frenchman of impaired vitality, or the enervated Italian — is usually a source of displeasure; namely, healthful exercise.

But I am interrupting my walk by idle speculations, instead of doing justice, as I now propose to do, to two trusted companions — human features of the Vomperloch, I might term them — at whose sides I have often scaled the fastnesses of this wild region, and in whose company I have trodden the most dangerous paths. They are the "jägers," who though at the time I am speaking of, simple keepers to the outer world, were the kings and rulers of this vast hunting-ground.

Tonerl, the elder of the two, has a cottage of his own in the secluded little hamlet of some half a dozen houses, nestling on the high plateau at the very entrance of the Vomperloch. Our visit being unexpected, we find Tonerl from home, and his sturdy wife Theresa tells us that he is collecting brushwood on yonder precipitous slopes.

Let us, seated on the rustic bench placed under a couple of gnarled fruitless apple-trees in front of the lowly little cottage, await his return. Glancing up from the huge dish of delicious milk, which has received our particular attention, we scan the steep declivity down which Tonerl has to come. Presently we detect, high up on a

sort of cutting, a bundle gliding down the very precipitous gradient at lightning speed. By the aid of the pocket-telescope, we discover that this bundle is nothing less than Tonerl in front of a sledge, upon which are stacked and bound down two huge bundles of brushwood. Leaning back upon his cargo, his feet well forward and armed with crampons, he holds on to the two "horns" of the sledge. To one who has never watched a descent of this kind, it seems utterly impossible for a human being to slide down a narrow cutting at a gradient of fifty or sixty degrees, with a huge load of wood behind him, and not be dashed to pieces long before he reaches the bottom. Small precipices of six to seven feet in depth are passed in one bound; stones of great size, embedded in the course, are likewise no obstacle to speak of. It requires strong nerves, a steady eye, and cool courage, to guide one of these summer sleighs on a steep slope. Your breath is taken, your eyes blink, now you imagine nothing can save you from dashing with fearful violence into a boulder the size of a moderate house, while a slight touch of your crampon-armed foot will guide the sleigh to the left, and you pass it at a close shave; then again you believe your very bones must be shaken to pieces, as with a gay jodler the guiding steersman clears a small precipice, when you have to cling as for your life to the ropes wherewith the bundles upon which you sit are tied down. "Hold hard!" you cry, as with dismay you see a couple of huge trunks of trees lying athwart your course; but it is too late, the steersman, when as if about to crash against the huge beams, lifts the front of the sledge, and you and the bundles pass over them in safety. Nothing can be more exciting than one of these summer sleighing parties; and though severe accidents do sometimes occur, the prime fun of the expedition will outweigh your fears, and you take your seat behind the steersman, or, as is frequently the case in remote valleys, behind the betrousered steerswoman, with quickened pulse. In late autumn and early spring, one of the chief amusements that varies the monotonous life of the peasantry is to bring down the hay

from the small log-built hay-huts that dot the highest pasturages, in which it was stored when fresh cut. Snow, of not too great a depth, covers the steep slopes, rendering the descent a swift and delightful sleigh.

Very often the duty of bringing down the hay, being a lighter kind of work, falls to the lot of the girls, probably the daughters of the owner. With trousers of stout canvas in lieu of the usual female dress, and sharp crampons on their feet, two or three of these buxom lasses will set out. Hours of hard toil will finally bring them and their sleighs to their goal. The hay, packed in nets of strong cord, is tied down on the sledge; and then lighting their pipes, and making the valley at their feet ring with their merry jodlers, each girl placing herself in front of the sleigh, on which, towering far over her head, the huge bundles of fragrant Alpine grass are lying, sets out on her dangerous descent. Away they speed like lightning, a few yards intervening between them. Now they have reached the bottom of the meadow: next comes a dense wood, rendering further progress seemingly impossible, and yet, with a loud whoop, they enter the narrow cutting which has been made through the wood, and like a flash of lightning they pass through the gloomy forest. In this way these dauntless lasses cover, in two or three minutes, ground which it took them as many hours to ascend.

Words fail me to describe the gay scene, and the feeling of joyous lightness which takes possession of one. Every thing combines to make it one of the pleasantest scenes of Alpine life, — the valley far down at your feet, the grand peaks rising from a belt of dark-green pine-forests, the crisp air, and the lightning speed at which you travel, comfortably seated on the top of the bundles, with your legs hanging down one at each side of your fair guide's head.

At one of these sleighings, at which I happened to participate, the fun was greatly enhanced by a ludicrous incident. We had been traveling for several seconds, as usual at a tremendous pace, when all of a sudden I noticed that the hay bundle on which I sat was smoking. I



cried to the lass who guided the sleigh ; and on turning she saw that the hay had been set alight by a spark of her pipe. Had we gone on for a minute, the whole cargo would have been ablaze, and my position rendered very dangerous. She knew she could not stop the sleigh, as we were just at the very steepest part of the descent ; so, quick as lightning, she made the sleigh swerve to the left, right into a deep bank of snow. The sudden stoppage sent me flying over my companion's head into the snow. To see me dig myself out, must have been a highly ludicrous sight ; but for all that the fire was stifled, and nobody was hurt.

But we have been sadly led away. Old Tonerl, we have seen, was coming down in the way described ; and a few minutes later the weatherbeaten old fellow was standing in front of us, stretching out his brawny right hand, while with his left he wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"That's right ; you've come at last. I thought you had quite forgotten the old place. But you look pale ; I'm sure you've been tumbling about dusty cities, instead of visiting your old haunts."

Old Tonerl, a man of fifty-five or fifty-six, whose strongly-knit figure and powerful limbs would hardly betray his age, has, for a mountain-born Tyrolese, seen a deal of the world. In his younger days he had been a soldier, — one of that renowned corps, "The Kaiser Jäger," the Emperor's chasseurs, who executed such deeds of bravery under their beloved veteran leader, Marshal Radetzky, in the Italian campaigns of 1848. He had fought, as he will tell you with sparkling eyes, the first ten minutes of your acquaintance with him, in seven battles, and more than a dozen engagements.

"Ah, those infernal 'Welsche' (the name by which the Italian-speaking people of South Tyrol and of Italy itself are known), didn't we just lick them ! With our rifles stocked, we stormed their barricades, and clubbed them down like so many curs."

The man's eyes light up when he reverts to his soldier days ; and you see he loved fighting for fighting's sake.

Tonerl will close a long rigmarole about the country in which he spent so many years of his life (he had been in Italy eleven years), by telling you that there's only one good thing about it, — otherwise a rotten country, inhabited by a set of treacherous rascals, — and that is its cheap wines. “Why,” he would continue, “you could get a ‘mass’ of capital wine for two kreutzers of the old currency. Ah, those were times! and schnapps,” he would add, “schnapps as much as you could get down your throat for a ‘groschen.’”

Once, on returning from a few months' stay in Italy, I revisited my old friend; and the very first question he asked, on hearing that we had been in Italy, was, “How dear is the wine there now?” When I told him that I had paid but little attention to that topic, he looked quite aghast; and some time later I overheard him telling his wife that I had been in Italy for several months, and actually did not know what the wine cost.

I felt that I had fallen very considerably in Tonerl's opinion, and naught could restore me to the elevated position I had formerly occupied. His suspicions must have been aroused by this instance of gross ignorance on my part; for presently he subjected me to a severe cross-examination, which, following closely on my first discomfiture, did for me entirely.

In the eleven years he had soldiered about Italy, he had got to know many of the fortified towns, such as Mantua, Milan, Verona, Padua, &c., and had stood on guard hundreds of times at their numberless gates.

His questions were in accordance with these experiences; for, on my displaying ignorance of the number and names of the gates that Verona or Mantua has, he gave me up as a sad story-teller, and hinted as much as that my Italian travels were myths.

With the exception of the two phrases, “Give me some wine,” and “What's the price of this wine?” he had forgotten every word of the Italian tongue; and even these two phrases time had metamorphosed into oaths, and his “Quantocostavins” rolled out in right awe-inspiring style.

According to old Tonerl, fair Italy was metamorphosed into a country the like of which, for bad qualities, it would be impossible to find. And, indeed, if you listened to his tale of woe, — how the malignant fevers had decimated the ranks of his regiment far more severely than their enemies' bayonets; what fearful sufferings they had to undergo in the suffocating heat of the summer; how treacherously the Italians behaved; that the assassin's dagger or poison, handled by patriotic but misguided women, was for ever at work, — one could well fancy that the open character of these mountain-born troops grew hardened and vindictive, and that treacherous cruelty was met by rough-and-ready violence.

Looking at Tonerl now, one could hardly fancy in him a veteran soldier; nothing whatever indicates his former vocation. He represents as true a type of a chamois-hunter, born and bred in his native valley, as one could fancy.

His powerful though under-sized frame has about it that look of well-knit bones and joints which characterizes the peasantry; his figure has the stoop so peculiar to the hunter, his very gait, the long swing and heavy tread of the mountaineer. These trivial details are an instance of Nature's power over man.

Fourteen years of soldiering meant, at the period I am speaking of, serving that number of years, in the prime of life, under an iron rule of pig-tailed pipe-clay, which reduced the free man into a machine far more complicated and nicely adjusted than the most intricate machinery of a chronometer. His very thoughts, words, and actions were regulated strictly according to the word of command.

In a character less imbued with the idiosyncrasy of his people, an indelible effect would have been produced, an effect no number of years or change of vocation could efface. How easy it generally is to recognize the soldier, be it even under puzzling disguise!

But with the mountain-born Tyrolese the case is different. When he is once back among his Alps, Nature effaces every trace of the foreign element. The man

casts off his soldier's guise as effectually as his noble game, the hart, sheds his antlers. Nothing remains to tell of that long life of clockwork misery. Grand Nature, that surrounds him on all sides, acts as the furnace in which the sterling metal of the independent mountaineer frees itself of the alloy so foreign to it.

Leiter, the other keeper, was a little wiry man some forty years of age, and about the best cragsman I have ever met. In intelligence he was far above the common run of his comrades, who usually are naught but sportsmen, born, reared, and condemned to die in the solitude of their beloved mountains. Many an agreeable day's stalking have I enjoyed in bygone years at the side of this man; and when late in the evenings, after a two or three days' stalk, we would return to his humble cottage, a steaming supper, a bright cleanly-kept room, and the smiling face of his pretty young wife, would await us.

Poor fellow! Little did we think that his days were numbered, when, on a raw November day some years ago, we returned from our last expedition into the Vomperloch for that year.

And yet it was that very stalking excursion that brought Leiter to grief, and widowed poor "Nanni." It was a cold autumn day. The mountains were already coated with their winter's pall. We had been in the Vomperloch for a couple of days, and in the afternoon of the second we proposed to make a short "drive" for chamois. Leiter and Tonerl were to act as beaters, while I was to station myself near the banks of the torrent, expecting that the game would endeavor — as it usually does in winter — to escape across the water.

No chamois came, and after waiting several hours, the beaters at last returned. It was getting dark, and so it was proposed that, rather than scramble up the impending excessively steep slopes to reach the path, we should follow the watercourse, which would save us at least a good hour. As the torrent was skirted by walls of rock of considerable height, forming gorges of great length, we had to wade in the icy-cold stream.

It varied in depth, but being autumn and hence there being very little water in comparison to that of summer, when it would reach a depth of eighteen or twenty feet, it never came up higher than our hips. Yet, the force of the stream being considerable, we had hard work to keep on our legs, particularly as it was getting quite dark.

Laughing and joking, we proceeded on our wade, the stupendous cliffs around us re-echoing every word with tenfold force. Cold work we thought it, as quarter of an hour after quarter of an hour elapsed, and we were still immersed in the icy water. Finally, after nearly two hours of it, we reached two lonely cottages, built at the very last extremity of habitable ground, right at the commencement of the "Vomperloch Glen." One was Leiter's habitation, the other the inn, whose owner combined a smithy with his other vocations as petty farmer and host of the inn.

Here we parted, and I proceeded to gain my own quarters, some little distance off. That time twelve hours, I was entering the express, and just forty hours later was stepping into a hansom at Victoria. A week afterwards I received the news of poor Leiter's death. An acute inflammation carried off my trusty companion — nay, I may even say friend — in less than three days.

I have now sketched, as best I could, the characters of my two favorite comrades; but there yet remains another human feature of our favorite district, and one that will probably prove of more interest.

Ferocious Jokel was a character in strict harmony with these wild regions, which were, I may at once betray, his favorite hunting-ground. He was a poacher of the very first caliber. How well I remember his startling aspect! those glittering, restless black eyes hid beneath his shaggy brows, his muscular and gigantic frame, spare and without an ounce of superfluous flesh on it, his coffee-colored chest, open alike in summer and winter, and covered with hair. His taciturn demeanor, his piercing glance as with one look he had examined you from head to foot, that air of unapproachable *hauteur*, had all attracted my

attention the very first minute — now many years ago — when I first saw him. He was leaning over a heap of smoldering embers in that forlorn shepherd's hut, where I met him the first and the only time in my life. It was a strange meeting, and one that I shall remember.

I had been out several days in these very mountains, and on the evening of the third day was returning to more habitable quarters, when, overtaken by a fierce thunderstorm, I had to take refuge in a deserted *châlet* situated in the very wildest and most secluded nook, many hours' walk from the next inhabited Alp hut. The boards that did for a door were pushed aside, and a fire burnt on the open hearth. A loud peal of thunder, which shook the very earth, had drowned the noise of my entrance, and I stood in the hut before its occupant, who was staring pensively into the flames, had noticed my presence. The next second he looked up: his eyes seemed to devour me, as with one agile leap he gained the bench upon which his rifle was lying. The next moment it was leveled at my breast, and Jokel, for it was no less a personage than that noted poacher, though at the time I was ignorant of his name and fame, demanded gruffly what I wanted of him.

Before I had time to answer, he had lowered his rifle, for he perceived I was unarmed, and in a voice scarcely less gruff than before, said, —

“Never mind; I thought you were one of those accursed keepers.”

I passed that night in his company, slept on the floor back to back with him, and drank out of the same battered old copper drinking-vessel. My judgment of this desperado's character was fully borne out by what I subsequently heard of him. Countless traits came to my knowledge; some betraying a reckless ferocity that bordered upon the supernatural, but others betokening a sterling uprightness that loathed a lie of any sort, and that would have prompted him to cut off his hand rather than steal a loaf of bread.

“And this man a common poacher!” the reader will

exclaim. Yes, nothing worse and nothing better than a poacher was Jokel. He saw no more wrong in killing a chamois — in his eyes a free gift of nature — than in picking up a stone on the high road. Who had a better right to the wild denizens of the Alps, roaming hither and thither from pass to pass, from peak to peak, than he, the free-born child of nature, whose home, the wild Alps, was also their home, and who was willing to undergo privations and dangers quite unknown to the legitimate owners of his noble game, as he followed them alone and unaided by beaters and huntsmen from crag to crag, from ravine to ravine, exposed night and day to the same inclemencies of climate, to the same dangers, that they, the fleet chamois, had to undergo?

And yet is it possible that a phlegmatic and undemonstrative native, whose very look, whose very words, seem to betray his total indifference to Nature's charms, could be swayed by motives other than sordid, in giving chase to the wary chamois and risking life and limb in the sport? Yet this *is* the case; for the commonest peasant loves Nature, though probably no words of admiration ever pass his lips, far more intensely than the stranger tourist who, though with difficulty, finds words to express his feelings. Because their undemonstrative characters shrink from giving utterance to their sensations in the voluble manner peculiar to strangers, we must not conclude that they are dead to the charms that surround them.

Nay, on the contrary, love of nature is innate with their very existence, and if we were to examine their character a little closer we would find that they are hardly aware of the presence of this feeling for their mountains and their chamois. To the tourists the feeling is new, and if it is genuine, it is but natural that they try to express it in words, though a remark I once heard from a guide is very true, —

“Why the goodness don't they” (the tourists) “stop in the country, if they profess to admire Nature so amazingly?”

Is it likely that Jokel, or any other strong, vigorous

man able to gain a comfortable livelihood, had he turned laborer or peasant farmer, would prefer, were it not for that "something" that lures him on to risk his life, to undergo untold privations merely from the sordid motives that prompt the common run of poachers,—a "something" that lets him forget the hardships of the last resultless expedition, that makes cold bearable, hunger pangless, thirst endurable, and the facing of numberless dangers a very pleasure in itself? And what is that mysterious charm that seduces the man from steady labor, from a comfortable homestead, but the love for Nature in its noblest form?

In Jokel's history we see this feeling predominating to a more than common extent. The son of well-to-do parents, he had wasted his comfortable patrimony. Field after field was sold off to ransom himself from prison, and when finally all was gone, he disappeared from the neighborhood, and betook himself to the Bavarian Highlands, where he soon became the most dreaded poacher near and far. Game was plentiful, but as long as his frugal wants were covered, he cared not what became of the chamois he killed. He would hang them at night to the door of one of the keepers' cottages, or in the same stealthy manner would present the village priests with a buck, or he would give the proceeds of his raids to the poor. He was only happy in the mountains, and when not out hunting, he would roam through the wildest districts, or engage himself as a woodcutter. But his strange violence of character, his dislike of company, and his taciturn *hauteur*, won him no friends among his comrades, and so he was generally shunned.

The strangest tales were told of his incredible strength,—how he once, unarmed, faced a mad bull, and after a severe tussle threw him on his back; how he saved a couple of children from a watery grave in a torrent; how he battered in, with his head, a stout oaken house-door; how he lifted a heavy cart-horse bodily from the ground; how he vanquished seven Bavarian gendarmes, who were about to capture him, and broke their bayonets and swords over their own backs.



With all his fierce recklessness, Jokel was not dead to human kindness, as is strikingly illustrated by one of his strange freaks. His widowed sister was wretchedly poor, and, when Christmas came round, had scarcely bit or sup in her cupboard. Jokel heard of her distress; and, though winter had set in with great rigor, he immediately started for the mountains, vowing he would not return without a chamois on his back. And he did it too, though he was out six days without shelter or fire in the long nights, and exposed to the terrible cold with nothing on his back but his coarse shirt and his frieze jacket. His death, the result of his fierce untamable temperament, was as strange as his life. I will tell it as, some months after the occurrence, Tonerl told it to me while sitting at my side, after a hard day's climb among the crags and peaks which were the favorite hunting-ground of the dead man.

One day early in the season, Leiter was out on his regular round, and while passing through the gorge Tonerl and I were now occupying, he was startled by the rolling echoes of a shot.

Scrambling up a projecting crag affording a good view round, he whipped out his telescope, and proceeded to scan the bluffs and surrounding heights. Knowing that Tonerl was at home, and could not have fired the shot, he instinctively attributed it to our ferocious friend.

"At his old game again," muttered Leiter; and being well acquainted with the artful character of the poacher, he watched for more than three hours, with his telescope constantly at his eye, but no trace of human being was discernible. He began to think he had been misled by the echo, and that in reality the shot had been fired in quite another direction.

But no. "There! I am right, after all," ejaculated wary Leiter; for just as he was examining with his telescope a boulder with some brushwood about it, he saw a hat and then a blackened face cautiously raised over the stone that gave shelter to the rest of the man's body.

"Aha! got you at last, old devil; this time you won't escape us as you did when you gave us the slip last year,

you infernal rascal," thought Leiter, as he continued to watch his foe's movements.

Jokel was notorious for the dare-devil pranks he loved to play the keepers of the adjoining estates, who stood in no little fear of him.

Just a twelvemonth before, Leiter and Tonerl had discovered Jokel carrying away a chamois he had shot on their preserves, quite close to the spot he was now secreted in. They gave chase, but the rascal was soon lost to their eyes.

Suddenly they heard loud jeering laughter right over their heads; and on looking up the perpendicular face of the precipice at the bottom of which they were standing, they saw right over their heads Jokel, picking his steps across a ledge barely broader than a man's foot, and where they, good mountaineers as they both were, had never dared to go. The fellow was too high up for a rifle-ball to reach him.

Presently he stopped, and increased their anger not a little by shouting down most insulting epithets. The wily old dog wanted to draw them on to a certain spot, where he intended to surprise them by one of his tricks.

The two keepers followed the base of the wall of rock for some time, until they saw him disappear up a cleft shaped just like a chimney-flue. He gained the top by swarming up just in the fashion of chimney-sweeps, though, of course, his progress was fraught with great danger, as he had a fifty-pound chamois, his kit, and his rifle on his back, and the "chimney" boasted of but three sides, the fourth being open.

The two pursuers hastened their steps, as they imagined there was yet a chance of capturing him if he failed to strike the right path across the frontier. They had entered a deep Graben, the sides of which were hardly more than fifty or sixty yards apart, and were just in the middle of it when a peal of laughter again jarred on their ears, and a tremendous shower of stones of all sizes came pelting down upon them.

The walls of rock afforded no shelter whatever, as the

stones rebounded from side to side, and there was not a single boulder or tree in the dismal Graben behind which they could seek safety. Nothing remained but to run, which they did with alacrity.

A second and third shower rattled down about their ears, but they escaped without a scratch, but vowing sanguinary revenge. Dead or alive they would get him the next time he gave them a chance.

And surely this time, a year later, Jokel's skin looked "cheap." Here he was, right under the telescope of his implacable enemy, the keeper, evidently deeming himself unobserved by mortal being, and preparing to hide himself and the game he had killed, for the rest of the day, till darkness should aid his escape over the boundary.

The face to which the hat belonged turned hither and thither, examining with the most minute scrutiny the neighborhood. Every thing was quiet, and Jokel's suspicions were lulled. He crawled forth from behind the stone, and ran towards a slight eminence, behind which he disappeared, returning, however, in the course of a few minutes, with a chamois on his back. The wary poacher had observed that necessary caution of lying close after firing his shot.

But this time it availed him little; the pitcher was destined to break, for Leiter, in whose ear a certain scornful laugh still tingled with unabated vividness, had held out on his post, and his patience, as we have seen, was rewarded by finally discovering the malefactor.

But now in Leiter's mind arose the question how to get at the poacher so as to effect his capture.

The distance between the watcher and the watched was scarcely more than three miles as the crow flies, but to walk it would take more than double that number of hours, for there intervened a deep impassable gully, at the bottom of which the stream boiled and seethed. This obliged one to make an immense round to gain the opposite bank, where the poacher was now busy brittling the game.

Leiter continued to watch his movements, and saw

him take up the chamois and his rifle, and bend his steps upwards towards a precipice which rose many hundred feet in one bold bluff.

When Jokel approached the wall, he proceeded to divest himself of his shoes, — stockings he wore none, — and commenced to pick his way up a minute slanting ledge. When he got to the end, where a couple of stunted “Latschen” grew, he pulled himself up by the aid of their tenacious branches to a sort of cavity in the rock, which Leiter had failed to observe until the poacher was right in it.

“Ha! old rascal, is that your game?” thought Leiter, who now knew that Jokel was intending to occupy this hiding-place for the rest of the day, and leave when night should render his return home far less hazardous than it was in daytime.

He watched him settling himself down on the jagged stones, and putting the dead chamois as a pillow underneath his head, evidently intending to enjoy a nap.

Leiter pulled out his watch, and found that it was nigh upon twelve o'clock.

Would he have time to hasten down to Vomperberg to Tonerl's cottage? or would he have to undertake the capture alone? The latter undertaking seemed somewhat too dangerous. Jokel's dauntless recklessness he well knew; and, if he failed to catch him asleep, the odds would be greatly against himself, for Jokel had chosen for his resting-place a natural fortress.

One man only could ascend the ledge at a time, and the formation of the ground was such that from no point could the would-be captors fire into the fortress, while they, on the contrary, would be constantly exposed to the poacher's unerring aim.

Leiter wavered but a few moments, and then rushed down the steep slope on his way home. Within two hours he, covered with perspiration, reached Tonerl's habitation. Tonerl was at home, and in a twinkling had pulled on his coat and shoes, and taken up his rifle and a coil of rope that hung on the next peg. Scarcely five

minutes after Leiter's arrival the two men were walking off at their fastest.

In the four hours they took to reach the scene of action, they had ample time to devise the best means of surprising Jokel before he should have time to offer resistance.

Long before they reached the neighborhood of the precipice, in a cleft of which old Jokel lay hid (asleep too, it was to be hoped), they refrained from talking or making the slightest noise, lest his sharp ears should detect them approaching.

By the time they got to the base of the precipice it was nearly six o'clock; the sun was going down, and it was high time to begin their operations, lest darkness should enable their foe to make good his escape.

Tonerl, taking off his shoes, crept up the slanting ledge, Leiter following as close in his wake as possible, both holding their guns at full cock.

The former had very nearly gained the height, and was just about to lay hold of the Latschen branches to pull himself up, when Jokel, who had been lying awake for some time, heard them, and, with a terrible oath pushed the Latschen apart to enable him to see who was there. To see Tonerl, and to level his rifle at Leiter, who was just about to reciprocate, were the work of a moment. The former, who was hanging on the branches, could not of course use his own weapon, but, what was far better, he swung himself up, and at the very moment Jokel fired, struck aside his rifle. It went off, however, and the next moment the two men were grappling on the miniature platform edged by the gulf. Leiter quickly came to his comrade's rescue, and the poacher was overpowered.

After he had received a sound thrashing by his captors, they proceeded to take him down.

This they had to do with great caution, for the difficult descent obliged them to allow Jokel to accomplish it unbound. In front crept Tonerl, then came their prisoner followed by Leiter with his rifle at full cock, and vowing he would shoot him the instant he made the

slightest attempt to escape. This they were afraid he would try by a bold jump down the miniature precipice, some eighteen or twenty feet in height, at their very side.

When they reached the bottom of the wall, they proceeded to bind their prisoner's hands. Then only it appeared that his right hand was shattered into splinters. His rifle, a clumsy old arm, had burst. Though his wound must have pained him desperately, he did not utter a groan. His firmly-set teeth, gleaming out from his black face besmeared with blood, and his eyes, glittering fiercely from behind the shaggy hair which hung down his forehead, were all that told of his sufferings, enhanced though they were a thousand-fold by his ignominious capture.

It was after midnight when the two keepers arrived at Tonerl's cottage with their captive. Here his wound was washed and bound up, prior to his being delivered up to the authorities at Hall, some four or five hours' walk off. When they arrived there, Jokel obstinately refused to have his wound attended by a doctor; and when, after getting him securely manacled, the surgeon managed to amputate the hand, he succeeded in tearing off the bandages with his teeth. The next day mortification set in, and the third day ferocious Jokel was dead.

So ended the life of this iron-hearted son of nature; and, in the eyes of his captors, his last act was not one to lessen the awe in which they had stood of him.

To him, as to so many of his *confrères*, a death-shot received in the open is but what, during a course of years, was constantly expected, and never brings with it any other feeling than "that it was to be;" but to suffer ignominious imprisonment at the hands of the servants of the law which, from his youth, he had loved but to defeat, was to him a disgrace he could not live through. We leave him at rest at last, reposing under a modest wooden cross in the cemetery at Hall.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### A WINTER ASCENT OF THE GROSS GLOCKNER.

**A**MONG the manifold descriptions and recitals of travels and tours in Tyrol, there are none that deal with the country and its features during winter-time.

Travelers visiting the country in the full tide of sunshine and warmth have, I am afraid, very little conception of what it is like in the rough season of the year, and still less idea of the terrible straits in which the frugal inhabitants are involved by a fall of snow three to five feet high, for four and five months of the year.

I have frequently been amused to observe the curling lip and half-scornful smile of some native, as he watched the abortive attempt of a shivering tourist on a wet day in July or August, to seek shelter and warmth in the ample folds of a shawl or greatcoat; and considering that this very same mountaineer, attired in the very same garb that he wears in summer, short leathers and frieze coat, will brave a cold of the intensity of which we in England can form no conception, his scornful derision at the effeminate stranger may well be understood. In those parts of Tyrol north of the vast mountain chain which divides the country into halves, winter lasts for many months; indeed, to speak more definitely, the fact may be mentioned that in the courtyard of Castle Matzen, snow lay from Nov. 13, 1874, till the first week of the following May. Many valleys are entirely cut off from the world, every communication being stopped by the depth of snow on the paths and roads that connect them with the next large village or town.

On the mountains the snow accumulates to an astonishing depth, masses twelve and fifteen feet being by no means unusual; and Alp-huts situated a few thousand feet above the base of the adjacent valley disappear entirely.

A short time ago I was one of a party of about twenty men that were called together to aid an old couple whose hut had been entirely buried by snow. After a terribly fatiguing march up slopes which, owing to their steepness, were covered by only three or four feet of snow, we reached the site of the hut; nothing but a gable of the roof showed that we were standing right over it.

A trench dug down to the door enabled us at last to deliver the old people, who had been thus imprisoned for nine days. Fortunately they had a goat in their hut, and a few loaves of bread in their store-room; without these they would have perished by starvation long before our arms and shovels could have liberated them from their living grave.

Two incidents of my own experience will illustrate the difficulties attendant upon winter-sport in a severe winter in the Tyrol: the first a shooting-adventure in a remote Tyrolese valley well stocked with game; the second an ascent of one of the highest mountain-peaks in mid-winter.

The autumn of 1874 was, as those of my readers who happened to be on the Continent at that period will undoubtedly recollect, a remarkably fine one.

On November the 8th, with ten companions, natives of the B—— valley in North Tyrol, I started on a sporting-expedition, intending to be away five or six days.

Our goal was a remote little Alpine ravine surrounded by high peaks, affording the very best sport possible. As our quarters we chose one of those odd "Wurzenhütten" — a small *châlet* where in summer-time spirits are distilled from the fragrant herbs (especially the gentiana) that grow on the slopes and rocks. This hut, about 6,000 feet above the level of the sea, is one of the highest-situated of the kind I know, and, for its remote posi-



tion, the fact that we had a ten-hours' march to it from the last human habitation will speak for itself. We of course expected to find the hut untenanted, the season being so very far advanced; what was therefore our surprise, on reaching the *châlet*, to find it inhabited by the young daughter of the old rascal who was owner of this illicit distillery!

I must mention that the reason of its inaccessibility is to be found in the excise-laws of Austria. All spirits are subject to a heavy duty, and the purpose of the owners of these secret distilleries is, of course, simply to defraud Government.<sup>1</sup> Lena (the daughter) had been obliged to remain "on high," in order to finish a certain quantity of spirits ordered by the innkeeper of her native village.

The first four days were warm and balmy, and our sport capital; five chamois, four roedeer, and three splendid harts rewarded our pains. The fifth day, Nov. 13, the weather changed, and snow began to fall in such masses that on the eve of the third day we found, on our return to the hut, just the roof-beams sticking out of the snow. Lena, our cook, was glad to see daylight again, when, after some considerable trouble, we managed to dig a sort of cutting down to the door. Our bag had now increased to twenty-five head in all, — nine chamois, six roedeer, and ten harts.

The snow still continued to fall, and owing to the difficulties of the previous day we decided to remain within our hut, and not to venture out into the wilderness of snow. Every three or four hours two or three of us took turns with the spade, which we had fortunately discovered in the hut, to keep open our passage in front of the door. A pack of terribly greasy cards and an ample store of tobacco and spirits helped to while away that long day; the next was no better, the third just the same, and at last, on the morning of the fourth, the sky cleared, and it ceased snowing. To return to the village was, until the snow should be settled down, an impossibility.

<sup>1</sup> The quantities produced in these distilleries are very small, some distilleries averaging not more than ten or twelve gallons per annum. —

Shooting was likewise impracticable, and so we had simply to wait till the cold rendered the snow more capable of sustaining the weight of a man with snow-hoops. With the latter we were unprovided, never imagining that such a terrific fall of snow would imprison us. With a little patience, a sharp knife, a bit of string and cord, and the tough branches of the fir-tree, we managed to manufacture serviceable substitutes, so that at the end of six more days we started, and after a most fatiguing march of nearly twenty hours we reached the snowed-up village.

Lena, with admirable fortitude and a remarkable degree of endurance, kept up with us in good style, though of course she had the benefit of our steps, or rather knee-deep holes in the snow, she bringing up the rear of our long file.

The lighter head of game, such as roe and chamois, we carried along with us; the rest we buried in the snow.

On arriving at the village late at night, we found everybody in commotion, and full of anxiety on our account. On the morrow they had intended to send a large body of men to our aid. Our absence of more than seventeen days, coupled with the amazingly heavy fall of snow, had made the villagers fear some accident might have befallen us.

Lena, in her short leather breeches, — she had donned a pair of her father's, which had been left in the hut, so as to be able to walk unhampered by the skirts of her dress, — created quite a stir; and indeed the poor girl, dead with fatigue, well deserved the warm praise and the hearty shake of many a brawny palm extended to her in recognition of her brave spirit.

A week afterwards twenty-one young fellows, armed with shovels and snow-hoops, returned to the hut to fetch the ten stags still buried in the snow.

I was unfortunately unable to accompany them, but saw some of them a few days after their return.

Sleighs being impracticable, the men had to carry the stags on their shoulders; and, amazing as it may seem, there were three or four among the lot who each carried

a stag for nearly an hour at a time. As the weight of a hart showing eight or ten points is considerably more than three hundred pounds, this may serve to show the powerful build and great strength of some of the inhabitants of remote valleys.

The "Ortler Spitze" and the "Gross Glockner" are the two highest mountains in Tyrol. Both close upon thirteen thousand feet, the latter was formerly supposed to be the loftier of the two; but lately, owing to more accurate measurements, the Ortler has been found to be a hundred feet higher. Though of a greater height, the latter is not nearly so noble a peak. Not unlike the Matterhorn, the Glockner is from several points of view even of a sharper and more needle-like formation.

Several ascents of this peak in the summer months—the Glockner is by no means a difficult mountain, and even ladies have ascended it—developed in me the wish to try once an ascent in the depth of winter; and though I frequently thought of this plan for several consecutive years, I never had the opportunity or time to carry it into execution.

At last, in December, 1874, I resolved to take advantage of a fortnight's spare time, and try the ascent<sup>1</sup> I had determined upon years ago.

From what I knew of the peak I came to the conclusion that any attempt must be made from Kals; there being two points from whence this peak can be ascended, Kals and Heiligen Blut.

To Thomas Groder, the head of the guides at Kals, a man of great experience in all matters of mountaineering, I expressed my desire to receive accurate information respecting the depth of snow, and state of the latter, — if yet soft, or already coated with a crust of ice.

The answer I received was certainly not encouraging: snow nearly five feet deep in the valley, very soft, and the probability that no guide would venture to undertake so perilous an attempt.

Not easily daunted, I determined to convince myself

<sup>1</sup> See the *Alpine Journal*, May, 1875.

by eyesight of the real state of things. A railway journey of ten hours — we were snowed up twice — brought me to Lienz, in the Pusterthal. Engaging a sleigh, I proceeded to the "Huben," a comfortable inn on the road from Lienz to Windisch Matrei, at the point where the valley in which Kals is situated branches off. My coachman laughed right in my face when I answered his question, what brought me, in the depth of winter, and of so severe a winter too, into the valley of Matrei, by telling him that I intended to ascend the Gross Glockner. "Why, that is beyond what a mad Englishman would do," exclaimed the astonished native, little imagining he was in reality addressing a member of the mad "Engländer nation." "Why, look only at the eight-feet-high wall of snow (lining the road, cleared by means of a huge snow-plow drawn by twelve horses), and imagine what must be the depth of the snow high up yonder mountains; and they are about a third of the Gross Glockner's height."

Indeed, the aspect of things was any thing but promising, and my driver's gloomy prophecy did not tend to brighten my hopes.

At the inn I discharged the sleigh, intending to stop the night there, and proceed next morning on foot to Kals. I ordered my supper to be brought into the bar-room, in order to indulge in a chat with mine host, whom I knew from former times. Even he, who, I felt sure, had a high opinion of my mountaineering experience, thought me demented to venture on such a trip. "In other winters there might be a chance of succeeding, but this year will be an unprecedentedly severe one: you have not a shadow of a chance to reach even a height of 8,000 feet."

Resolved upon trying what perseverance in a good cause could accomplish, I started next morning at an early hour for Kals.

A four-hours' tough struggle with snow, which had fallen to a depth of nearly a foot on the path made in the deep snow the day before by the villagers passing to and from the larger Matrei valley, brought me to my destination.

The greater part of the afternoon of that day, Dec. 29,

was spent in serious consultation with several guides, chiefly with Groder, their head. The verdict was unanimous: "Impossible; but if you will pay us well, we will try how far we can get up on the slopes of the Gross Glockner."

Now, to try, and not succeed, did not suit my plans at all. I told them, however, that I was willing to enter upon "their" proposition, and would engage all such men as would volunteer, and who had had some practice in battling with snow, as chamois-stalkers. I left them twenty-four hours to consider "my" proposition, and at their termination four men offered themselves for the dangerous work.

It continued snowing on the 30th, and on the forenoon of the 31st, December.

On New Year's Eve, towards dusk, the wind changed and the weather cleared, so that when I went out in the open air in front of the house, a few minutes before midnight, in order to hear them ring in the New Year, the stars were shining brightly, and the thermometer, my constant companion in those anxious days, was marking  $11^{\circ}$  R. (or  $5^{\circ}$  Fah.). I returned to bed full of hope that the next day would witness our departure, but sorry that my favorite project of reaching the top of the Giant's Peak on New Year's Day had become impossible, not only on account of the unpropitious state of the weather on the morning of the 31st, but also owing to the religious scruples of my four guides, who refused to be absent from the morning service on New Year's Day.

The tolling bells and the bright sun shining into my comfortable wainscoted chamber woke me at eight o'clock. Looking out of the window, which I had to open to be able to see any thing, my joy can be imagined at seeing a bright sky and a further retreat of the quicksilver (hung up in a shady corner); it now marked  $12^{\circ}$  R., thus rendering it very probable that the snow would be in that state termed by the natives "harscht," able to bear a man's weight, spread, as it would be, over the broad surface covered by the snow-hoop.

After their dinner, or, in other words, at half-past eleven in the forenoon, we met for a final consultation in the crowded bar-room of the Wirthshaus. We five were determined to start, however strong and vociferous might be the party opposed to the whole undertaking. With the words, "Hinsein können wir nur oin mal," or "Die we can but once," the leader of my intrepid little party, Peter Groder, closed the consultation, and they all left for their several homes, to change their dress and bid good-bye to their families. The provisions, four bottles of wine, two bottles of schnapps, three of cold tea, some lard, flour, sugar, salt, six loaves of bread, tea and coffee, were all collected on the center-table of the room.

At one o'clock the men returned, and we set about dividing the stores into five equal parts. I was determined to carry my own share, and, in fact, by taking upon myself an accurate fifth part of all danger, work, and fatigue, not to give the men a chance of turning upon me with the excuse that they carried more than I did, or that I took the lazy man's post at the rear of the party.

Punctually at two in the afternoon we started. Our aspect, wending our steps in single file through the narrow cutting in the deep mass of snow that lay between the houses of the village, must have been extremely comical.

A fool's errand it seemed from the beginning to the greater part of the villagers, but never more so than now. Each man bore on his back an ample Rucksack, from which dangled on one side the large snow-hoops, from the other a pair of crampons, while a short ax, or large bundles of dry wood, or the handle of a gigantic iron pan, or coil of rope, were the visible contents of the several bags, as we passed the criticising review of numerous groups of natives and guides, who had turned out to witness our departure.

For nearly an hour and a half we found a comfortable path connecting the outlying peasant-houses with the village.

At the last house we halted for a moment, strapped the snow-hoops to our feet, and began work in earnest. Con-

trary to our expectations, we found the snow in the very worst state. Fine-grained and dust-like, it did not resist our weight in the very least; and when, at the outset, I saw my front man sink in up to his thighs, my hopes grew faint, and I heard several very distinct grumbling sounds from the three men walking in my rear.

We plowed on, however, doing our duty in a manful and spirited way. Every quarter of an hour we changed leaders, the latter, of course, having comparatively the most fatiguing work, making the steps for his companions.

At five or half-past darkness set in; and, lighting our two large lanterns, we continued our march by their light.

At nine o'clock or thereabouts, we reached the "Jörgenhut," a *châlet* tenanted in summer by a herd and his cattle, and of late years but rarely used by mountaineers as their night-quarters, the comfortable "Stüdlhütte," two hours farther up, being a far preferable abode for a night.

We halted, and, digging a sort of passage to the doorway, — the snow reached up to the rafters of the hut, — we entered the desolate habitation. Here we intended to leave the bulk of our various utensils not actually required in the ascent.

After some trouble we lit a fire with the wood we had brought with us; and half an hour later we were sitting round a gigantic pan filled to the brim with "Schmarn," and a large iron pot full of strong tea.

We had determined to try the ascent by a route entirely impracticable in summer; and, as the Jörgenhut was the last Alp-hut on our way, it would be our last meal till we returned. No wonder we sat nearly two hours over our supper, making it necessary, in fact, to cook a second edition of the "Schmarn," and to make a third and fourth *jerum* of tea.

At midnight we started, leaving every thing behind save some bread, meat, a bottle of schnapps, one of tea and one of wine, and the implements, such as ropes, crampons, &c., necessary for the ascent itself. The night was one of intense cold; the thermometer on leaving the hut marked  $17^{\circ}$  R., or  $6^{\circ}$  below  $0^{\circ}$  Fah.

For two hours our road lay along a small valley ; at the end very steep slopes ensued, terminating in the large Kodnitz glacier, forming a sort of slightly-inclined plateau. At the extreme end of it, in one bold sweep of more than 4,000 feet, rises the noble Gross Glockner itself.

On reaching the slopes leading to the glacier, we changed our respective positions, leaving a space of some thirty yards between each of us. The first man, the center man, and the rear man were supplied each with a lantern. The great danger of avalanches, frequently set into motion by the mere vibration of the air resulting from a shot or loud shout, made great precaution necessary.

Peter Groder, to whom I had given the command of the party, and who was by far the best man of the guides, had had the misfortune to get into avalanches twice in his life, but was saved on both occasions by miracles.

We had been ascending the slope for about an hour or so, when suddenly the solemn stillness reigning around us was broken by a rumbling sound, increasing in intensity from second to second, and making the very earth shake and tremble. A huge avalanche, measuring some hundreds of yards in breadth and thirty or forty feet in depth, thundered down the adjacent slopes, in unpleasant proximity to the place on which we were standing. I was just then the leading man, and on looking back towards Peter, who was walking at my rear, I perceived him and his three companions engaged in a whispered consultation. Turning, I learned on my approach that Peter, unhinged and frightened, was endeavoring to prevail upon the others to turn back. It cost me ten minutes' talk to persuade him to continue the ascent. Silently, not daring to speak a loud word, we climbed on, now sinking up to our chests in heaps of drifted snow, now traversing the firm pathway of an avalanche, only to sink in far over our knees on leaving the track of our dangerous foe.

Two more avalanches passed us that night ; and each time Groder, daring and bold as he was on all other occasions of danger, evinced signs of fear, and but for my arguments he would have turned back each time.



At half-past three we reached the glacier, and traversing its breadth, we came to another bit of stiffish climbing. At half-past six or seven we were standing on the top of a narrow ridge, the "Adlersruhe," that connects the Gross Glockner with some minor peaks on its right.

Here we saw the sun rise, a spectacle of unique grandeur. The cold had abated, but the wind, terribly keen, was sufficient to freeze the marrow in our bones.

On looking towards the mountain which rose in a fearfully steep incline from the point we were occupying, we perceived by the rays of the sun that the whole grand peak was one mass of pure ice.

Unfortunately we had never thought of this possibility, and had therefore failed to provide ourselves with ice-axes. The men, amazed to find ice, were for the first moment quite thunderstruck, — indeed, my own feelings were very much of the same tenor as those of my four guides. Fastening ourselves together with the rope, and leaving the lanterns and snow-hoops behind us, we determined to try at least what could be done with the aid of the iron shovel and the sharp and long-pronged Alpenstöcke, and crampons on our feet.

Hard and dangerous work it proved to be, and had we only had an ax we should have reached our goal (not more than two thousand feet over our heads) at least an hour and a half or two hours sooner.

Cutting steps with an iron shovel into hard ice on a very steep incline, while the wind, cold and piercing, was blowing big guns, was no very inviting occupation.

The top of the peak is divided by a sort of incision — the Saddle — into two distinct horns, one the Gross Glockner, about a hundred feet higher than the other, the Klein Glockner, which latter we had to pass on our way to the former. At half-past nine we were standing on the top of the lower horn, and there came across a phenomenon which had never been witnessed by any of us five.

The top of the Klein Glockner is ordinarily a mere sharp, knife-like edge running towards the more elevated

peak, and divided from it, as I have said, by the Saddle. Instead of this we found on reaching the top that we were standing on a broad platform some sixty feet long, and from twelve to sixteen feet wide.

I was at that moment the second in the file, and sticking my Bergstock — a stout ash pole seven feet long — into the half-frozen snow, which formed the platform, I found that it penetrated, and would have slipped through had I not held it firmly. On looking down through the hole which I had made with the alpenstock I perceived, perpendicularly some four thousand feet below me, the Pasterze Glacier. Of course we retreated precipitately; but nevertheless I and the leading guide had been standing for some minutes on a shelf of snow which the wind had drifted against the smooth surface of the precipice forming the northern side of the Klein Glockner.

It is wonderful that this shelf, not thicker than three feet where it joined the rock, should have withstood our double weight; and at the same time it serves to illustrate the incredible force of gales in winter-time at high elevations.

The “saddle” over which we had to pass was a decidedly bad place, and even in summer, when the wire rope that has been fastened across it can be used, every precaution is necessary. Now the rope was invisible, embedded in ice, in fact, and consequently we were obliged to walk for thirty or forty feet along an edge not broader than nine or ten inches, having on both sides precipices three thousand and four thousand feet deep.

To render this feat even more dangerous, the wind had increased, making it difficult to keep one's equilibrium while balancing one's self across this icy knife-back.

At five minutes to ten o'clock, A.M., on Jan. 2, 1875, we five mortals were standing on the top of the Gross Glockner, having successfully accomplished a feat, which, as my guides afterwards hinted to me, they would not repeat for five hundred florins each. The men dropped upon their knees, and offered up a short prayer, — a proceeding quite unusual with these fearless fellows, showing

more than any thing else that the dangers we had passed through were exceptionally great.

The cold had abated, —  $6^{\circ}$  R., or  $18^{\circ}$  Fah., was quite bearable, but not sufficient to thaw our provisions, which were frozen as hard as stone. The strong schnapps even was in a half-frozen state ; and considering the bad nature of the descent, and our exhausted condition, we refrained from taking any for fear of evil consequences. The meat, tea, and wine, of which we stood so much in need, had to be returned untasted into our spacious "Rucksack."

My card, with the date of the ascent and the names of the four intrepid guides scrawled as legibly as my stiff fingers and shaking frame allowed, I deposited in the cairn that had been raised by preceding mountaineers. A large flagstaff, lying buried under the ice and drifted snow, was dug out, and, after having fixed upon it the remnants of a red flag, was stuck into a deep hole made by means of our sharp-pronged Alpenstöcke.

The view was magnificent beyond description. The sky was of a dark, dead blue, and the air so clear that we could make out peaks never yet seen from the Gross Glockner.

The Ortler and the Bernina group, invisible in summer from this height, were quite distinct, and seemed hardly farther off than the Marmolatta peak (in the Dolomites) in summer.

Far beyond the Bernina we perceived rows of glittering rose-tinted giant peaks, though of course the great distance made it impossible to determine their names.

We remained about thirty-five minutes on our elevated post, and then, waving our hats and shouting one simultaneous "jodler" as a last greeting to the flag fluttering in the wind, we turned our backs on that well-known cairn, thirteen thousand feet over the level of the sea.

By means of my telescope I had noticed groups of people standing in front of the Heiligen Blut Church lying, as it were, at our very feet, and needing but one gigantic leap of some eight or nine thousand feet to reach it. What their feelings were on seeing our flag,

none but a jealously-inclined mountaineer can imagine. Three consecutive winters had they tried to vanquish the Gross Glockner; and though they once got as far as the slopes leading to the Klein Glockner, they had on every occasion failed to reach the spot we were just about leaving.

These attempts, I may add, had been made in winters when a much smaller quantity of snow made high elevations less inaccessible. As we looked down the terribly steep slopes, which were one mass of ice, it seemed impossible, unprovided as we were with any instrument to cut proper steps, or to anchor ourselves effectually if one of us slipped, to get down in safety. "One slip, and we are killed," were the words with which dauntless Peter took the lead down that icy incline.

With the greatest caution, and making use of our crampons, which latter were of the most vital service, we managed to reach the "Adlersruhe." From that point to Kals we met with nothing extraordinary, excepting one avalanche. It seems strange that in ascending in the cold night we had seen three of them, while on our return in daytime, with a bright sun shining, we only came across one.

So eager were we to reach Kals and announce our success, that our descent from the "Adlersruhe" was accomplished in double-quick time, the evening-prayer bell (four o'clock) ringing in our victorious return to Kals. Our flag had been seen, and a large crowd of inhabitants came to meet us and proffer us their congratulations.

A fast of nearly eighteen hours, and great bodily exertions, had left us famishing. Our attacks on food of every sort were closely watched and admired by a crowded audience in the Glockner Wirth's cozy parlor.

APPENDIX.



## APPENDIX.

### ADDITIONAL DETAILS OF MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

IN Tyrol we have to note a diversity of wedding customs, inexplicable, did we not take into consideration the numerous quite distinct races of the population, each having some special traits. We find that the inhabitants of the Unterinnthal are in character quite a different race from the Pusterthaler or Oberländer peasant. The Unterinnthalers enjoy the reputation of being the gayest and liveliest ; a circumstance which is to be brought into intimate connection with the more enlightened spirit of the population in all matters concerning religion. The clergy have less power, and, with the exception of one or two localities, refrain from interfering in questions of social amusements, provided they are kept within the bounds of propriety.

In other parts of Tyrol, especially in the Oetzthal, Oberinnthal, Passeierthal, and Vintshgau, the clergy exercise an unlimited power. Most of the quaint old customs have been suppressed by them, and dancing and merry-makings of every sort are strictly prohibited. The dancing at weddings is confined to a few ceremonious evolutions, headed by the bride and bridegroom, and ending with their departure. We find none of that gay rollicking mirth of the northern districts of Tyrol. Carnival, again, in other parts a period of general merry-makings, is bare of all those quaint and highly characteristic amusements that were, some twenty or thirty years ago, common to every valley. Strange to say, the last quarter of a century has worked all these changes. It would lead too far,

to fathom the cause of this strict surveillance on the part of the clergy ; for apparently a casual dance or a harmless masquerade, in which local events are caricatured, do not stand in any very intimate connection with the power of the Church.

The Ampezzo valley in South Tyrol is distinguished for several odd customs of which no trace is to be found in the rest of Tyrol. First of all, it is the circumstance that by mutual consent all weddings that are going to be held within a certain period are arranged to take place on one and the same day. Thus we find that not infrequently eight or nine "Hochzeiten" are held at the same time, — of course in carnival if it is any ways possible.

The bride is called "Novice" from the day of her betrothal to that of her wedding, and receives, either at the hands of her parents or of those of the "Vicar," a female guardian of her honor, who goes by the comical name of "Brontola," "the growling bear." This female never leaves the side of her charge for the whole time of the betrothal. The bride may not show her face outside of the house without her at her side ; and she it is who regulates the visits of the bridegroom, much, as we may suppose, to his chagrin.

How very strict a watch is kept over the hapless bride, may be conceived when we hear that a fine of ten florins is inflicted if the bride is discovered giving her betrothed a kiss.

On the Saturday preceding the Sunday on which the bans of the several couples are proclaimed for the first time, the village sexton has to perform an important official act. At an early hour of the day the several brides, accompanied by their "Brontolas," meet in the church. The sexton, arrayed in his robes of dingy white, puts himself at the head of the file, and leads them three times round the church. At every altar the procession halts, and a certain number of prayers are prayed. When this has been performed, the sexton leads the file to the Vicarage close by, where the maidens have to pass a species



of examination by the reverend gentleman. They have to know the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the usual and "unusual" prayers of the Holy Roman Catholic Church.

The examination passed, the whole party adjourns to the village inn, where an ample meal and full glasses await the fagged-out sexton and his female troupe.

Unlike some other districts, where the brides are not present when their bans are published, they are required to be so in Ampezzo.

On the first Sunday their dresses are green, and their hats are trimmed with the same color; on the second Sunday they appear all blue; on the third and last they again wear green apparel. On these three important days the "Brontolas," who of course accompany the fair ones to church, distribute, at the end of the service, cakes and buns to their charges.

At an early hour on the important morning, the brides are called for, at their respective homes, by the best men and the Brontolas.

They all assemble in the parish church, and by ten o'clock the sacred ceremony is over.

Then they repair to the Vicarage close by, where they pay their respects to the Vicar and Co-operator, and invite them humbly to partake of their meal, which request the holy men comply with by visiting each house in rotation. If the couples are numerous and live far apart, the Co-operator takes the half of the invitations upon himself, while the Vicar attends to the other couples, according to the neighborhood.

On issuing forth from the Vicarage, the party separate, and each couple, accompanied by the Brontola, the best man, and the select few who have been invited, repair to the house of the bride's parents.

In Pergine some ten or twenty years ago, a very strange and highly interesting series of customs was rigorously observed. Of late it has disappeared; for one of the former priests in that valley, on discovering that the custom was doubtlessly of heathen origin, moved heaven

and earth to suppress it. The couple about to be married were accompanied on their walk to the parish church on the wedding morning by two "Brumoli," or best men, one of whom held a stick in his hand, at one end of which was attached a live hen. The other carried a complete spinning-wheel with its distaff wound round with flax. The hen was the symbol of a careful housewife and a loving mother, the other an emblem of assiduous application to the cares of the household.

When the holy knot was tied, the couple, accompanied by the two Brumoli, repaired to the bridegroom's house. On approaching the latter, the house-door was suddenly slammed in their faces, and the party came to a sudden standstill.

A very quaint conversation between the mother-in-law inside the door, and the daughter-in-law outside the porch, now occurred.

The girl commenced the proceeding by reciting, in a loud voice, a set speech composed of words in an unknown language, which nobody understood. For centuries this formula had been in constant use on like occasions without its meaning being ever known; and it is highly probable it would have remained unknown to the present day, had not a certain famous linguist, a native of Trent, fully unraveled the mystery by discovering that the words used were the very ones recited by the Romans on like occasions. The well-known "Ubi tu Cajus, ego Cajer," spoken by the Roman bride, had been metamorphosed in the course of the sixteen or eighteen centuries into a sequel of words, the import of which no one knew or cared to know.

The mother-in-law then asked the bride what she was doing at the side of her son. "She wanted to enter the house, as her son's lawful wife," the latter answered; whereupon the former demanded to know by what right she was the lawful wife of her son, and what traits of character, favorable and unfavorable, she would confess to possess. "By the rites of the holy Roman Catholic Church, I am your son's lawfully wedded wife, in life and

in death inseparable from him. I mean to be true to my master (the husband). I intend to revere his parents; I promise to love his brothers and sisters; I am pious, I am diligent, and I am accustomed to the hardships of life," was the wife's quaintly-put answer, which removed the fictitious doubts entertained by the dame, who now flung open the doors of the house, and welcomed her dutiful daughter with a motherly embrace.

In the Gröden valley, to give our last instance of South Tyrolese customs, the inhabitants have retained the language, the quaint institutions and laws, of their forefathers, in a remarkably perfect manner. The weddings there are marked by a spirit of ceremonious pomp quite at variance with the mirth and gayety of North Tyrolese Hochzieten.

As an instance of this, we may allude to the speech of the best man — here he is called Prim Dunsell — when calling for the bride at the paternal house on the wedding morn: —

"I am aware that a precious jewel, owned by my friend the bridegroom, has been left in your charge and care; I have come to fetch that jewel; I hope, therefore, that the honest guardians will deliver it to me without let or hinderance, to the end that I may lead her into the presence of her Almighty Creator, Who, if He deem her a fit subject for His mercy and *bienfaisance*, will unite her to a male 'for the good of mankind.'"

Though Gröden and Ampezzo are neighboring valleys, the institution of Brontola, and the fines in connection with this office, are unknown in the former, and a bridal kiss is considered there no transgression of the municipal laws. In the same way the betrothed couple may appear in each other's company whenever they please; local etiquette, in fact, requires that the couple should not be present in their village church on the Sunday their banns are published for the first time; they have to repair to the next village church, often many hours distant.

On the second Sunday the betrothed appear in grand state, she with a blue dress with red sleeves, and a green

hat, and accompanied by her Prima Dunsella ; he with ribbons and flowers on his hat.

During the week preceding the "third" Sunday, the couple dressed in black go their round of visits of invitation. Their first call is invariably to the Vicar and his assistant Co-operator. Custom requires that they should shape their invitation in a Latin verse of some eight lines ; this verse is the same as was in use in the fourteenth century, but, owing to the circumstance that Latin is of course an unknown tongue to the populace, the words have gradually been so much changed and adapted to the local idiom that when the verse was on one occasion repeated to me, I did not understand one single word.

The presence of the Vicar or the Co-operator at the wedding-meal is a matter of great importance to the affianced : the people believe that if they are absent it is an infallible token that the couple never will have occasion for the services of the priest ; i.e., that their married life will remain issueless, and that they both will die, if not of a violent, of a sudden death.

The Tuesday following the third Sunday is the day fixed for the wedding ; the friends of the bridegroom repair to the latter's house, while those of the bride hasten to keep her company in her paternal domicile. In both houses a sumptuous breakfast is served, after which the best man, — Prim Dunsell, — the guest of the bridegroom, leaves the gay company in order to call for the bride, which he does in the way we have described.

The whole company then repair to the church, where the Vicar unites the couple, let us hope "for the benefit of mankind."

A ceremonious procession is then formed, and proceeds to the roomy village inn. The sumptuous meal, consisting of rich viands, awaits them already, and the whole party sits down to it strictly according to the custom of centuries ; the Vicar to the right, the Co-operator to the left of the bride. The orderly, not to say ceremonious way in which the meal is conducted, renders it a dull affair withal. The mirth and hilarity, which in other parts

of the country give zest to the meal and drink, are sadly wanting.

We have once already remarked what an important rôle *kraut* (cabbage) plays in country weddings; and it is singular that even in Gröden, so totally different from the German district of Tyrol, we find that the dance, which takes place about the middle of the meal, when a huge dish of this vegetable is placed on the table, goes by the name of *Bal du Kraut*, in other words the cabbage dance. At the termination of the meal, the *Prim Dunsell* rises, and in a well-composed speech thanks the company for having assisted at the wedding. The Vicar — or if he is not present, the Co-operator — has to answer this speech by a sort of instructive lecture on the blessings of married life, on the reciprocal duties of husband and wife, &c. After this the company rise from the table, and adjourn to the dancing-room. The couple then leave, in order to invite their parents, who, according to the ancient custom of the valleys, may not be present at the wedding festivities. When they return in their company, a substantial meal is placed before them, while the young couple leave them to enjoy a few of the solemn dances which are going on in the adjoining room.

At ten o'clock husband and wife depart, and with them the whole company disperse to assemble again on the following day (if the couple are well-to-do) in the same inn, to enjoy a second dinner, on a small scale. This meal, as its chief dish is a sort of pancake, is termed "*Ueves in té Schmauz*" — eggs in butter.

In the districts adjoining the Bavarian Highlands, a very ancient and common custom is "*Auf B'schau gehen*;" i.e., inspection of the houses belonging to the parents of bride and bridegroom. It sounds strange to our ears, so rigorously trained in the conventional usages of modern life, to hear that this somewhat ostentatious custom, which takes place some weeks before the betrothal, purports to satisfy the parents' mercenary anxiety respecting each other's stability and worthiness of the honor about to be conferred on them.

Take, for instance, the case of a rich peasant, proved possessor of an ample house, perhaps containing even a spare bedroom fitted up with such splendor as a wardrobe and a veritable looking-glass, — luxuries which render it worthy to shelter the portly village priest himself, — not to mention the fact that he is owner of twenty or thirty head of fine cattle and of two Alps on yonder mountain ; for a man of his stamp, we say, it would hardly do to allow his son, the heir to all these riches, to marry the daughter of his unfortunate neighbor, whose house has no top-story to it, and who owns but one Alp upon which to graze his herd, consisting of just half the number of his own.

These important family discussions are no trifling affairs, for though you may have been hundreds of times over your neighbor's house from kitchen to garret, yet again, for the hundred-and-first time must you inspect minutely every article, useful or ornamental, which the house contains. Your scrutinizing glance has to rest upon the milk-pail or water-bucket as if it were the first time in your life you had seen these utensils.

The inspection is formally announced days and weeks before ; so that, what with incessant scouring, cleaning, settling, mending, and repairing, the house is more like a Dutch cottage home than a Tyrolese peasant's habitation, where cleanliness is not always a primary object of its mistress.

The cattle-shed and its inmates are matters of great consideration. Every cow is examined, every calf looked at.

When the survey is finally completed, the company assemble in the living-room. Here we hear how much our poorer neighbor is inclined to give in money and kind as his daughter's dowry. A cow more or less, a couple of "teners" (ten-florin notes) on or off, will decide the fate of the young couple.

Etiquette forbids us to say that we agree or that we do not agree with the proposals of our neighbor. At the most we may opine that five cows are too few, he must

give seven; or, that we won't pay for the wedding expenses, he must do that.

We leave our neighbor without imparting to him by word or mien to what determination we have come. If the match is "no go," he won't hear any more about it, the matter drops, and nobody speaks of the abortive inspection. If, on the contrary, we give our consent, the bridegroom, dressed in his best garment, and his hat decorated with ribbons and flowers, while a bunch of rosemary is sticking in his buttonhole, repairs on a Sunday afternoon, in his official capacity, to the father of the object of his desires. He announces to him that the thing is settled, that his family has consented to the union. This is called ratifying.

From the father he hastens to the daughter, to present her the "arrha," earnest-money, the amount of which varies according to the wealth of the bridegroom. Generally about five to ten silver thalers are pressed into the hand of the bride.

This clinches the business; and one hears very rarely of the "arrha" being returned, a circumstance which casts a lasting slur upon both parties.

This money gift is followed by the so-called "Yes-pancake," of which both bride and bridegroom partake.

Both these strange practices can be traced back to the eleventh century.

In an interesting wedding "inspeximus" of that century, preserved in the Munich Archives, both customs are mentioned.

The best man, in the sense we have employed this word throughout the text, is no less an important personage in the Bavarian Highlands than elsewhere in the Alps. Farther north, towards Munich, we find that professionals are employed. The Highlander sports, as a very appropriate token of his craft, a long staff, bent on one end similar to our hockey-sticks.

"Hooking" is a procedure in which these marriage brokers must be adepts. They are not only undisputed masters of the field, but they can give their frolicsome

fancy free reins, playing as many tricks and practical jokes as they choose.

Not a few of them are considered by their fellow-villagers walking marriage-brokers. Many a timid man — for there are timid men among the peasantry, just as well as in any other class of society — has been furnished with a wife by these confidential go-betweens.

For the ordinary business routine to him, he is remunerated for his trouble according to a standard rate. Thus, for instance, he will receive in the Friedberg districts four kreutzers (about twopence) for every guest he invites; in Traungau he gets about half a crown per diem when he is out on his round of visits of invitations, besides which each guest must give him a present of one penny; in other districts, as, for instance, in Ampes and Chiemgau, he is paid in kind, — a new shirt, one peck of oats, and one of Indian corn being the usual fee for his missions to the numerous wedding-guests, whose habitations are spread about over a large expanse of ground.

The number of the wedding guests, and their connection with either the bride or bridegroom, vary according to the wealth of the contracting parties and to the locality. In the remote little frontier valleys of Bavaria and Tyrol the whole village is invited, and every house-owner sends at least one member of his household to represent the family at the festival.

The farther out one gets towards the plains, the more restricted is the number, culminating in some places north of Munich, where only the very next relations of the couple are invited.

In the Bavarian Highlands and districts adjoining Tyrol, a "poor" wedding will consist of about forty invited guests, a "middling" one of about ninety, and a "rich" one of a hundred and fifty to two hundred. In Tyrol proper the same numbers hold good, with the exception of the very poorest valleys, or those not containing more than fifty or sixty inhabitants all told.

The guests are not counted each singly, but according to the number of tables (each to seat twelve) that are



brought into requisition. Thus one hears frequently a wedding described as being one of "twelve or fifteen tables."

A very nice point, and one that forms part of our friend the best man's heterogeneous duties, is the arrangement of guests at the various tables according to rank, wealth, or position. Here again we find a variety of customs in vogue in different localities. In some places thus, for instance, in the Caar-river district, the bride and two bridesmaids sit at the "bridal table" (the honorary board), while the bridegroom and the wretched best man are obliged to stow themselves in some modest out-of-the-way corner near one of the last tables.

Differ as customs may, one rule holds good throughout the whole country; that is the hospitable reception of the "best man" by the family he is about to invite to the wedding of his "patron."

In some places, as for instance in Traungau, the bride is the first person invited. A quaint custom prevails there in connection with this invitation to her own wedding.

As soon as the important personage, attended by his clown, the hen-prigger, are seen to approach the house, the bride hastens to hide herself. On entering the room, the "Procurator," for thus he is called, looks about him, and snuffing the air, he exclaims, —

"Methinks, methinks I scent the smell of a bride."

A search in the whole house is instituted, and finally the blushing lass is discovered, and is borne in triumph into the chief room. Here she at first plays bashful, pretends to be deaf, or not to understand the Procurator's language. At last she relents, and listens quietly to the ceremonious speech addressed to her.

In other districts, again, each invitation involves a delay of two days, it being the custom that the Procurator is strictly prohibited to allude to the purport of his visit the first day. He has to converse of every thing else but the real cause of his coming; and though everybody knows of course the object of his visit, he has to spend the evening in their company, eating and drinking, and

must pass the night under the peasant's hospitable roof. Next morning, after a solid breakfast has been polished off, he may revert to the cause of his coming by repeating the set speech for these occasions, in which the accurate price of the wedding meal is generally also mentioned. The invited person has to feign the most intense amazement and wonder at this piece of news, and, as becomes a modest character, declines the honor of assisting at the festivities.

The Procurator's powers of persuasion now come into play ; the peasant's objections, be they based on modesty, unworthiness of the honor bestowed, or on the ground that he is no relation of either bride or bridegroom, vanish one by one, and finally the victim signifies his willingness to accept the inestimable honor.

On the Procurator's return from his invitation trip, the result of his journey, in the shape of the number of guests who he thinks will attend, is immediately communicated to the landlord of the inn where the meal is to be held.

After this he accompanies the betrothed couple to the village priest, when the formal betrothal in the presence of two witnesses takes place. They receive a certificate from the Vicar, and with it they repair to the municipal authorities of the district — very frequently a day's journey off — in order to get the marriage-license, a matter of some difficulty if the parties are both poor.

Up to a few years ago it was imperatively necessary that the bridegroom should prove the possession of a homestead. Now it suffices if he can show that he is in receipt of fixed wages which suffice for the modest wants of a family. Thus a man earning a florin (two shillings) a day, all the year round, will receive the desired permission ; but to a homeless woodcutter, for instance, earning the same sum per day, but only for six or seven summer months, it will be refused if he or his bride have not some savings in addition. It seems, perhaps, very easy to be able to prove that one is earning a florin a day all the year round ; but in the remote glens there are very

few indeed who can say it. The long winters, the huge masses of snow, burying nature under a deep white pall, are insurmountable impediments, rendering a fixed occupation throughout the year nigh an impossibility. Even the tailor and cobbler, if the village does boast of these artisans, have to shut up shop in the depth of winter, and live upon the savings of their summer's trade. In less remote valleys, it is of course different; and a fairly diligent man, who has learned any one particular craft, can nowadays marry before he is thirty.

When the preparatory formalities with priest and magistrate have been all settled, the "Krautessen," cabbage dinner — a customary fête in many of the north-western frontier valleys of Tyrol — is held. It is a simple meal in the village inn, at which bride, bridegroom, and best man meet. A dish of cabbage, which from time immemorial is a symbol of married life, forms the chief part of it.

When the dish is placed on the table, the bride asks of her betrothed, —

"How much will you give me for this dish of cabbage?"

The bridegroom answers, —

"I want none;" but finally relents, and lends a willing ear to the entreaties of his bride. He bids a florin for the cabbage.

"That's too little; I'll give two for it," retorts the best man.

And so, after several bids, the unfortunate bridegroom has to fork out some eight or ten florins, which are handed to the smiling lassie by the Kellnerin, who receives the money from the bridegroom.

Formerly these meals were frequently of prodigious dimensions; and the assembled guests, if the bridegroom was rich and could afford it, bid him up to fifty and sixty florins.

In Bavaria, besides the bride's race, other outdoor games are also frequently held. In this case, the bride's race proper is limited to competitors who are of the same

calling as the bridegroom, while the others are open to all comers.

The prizes do not consist in money, but in various presents. The first, however, is invariably the same, i.e., a wooden key, carefully gilt, and adorned with bright ribbons.

The bride's race is an institution once common with all Germanic tribes, and of which the very earliest accounts are in existence. Originally it was a race for the key of the bridal chamber, in which the bridegroom participated. If he was beaten, he had to pay a certain ransom to regain possession of this valuable prize. At "silver" and "golden" weddings this race is never omitted, although only old men are permitted to compete.

The bride is generally stolen after the solemn "cabbage dish" has been dispatched; and while the bridegroom's party is on the search for the missing fair one, the other lassies at the table disappear one by one. They are "buying their boys," that is, purchasing little presents, generally silk handkerchiefs, for their lovers, which, on their return, they stealthily pin to their hats, which have been thrown aside before sitting down to the festive board.

This "buying her boy" is the open acknowledgment of her lover, who now has to pay for her drink, and show his gallantry in various ways, while it also bestows upon him the right to place his hat upon his fair partner's head while dancing. He is from thence her champion, and the slightest sneer against her must be taken up by him as an insult to himself.

While the fair bride is salting the cabbage, her female companions lay aside their wedding state, re-appearing in their usual Sunday finery; the picturesque conical green felt hat with its bold eagle's plume and silver tassels taking the place of the artificial-flower wreaths, which, if the fair owner has a "boy" or lover, is pinned to the latter's hat, thus publicly declaring the object of her choice.

Local etiquette requires that the bride, or, in other places, the bridegroom, should not participate at the dancing. In the former case she keeps on her wedding finery,

and forms the center of a group of admiring relatives, while her bridesmaids and the rest of the female guests seek recreation in the arms of the dancers.

In the Bavarian regions, the speech of the Procurator before the "Ehrengang" is peculiar and in rhymes. He tells the company of an accident that has befallen the young couple's newly-bought crockery ware. A hen, followed by her brood of thirty chickens, has flown into the kitchen, and in the attempt to catch the invaders, every pot, cup and saucer has been broken into thousand bits. Would the honorable company not give a trifle each towards buying a new set of crockery? When the "Ehrengang," or presentation, is concluded, the Procurator rises again and reminds the company that, "having eaten well and drank much, the poor ought not to be forgotten." He thereupon places a large dish, covered with a clean napkin, on the table, and the guests place their alms on it.



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