BATTLE *and a* BOY

BLANCHE WILLIS HOWARD

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A Battle and A Boy

BY

BLANCHE WILLIS HOWARD

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"TONY THE MAID," "THE HUMMING TOP," ETC.

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A BATTLE AND A BOY.

I.

THE cattle-market occupied the town common. The child-market was round the corner in the Bach Strasse. Burly peasants in long coats, red waist-coats, and high boots, tramped with a weighty air from one to the other, and it would be difficult to say which was the noisier—where the children's shrill tones were continually raised in eager bar-gaining, or where the poor beasts, unable to make terms for themselves, yet lifted up their voices in loud but futile protest against such indignities as thumps in the ribs, having their jaws stretched to the verge of dislocation, and their legs pulled about in attitudes at variance with the laws of their anatomy.

Down the very middle of the long, rambling street, a mere thread of a brook came rushing and

leaping impetuously, trying to overflow its rough board barriers. It was strong, and swollen with spring rains and the melting of ice and snow in the mountains, and made as much noise as if it thought itself a river. Franzl Reiner, kneeling by the swift water, sailed chip-boats—some with masts and some without—as diligently as if he had come to the Ravensburg child-market for this sole purpose, and as if his future bread and butter would depend exclusively upon his skill in this branch of industry. His back turned to the crowd, he watched his boats bob and whirl, capsize, disappear, or go gayly on past the people, and tall high-gabled houses, with upper stories projecting each over each, and sail out of sight; but he was proudly conscious they must in time reach the great watch-tower, through whose antique, arched portals the street ran away from the town and out among the fields. In all his eleven years he had never seen so many men and women together, so many cattle, and heard so many voices as that day at Ravensburg. At first he had been bewildered by the uproar and strangeness. The animals indeed looked familiar and homelike, and diffused a warm, barn-yard smell which he found comforting. He felt strongly inclined to remain near an affable

cow that manifested a certain placid pleasure in his society. But the people and children were pushing on to the Bach Strasse, in front of the Golden Lamb Inn, and a horse-dealer had sent him along with a slap on the shoulder and a rough—

"Colts sold here, good-for-nothing boys down there!"

The children formed in a compact little army until their ranks were broken by people pressing in with sharp questions and scrutiny. Franzl stood for a while on the outskirts of the crowd, uncertain of his course. Feeling shy, he looked sullen and defiant, and scowled at everyone whose glance he met, not in the least from ill-will, but rather from a vague instinct of self-defence. Nudging with a prompt elbow every mortal who by chance, or with intention, nudged him, returning with liberal measure all the amenities of childhood, and the methods by which the unregenerate small boy makes the acquaintance of his peer—grimaces, motiveless blows, inconsequent efforts to trip up and knock down—he listened a while to the others, and heard the old hands among the children glibly boasting what they could do, and where they had been, how they had kept cows and sheep on the hill-slopes, how they could scour and run and dig.

"Buy me! Buy me!" they cried, shrilly. But it was all rather confusing, and as nobody happened to inquire what his special accomplishments were, or seemed to desire his services, he gradually withdrew from the greed and turmoil of the market-place, and finally forgot it, devoting his energies to the navigation of chips, for it was really a splendid brook.

Meanwhile if Franzl was oblivious of his duty to secure a good situation, to "sell" himself, as they say in Ravensburg—for the child-market has its queer idioms as well as Wall Street—the din behind the careless little mountaineer proved that others were less indifferent to their worldly advantage. The swarm of boys and girls was of all ages and sizes, and though some were pale and sickly, for the most part they looked as rosy and clear-eyed as if the Pied Piper himself had led them, dancing to the tunes of his magic pipe, over the hills and far away from their mountain homes in Switzerland and the Tyrol. The truth is they had been regaled by nothing so merry and melodious. They had patiently trudged many a weary mile to the Ravensburg spring-fair. Those of them who had had the occasional privilege of dangling their heels from the back of some jolting cart had

deemed themselves lucky. They had been glad of every crust of coarse bread given them on the way, had regarded a few cold potatoes as a feast, and a swallow of bitter beer as a rare boon.

Timid little girls of eight or nine were making their first ventures in the great world—a somewhat immature age, it must be confessed, for gaining an independent livelihood and establishing one's self permanently. But nothing makes an experienced maid-of-all-work of a baby of nine quicker than seven or eight younger brothers and sisters, and it is astonishing how motherly and painstaking even a boy becomes, when necessity compels from him unceasing domestic ministrations. Where mouths are many and pence are few, the senior infant acquires a goodly amount of routine, and when Number Two becomes nearly as expert, Number One is sent to trade her experience and accomplishments at the child-market. Here the smallest human mite is in demand, for perhaps some childless woman—inspired by practical, not sentimental, motives—has come to hire a little girl, or some hardworking young mother wants a child to tend the baby while she looks after the farm, her husband, and the men.

Large, bold boys and girls of fourteen or fif-

teen who had been there before knew how to bandy rough jokes to amuse the bystanders, and in the matter of a sharp bargain were a match for the wiliest old peasant of them all. A sad-eyed mother held her boy's hand clasped close, listened to the boisterous talk, scanned every peasant's face, anxiously seeking a kind master, and asked herself, after her three days' pilgrimage, whether by dint of still harder work, sewing still later at night, she could not manage things better, pay off the debts faster, and keep the boy at home, at least till next year, when he would be stronger and older. A keen-faced big boy stood with his arm thrown round his little brother, making brilliant terms for both, but the timid little fellow invariably hesitated to ratify the bargain. If a boy was quick to seize an advantage and ready with his tongue, the children were glad to avail themselves of his oratorical talent, and he frequently had a large clientèle. For the boys and girls, while sometimes coming in little herds with a man in charge, like sheep with a shepherd, were often alone and rarely accompanied by their parents. People so poor that they are forced to send young children on such an errand have obviously little time or money to spend on journeys.

There were, therefore, few partings at the child-market. The little ones had shed their tears, or gulped them down—according to their size and sex—at home. They had left behind all that they knew and loved, and being poor, hard-working little souls, had come to cast their lot among strangers, to find somebody who had need of their young strength, who wanted an extra pair of willing feet, a cowherd, a shepherd, a goatherd, a goose girl—or help in rough work in cottage or field. But whatever was the especial purpose for which they sold themselves, it was for the hardest possible work and the smallest possible pay. As they had never seen people who did not have to work, and scarcely knew such phenomena existed in this busy world, the prospect was in no respect disheartening, but merely what they expected as a matter of course. They cared little for rough words, and even a blow now and then was not sufficient to destroy all amicable relations with the owner of the fist. The most rose-colored hope which each child privately entertained was that he should get more to eat in his new quarters than he had ever had at home.

Peasants from all the fertile shores of the Lake of Constance, from Bavaria, Würtemberg, Baden,

Austria, and Switzerland, strode about, each speaking the dialect of his region, many wearing the old costumes, which, although going rapidly out of date, are still worn on Sunday and special occasions. They came to buy, to sell, to see acquaintances, and what was going on. Some sought a good horse, some a cow, others a sturdy boy or girl. It was easy to detect a rich farmer, for he was apt to take himself and life with becoming gravity. There was always a dense crowd by the horses, another round the children, and everywhere was a continual commotion, a neighing, a lowing, a bleating—scolding, quarrelling, and laughter—tramping in and out of the inns, where every bargain was concluded by a mug of beer; above all, the shrill treble of the children, "Buy me! Buy me!"

Franzl knew that the brook was born in the mountains as much as he himself. Only a mountain brook could spin along like that. Theirs on the hill behind the cottage went faster still, and clearer, and foamy over the rocks. Yet for a mountain brook that had somehow got caught between boards in the middle of a town street, this was a fine fellow, travelling on quite unconcerned, with a brave and merry spirit

of its own. All of which Franzl felt in a vague, general way, and with a sense of approval and companionship. He shaped his masts carefully, and was no more anxious about his future than a frisky colt round the corner.

A red-haired boy strolled near and watched him. Franzl scowled and rose. The other boy was not dressed precisely like the boys of Franzl's native valley and was a stranger—reasons enough, as all the world knows, for mistrusting and disliking a person at first sight. A mast would not stand. The boy at Franzl's elbow snickered, whereupon he punched the tempting red head to get it out of the way, and the owner returned the blow with the quickness of thought. After which silent interchange of courtesies, that made them feel better acquainted and more friendly, Franzl continued to make boats and the other to watch with benevolent interest.

"Pauli, Pauli," called a woman, coming rapidly toward them. She wore a red plaid shawl drawn over her head and pinned under her chin, and in addition a man's hat; but small eccentricities of toilette were too frequent to be conspicuous at the Ravensburg market. The children glanced up as she approached.

"How can you be idling there, Pauli, when you haven't sold yourself yet? There's a fat Allgäuer dairyman who wants to look at you. Josef is already in the Lamb with his Baden peasant. Ach, it is far from us—Baden! And little Vroni—the woman says she'll be easy with her, but dear, dear, who knows? I don't fear for you, Pauli. You are slow and steady like me, and willing to keep at your work whether things are rough or smooth. But Josef takes after your father, being sometimes sulky-tempered. If they drive him, he won't work well, while if they'll coax a bit, he'll slave his fingers to the bone for them, but how will they know that, the strangers? And my little Vroni, that's the worst! Twenty marks is all they'll give—but if they are easy with the child—well, well! Come, Pauli!"

Franzl dropped his boat and looked gravely after them. He was rather sorry to have Pauli go.

The woman was very poor, and had not yet sold her Pauli. Why should she bother about other folks' boys, she thought. But her good heart made her turn again, and say:

"Are you sold?"

"No."

"Do you want a place?"

"Yes."

"Are you here alone? Nobody to look after you?"

"I'm taking care of myself," said Franzl, with dignity.

"I should think you were! All Saints give us patience!" she exclaimed. "These boys! There you stand and cut chips like a duke, while the best places are taken behind your back. What will your poor mother say to that?"

Franzl did not reply. He dug his heel hard into the ground, swallowed a big choking lump that he now and then felt in his throat, and tried to squeeze away a hot sensation behind his eyes.

Pauli's mother cast an anxious glance at the crowd, caught the eye of her fat dairyman, pointed at Pauli, gesticulated frantically, giving her patron to understand that she was coming in a moment, was somewhat, but not wholly, reassured by his nod, then turned with impatience to the senseless child taking her time and attention at so critical a moment.

"Where's your mother?" she demanded, harshly.

"Dead," muttered Franzl, his voice queer on account of the lump.

"Where's your father?" she asked, gently.

"Dead."

"What? Both of them? Oh! oh!"

"He died first. He was hunting chamois with the strangers. He never came back. Nobody ever found him. He's down a cliff somewhere."

"Well, well—that is bad luck! This *is* a world! And your mother?"

"She was always missing him. Then she got worse. Then she died," said the child, unsteadily, digging his heel deeper into the earth.

"Lately?"

"Last week."

"And you've no family at all?"

"Yes, I have, too. I've got some family," he returned, with a flash of resentment and a surprising change of demeanor; but he did not communicate the fact that his entire family consisted of a queer little flannel bundle, with a face that puckered and ten pink toes.

"Well, well," she returned, with a benevolent, but somewhat vague, attempt at consolation, "it will be all right sometime," though what was going to be right she did not intimate, "and I'm glad you've got a family, after all."

"I have," Franzl declared, stoutly, and smiled for

the first time, a bright warm smile, which Pauli's mother liked.

"You come along with me," she said, briskly. "Your poor mother never wanted you to be dawdling here, and I am sure if I was dead I'd be much obliged to anybody who would look sharp after my Pauli when he needed it."

Without more ado she grasped his hand and moved toward the market, a boy on either side. Franzl went willingly enough, cheered by her protection and control.

"Now, Pauli, there's your fat dairyman. Run along and tell him what you did last year, and that you'll suit him. Speak up! Don't be bashful. I'll be there as soon as I find little Vroni. She'll be lonesome without me. But there, how like an old fool I talk! She'll have to get used to being lonesome. And twenty marks isn't much. Holy Saint Josef, this *is* a world! Here I am selling three children, and a strange boy, too, without any father or mother. What's your name?"

"Franzl Reiner."

"Now, Franzl, you be a good boy and sell yourself as fast as ever you can. I'll be along as soon as I find Vroni. In a crowd like this you could lose your own soul and never know it. And I

must speak a word to Josef. He's a good child, but sometimes he's sulky. He takes after his father. Franzl, in the first place, listen a bit. If you had listened instead of playing you would have sold yourself long ago, for you are a fine, strong boy, Franzl. Hear what the others say. Good Lord, some of those children would sell themselves to the Kaiser before he knew it, and talk him stone deaf, to boot. Their tongues go like mill-wheels."

Franzl, although not critical, thought that her own tongue was not stiff.

She had elbowed their way well into the noisy throng.

"Now you stand here in the middle, and listen with all your ears, and find out what's going on—and look as big as you can, and if anybody wants to buy, you talk away as bold as a lion—but don't promise anything till I come back. I'll be along as soon as I've looked after Pauli and Josef and Vroni."

On she went with her intrepid elbows, and presently he lost sight of the red shawl pyramid, crowned by the man's hat.

Thus admonished, instructed, and initiated by his new friend, transplanted from the byways of sloth to this great centre of speculation and busi-

ness, Franzl, who was by no means dull or lazy, felt excited and interested, eager to begin operations, and determined to do well for himself. The touch of human sympathy had melted his defiance and loneliness. No longer scowling and suspicious, he stood alert and sunny, calling, "Buy me! Buy me!" with his fresh young voice, and awaiting his fate.

II.

Franzl's fate presently stalked up to him in the shape of a Suabian peasant, who scrutinized him as narrowly as if he were a horse. The solemn ruminating gaze wandered slowly over his small person, and inspected his loose waistcoat, broad leathern belt, short, tight trousers, the stockings, that began too late and ended too soon—for they did not approach the bare, brown knees or the ankles—the heavy shoes, with nails in the soles, the curly brown hair, and the pretty, green, pointed Tyrolean hat, beneath which the spirited face looked up curiously. His clothes were old, faded, patched, and shabby; but they were the Sunday suit his mother had made for him long ago, and constituted his entire wardrobe. Some of the children laid on the ground before them small bundles containing all their worldly possessions. Franzl's march had been impeded by no such weight.

"Tyrolean—hm?" said the man.

The portentous "hm" puzzled Franzl. It

sounded disparaging, and he did not yet know enough of trade to understand that stupid people think it sharp to underrate the value of the wares they wish to buy.

"From the Venter Thal," he replied.

"Hm—hm—" repeated the peasant.

"It's a splendid valley," Franzl returned, haughtily, offended that anybody should "hm" at his home; "it's got snow mountains, high ones, the highest in the world—and rocks, big ones, the biggest in the world—and chamois, more chamois than there are anywhere else in the world."

The man, as taciturn as Pauli's mother was loquacious, stared, but otherwise paid no attention to these boasts. Puffing slowly at a long, brown, curving pipe, he measured the boy from head to foot.

"Ever been out to work?" he finally asked.

"No."

"What can you do?"

"Anything any other fellow of my size can, I suppose."

The peasant pinched the child's arm, gave his shapely legs a few investigating slaps, looked well at the multitude of youngsters to satisfy himself anew that there was no healthier boy on the

ground, and again uttered his enigmatic "hm." Franzl did not mind it now. He concluded it was part of the business.

"Can you engage for a year?"

Poor homeless Franzl might have replied that he could engage himself for a dozen years, since there was nobody to miss him, but he merely said:

"Don't mind."

"Family?"

"Yes," said Franzl, cheerfully, "I've got some."

"Hm, they'll let you alone will they? They won't be coming after you?"

"No danger," returned the boy, reflecting that it would be long indeed before those ten pink toes would be coming after him.

A circle had formed round them, for the peasant was known as a man of means and importance, and a good judge of cattle. He had inspected several boys that morning without finding an article to his taste. He was so slow he gave one the impression that he expected to live a thousand years at least, and was paid by the hour for deliberating. While he stared and pondered, Franzl counted the silver buttons which in long dazzling rows adorned the farmer's portly person.

"I'll give you thirty marks," he proposed.

Franzl felt disappointed and mortified. Why, the woman's little Vroni would earn twenty—a girl —and he a big boy of eleven, as big and strong as some fellows of thirteen. Confused and depressed, he looked at the bystanders, who, however, showed no surprise at this unflattering estimate of his powers, and indifferently waited for his answer.

Suddenly, a little distance behind the peasant, Pauli's red head and friendly freckled countenance bobbed into view, and nodded infinite encouragement. With frantic gestures, grins, and disrespectful grimaces at the peasant's broad back, Pauli swung his arms like windmills, and silently cheered Franzl on to victory.

The pantomime might have been unintelligible to the wise and prudent, but it was not to Franzl, to whom it said: "Go on, old fellow! You're all right. He's a fraud. We'll manage him."

Support and sympathy from an old and intimate friend—for so Pauli seemed at this crisis—did Franzl's heart good and set his wits working.

"Why, they always begin low down," he remembered. "That's what I've been hearing all the morning. What a fool I was to forget!"

It struck him that it would take less time and

trouble if people would say at once how much they would pay, instead of beating about the bush so long. He did not quite know what he was worth—a nice question, indeed, for anyone at any time to decide for himself; more than Vroni he was sure, but less than Pauli, who, having been bound out before, belonged to the aristocrats of the market and could put on airs toward novices. Franzl was on the point of declaring he would not take a penny less than fifty marks, when he saw Pauli hold up eight fingers, and make hideous contortions with his mouth.

Franzl understood and was much excited.

"He means eighty marks. But that's what the very biggest fellows have." Bits of talk and haggling which he had heard with indifference now recurred to him. "Oh, yes, he must come up and I must come down. It's a kind of hide-and-seek. He hides, then I hide."

A merry-looking girl of fifteen or sixteen had joined Pauli, also another boy. All three telegraphed by private wire to Franzl that he must say "eighty," and eighty he said, boldly; but he felt queer, somewhat as he had once felt when he was a very little boy and his father had told him to jump from a rock into a green, deep lake. He thought

it was plain enough how he would get into the water, but how it would be down there, and how he would ever come up again—that was what he didn't grasp. This, too, was a leap into the unknown; still he said "eighty," in response to his privy counsellors.

"Thirty-five," the peasant offered, stolidly.

"Here we come," Franzl thought, "one toward the other, like two donkeys crossing a bridge." But he was in good spirits now, and roused to do his best.

With his hands behind him, and making himself as tall and manly as possible to increase his market value, he exclaimed:

"Thirty-five marks for a big boy like me! You must be joking. You mean seventy-five."

The council of three grinned approval. Pauli waved his windmill arms.

Observing Franzl's bright face looking often in one direction, the peasant turned to discover the attraction; but as his rotund figure revolved slowly upon its axis, he saw nothing but people moving about, intent on their own affairs, and three most innocent figures, with heads thrown back and eyes fixed upon the ancient tower, like connoisseurs lost in contemplation of its architectural charms.

"Forty," he said, "and it's more than you are worth. Forty marks is a good deal of money nowadays," he remarked solemnly, and looked at the bystanders. His assertion met with sympathy.

"That's true," somebody responded. "Forty marks is a good deal of money. It doesn't grow on every bush."

"Say seventy, and I'll begin to listen," returned Franzl; but it was difficult for him to command his lordly tone, for forty marks seemed a fortune to him.

"Forty," reiterated the peasant. "Forty is my price."

Franzl hesitated. Over the private wire again came sound advice from experienced heads:

"Say sixty, then come down to fifty, and hang on for your life."

Franzl obeyed the instructions conveyed by the animated, expressive, and trustworthy "code."

"Sixty," he called, boldly.

The peasant puffed some time, regarding Franzl's lithe, strong legs. It was those legs he wished to employ. They were the best ones on the market that day. Since they could run they had been trained in the mountains to climb and spring,

sure-footed as a goat, while above them were an unusually deep, broad chest for a growing boy, and perfect lungs.

"He is worth a hundred marks and more to me," reflected the peasant; "I'll give him fifty;" for he would not have enjoyed a golden crown in paradise unless he could feel that he had bought it for half price.

Meanwhile the allied juvenile forces and the enemy had arrived at the same conclusion. They were all determined upon fifty marks—the three children, because they had their special tariff, and fifty marks was the highest price which a new boy under fourteen could obtain; Franzl, because they had inspired him with confidence, and it is always pleasant to have one's value set at a high figure; the peasant, because such a boy was dirt-cheap on such terms. Nevertheless the peasant proposed forty-two, and Franzl came down slowly to fifty-eight, and there they remained balancing some time before they would deign to make further concessions. Finally, after a great deal of unnecessary shilly-shallying, they arrived, by reluctant degrees at fifty, which made all parties secretly triumphant, particularly the conspiracy of labor against capital.

Franzl, who felt far richer than a Rothschild, still thought it, all in all, a silly performance, for he was only an ignorant little mountaineer, and hadn't a suspicion that this sort of thing was not peculiar to the Ravensburg market, but that roundabout ways were in high favor all over the world, and that statesmen, diplomates, lawyers, doctors, all sorts of wise old graybeards, frequently scorn to accomplish their objects with simplicity and directness, when they can possibly spin out preliminaries and waste time in not saying what they mean.

If Franzl had been uncertain as to the delicate matter of self-valuation, he was quite at his ease with respect of certain practical privileges which it was now his task to secure from his new master, and scarcely needed Pauli's lively suggestions from the background.

"You'll give me two suits of clothes"—what he really said was *double clothes*—"a Sunday suit and a workday one?"

The peasant demurred and wrapped himself in smoke and silence to ostensibly consider the question, but this again was merely his idea of manners and dignity, for every child, according to old custom which nobody ever thought of evading, could claim two suits.

"Yes, two," he agreed, at length.

"Whole suits," persisted Franzl; "jacket and trousers and waistcoat?"

After another season of profound meditation the peasant responded:

"Whole suits."

"And two pairs of shoes?"

The peasant puffed a while, stolid, inscrutable, and as important as if the fate of the Triple Alliance depended upon his answer.

"Two pairs of shoes," he repeated.

"Shoes made out of shoe-leather?" Franzl stipulated, gravely.

The peasant nodded assent, and the bystanders laughed, but Franzl was quite serious. He had seen shoes made of wood, of felt, of carpet, even of an old coat, and he intended his should be out-and-out shoe-leather shoes, and no mean woolly imitations.

"And school in the winter, Franzl — three months' school," prompted Pauli's mother, who had listened to the closing conditions. Neither party to the sale was as grateful as he ought to have been for this judicious suggestion; the farmer because he did not want to lose so much of the boy's time, and Franzl for reasons which need not be dwelt upon, since they are evident to every eleven-year-

old boy, unless he be a little John Stuart Mill, who at the age of three preferred Greek to taffy.

Franzl did not look elated, and something in his eyes expressed the wicked intention of shirking school if he could; but Pauli's mother came forward valiantly, leading little Vroni.

"Now you must let him go to school, you know. Boys must have their schooling. My Pauli and my Josef will have their three months' school. Speak up Franzl, and say you want to go to school. Fifty marks is good, and the clothes and shoes, and everything is all right except the school. I've walked three days from beyond Bregenz," she confided to the peasant's immovable countenance, "and I've sold three children this morning, and I ought to start for home again, for my man's got a broken leg—broken in two places. I suppose he couldn't help breaking it just at this busy time, with the spring coming on, but it does seem as if men made all the trouble they could. I've got five children younger than Vroni here. This *is* a world! That's why I have to sell some of them. I don't fear for Pauli. He's steady as a mill, like me. But Josef takes after his father, being a bit sulky in the temper, and strangers won't know how to humor him; and little Vroni—well, well, they say

they'll be easy with the child—it's only twenty marks she gets! If you have eight children, you know, and a man with a broken leg—broken in two places—spring's an inconvenient season for broken legs. Well, well! But it's as much of a pull letting them go off among strangers as if you had only one. Nobody knows what they will find off there. It's as bad as getting married—which is mostly pretty uncertain. I ought to be off. It's no use waiting, now they are all sold. You will let Franzl go to school, won't you? It's his right, you know."

She might as well have addressed herself to the town-pump so far as sympathy and response were concerned. But happily all that she required was a listener. The sympathy and response she herself could provide. Undaunted by the peasant's apathy, she went on energetically:

"I'm looking a bit after Franzl. I told him I'd see that things were all right. He's got a family, but they couldn't come with him. They want him to go to school. It isn't respectable not to get an education when you're young and not good for much else. Speak up, Franzl. Say you want three months' school. Tell him your mother wouldn't want you to miss your schooling."

Franzl flushed, and without more delay muttered, ungraciously:

"Well—school then," and the peasant grudgingly agreed.

The bargain was now completed. Franzl Reiner was bought and sold, and duly registered. He submitted his papers, which the peasant examined with his phenomenal slowness, then fished from the depths of a leather purse, as long as a stocking, a five-mark piece, which he gave the boy in proof of good faith. It was a large, heavy coin. Franzl longed to examine it, but the older boys were watching him, and pride led him to drop it carelessly into his pocket.

Little Vroni, however, was more guileless, and worked to unclasp her mother's fingers, which held a similar but smaller coin.

"There, little one," she murmured in her loving and pretty dialect; "thou seest it, my child. It is thine. Mother will put it away that it may not be lost. And here is thy woman coming for thee. It is time to go. Be good, Vroni. Mother will come for thee some day. Run along, child."

She gave the little girl a slap on the shoulder, did not kiss her—peasants have not much time to kiss their children—did not shed a tear as Vroni,

somewhat dazed by her vast experiences that day, and led by the strange woman, walked out of the crowd and turned the corner of the street without once looking back. The mother watched, dry-eyed, until the small figure was out of sight, then dropped upon a bench in front of the Lamb, flung her apron over her face, buried her head in her hands, rocked to and fro, and sobbed and mourned for her children. But tears were a luxury which she could not afford long at a time.

"Lord! this *is* a world!" she muttered.

As she looked up with her wet red eyes, Pauli stood near—troubled and awkward—and Franzl hesitated at the door of the inn.

"Oh, you boys," she exclaimed, with a strange outbreak of irritation, "mind that you behave yourselves, mind that you are steady and decent, and grow into something worth having. Men-folks do an awful lot of harm—and women-folks have the worst of it—mostly. But there—what do you know about it? Off with you, Pauli! Josef's gone—Vroni's gone." She stood, smoothed her apron, rubbed the back of her hand roughly across her eyes, and prepared to start on her homeward journey. "Behave yourself, Franzl. Good-by, Pauli. There is nothing more for me to do

here, and there's enough work waiting somewhere else."

She turned from him, suddenly looked back, a world of tenderness in her rugged face:

"You've been a good, steady boy, Pauli. You have always worked better than any other boy."

She strode away with the step of a man, and the queer man's hat on her head—in her heart, heavy sorrow—the kind, womanly, pitiful heart that, in spite of its own burdens, could care for the interests of a lonely little boy by the wayside.

In the Lamb, packed close together on benches at long, bare tables, sat the peasants and the children who had sold themselves. It was their inalienable right to eat heartily of soup and meat, with beer, as the final ceremony of the market, and the one which they regarded as entirely satisfactory.

Neither Pauli nor Franzl had had a morsel that day, and when they found themselves and their respective proprietors sitting before bowls of steaming hot soup, they fell to in silence and with ravenous appetites. The din of voices, the air dense with the smoke of a score of strong pipes and beer fumes could not destroy their zest. Pauli loved his mother honestly, and choked and

felt queer when she left him; but he was only thirteen. He could not comprehend her grief or her love; he had never before in all his life had so much soup at once, and this felicity absorbed his being.

When, after a while, the two men moved to a table where great cattle-potentates were discussing prices and pounding with their fists, Pauli remarked with a chuckle:

"Well, we nosed him about!"

"Lucky for me!" returned Franzl.

"Oh, I didn't mind doing you a good turn," Pauli rejoined, with frank indifference. "The mother wouldn't leave you alone. But what I wanted most was to pay him off. He offered me forty marks this morning, and said that was all I was worth. He pretended there was something the matter with my knees. I'm an old boy, and a sixty-mark boy, and when I saw him put his eye on you I made up my mind I'd make the price, and he shouldn't have you for less than fifty. That other fellow was angry with him, too, for some such trick. He and his sister and I, we sold you well. Knees indeed! Old Skinflint had to pay fifty. He's rich as a king—ten or twelve cows and no end of vineyards."

Franzl's eyes opened wide at such visions of affluence, but he took exception to Pauli's tone, and remarked, loftily:

"Oh, I could have sold myself alone. I was getting on all right."

"We'd better eat all we can stuff," observed the practical Pauli, in no respect moved by Franzl's ingratitude.

Whereupon the boys relapsed into silence and devoured everything that was set before them.

That night Franzl, wedged between his master and another heavily built man, had his first ride on the railway. The carriage was crowded with peasants smoking their pipes and talking of the market, prices, cattle, vineyards, and crops. Franzl was wildly excited by the movement, and although it was an accommodation-train of surpassing slowness, he held his breath with delight, and fancied himself flying. He must tell his mother about it, he resolved—the thump-thump, the other motion, and the rushing through the air. She would never believe it. She would say:

"Franzl, thou art a little boy, but a great rogue."

Ah, there was the lump in his throat again. He was always forgetting there wasn't any mother any

more. He couldn't run home and tell her anything. She would never smile at him again, never speak again.

The lump grew very big. In the smoky, dim light, no one noticed the homesick, heartsick, tired little boy, squeezed between two broad peasants, the tears rolling down his face.

He wept till he fell asleep, and dreamed a happy dream of the swift mountain-brook foaming down the rocks behind the cottage.

III.

The young Alexander was doubtless far less proud of his snorting Bucephalus than Franzl of his clumsy, rattling, bright-green milk-cart. It is true that nothing better than a horse has ever been invented for a boy's delight, and even if Alexander had no printing-press, no bicycle, and no detective-camera, he possessed, in his historic nag, the best thing a boy could then, or can now, call his own. Still he had had other horses, as well as everything provided in those days for the entertainment of Macedonian youth and kings' sons—and if there was anything else in the world which he thought worth having, we read that he helped himself to it later without shyness—whereas Franzl had never owned much of anything. If he played with a toy, it had been of his own construction, and neither he nor any boy of his acquaintance had ever had a story-book. The only books they knew were school-books, for which they entertained a healthy aversion.

When he found himself in command of his milk-cart it was a great moment in his existence. Although in point of fact he owned neither cart nor milk, his sense of proprietorship was mighty as he realized he was to be sole propeller of all this magnificence. That it was over-heavy for a little boy, that the way was long and up and down steep hills, that in storm and wind, heat and cold, he would have this load to push or drag after him, did not enter his thoughts, for neither weather nor work could frighten him. He was proud, glad, eager, and ambitious. It was a distinct advance in life besides being unexpected. He thought the green wagon with the nine shining four-gallon milk-cans, standing straight as a regiment, and two measuring-cans packed crosswise in front, a beautiful and imposing sight. The pole was nearly twice as long as the little cart, and very broad and strong, but its uses were manifold and its possibilities more than appeared at the first glance. As it might be attached to a horse, an ox, a donkey, a cow, a dog, a man or woman, a girl or boy, it was made big and adjustable to suit all their needs, and none of them ever found fault with it for being out of proportion.

Leni walked beside him, her grave eyes look-

ing straight before her, her dark hair brushed smoothly back and hanging nearly to her knees in one long, heavy braid. She apparently paid no attention to the boy, and as they had nothing to say to each other, and were simple folk, they marched on in silence, whereas when fashionable people have nothing to say, they chatter as fast as possible, and which is the more sensible method is entirely a matter of opinion, but it is possible Socrates might have disagreed with Mrs. Grundy on this and many another point of social etiquette.

Leni and Franzl, however, never having heard of either of these worthies, simply obeyed their own instinct, the young girl serious, absorbed in thought, the boy enchanted with the noise his cart was making, eying it keenly, studying its weight and properties, and the best way to draw it; for there was a cross-piece on the end of the pole, beside various dangling straps, which Franzl was trying one after another as fast as possible.

Christian Lutz's large farm lay at some distance beyond the village of Waldheim. After passing the village the road ran between thrifty apple-orchards, was level, and so hard and good that the cart almost went of itself and gave little trouble. But when they had walked at a brisk pace for a

half-hour or more, they came to a long, steep hill. Here for the first time Leni seemed conscious of her companion's presence, not that she deigned to speak, but she watched him and his efforts to master the situation.

It was astonishing how heavy and unwieldy the docile cart suddenly became. Franzl pulled and tugged bravely, glanced back questioningly as if he suspected some unseen boy of loading on extra weight, but the cart did not grow lighter, the hill stretched on before him, and putting a stone behind a wheel, he stopped an instant, panting and wiping the moisture from his forehead with his sleeve. Leni looked calmly at him as if his struggles did not concern her. Franzl wished he had not stopped. He would never stop after he was used to it. He wondered what that big cross-piece was for. Perhaps to push. He turned the cart and began to back it up the hill. Although it was still hard enough work, he could use all his weight and so get a purchase and manage the thing very well without losing more time.

"Right," said Leni; this one word, no more and no less, and went on with her unconcerned air.

They reached the brow of the hill and began the long downward slope. Presently Franzl found

himself and his cart careering along as wildly as if a separate demon sat enthroned in every milk-can and inspired the mad flight. The cart seemed alive, and Franzl, a mere helpless appendage, dragged along in its train. But his was not a spirit that would easily acknowledge itself beaten, and by a milk-cart, too! With a strong effort he ran it to the side of the road, and at the risk of overturning it, succeeded in getting the side-wheels into a ditch. This manœuvre effectually controlled its friskiness, and the little boy paused to take breath and counsel with the inner Franzl. He was amazed to discover what eccentricities of conduct, what headstrong speed, and unmanageable momentum a placid milk-cart, could upon more intimate acquaintance develop.

Leni had apparently left him to his fate. He felt irritated. She might at least stop and look back. After all, it was her old father's old milk-cart. He cautiously put the thing in the middle of the road again, uncertain what it would attempt to do next, and this time he had the good sense to place himself in front and bear back sturdily with the strong little legs which Christian Lutz had specially bought at the child-market. In this manner he got the recalcitrant cart well in hand, and was

relieved to see that it could not again take the bit in its teeth and run away with him.

He now overtook Leni, who once more turned her grave face toward him and said:

"Right."

They tramped on silent as before, but when they came to the next hill Leni put her hand on the cross-piece and pushed with him.

"I know how to do it myself, without any woman-folks," Franzl informed her.

The young girl took no notice of his arrogance, but continued to help him. Again, at a steep descent she made herself useful, steering the cart better than he could.

"You can't do it all at once," she began. "I've gone with the cart until to-day."

"Oh, have you?" he returned, with more respect than he had hitherto shown.

"I'm too old to go with it, since father can afford to have somebody else," she remarked, quietly.

"You look awful old," he assured her.

"I told father to buy a boy at Ravensburg. He had to go down there to see a man who owes him some money. I told him he'd better get a boy. You're not as stupid as some."

Franzl, secretly flattered, answered negligently:

"I don't call this much work. I could pull a heavier cart than this."

The tall strong girl looked kindly and with a slight smile at the breathless, flushed little boy.

"It is heavy for me," she said, simply, "but that is not the reason why I didn't want to pull it any more."

"Did your father buy me because you said so?"

"Yes."

"Does he do everything you tell him?" he went on, inquisitively, thinking it would be a lucky condition of things if Leni were captain, instead of Christian Lutz.

"When it suits him, when he thinks it for his advantage; but not often," she replied in her serious fashion. "Father is a very prudent man." She gave a little sigh, and Franzl feared that the peasant was captain after all—Leni's captain as well as his own.

The cart was now conducting itself with much discretion, and Franzl's joy was profound, especially as he saw other carts and other boys coming into the main road from byways. Reaching behind him and before him was a line of green carts, some drawn by dogs, some by women, many by children, but not a boy was so small as he. He

observed that women with baskets of vegetables and eggs on their heads joined the procession, all bound for the Wynburg market.

"I'm glad you told him to buy me!" he exclaimed, warmly.

"You try to please him," returned Leni. "He is very pious. Nobody is so religious as father. He's at church as regular as the parson," she said, with considerable family pride. "But if he gets anything into his head against anybody, nothing and nobody can drive it out."

"I think there is more chance of pleasing you," Franzl replied, heartily, for he was fast growing used to Leni, and her quiet sensible face inspired him with confidence. He could not help wondering why she was so serious. The other women were chattering, laughing, calling to one another. Leni bade them good-morning as she passed, but joined no gossipping group. Straight, tall, clear-eyed, her basket of salad on her head, she went steadily on with the little boy, spoke little and smiled less, yet with every step he liked her better. It seemed a long time to him since they had carried his mother off to the churchyard. The queer thing about the lump in his throat was that he never knew when it was coming.

"What is the matter?" asked Leni, abruptly.

"Nothing," Franzl muttered.

"Are you tired?"

"No."

"Are you in trouble?"

"Don't know."

"But you are crying."

"Girl's cry when they are tired. Boy's don't," he informed her, in a proud but choking tone.

She smiled.

"Girl's cry for a great many reasons, sometimes good ones, sometimes not. But it is no sin for them or you. I've seen already that you are no baby. What is it, Franzl? Are you homesick?"

Now Franzl did not know what he was, whether homesick or in trouble, or anything else. He had not slept much—for he had been on his first railway journey—till late in the night, and not even a boy can really sleep when he is jolting up and down for dear life, besides being jammed as flat as a squashed mosquito on the window-pane. He had been walking for days, had seen strange sights and people (as wonderful to him as things were to the great Ulysses on his more extended travels); he was honestly proud of his cart and of himself, and doubly pleased with his importance when he

beheld all his colleagues with carts—many of them men and women. Just now he happened to wish his mother could see him with the cart, and the lump came; but the reason he was crying, so far as he knew, was because something in Leni's voice made him cry, and he just wished she wouldn't, so there now!

They had come to the cross-roads where the inn called "The Linde" stood. Leni pointed to the stone bench on the corner.

"Sit down and rest a minute," she said, at the same time slipping the basket from her head to the high stone shelf or table. The child sobbed hard a few moments. He had not wept like that since the day his mother died.

Leni scanned the many roads winding away to distant hills, and the many figures far and near, tramping by meadow and orchard and vineyard.

"It will be a good market," she said. "There's old Mariele the butter-woman. She has five good hours to walk and we have only two, Franzl."

"I can walk a great deal more than five hours," he assured her, huskily. "I don't call that much."

"Come along now and don't cry any more. They will think we have been beating you."

Leni slipped her basket from the stone table,

which was as tall as she, to her head and walked on, saying nothing more until she saw that the boy was calm again.

"See here, Franzl, you're not a bad kind of boy. I don't like boys much. They are rough and sly, and not worth much till they get older—sometimes not then. I have my opinion of men folks."

"Pauli's mother doesn't think much of them either," Franzl remarked, sagaciously.

"Who is she?"

"The woman who made me sell myself. She isn't afraid for Pauli. He's steady like her. But Josef is sulky. He takes after his father. And they only pay twenty marks for little Vroni, but if they will be easy with her, she doesn't mind. I suppose she's got cold, for she had a shawl over her head and her man's hat, too. He's broken his leg in two places. It's an inconvenient season for broken legs. But men folks always make all the trouble they can, and women folks always have the worst of it. Lord, this *is* a world!"

Leni laughed, but Franzl hadn't the faintest idea why.

"You have a good memory," she said. "Pauli's mother was kind to you?"

"Yes—like you," returned the child, simply.

After a while she rejoined:

"People don't call me kind very often. You see I have my own ways. But I'll be kind to you. I promise you that. Some day you may tell me about your home and what made you cry. Not now, for we are coming into the city. I suppose you are lonesome? I suppose you want your family?"

"Oh, no, I don't want it now," he broke out eagerly; "because I shouldn't know what to do with it, you know, and I couldn't take care of it right, myself; but I'm going to have it later, as sure as you live."

Leni, somewhat preoccupied, did not pay particular attention to his enigmatical remarks and eagerness.

"You see, Franzl," she said, "some people are lonesome with their families, and some are lonesome without them, and nobody can get out of his own skin."

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed Franzl, not at her philosophy, but because he saw the city down in the misty valley: many church-spires; smoke rising from a forest of chimneys; the sun shining on metal and glass; so many, many houses, and a flood of sunlight.

Recovering from his first amazement and fearing that he might have seemed too much overcome, he said, superciliously :

" It would be handsomer with snow-peaks !"

Missing Leni, he looked back.

She was standing where a narrow path from some vineyards met the high road, and a good-looking young man in a blue blouse was talking earnestly with her by a stone wall.

"I can't stay," Franzl heard her say. "You oughtn't to stop me here. It will only make more trouble. You must have patience, Karl."

"But can you hold out, Leni ? Are you sure? He's a hard man, your father."

"I am his daughter, I am hard too," and her mouth set sternly. "Go back now, Karl. Please don't let them see you. Half the village is coming down this morning."

Franzl had turned the cart that he could stare at them better, and was listening with interest, but he did not hear what Karl answered just before he ran back into the vineyard. It seemed to please Leni, however, for she smiled and smiled and looked quite different.

"Franzl," she began, hurriedly rejoining him, "that is our first house—the big one by the park,

with the piazza and garden. You must notice everything and learn all you can, so that soon you can come alone. They take a great deal of milk there; there are children, and they want it before seven, for they go off early to school. The cook is kind. It is a good house, one of the best."

She put her hand on the pole and the two together ran the cart down a short hill at a breakneck pace, and with motion enough to churn the milk. The cart obeyed Leni as a well-trained horse obeys its master, while it still had coltish tricks with Franzl.

They crossed a paved court and went up a flight of stairs.

A door was flung open at the top, and a boy of about Franzl's size, a small silver watch open in his hand, called imperiously:

"Here, you little rascal, what do you mean by keeping me waiting? You are five minutes late!"

Franzl scowled with a will over his big milk can, while Leni said, coolly:

"Then Herr Kurt will have to eat five minutes less time at breakfast, or run five minutes faster to school."

"Oh, it's you, is it, Leni?"

"Don't scold that nice little boy!" cried Hilde-

gard, whisking on to the scene on one toe, and trying ineffectually to trill on a very high note. She had once been to the opera, and ever since had cherished the intention of becoming a great singer, but sometimes she confused the spheres of the prima donna and the ballet.

"Hush, children, you'll wake mamma," said a tall fair-haired girl. "Good-morning, Leni. Good-morning, little boy. Be quiet, children. Kurt, how can you!"

"Oh, don't you wish I was a deaf-and-dumber? Mamma doesn't mind my noise. She only minds Hildegard's," Kurt retorted, mockingly.

"But you are twice as noisy as I. Isn't he, Doris?"

The older sister drew them both into the kitchen, which, with its blue and white tiles and polished copper saucepans, seemed magnificent to Franzl, but he could not really enjoy the sight because that grinning Kurt was looking at him. Franzl wished he had him out on the road without any women folks about.

But Leni was measuring the milk, and he had to attend to business, postponing his schemes of vengeance and merely glaring after Kurt's handsome coat as it disappeared from view, when Doris

marched her explosive young brother and sister into the breakfast-room.

"So this is the boy?" Nanni the cook said, kindly. "Quite a little man."

"You'll look after him a bit at first, won't you?"

"Of course, but you'll come again?"

"To-morrow, yes, and until Franzl gets sensible, and understands."

"I'm sensible," Franzl declared, as soon as they had left the house. "I can pour out that milk."

"Pouring the milk isn't the hardest part of it," she returned, dryly. "You looked as if you wanted to pour it on Herr Kurt's head. Now, you cannot tell what will happen in any house. You have to take it as it comes, whatever it is. But business is business, and if you undertake to bring people milk, it's milk they want and nothing else. They don't ask whether you are footsore or hungry, or pleased or angry, or what troubles you've got in your heart. That isn't what they buy. They buy milk. Remember that, Franzl. That's what you've got to learn. Besides, Kurt isn't a bad fellow, either."

"I'll punch his head," Franzl interrupted, fiercely.

"I don't care if you do, but you can't when you

are on your rounds with the cart. It isn't honest. You promise the people to bring the milk. You promise me. You say you are big enough to run this business. Then you can't punch heads till afterwards. Besides you'll have too many to punch. There are too many boys. Don't you see?"

Franzl did see. He was obliged to acknowledge the force of the argument. After thinking a while he muttered:

"But I'll remember them all and punch them some time."

Leni smiled.

"Better forget," she said, kindly. "And don't mind Kurt. He can't help it. He doesn't mean any harm. He's never had anything to do but to go to school, and play, and amuse himself, and wear good clothes, and eat all he wants. If he should hammer a tune with an iron hammer on their big mirror, his mother would think it pretty manners."

"I'll hammer him!" exclaimed Franzl.

"What for? We were five minutes late. They are our first customers. They ought to have their milk at seven, sharp. I usually get there ten or fifteen minutes early, and have a chat with Nanni. But you were a little slower, not being used to the

cart, and then we stopped a while at the stone bench you know. Herr Kurt might have spoken pleasanter, to be sure. Sometimes he oversleeps and is late himself. Still he has a right to his milk at seven, and it is the milkman's business to remember that."

"I don't care what he said," persisted Franzl, "it's the way his monkey-face looks that makes me mad."

"Oh, never mind him," Leni returned, placidly; "that's silly. I used to mind such things myself, but going about with the milk into so many houses year after year, you learn a good deal. Perhaps you'd act worse than Kurt, if you never had to work, and when you sneezed somebody thought it sweeter than a nightingale."

"I never heard a nightingale," Franzl said, brightly.

"You'll hear them this summer up in the bushes and low trees near us."

"Oh, what is that?" he exclaimed, pointing to a tall draped figure on a high pedestal in the park they were passing.

"Well, I don't know exactly," Leni replied, with indifference. "It is a kind of a big brown woman without much on. I saw her when they were put-

ting her up. Then they strapped on that cloth to cover her through the winter, and I've heard that they are going to unstrap it and uncover her, sometime this spring, and stand round her, and make speeches and sing, and the prince will be there. It is queer the things they are always getting up; but I suppose it amuses them, and they haven't much to do, and might as well do that as anything else."

"If I didn't have anything to do, I'd do something better than that."

"What would you do?"

"I'd ride on the railway a whole year with a whole seat all to myself."

"I don't think I should like that. I should be afraid. The rich people seem to like statues," she continued. "I don't mind the white ones down in the King's park, they look so clean. But this is a queer brown thing. But there's to be a fountain and a dog's basin, and seats in the shade, and that's a good thing as you'll find, for it's a long pull from the market in the summer, and straight up almost the whole way, and a body's glad to rest a minute and breathe, and you needn't look at the big brown woman unless you want to," she concluded, carelessly.

This was the first art lecture which Franzl ever heard. Leaving the shrouded Galatea behind, Leni cheerfully introduced him to the next house on his beat. From this time they were very busy, being now in the heart of the city and having to serve customers rapidly. Up and down long flights of stairs, across courts, into shops, Franzl carried the can and measures, and Leni let him pour out the milk, and even sometimes take the money and make change. He learned fast under her watchful tuition, and kept the accounts in a little book.

Everywhere she had a word to say of the families to whose needs she ministered—not a long gossipping tale, but some hint of the household interior which would have vastly surprised her customers. For walls have ears, and cooks have tongues, and Leni among strangers was a silent young person, who could listen, observe, and learn much.

"They are unhappy in this house," she informed him, "all at sixes and sevens."

"Unhappy in such a beautiful big house?"

"The wife goes to balls all the time, and the husband is pale and does nothing but work. He takes his coffee alone when the milk comes. She'll have hers in bed hours later."

"Why doesn't he make her get up and go to work? I would."

"Here, Franzl, we have a pint to take up five flights. It's such a nice customer. You'll see."

Up they went to a small room where a handsome young man in his shirt sleeves sat at a table littered with books and papers. He was singing so loud that he did not hear Leni's first knock.

"Ah, there you are, Phyllis; and who is the curly pate? I thought you had no brothers or sisters?"

"It's the new boy, Herr Professor. Father bought him at the child-market."

"Professor *in spe*," remarked the young man, holding a small cracked pitcher for Leni to fill. "My compliments to your father. He has eyes in his head. Come here, you young faun."

He smoothed back Franzl's tangled curls and looked with so searching a glance in the brown rosy face that he plunged the boy into profound embarrassment, particularly as he didn't know whether "faun" was a term which he ought to resent or not.

"He's going to bring the milk alone as soon as I teach him."

"What, a partner? A useful and respectable

citizen at his age? It is more than I am. I shall miss you, Leni. How are things going?" he asked, kindly.

"No better, thank you," she returned with a blush, "about the same."

"Courage," he said, heartily. "You are young yet," taking a little coffee-machine from its honorable place on a Greek Lexicon. "If ever I can do anything for you, Leni, come, or send the faun."

"You have a kind heart, Herr Professor."

"Oh, as to that," he said, smiling, and secretly wishing that his bank account was as kind as his heart.

"What does *in spe* mean?" demanded Franzl the instant they reached the street.

"Oh, it doesn't mean anything," Leni said, calmly. "It's only his nonsense."

"Why did he call me 'faun?' What is a 'faun' anyhow?"

"Oh, I don't suppose it is much of anything," Leni replied with not a trace of interest.

"What was it he called you? What kind of a thing is a Phyllis?"

"I never hear his queer talk," she said, indul-

gently. "He is so kind. You don't know how kind he is. Didn't you like him?"

"I don't like to be called names I don't know the meaning of," Franzl replied, with dignity.

He was silent and thoughtful some time, and looked up occasionally in Leni's face with a puzzled expression. She had seemed so wise and old to him.

At length he asked:

"Does he know more than you?"

"I suppose so," she said, negligently. "He doesn't know more about cows, or farming."

"Why does he sit at that table?" he broke out, impetuously. "What does he want of such piles of books? He's a big man. Nobody can make him go to school. Why doesn't he go out of doors? I'd go hunting and fishing. I wouldn't sit cooped up in the house!"

Leni looked surprised.

"Why, what a pepper-box you are, about nothing! I suppose he likes his books. He sings over them and seems happy. And he does go hunting and fishing sometimes. He doesn't get all he wants in the world any more than some other people."

"What's his name?"

"Herr Arno Theobald."

"He'd better talk like other people and go a-fishing," persisted Franzl, doggedly.

"Perhaps I'll tell you more about him some time. You know, Franzl, I don't tell tales about my customers to everybody. It is only because you are my partner. I don't know when I've talked so much as to-day. I'm rather still mostly. But you'll be careful, Franzl."

"I know enough to hold my tongue. I'm not a girl."

"I hope you do," she went on, earnestly. "And Franzl—" hesitating—"about that little talk at the side of the road this morning—there by the vineyard—you won't say anything about that, will you? Not to anybody? It would do harm. And it wasn't my fault. You'll understand when you're older."

Franzl looked at her with an air of reproach.

"I understand now. I know about—*lovers*," he said, grandly. "I've seen some in the Venter Thal. There's a good many of them there." He spoke with cold remoteness as of specimens of an extinct race. "I shan't say anything about you."

"So much the better," returned Leni, quietly.

"Wait here, Franzl, I'll go in alone. They are good people," she explained when she came back, "old ladies, sisters. I always need a little time for them, they are so interested in everything and everybody. If you had gone up, they would have been so surprised, it would have taken too much time, and I should have had to tell more than I know about you. Now come on fast. Take care! Big teams can't turn out for you. Here we are at the market."

IV.

One of the prettiest sights in every great city is its market, and each has its special charm: each tells the traveller, intrepid enough to sacrifice his morning slumbers and go down among the veritable pillars of society, a tale not told by fashionable shops or even monuments and museums; each shows him a picture not easily forgotten, a glimpse of warm pulsating life. He feels for an instant the strong undercurrent of toil sweeping on beneath the surface-bubbles of his easy existence; he perceives much that is beautiful, much that is rough and repulsive, more color, more freshness, more smells, good and bad, than he knew existed, and the most sordid traffic, the most ignoble haggling, detestable because greedy, pardonable, since its source is for the most part need and anxiety; and he goes away more thoughtful than he comes—a healthful condition for most of us—and detects, on that day at least, a few fundamental facts below the glittering superstructure of his hotel-dinner.

Nowhere is the market prettier than in Wynburg. Where else in the world do so fascinatingly ugly old women, with their baskets of vegetables on the ground in front of them, sit and knit and gossip in the sunshine on the warm side of such castle-walls? Where else do so severely noble towers rise from a jumble of booths and carts, of cries and calls in the ear-rending Suabian dialect? Where do rosy chestnut-spikes mass themselves in such richness, and trees serenely claim their royal right of way, occupy the best places, and refuse to yield to the pressure of trade. Where do visions of sixteenth century knights, with a fierce troop of mounted men, dash out of a picturesque arcaded quadrangle, and create sad havoc among peaceful piles of vegetables, and incongruous old wives knitting in stolid unconsciousness of their historic background? From the open square behind the church where the Schiller statue stands, down to the great glass building, the market proper — through the queer crooked tunnel-like streets diverging from the original market place of centuries ago, where a few ancient patrician houses still display their unmistakable lineaments — the whole region in the heart of the modern city is full of charm even without the motley life which

surges beneath the silent old towers three days in the week.

Leni and Franzl were not disturbed by phantom knights, and the beauty of the castle did not enter their innocent thoughts, which were bent upon getting the cart successfully through the crowd, and took keen notice of the general condition and quantity of cabbages, carrots, spinach and cauliflower, and all manner of salads and cresses from brook and meadow.

In the corner of the market building was Leni's stall with a cool chest for her remaining supply of milk. She had relapsed into her silent mood, saying only what was strictly necessary and looking grave, almost stern indeed. But she gave Franzl a piece of black bread and a small cup of milk, and told him to sit down and rest a few minutes on a box near her, where he perched contentedly, greatly relishing his repast and staring with wondering eyes at the ever-moving crowd in the great building so full of noise and light.

Leni seemed to be a person of considerable importance. Women employed by her father came to her to report, ask advice, complain or gossip a bit. For the most part she sent them off quickly with a cold business-like air, after a few sharp in-

quiries. Often she would appear suddenly where she was least expected and listen silently to the bargaining between a shrewd cook bent upon her advantage and the equally shrewd old woman whose province it was to represent Christian Lutz's interests. All her father's people seemed to be always aware of her presence, and her still cold manner had more weight than the scolding and abuse of the others.

"Proud thing!" Franzl heard a woman, whom Leni had reproved for some negligence, say spitefully. "Since she can't have her way with old Christian, she's bound to have it with us."

"I don't know what is the matter with the girl," sneered another. "Why doesn't she take Klumpp and be done with it and wear a decent face on her? She can't do better than the biggest farm for miles around, even if Klumpp has got the palsy and one foot in the grave and it isn't very lively at his house. A farm like that! What more can a girl want? As for Karl, she might as well give him up first as last. Old Christian never changes his mind. If she doesn't look out she'll fall between two stools, and serve her right. A man sixty years old can't wait forever for a silly girl. There she goes, with a face like a stone image and not a civil

word for anybody. What are you staring at?" she demanded roughly, making a dive at Franzl, who was listening open-mouthed to these revelations.

"You," he responded, impudently, having sprung to a safe distance and saluting her with a series of leers and grimaces.

Leni beckoned to him.

"Don't be silly," she said, coldly. "Babies make faces. Remember you are in business."

He felt ashamed, and tried hard to look seriously upon his new honors and responsibilities, and to struggle against a tendency to enlivening little dissipations, such as occasional whoops and yells in the ears of the people who had walked half the night and were now napping at their posts. He was also pursued by the gnawing desire to make faces at persons who called him "rascal" and "good-for-nothing" and "brat," terms which were flung about freely at the market, not so much on account of the mischief that any particular boy was actually doing, as from a large comprehension of the latent talent of the genus. Franzl finally made a mental compromise between his natural inclinations and his growing wish to please Leni, and decided to take no notice of "rascal" or "good-for-nothing;" but as "brat," for some occult reason,

was particularly obnoxious to his fiery temperament, to respond to it with his most diabolical face provided he thought Leni wouldn't see. As for boys, he didn't count them. A little scrimmaging and scuffling must go on as a matter of course. Even Leni didn't demand total abstinence in this respect except when he was on duty—responsible for the safety of the cart.

He worked well all the long day. Sent with vegetables after a lady, and following her through the strange streets of the city, he lost his way on the return-trip and wandered about helplessly for some time. Again Leni spoke coldly to him:

"It is babyish to lose your way. You have eyes, you notice, and your memory is good."

"In the woods or the mountains it's different," he stammered, "but the city makes such a noise and all the streets look alike."

"Don't do it again," she said, and turned away. Franzl silently vowed he wouldn't, and, thus put upon his mettle, and expected to do his best, he did it, counting streets, making mental notes of signs, fountains, monuments, conspicuous buildings, anything that would serve as landmark, for it cut him to the soul to hear the word "babyish" from Leni's lips.

Business slackened perceptibly toward noon. Leni sent him on an occasional errand; but he had time to think harder than ever in his life before, when he really could come to himself after the bewildering changes of the last few days, and sometimes it seemed to him he must be quite a different boy from Franzl Reiner.

In the first place, he felt as if he had always known Leni, yet he never saw her before that very morning. It was very queer. It was as if her smooth, dark head, her quiet face, and her voice had been familiar to him always in Heilig-Kreuz. What did those old things mean by calling her proud? Proud girls wore gay clothes and beads. Leni was dressed in a plain dark gown, and wore her hair in a long tail with no bright ribbon on it. She looked all straight and smooth. Then she wasn't proud. That was silly. What did they mean by saying she'd better give up Karl? Karl was very nice. He had merry eyes. He had looked at her as if he saw nothing else, not even the milk-cart. But Leni had glanced about everywhere as if she was frightened. Franzl wondered if Karl had a gun, and if he'd ever shot a chamois. But no, they had no chamois. The mountains were too low. Perhaps Karl had a long

hunter's knife. He was big and strong. He looked only at Leni. That was because they were lovers. Lovers always looked at each other. Max and Luise did, and so did Georg and Rosine, and Benedikt and Beate. Afterward something happened, and Benedikt went away and Rosine didn't look at anybody for a long time, and then she looked at Ludwig. Oh, yes, he knew very well what lovers were. It was foolish of Leni to suppose he didn't. She forgot that he was eleven. Of course it was different when you liked people and when you didn't. He liked Leni. He hated Kurt. He wished he had Kurt's watch-chain, and would fight him if ever he caught him in the street. When you like people awfully it's lovers. That's the way his father and mother were, and his mother and he, and he and Loisl. When Loisl was big enough to live with him, he would buy her a blue frock like Fräulein Doris's with ribbon danglers. The mother said:

"Some day you must be together. Some day you will be a young man and she still a wee girl, and you must take care of her. She is all the family you have, my poor Franzl, and you are all the family she has. If I could take you both with me! The way will be long and hard for you, but you

are my brave, loving Franzl. You will grow to be a man and take care of her."

She said it that very last day when she was so white and her eyes were strange. She told him, too, that it was better for him to go away, better for him and better for the others, for nobody had more than enough in the village, and there were too many boys already, and while people were kind and would take care of Loisl—his Reverence promised it—he must go among strangers and work his way, but never forget his little sister. Perhaps something good would happen. It did sometimes. All the neighbors would be good to Loisl. His Reverence would see to the papers and send him to the child-market. Konrad had gone three springs ago and taken a place for the summer, and liked his master. There were good people everywhere. If Franzl was good he would find them.

Then she put her two hands on his head and held them there long—long, and his heart was bursting because she said she must leave him all alone, except for Loisl, and ever since, when he thought of her, and that was often, his heart swelled and his throat choked.

It used to be pleasantest when his father came home after a long hunting-tour with the strangers.

All the room was bright when he strode in with his big gun, filling the room with his laugh, and telling everything that had happened. The mother made pancakes, listening and smiling always, and Franzl sat on his knee and laughed too, whether he understood or not. After the father was gone, the room was never so bright again, and the mother never smiled so and listened. Still, while she was there, he had not missed his father so much. Now he missed them both, the mother most, for he had been always with her. And here he was on a box in the Wynburg market, and there was no mother, no father, no cottage, no warm stove and pancakes, no snow-mountains, no brook foaming over the rocks. That was why it often seemed as if there were no Franzl any more.

When he put his hands over his ears tight, and then removed them suddenly, and did it again and again, it made the great hum—like big bees—come and go, nearer and farther. Leni said more milk would come down for the evening customers. Then he must take it to more big houses. When he was a man he was going to have a big house himself and live in it with Loisl. How much would a blue gown with danglers cost, he wondered? But first Loisl must have a short red frock

like Fräulein Hildegard's. She was a nice little girl. She had a leaf in her hand. He hated Kurt, and would hit him the very first chance—sure! That old woman with the carrots had a face exactly like a nut-face, such as his mother used to make for him; eyebrows like smooches of ink; a nose that went in before it came out, and a chin that ran away into her kerchief. The nut-woman's head was stuck on a stick with red sealing-wax. The old woman's kerchief was red, and she was like a stick—like two sticks when she walked.

He wondered how long it would take him to save money enough to buy a big house for himself and Loisl. When he left Heilig-Kreuz he had meant to have a cottage; but to-day, seeing so many big houses, he had changed his mind. From his pocket he slowly removed a piece of twine, several smooth stones, an apple-core, a lump of lead, a rusty broken nail, a cork, a four-bladed knife with three blades gone and all but the stump of the fourth, a pill-box, a much-chewed pencil, a dead beetle, some tar, some wire, a bit of green bottle-glass, a tin box-cover with a hole bored in it, chips, beans, bread-crumbs, and finally the coin Christian Lutz had given him at the child-market, the first money he had ever owned, together with a bit of

nickel a lady had paid him for an extra errand, and which Leni said he might keep, as it was not for milk.

Stuffing his other treasures back into his pocket he regarded the big coin and the little one meditatively. When he was a man he was going to be bright and strong like his father, and Herr Arno Theobald, and Karl. It was queer that none of them had a big house. Why did the cross old men have all the money and farms and vineyards, and the pleasant young ones with merry eyes not have what they wanted? He wasn't going to be like that. He was going to have what he wanted; a silver watch and chain like Kurt's, and a big house —bigger than Kurt's—and he was going to laugh like his father and look pleasant like Karl and Herr Arno Theobald, for if you looked stern, and had the palsy, and a bald head, it didn't seem much fun to have vineyards and cows.

He wished he knew better how much things cost, watch-chains and houses, for instance, and he'd like a top very much. But his mother said: "Save all you can earn." If he got a top, he wouldn't have so much left for a house. Then perhaps he could fight a boy and get his top, which would be cheaper. Some time he would ask Leni some of these things.

She came toward him, thinking, involuntarily, little as her life had led her to consider personal beauty, what a strikingly handsome boy Franzl was; what a bold and proud air the little beggar had in his shabby, dirty clothes. They were too bad to patch she decided, examining him carefully as she approached. She would soon make over an old coat of her father's for the child. It wasn't respectable for Christian Lutz's bought boy to look so poor, and he was a bright, affectionate little fellow, rags or no rags, she concluded, while Franzl built his castles in the air, gazing at his coins and proudly rattling them.

"Shall I take care of them?" she asked.

He considered a while before reluctantly passing them to her.

"Pockets have holes," he said, gravely.

"I will help you to save your money."

"May I look at it and touch it when I want to?"

"Of course."

"Then you'd better keep it. You don't have to fight. You see when you fight, sometimes you get turned upside down and lose things. I am going to save a great deal. There are some things I must buy, some time."

"It won't trouble me to take care of all that you can save," she replied, gently. "But you must send it home, mustn't you, Franzl? Your family will want it?"

"No, my family doesn't want it yet. I can save my money if I want to."

"So much the better."

"And I do want to because I must have a great deal by and by, when I'm grown," he went on, with calm conviction.

Leni was not sentimental, but she did not look without wonder and vague pity at the ragged little urchin who had sold himself for fifty marks to a hard master, and could yet speak in this bright, sure way of money and future plans.

"Time will tell, Franzl," she returned, indulgently. "The best thing is to do well what you have to do each day."

"I'm going to have it, while I'm pleasant-looking, like Herr Arno Theobald and your Karl," he went on, to her astonishment. "I'm not going to wait till I have the palsy like old Andreas Klumpp, or get fat in the waist like your father."

Leni colored deeply at his extraordinary allusions and stared at him in increasing surprise.

"I'm going to have a big house and I'm going

to hang my father's gun that they are keeping for me on the wall; and my family and I are going to live there together. You may live with us too, if you want to. It's going to be a bigger house than Kurt's, and I'm going to have a longer watch-chain."

"Franzl, Franzl, who told you such things? What do you know about old Andreas?"

"The women were talking. That one over there, the one with the big frog mouth, called you proud, and the one with the green-striped apron said you couldn't get your way with old Christian and so you were bent on getting it with them," he repeated, with scrupulous exactness. "You aren't proud, are you? You haven't any beads. They don't know what is the matter with you. Why don't you take Klumpp and be done with it, and wear a decent face on you? What more do you want than the biggest farm for miles and miles? As for Karl, you might as well give him up first as last, for old Christian never changes his mind. If you don't look out, you'll fall between two stools, and serve you right. A man sixty years old, with the palsy and one foot in the grave can't wait forever for a silly girl. It isn't very lively at his house."

Leni listened with changing color. Her face grew sad and old.

"Do you remember every word you hear?" she tried to ask, carelessly.

"Yes," answered the child.

"It isn't worth while. It was silly talk."

"Oh, yes, it was silly. Women are sillier than men."

She stood a while lost in troubled thought.

The boy—beautiful, smiling, resolute—swung his heels from his high box, and, undaunted by his rags and homelessness, looked fearlessly into the future.

At length Leni with a sigh roused herself from her meditations and met the frank gaze of his happy, handsome eyes. His rough curls were shining in the sunlight, his cheeks glowing like dark peaches. He smiled trustfully, as if he belonged to her.

She hoped he would forget the women's talk. It would make her ill at ease to feel that the child, with his dreadful memory, was speculating upon her most private affairs. Probably he wouldn't understand or think of them much, even if he did repeat the spiteful chatter, word for word, as if it were his lesson.

"Franzl, you are modest, you are!" she began. "Why don't you say you'll have the moon?"

"Because I can't live in it," he replied, cheerfully. "I'm going to have something I can live in."

"Well, wishing's cheap," she returned, dryly, "for both of us. In the meantime there is always work to do, and here is old Wally with the evening milk."

V.

FRANZL worked with a will, but as he found himself in a community where everybody worked unremittingly, no task surprised or dismayed him. While he pulled and tugged and strained his young, growing body to the utmost limit of its strength, and was dead tired every night when he threw himself upon his bed of hay, in close proximity to his equine and bovine comrades, the open air and sunshine, the winds, night-dews and rains, all seemed to exert happy and healthy influences upon him, and he grew tall and strong like a young birch by the brookside.

He never, perhaps, had quite all that he could eat; but, on the other hand, he was not incommoded with headache, stomach-ache, and other ills which made Kurt von Normann extremely peevish and uncomfortable on the day after Christmas, and the days after birthdays and all high family feasts, when people indicate their affection and felicity by eating too many sweets.

Every day Franzl rose at half-past four, and took his milk to the city, walking up and down hill two hours or more, those beautiful, fresh, spring mornings, and making his rounds punctually. The three market-days he remained all day in Wynburg, returning usually with Leni toward evening. On other days he went directly back to Waldheim and worked on the farm or in the vineyards—weeding, digging, mending walls, feeding cattle and pigs and hens—wherever, in short, he could be made useful. As it never occurred to him that anyone was stronger or abler than he—humility not being his chief virtue—he was often laughed at for attempting the impossible, but his willingness and zeal won respect even from the older farm-laborers, and Lutz, who never praised or seemed satisfied with anybody's efforts, secretly felicitated himself upon his shrewdness in selecting the little Tyrolean's muscle and staying-power from all the young flesh at the Ravensburg market.

Franzl soon learned a fine control of his milk-cart, and steered it coolly at a breakneck pace down the steepest roads. When, in the morning or evening twilight, twenty or thirty boys by chance appeared simultaneously on the same hill,

shouting and hooting and careering like demons, rattling and running their carts like mad, they seemed a wild horde of outer barbarians coming with hideous machines of destruction to invade a peaceful land rather than simple rustics ministering to innocent domestic needs. Among them all no one yelled in a more demoniac fashion, none drove his chariot with more apparent recklessness, more real ability and aplomb, than Franzl.

He felt a peculiar sense of ownership in the houses on his circuit, and every tale which Leni told him that first morning remained sharp and clear in his mind. "This is the house where the pale man works hard and the woman goes to parties all night and takes her coffee in bed at noon." "This is the house where nothing particular happens." "This is where everybody is always on horseback." "Here is the cross cook." "This is where they always try to get the milk a penny cheaper." "In this house the two kind old ladies want to know everything and are always so surprised and 'Oh' and 'Ah' till one can hardly get away." "This is where there's a nice fat baby, bigger than Loisl, and not so puckery," and it would have been a shock to the nurse's nerves, had she suspected that the rather dirty little milk-

boy, who looked up so curiously at the child in her arms, was thinking how much he would like to see its toes.

Best of all he enjoyed going to the Normann's beautiful home, and to Herr Arno's room under the roof. The young man was handsome and strong, kind and merry, and would indeed have been altogether perfect in Franzl's eyes if it were not for the queer and puzzling words, which had a peculiar effect upon the child and made him uncomfortable and restive. In his new atmosphere he was indeed roused necessarily to a certain surprised consideration of language, since at every step he was confronted with differences between his Tyrolean speech and the harsher Suabian dialect and his peculiarities of accent and phrase induced much free comment and laughter. Still it was easy enough to learn to adjust his language to his surroundings, and above all to find out what working-people meant. Often Herr Heinrich, a friend of Herr Arno, was there, and then the words were awful; but they caused Franzl no lasting distress unless addressed to him. One morning Arno, chatting with his friend, happened to call the beautiful rosy boy pouring milk into the cracked pitcher a Ganymede, whereupon Franzl

ran off brusquely, feeling unhappy and desperate.

"Oh, I wish he wouldn't," he thought. "I'd rather he would call me 'Brat' and be done with it. When he smiles and looks so pleasant, and I'm not expecting anything in particular, and he fires one of those awful names at me, I feel as if I should burst."

"What does Ganymede mean?" he asked Leni that night.

She was exceedingly busy.

"Oh, Franzl, don't be tiresome," she returned. "How should I know? It's Herr Arno's nonsense again, isn't it? What on earth does it matter?"

"But do you know?" the boy persisted.

"No."

"Does Karl know?"

"No, he doesn't. He's got something better to do."

"Does your father know?"

"Not he."

"Does Andreas Klumpp know?"

"Of course not."

"Well, then, who does know?"

"Why, people like Herr Arno, to be sure. No-

body who has to work bothers about words. But in the school they must know, Franzl."

"No, they don't. I've been to school myself, and I never heard any such talk."

She wondered at his dreary manner, and said, kindly:

"I wouldn't trouble my head about it. It has nothing to do with us or with work. It goes in one ear and out the other when I hear it. I'd forget if I were you."

"I can't," he replied, gloomily. "I try to, but I remember every word. There's an awful lot of them now. Seventeen from 'Phyllis—' 'in spe—' 'faun—' to 'Ganymede.' That's the worst yet."

By dint of much reflection it gradually became clear to him that there were more than two kinds of people in the world. Between rich and poor he perceived differences unsuspected in the Venter Thal; not, however, vast differences when both classes worked. Christian Lutz was rich, and he, Franzl, was poor; but as he was going to be rich by and by, and as Lutz worked as hard as any of his farm-hands, the distinction did not seem like a yawning chasm between them. Between people who worked and people who didn't there was a

more amazing difference, Franzl concluded, and speculated much upon it; the lady who never got up in the morning, for instance, and the family who were always in the saddle—surely they were rich, yet not like rich Christian Lutz. He saw this plainly and it puzzled him. He had been categorically taught that laziness was a sin, also that people who didn't work must sooner or later starve. Among his milk customers he discovered many who neither worked nor starved, and who did not appear to regard themselves as sinners. But clearest of all grew his new conviction that there was still another difference between people, the great mysterious one of *words*, for he began to suspect that Herr Arno had no monopoly of them. Franzl had positively ascertained that none in his immediate circle knew or cared about the hidden meaning of Theobald's language. Then who did know and care? Herr Heinrich for one. The people on the road talked of prices. Coming and going from market, it was always how much things cost. The men in the village, too, talked of either prices or crops. Why didn't people all talk alike? If Herr Arno would fling queer words at him, angrily, they wouldn't occupy him an instant. He knew what to do and how to feel when he was

insulted. But the kind voice and smile were what made him wretched, and caused the mysterious talk to mercilessly haunt and perplex him. Some days Herr Arno said nothing incomprehensible, and the child breathed freer, for his list was long and every new word caused him fresh aggravation. He had a way of muttering rhythmically to the accompaniment of a creaking wheel, and many a mile he tramped saying his words, like a witch's charm or some ancient chant, with never a mistake ; and it is a pity some great philologist did not hear the boy ; for while the scholar would not have had the faintest inkling of the truth, and could not, with Franzl's arbitrary division of syllables—to make them fit the cart-accompaniment—have distinguished the words, he would have discovered in the innocent prattle the remains of some primitive folk-song, with familiar Aryan roots, upon the strength of which he would have promulgated highly erudite theories, to his enduring satisfaction and renown and the envy of his colleagues.

Many important things occupied Franzl's alert mind. The birds in the beautiful woods—through which he passed twice a day — a pond where there was a prosperous commonwealth of frogs, lizards on the vineyard - walls, all the orchards

and fields of grain, all the people, all the horses and dogs. There was always enough to think of, both on the long country road and down in the busy city. Indeed he never felt that he had got his thinking half done, and he wished he did not fall asleep the instant he closed his eyes at night, for if he could only have stayed awake a while, he might have gotten rid of some odds and ends of thought which he never quite knew what to do with.

The Normanns were a daily source of pleasure, excitement, and wrath to him. The pleasure and excitement began with the sight of the major in a splendid uniform, who usually rode out of his court-yard as Franzl and his cart came in. The boy would pull off his cap, the major responded with a fine salute and a smile. Wrath followed speedily. Kurt, for no reason in particular, but merely because he had happened to begin the acquaintance with hostilities—perhaps, too, from contrariness, since his sisters praised the little milk-boy—lost no opportunity to make himself odious to Franzl, who remembered every offence as faithfully as Herr Arno's words, and stored them away against the day of reckoning. Nanni, the cook, was a kind, motherly soul, whom experience

had taught that boys can always eat, even if they are fed upon the fat of the land ; also, that a milk-boy is not apt to be pampered, no matter how rosy and bright he looks. Being a privileged person in the Normann household, she put aside many good things for Franzl. The pretty young lady, Fräulein Doris, he seldom saw unless the children were quarrelling worse than usual. Fräulein Hildegard frequently honored him with her presence, for she was a lively young person who made it a point to appear wherever anything was going on. At this time of the morning very little was going on except the kitchen. Hildegard was curious as a magpie, and liked to see everybody who came, whether by the visitors' or servants' entrance. As she was also kind, there was all the more reason why she should pirouette into the kitchen and keep a restraining sisterly eye on Kurt, who was habitually hateful to that nice little boy.

Hopping, twirling, standing on one leg like a stork, she seemed to regard herself as a theatre and enjoy her own performances hugely. She sang her most ordinary requests, and always had a leaf or twig in her hand or mouth. Franzl admired her vastly.

One day she said to him :

"Little boy"—she always called him little boy, although he was bigger than she—"don't you want to bring me some pussy-willows? I saw some yesterday when we were driving, and mamma wouldn't stop to let me get them. They are on the bank by the little bridge where you come every day."

He agreed gladly, and she told him he was the nicest little boy she ever saw.

He brought her a great bunch of catkins the very next morning. Hildegard was delighted. He did not see Kurt, and Nanni gave him a generous slice of cake, with plums in it, for which three reasons he left the house in high spirits. But alas! the innocent catkins, like Beauty's rose, were destined to make mischief. Herr Arno gave him no trouble that day. Toward noon he was on his homeward journey, whistling and singing in a contented frame of mind. As the sun was hot on the long hill, he stopped an instant in the shade of the little park in front of the Normanns' house listening to the cool plash of the fountain, mildly regarding the big brown woman, and wondering why they had put up those four awfully queer things—half woman and half cat—on the terrace by the fountain, and if there were really cat-

women or women-cats, with that queer stare and their paws stretched out. Suddenly Kurt, carrying some books with a strap, came up the winding walk through the shrubbery to the open lawn where Franzl stood with his cart. Now Kurt was in the worst possible humor. His father had promised him a horse if in a certain examination he should be No. 1 in Latin and mathematics. He had worked hard and felt confident of success. Whether he had been too excited or too sure he did not know, but to his overwhelming disgust and irritation two fellows, who usually stood below him, had passed in better papers, and although first in Latin, he found himself third in mathematics; an honorable enough place in a class of forty, but he knew his father, and that there would be no horse for Kurt Normann this time. He had bragged of the horse far and wide. That was the trouble. Friends as well as enemies had not refrained from pointed allusions to this famous steed, and Kurt, angry, mortified, and ready to vent his spleen on the first-comer, came slowly home from his failure.

Franzl, from habit, scowled fiercely at the approaching foe. Kurt stopped, and all his rage against himself, his teachers, his comrades, the

world, and fate, seemed to concentrate itself in a desire to quarrel with this insolent milk-boy standing motionless by his cart.

"Here, you dirty little beggar," Kurt began, with no plan of attack whatever, but conscious of vague and vast belligerent intentions, "what do you mean by—by—by—by bringing catkins to my sister?" he concluded with sudden inspiration.

Here was Franzl's longed-for opportunity, but there was the milk-cart. It had grown to be second nature to take care of the insignia of his profession, and Leni's precepts had sunk deep within him. One hand still on the pole, he stood poised ready to spring.

"You keep your weeds for your own dirty little sister," Kurt sneered, as a purely random shot, "and let mine alone. If I see any more of them in my house I'll switch you with them."

At this moment a young man who was sitting on a bench with his back turned came toward them.

"I say, Kurt," he began—

But before he could finish, Franzl had swung the cart round, thrust the pole into Herr Arno's hand, and flung himself with all his strength upon the boy who had insulted his sister.

Arno, recovering from his surprise, gravely ac-

cepted the trust, sat down on a stone moulding, and let the boys fight. It occurred to him that a sound thrashing might be a desirable sanitary measure for Kurt Normann, and something that had failed for some time. There was also a certain humorous satisfaction in the consciousness that Kurt's mamma, who systematically spoiled him and prevented him from being the good fellow he might otherwise become, was in the house, whose windows looked over garden-walls and shrubbery upon the field of battle where her high-born darling was about to be thrashed by a milk-boy. For Arno had not the faintest doubt as to the result of the contest. Kurt was going to be unmercifully beaten.

The boys were evenly matched as to size. Kurt was the older, and well-trained in gymnastic exercises; but no gymnasium three times a week could do for a boy what the mountains and hard, constant, open-air work had done for Franzl. Moreover, he was by far the angrier of the two, and this was half the battle. "His strength was as the strength of ten," not "because his heart was pure," but because he was so very "mad," while Kurt was already more than half-ashamed of himself.

Arno observed that Franzl, instead of spending his force at once in his first furious attack, seemed to have endless reserve-power. He showed no weariness, but grew fiercer and stronger, not however from contact with mother earth; for while Kurt was frequently down, gaining dirt but no strength, Franzl remained firm on his feet. Kurt fought well and bravely, but Arno, silently watching them, thought best to interfere.

"There, that's enough for to-day, boys. Stop, Franzl. Hold up, I say." But Franzl did not or would not hear or stop until forcibly removed.

"Kurt, you'll have to admit you're well thrashed."

Kurt said nothing. There was blood on his face, a button had cut his lip, his eye was puffing fast, his coat was torn, his watch and chain lay on the ground, his wrist was lame, his leg felt queer, and his head ached.

"You acknowledge yourself fairly beaten, do you?" Arno repeated.

"Yes," said the boy, faintly, feeling dizzy and dropping upon a bench.

Franzl stood panting, glowing, triumphant, his feet still braced, his hands on his hips, his eyes contemplating that silver watch and chain lying low in the dust.

"Go in and ask Nanni to look after you, Kurt. I shall have to tell you that I think you deserved it. I heard what you said to him. That is why I didn't interfere. Now it's none of my business perhaps, but what has he ever done to you?"

"Nothing," said Kurt, frankly enough.

"Then what under heaven induced you to try to bully him in that fashion?" Arno demanded with considerable disgust.

"I was red-hot mad about something else," Kurt returned, with a feeble grin that was very one-sided on account of the aldermanic proportions his face was rapidly assuming.

"Your examination?" Arno asked, quickly.

Kurt nodded.

"Oh! oh!" exclaimed the young man, significantly. "And you, Franzl, what have you against Kurt?"

"I hate him," Franzl returned with cheerful promptness, "and he said something nasty about my family."

"Yes, I heard it. I'm not a great friend of fighting, but from your point of view I don't see how you could have declined with dignity after that provocation. Come here and let me congratulate you. My sympathies are entirely with you."

He held out his hand and Franzl, proud and radiant, shook hands with him.

"But you are satisfied now, Franzl? You don't thirst for any more blood?"

"If he lets me alone I'll let him," the boy remarked, succinctly.

"You hear, Kurt, do you?" and Arno stooped to pick up a paper book which had fallen from the schoolboy's strap. Brushing the dust from a page, which Franzl saw was covered with queer, curly writing, the young man remarked: "You'll have to recopy this Greek. It is too dirty to hand in. I don't like to preach when you are in that plight, Kurt; but, upon my word, I thought you were more of a gentleman. If you don't choose to remember that '*Noblesse oblige*' is your Normann device, it is useless for me to remind you, I suppose. But as an old friend of the family permit me to say that if honor doesn't restrain you, prudence should, for this young Berserker can slay you without over-exerting himself. Now shake hands, boys."

"I don't care anything about the slaying," Kurt returned quickly, hobbling forward on his lame foot and with his lame hand extended. "Here, Franzl, it's all right. You can bring anything you

like to Hildegard. I only said that because I was in no end of a temper. I've always been teazing him, you know," turning to Arno, "and I do care about '*noblesse oblige*.'"

But what was the matter with Franzl? He was turning his cart as fast as possible, and all the joy of victory had vanished from his face. It seemed to Arno that Kurt, after all, was behaving gallantly, since it is always easier for the victor to forgive than the vanquished. What, then, had seized the conqueror's bright spirit? Why was he slinking off in this fashion, ignoring Kurt's generously proffered hand. He, Franzl, who always seemed so ardent and warm-hearted?

"Franzl," Arno called, "don't go. Shake hands with Kurt first, to show there's no ill-will."

"Wait a minute, Franzl," Kurt called, limping a few steps after him.

But Franzl paid no heed. He went as fast as he could stride from the scene of his triumph and his bitter disappointment.

"Eighteen—nineteen," he was saying to himself in utter hopelessness. "'Berserker' and 'blesbleege,' and Kurt knows what they mean—and says, 'blesbleege' himself!"

VI.

Arno Theobald, although in reality a happy, healthy, and fortunate youth, had in his own opinion his share of work, care, trouble, and uncertainty of a peculiarly absorbing and delicate nature, and therefore thought little of the juvenile fight in which he had acted as umpire, and which was a crisis in Franzl's history. But when the little milk-boy appeared the next morning, shy, grave, and more hurried than usual, Arno remembered the child's abrupt departure, and was led to instil into his rustic mind some idea of the etiquette of the duel, even of the crude and primitive duel with fists.

"How are you, Franzl? No bones broken, I see. By the way, why did you go off so quickly? Why wouldn't you shake hands with Kurt?"

As Franzl said nothing, Arno concluded that he was still sullen and unforgiving, which seemed natural enough on the part of a poor boy whom Kurt Normann had persistently insulted. Arno

liked boys, and had a special interest in boys of Franzl's condition, was used to them, and succeeded ordinarily in understanding them tolerably well.

"Now Franzl," the young man went on, good-humoredly, "you really ought to have shaken hands with him. That's the thing to do. For instance, two men come to fight with swords or pistols. There is some deadly wrong, or ought to be, if they get as far as that. Well, suppose they are snorting fire and brimstone. They slash or shoot. They draw blood. We won't make it fatal this time. We'll only let them be scratched a bit like Kurt yesterday. Then they shake hands. The witnesses shake hands. Everybody shakes hands."

Franzl, interested in spite of himself in this tale of swords and pistols, had forgotten his grievances and drawn near the table, smiling his winning, trustful smile.

"And when you and I consider it in cold blood, it is the stupidest thing in life, because if it is possible for them ever in God's world to be sufficiently reconciled to grasp each other's hands, then it would be wise to anticipate the action of time upon their enmity and shake hands in the first place. People don't often hate as hard as they imagine they do. But, Franzl, this is how a man

talks when he is not angry, and when he's angry his blood boils as yours did yesterday, and he doesn't think any more. Then he's a beast. I'm sorry to say I've been one a few times in my life. All the same, fighting is as stupid as it is wicked. Remember I don't blame you at all for fighting Kurt. When you are older I hope you will think differently, but at your age and after what you had borne I don't see what else you could have done, and, since you had to do it, I'm glad you did it so well. But you ought to have shaken hands with him and buried the hatchet."

"What hatchet?"

Arno smiled.

"I mean you ought to have been satisfied with the punishment you gave him. You don't hate him I am sure."

"Yes, I do," Franzl asserted, roundly.

Arno considered an instant.

"Franzl, I don't know that you quite understand how things were yesterday. Of course Kurt was in the wrong. I can't say that too decidedly. I am glad on several accounts that he got for once what he deserved. He can make himself as insufferably disagreeable as any boy I ever saw. But he's not a bad fellow at heart. He lost a prize

yesterday, and the praise, which is sweet to him, and a horse, which he felt sure he would have for his own, and he was rather well pounded and battered, and aching in every bone, yet he forgave you outright for thrashing him. That's like Kurt. He will act like an overbearing insolent cur for weeks, then he turns round and surprises you with something so uncommonly sweet-tempered and generous that you can't help admiring him."

Franzl was wholly unmoved by his praise of the enemy, untouched by the faintest sympathy for or appreciation of Kurt's conduct; absorbed in his own thoughts the boy stared unceasingly at Arno.

"Talk about the ingenuousness of childhood!" he reflected. "Only children and great diplomates know how to be inscrutable."

Meanwhile Franzl was making a grand resolve. He had nearly determined to ask about the words that tormented him. Pride, shyness, a stubborn savage reserve had always restrained him. He literally did not know how to express the confused thoughts and feelings which gave him no rest. It was not simply asking the meaning of one word or many words. It was all his thinking, coming and going on the road. It was all that he did not understand in the lives of people about him, new

things belonging to his new surroundings, and of which he had never thought in Heilig Kreuz. It was the differences—the work—why people didn't talk alike, and think alike; the whole world was one great *Why?* to him, and he longed to launch it all on Arno. But he did not know how to begin. There were the words—and Kurt—Kurt most of all since yesterday, when he had looked up with his face awry and dirty and bleeding, and said so resolutely: "And I do care about 'blesbleege'"

Why did he care so much about a "blesbleege?" What was a "blesbleege" anyhow?

Franzl had never before felt so strong an impulse to confide in Arno. The child of late, after listening suspiciously to the young man, hurried away as fast as possible, fearing that he might at any moment let fall one of those maddening words. To-day, indeed, he used language which Franzl did not comprehend in detail, and long "grown-up" phrases, but the drift of the talk the boy followed without difficulty, and there was nothing offensively personal in it—no calling names. His self-esteem was therefore not wounded, and Arno's manner was most kind and reassuring.

He concluded his little guest was still nursing wrath against Kurt. What but resentment could

such persistent silence mean? Children were rarely fiery and sullen too. After all, what could one expect of the poor little soul? What chance had he ever had?

Franzl was looking earnestly at an open book near him. It had queer, curly letters like Kurt's book yesterday. "Greek," Herr Arno had said. It flashed upon him those strange words might belong to such letters. Perhaps it was all Greek. That didn't sound very bad. Something bright and hopeful rose in his heart. Why couldn't he learn the letters. Then he would know the words like Herr Arno and Kurt—"blesbleege" and all of them. He could thrash Kurt. Then he could do anything Kurt could, and beat him too. He smiled, caught his breath in his excitement and opened his lips to speak at last.

But Arno, feeling that he had waited long enough for the boy's stubborn mood to yield, turned away.

"You think it over, little man," he said, kindly, going to his bookshelves. "Perhaps you'll feel different. A fight one can't always avoid, but no one need be revengeful. That's no good. After you have cooled down we'll discuss the ethics of it again."

"Twenty!" Franzl muttered mechanically, the old, discouraged, heavy feeling settling down upon his new hopes. Turning on his heel, he was gone before Arno could speak.

"What an odd little fellow!" he thought. "Evidently his High-Mightiness Kurt will have to look out for himself."

"Ethics, ethics—oh, dear—oh dear me—ethics, twenty—twenty, ethics!" and off went poor Franzl, pursued by words as by furies.

It happened that he had an errand to do for Leni that day after he had made his rounds. The streets did not attract him as usual. His free and sunny spirit had abandoned him. Returning with his empty basket, he turned down a street which was new to him, and saw many finely dressed people entering the wide portals of a building that had no windows except in the roof. In spite of his moroseness this roused his curiosity. How did they climb up to look out the windows he wondered. It was silly to put them up there. The windows in his house should be where they belonged.

The little boy with his basket hung about the entrance and saw the people come and go. Carriages with beautiful horses and coachmen in

livery were waiting. A lady with a bright red gown passed in. Presently he saw the red gown walk out. Then they must go in to see something. How he wished he knew what. How he wished he could see it. Once he saw a fat woman and a two-headed calf in a tent.

He drew nearer and peered in. There was a round room, three little marble steps, a fountain with large-leaved plants, and in the middle a little naked gold boy with wings and a bow and arrow. There were doors hung with red curtains. The people went through the door at the right under the looped-up red curtain. What if he should go in too? Nobody at the moment was near. He stepped cautiously within the marble room. Only the little gold boy was there. There was a window like the ticket-office at the railway station, but no face behind it and no voice to tell rough boys with baskets to be off. Slowly, timidly, walking very softly, he approached the curtain, beyond which he heard the hum of many voices. He did not need to go far. From the threshold he saw.

A great procession was bearing down upon him. Far, far back, as far as he could see, they were coming on through the narrow streets, hundreds of them, and straight toward him. They had white,

strange faces, and wild eyes, and all of them were stripped to the waist, and their backs were bleeding, and they had little whips with many lashes in their hands, and they were lashing their bare white backs until they bled. They were thin and hungry men and boys. They carried banners and an outstretched child, all skin and bone. A market-girl, with a cart like his, was trying to get out of the way. There was a great church and priests everywhere, priests in the very front, and an awful one the first of all, marching on with his arm pointing at Franzl, calling to him fiercely, wanting something of him, with fierce eyes fixed on his.

Franzl was never so frightened in his life. He shrank behind the curtain trying to hide from the awful priest in front who wanted him. After a moment he ventured out again, and this time saw a broad gold picture-frame and groups of ladies and gentlemen smiling and talking together.

He was ashamed that he had thought it real. Yet it frightened him still, and the free figures in front stood out as if he could run behind them. What did that dark awful man want? What did it all mean? Why did they whip their own backs until they bled? Why did they march down straight upon everybody and have strange, wild eyes?

Gradually his glance fell upon the men and women outside the picture frame. What were they saying about it? Why did they laugh and turn away? What was there to laugh at? He hugged his basket tighter under his arm and shrank against the wall as some people passed out, glancing at him with a smile which he did not like.

He looked again. Groups had dispersed and formed anew. There was more room in front of the picture. Two ladies stood there with a boy. He wore yellow kid gloves and a sky-blue silk handkerchief over his left eye. It was Kurt. He smiled quite unconcerned, as if the backs were not bleeding, the faces white and strange, the priest with the outstretched arm terrible. Kurt pointed at something with a wise air, as if he knew all about it. His mother and Doris listened and smiled. They moved, they were coming toward the door.

Franzl fled with hate in his heart.

VII.

THE pale hungry men with their strange eyes and half-naked bodies haunted Franzl from that day. He dreamed of them, he saw the great white procession bearing down upon him whenever he closed his eyes. That foremost priest beckoned with imperious gesture from any dusky corner of the barn, advanced from dim woods in the twilight, stood out commandingly on the rolling heath, and faded in purple mists over the distant hills. But the child did not ask Leni what the picture meant. He often looked at her wistfully and was silent. For he had learned that her world was not the world of the others—of Arno and Doris and Kurt. They cared for things which did not exist for Leni. Their language had for her no meaning and no worth. His new thoughts made him less sunny and gave him no peace; but neither they nor the words and the procession would let him go. Leni thought he was growing old fast, and feeling his long questioning gaze fixed upon her, asked him one day if he was not well.

She herself began to look pale and ill. Sometimes in the morning her eyes were red. Her grave, firm face lost its repose, grew anxious and nervous. There were market days when she did not go to the city. Franzl heard the women say Lutz was making things hot for her. Often the father and daughter talked together after the day's work was done, which was something quite new, and nothing made Leni seem so tired as a talk with her father.

Franzl was strongly attached to her. Next to his little bundle of family at home, he loved her better than anyone on earth, tramped contentedly by her side going to market, missed her when long away, and was glad to come back to her quiet familiar face. He did not like to see her look so hollow-eyed. His mother had looked so, too. Sometimes he did not know whom he hated worse, Kurt von Normann or Christian Lutz.

When he first came to Waldheim he liked the city better. Wynburg was full of excitement and fascination. He approached every house on his rounds with interest and curiosity, and something pleasant almost always happened. The noise and sights of the streets were wonderful, he had much to learn, was zealous and ambitious. But now that

he had mastered his duties, thanks to Leni's good training; now that he had grown accustomed to the city, and the customers were used to his bright eager face, and the newness of all things had worn off; and most especially since he had become conscious and uneasy on account of his ignorance—sensitive, resentful, yet helpless—his instinct was to stay in his own world, where he understood what was going on, where people, even old people like Lutz and Klumpp talked more or less as he did; where young men did not, in the kindest fashion, make him miserable with words beyond his ken; and where no dandy-boys whom he could thrash stood, waving yellow kid gloves, before a wonderful picture as full of moving men as the crowded market, and grinned and looked the other way, and talked carelessly as if it was not alive and terrible.

So Franzl had his peculiar reasons for liking Waldheim and the farm better than Wynburg. He drew more within his shell each day; grew business-like and taciturn on his rounds, even with kind Nanni. Arno was out of town for a few weeks. His absence gave Franzl incredible relief, although he missed him too. If the young man unwittingly tortured the child, Franzl liked him

nevertheless, and admired him vastly. The boy's warmly affectionate heart clung more than he knew to the people who were good to him, and who were unconsciously shaping his life; Fräulein Doris, who spoke so sweetly; little Fräulein Hildegard, who was so kind, and so very astonishing with all her whims and capers. Nearly every morning he would secretly slip a little bunch of wild flowers for her behind a milk-pan or pitcher, to be discovered by Nanni after he was gone. As he was always troubled or irritated when the slightest notice was taken of it, Nanni learned to look the other way when he hid it, and not to thank him. He liked them all. He thought much of them all. But he knew now that they were "different," and therefore he would rather work all day as hard as he could on the farm than come down to the city among them, their queer words and gentle ways. They only gave him more thoughts, and it seemed to him that he already had more than he could carry. It was better in the fields with the men; it was best with Leni.

One Sunday evening Lutz had gone to the village inn to smoke his pipe and drink his beer with Andreas Klumpp and the worthies who congregated in those murky precincts. Leni and Franzl

sat at the door of the isolated farm-house which stood far back from the main-road. It was a still warm August night. Over the fields floated now and then echoes of laughter and song, voices of men and girls returning noisily from their rollicking Sunday outing in some neighboring village—approaching, passing on, leaving everything quiet as before. All was silent near the two except for the deep comfortable breathing of the great yellow Leonberger asleep at Franzl's feet. The young girl in the doorway, her elbows on her knees, her chin in her hands, stared unseeing, into the deepening shadows under the linden-tree. Franzl was wondering how long Herr Arno and the Normanns and many other customers would be away. Half of his houses were closed, and the market was so dull that he was scarcely needed down there. Where did the people go? Why did they go away from their beautiful big houses? When he had one all his own he was going to stay in it. Fräulein Hildegard said they went every summer to the sea and played on the hard sand beach, and she couldn't swim, but Kurt could. Franzl wished he knew how it looked up there, but he could swim without any sea, and better than Kurt von Normann. If he could get Kurt in the water, first

he'd duck his head and then he'd show him some tricks. He hadn't had a swim since last summer, and he loved it so! He was the only fellow in Heilig-Kreuz that could swim. There wasn't much chance up there. But he was glad his father was a swimmer and made him learn. Here there was chance enough. Perhaps Leni would let him go to the river some day, only it was so far, and there was always so much to do. He got up from the bench against the house, stretched himself and yawned audibly.

"I think I'll go to bed, Leni, I'm sleepy. We've got to do the third field to-morrow," he said, with his important and responsible air.

"Would you mind staying up a little later to-night, Franzl?" she returned, after some moments, and timidly, not in her ordinary manner.

He was a little surprised, for she usually was careful to send him off early; in fact earlier than he wished to go, but he answered promptly:

"Why, no. You see a fellow only goes to bed because he doesn't know anything else to do. I don't think much of bed anyhow."

He reseated himself with a swagger, and presently, as Leni said nothing, he employed himself in stifling a series of deep-rooted yawns.

Suddenly the big watch-dog rose and stood alert and on duty listening, his nose pointed toward the orchards.

"It is nothing, Wolf." Franzl told him.

"Keep still, little boy, I know better," Wolf responded in his own fashion.

Leni put her hand on the dog's head, murmuring:

"It is a friend. Wolf won't bark."

"Do you hear anything, Leni?"

"Not yet. He's too far; but—come Franzl, come with me. Lie down, Wolf. Take care of the house. No, you can't come. You stay here. You know who it is."

Wolf stretched his muzzle along her arm and reluctantly consented to remain.

"It's all very undignified," he protested; "but pray do as you like."

Franzl, wondering, followed Leni past the looming black barns and into the dark orchard. The girl went swiftly and noiselessly on the turf, until they were at some distance from the house.

"There, wait here," she said. "I'll go on a little. I won't be long."

"Are you going to meet Karl?" the boy asked calmly. "Georg and Rosine used to meet in the dark."

"Never mind them. Be good, Franzl. If you hear any noise from the house, sing or whistle."

"Shall I whistle or shall I sing?"

"Either. Both."

"Shall I sing 'The High Alm' or 'The Tyrolean and His Child?'"

But Leni was gone. Franzl crept under an apple-tree, where it was soft, still, and dark, and there was a mound for a pillow. He concluded to get some of his thinking done while waiting for Leni. Years after, this summer night was vivid in his remembrance, and he saw Leni's pale, pained face stealing off like a shade among the black trees, and life and his own heart taught him what it all meant. But now he reached up and filled his pockets with green, stony balls—frustrating nature's beneficent intention to transform them into dark red apples by October — and diligently gnawed them, stretched flat on his back. Fond as he was of Leni, her griefs and her romance troubled him at the moment no more than if he had been a heartless young cannibal.

He wondered idly what had happened to Pauli, and did not believe Pauli could pull the milk-cart better than he, even if Pauli was bigger. He closed his eyes and saw the crowd at the child-

market, and all the boys and girls crying: "Buy me!" grew tall and changed into the white, fierce men in the picture and this was the last he knew until he felt a hand on his shoulder.

"Franzl, Franzl, all Waldheim might come to find me and you wouldn't hear!" Leni was saying in his drowsy ears. "Get up, Franzl!" shaking him. "Wolf is cleverer than you. He's awake in an instant."

"I am perfectly awake," he declared, offended. "I was only getting some thinking done, and then I forgot a little."

She had spoken brightly and kindly. She laughed at his explanation, took his hand and hurried on till the sleepy child was nearly breathless.

"How queer you are, Leni!"

"Am I? I'm a little happier. That is all."

"Well, I wish you wouldn't go so fast that I stub all my toes. Can you see in the dark?"

"Yes, to-night. Don't be cross. I know you are tired and sleepy. We'll soon be at home. Then if it weren't too late I'd tell you something, even if you are only a little boy."

"I am strong and large for my age," he reminded her.

"I know you are, and sensible."

Mollified, he went on cheerfully.

When they reached the house, Wolf came forward a few slow steps to meet them, satisfied himself that they had returned intact from their foolish expedition, and stretching himself, like a great yellow lion, at Franzl's feet, contentedly resumed his slumbers.

"We have been good friends, you and I, from the first day, haven't we, Franzl?" she began, hesitating slightly.

"Why, yes, Leni; of course."

"Are you tired?"

"Not now. Not a bit," he returned, brightly.

"Because it is quiet to-night. Perhaps I could tell you things. Sometimes I feel as if my mouth was sealed. Then I have no one to speak to. If my mother had lived, it would be different."

"Oh, do grown people want their mothers too?"

"Sometimes more than little boys do."

Franzl had never thought of that.

"I never wanted her more than now," Leni went on, simply. "It is hard to hold out three years against your own father. I don't like cheating ways, Franzl. I haven't seen Karl to speak with him since the first day you went with the milk.

I have had to tell him something. Father is like iron. He's at me all the time now. First he said November. When I told him I'd run away first, I'd never marry Andreas Klumpp, he said he'd give me till February, and if I'm not ready and willing then, he'll turn me out of doors. Father's orderly. He has to do everything by the quarters —whether it's rents or cows or sheep, or marrying me."

"I wouldn't marry old Andreas Klumpp either."

"It is the farm, Franzl, and I don't want meadows or orchards or barns or cattle. I'd rather have the smallest house, the smallest room with Karl."

"Why, yes, I should say so," Franzl assented, cheerily. "I should too. He's young and pleasant looking and hasn't got the palsy. And then he'd be your family, wouldn't he?"

"Yes; that is what we want," the girl said, softly. "We've wanted it years."

"He'd be a great deal better kind of family, than—than anybody round here," Franzl remarked, somewhat diplomatically.

"Karl has always been my family. He came to work here like you, when he was no bigger than you, and I was a little thing."

"Did he sell himself?"

"No; he was the child of people in Waldheim. They died, and father took him to work for his board."

"Did he get fifty marks?"

"Not at first. He was always good to me. He was here when my mother died. She loved him like a son. Father never had such a worker. There's nothing Karl can't do. Father can find no fault with him except he's poor. But haven't we enough? And Karl so kind, and so industrious! It was three years ago father found out that we liked each other. He was terribly angry and sent Karl off that very night, and forbade me to speak to him. But I did not promise I'd not speak to him. It's all too old for you, Franzl."

"But I understand very well. There's nothing at all hard to understand about liking and not liking. I could tell you some things that are hard!"

"I've been useful to father. I was a young girl when mother died. People thought he'd have to have some woman here to look after things. But I did everything just as mother used. He didn't seem to miss her, the work went so well. And ever since Karl had to go and I know how hard father felt toward me, I worked still better, trying to please him. It was about a year ago he made

up his mind I should marry Andreas Klumpp, and I've worked as I never worked before. In the house, at the market, with the accounts, with the milk—and I've looked after everything, the cattle, the market-garden, the men on the farm. Wherever a sharp eye, a willing hand, and quick feet could help, they have helped my father, and he has profited by them, and he knows it. The women may say I am proud and cold and stiff, but they can't say I don't work. Nobody can."

"No they can't, Leni. You work like six."

"Well, Franzl, it doesn't do any good—and I'm tired—not of work, but of the fight between father and me. Whether we speak or not, the fight is always going on. No matter how hard and long work is, it comes to an end some time, and you can draw a deep breath and say: "That's done, thank Heaven." But if it's inside of you, if it's two people pulling in different directions under one roof, and each is tough as the other, it is awful, it tires you out soul and body. If I tell father Jenny's giving less milk, we look in each other's eyes and see Andreas Klumpp. If father tells me to ask a penny more a pound for tomatoes, neither of us can forget Andreas Klumpp."

"Confound old Klumpp!" Franzl muttered.

"He's like a black shadow over everything. And lately it is worse, much worse. Father is as hard as a rock. He is determined to force me now. When he was so silent and I was so silent month after month, I used to wish he would speak. Now he has begun to speak, I'd give my life if he'd be silent again."

"It isn't at all like a family," Franzl said, thoughtfully.

"It's bad enough."

"And if you had a little room with Karl, you'd have a warm fire and a bright light and you'd make pancakes—big ones and a great many—wouldn't you? And he would joke and laugh and you'd be smiling and listening?"

The boy's clear voice full of confidence and interest was startlingly loud in the stillness.

"Hush, Franzl, you sound like a trumpet. Don't shout that to all Waldheim. But you may be sure," she continued, with a happy little laugh at his picture, "I'd make what Karl liked, pancakes or anything else: and if I can almost manage a whole farm, year after year, when my heart is heavy, it's reasonable to believe that I could make one little room cosey and bright if I felt hopeful and glad."

"Then you must have him," Franzl declared, in a tone of positive conviction. "Cheer up, Leni. I'll help you."

Leni laughed again. Franzl was so absurd, like a strutting little turkey-cock, sometimes; but he was as good as gold, and no child was so sturdy and faithful.

"You do help me," she said, affectionately. "You have helped me from the day you came. You see last year father was at me about Andreas Klumpp, and in the winter we were both silent and sullen. One day I remembered that he never did anything for me. It wasn't often I had a wish; but if I had one, it didn't move him any more than if I was one of the cows. It seemed to me if he would do one single thing I asked, my chances would be better in other ways; but if I never was consulted, if I always was ordered and driven like the cattle and the farm-hands, why then he would be so used to my dumbness it would be worse for me in the thing I cared most for. So I made up my mind I would try to have a voice in something. Just then the Waldheim women were beginning to talk. They can't talk enough about it."

"No, they can't. I hear them."

"I feel older too. I'd always gone on doing my

work and not thinking of anything else except Karl. But now I wanted to be alone and to keep away from the women. I knew father had the largest farm except Klumpp's, and was able to hire all the help he needed, so I thought when he was going to Ravensburg I'd ask him to buy a boy for the milk-cart. I talked quiet and reasonable. I said he was a rich farmer and I his only daughter, and I was too old to go with the milk. This was how I tried to make him hear my voice, and he did. He said nothing, but he bought you. I had a feeling all the time that you would bring me good luck. I felt kind to you before you came. I wanted you. I remembered how pleasant it used to be when mother was alive and Karl was a little boy and took care of the cows. I thought a great deal about you."

"Was he big and strong like me?"

"I don't know that he was. I don't know that anybody was ever so big and strong as you feel, Franzl." After a moment she went on: "But now it doesn't seem to have helped, though he did what I asked. And all my good work doesn't help. Nothing touches him. Perhaps he bought you so that somebody would understand the milk-cart and the business after he'd married me to Klumpp.

Perhaps he didn't really hear my voice. Perhaps he only thought he'd have me train somebody to fill my place. And I have trained you well, Franzl; I've done my best, and you've done yours. He knows it, though he says nothing. He sees how I try day and night to please him. But it's no use. He's got it into his head his farm and Andreas Klumpp's farm must marry."

"When I'm a man and have a beautiful house and the other things I'm going to have, I shall help the pleasant young people against the old cross ones. I shall make the rich old men give some of their land to the young who haven't any, and I shall help the ones who want to be families."

"Ah, Franzl, then you'll be very different from the rest of the world. Up here in Waldheim father and Andreas Klumpp are only doing what the Normanns and others are doing down in Wynburg. There's Fräulein Doris. She likes Herr Arno. She has always known him. He's given her some sort of lessons too, and been a great deal in the house. He has no money and no place yet. They want to marry her to Count Rosen. His land in the country is next to the Normanns' land, but it is a sin to marry acres together instead of hearts. He's in Hannover at the officers' riding-school, and

head over heels in debt—mean debts too. But next spring there'll be trouble. She never will take him. Herr Arno is worth a dozen of him—but there, if you are poor, you haven't much chance!"

"Do Herr Arno and Fräulein Doris want to be a family too?" Franzl asked in great astonishment, picturing another warm room and more pancakes.

"Oh, dear, yes."

"Does she know about you and Karl? Is that why she comes out and asks so pleasant, 'How is Leni to-day?'"

"Of course she knows. Nanni is a Waldheim woman. She has been in the Normann family twenty years, first as nurse, then as cook. She has taken more care of Fräulein Doris than ever her mother has. And I've brought milk to the house eight years. Of course you see into things in that time. Besides, Fräulein Doris and I are the same age to the month."

"O—h," exclaimed Franzl, "you look miles older! You are so dark and sober—not that you don't look very nice, and I like you best—but Fräulein Doris is all white and soft."

"She has never worked," Leni said, simply and without bitterness. "It is work that ages women.

I've often thought of that, going to so many houses and seeing the inside of things. With us you can't sometimes tell whether a woman is twenty-five or forty. But look at Frau von Normann—she might be twenty-five."

"Well, I don't know—if she didn't purse up her lips," Franzl remarked, critically.

"But you see, Franzl, even pretty Fräulein Doris is wishing for something she can't get. Everybody is."

"I'm not."

"O Franzl, the big house."

"Yes, but I'm going to have it. There's a great difference between wishing for what you can get and for what you can't."

He did not understand why she laughed as she replied:

"Wish away, Franzl. Wish hard and work hard. You have heard a deal of grown-up talk to-night."

"Oh, I don't call this very old."

"It won't hurt you, since there's nothing to be ashamed of. I haven't been meeting Karl behind father's back——"

"Like Georg and Rosine," Franzl said, gravely.

"Or sending him letters on the sly——"

"Like Max and Luise."

"If I met Karl to-night, it was right."

"Of course. He is your real family."

"I had to see him once more, face to face. I had to tell him I had given up trying to soften father, and that he says I'm to marry Klumpp next February, or be turned out of the house. I have told Karl he must have some sort of home ready for me by that time. He must get a place somewhere, a gardener's place I'd like best, but I don't much care. He's only working in his cousin's vineyard now. He knows the farm, every inch of it. I always thought when father should see how in earnest I was, he would take Karl back. He's never had a head-man like Karl. But I've given up. I have no more hope. If father turns me adrift I shall have to go. It's hard on an honest girl to have to disobey her father. But Karl and I belong together. It would be a sin for me to marry Andreas Klumpp. I'll stay at home and not marry anybody, or I'll marry Karl. That's the long and short of it. Sometimes I think if father wasn't so very religious he might not be so hard. He's so looked up to in the church, and so particular about everything, he thinks he's always sure to be right. He thinks he's right now, and

I'm wrong, and he's prayed a great deal about it. That's why I'm tired and discouraged."

"It's a pity I'm not grown up yet," Franzl broke out, impetuously. "I'd like to send them all spinning—Andreas Klumpp and Count Rosen, and Kurt von Normann after them!"

"You'd be a terrible fellow, Franzl! Now I have told you how bad it has been, and how I wanted you to come and bring me good luck. That was only a notion, I suppose, but we've been good friends, Franzl, from the first day, and if I've had any pleasure since you came, it has been through you, and that's the truth."

She stood silent and thoughtful for some minutes, her hand resting affectionately on his shoulder.

"It's late, very late, Franzl," she said, at length. "Go to bed now."

A curious medley ran through his mind. It was strange business that all these grown people shouldn't do what they wanted. The differences then were only in the words and the picture. In the very inside of them, Herr Arno and Fräulein Doris were wishing and wishing, quite like Karl and Leni.

"Oh, if I could only hurry and be a man!" he exclaimed, vehemently. "You'd see, Leni!"

"I see that you have a good heart. Good-night, Franzl."

She had seemed prodigiously wise to the child during all this strange talk in the dark. She had spoken of things beyond his experience. Perhaps she did know after all. With an eager impulse he said:

"Leni, what is a blesbleege?"

"Where did you see one?"

"I didn't see it. The Normanns talked about it."

"Perhaps it's a French vegetable," suggested the girl, carelessly. "Nanni says they call fried potatoes *pommes frites.* Couldn't it be something of that kind?"

Franzl was motionless for some moments.

"Never mind," he said, kindly and brightly; "I don't suppose it is much of anything. And you cheer up, Leni. You shall have Karl. There's no mistake about that. Good-night," and he tramped off to his hay-bed.

VIII.

Near Wynburg was a beautiful river which seemed to have been created for the express purpose of distracting and tempting boys, and making them unmindful of their duty. Neither wide nor deep, it flowed past pretty suburban towns and villages, whose cool, green, shady gardens ran down to the water's edge, over which large trees extended rich drooping branches. The river was a veritable river, possessed of traditional and historic importance, but at this point in its career it acted strangely like an overgrown brook, eddying and prancing in a juvenile manner round a couple of islands, improvising a few cascades, dashing boisterously over some rocks, and tossing its mane beneath three bridges—a heavy, broad structure, solid as the highway; an airy suspension railway bridge; and a narrow arched one for foot-passengers only, and resting lightly on an island before spanning the other flood.

Leaning on the railing of the small arched

bridge, one sunny September morning, stood a dirty little boy with a basket of new potatoes which Leni had told him to take to a certain house far beyond the river. She had also said he was to be as prompt as possible, for business was lively at the market and she needed him every moment. Franzl thought a fellow ought to have more than two eyes to see everything that was going on that morning. Watching the two shores and the islands and the bridges kept him very busy. It was like three rings at a circus. There was a glittering troop of cavalry winding along one side of the river, a tramway-terminus with much backing and geeing of heavy horses on the other, besides a hurdy-gurdy with a monkey; the whole world and his wife were passing over the big bridge, a drove of cattle was approaching it; a train steamed slowly across the suspension bridge; on the nearer island flags were flying, a merry-go-round revolved indefatigably, and gay tents peeped from the foliage, while three swimming-schools, whose discreet if rough board walls screened the boy-bathers, let delighted whoops and yells ascend to Franzl's ears. Directly near him, on the steep green bank, a flock of sheep, alarmed by the shriek of the locomotive, had lost their leader and their

silly heads, and were plunging distractedly toward the water, instead of filing respectably along the path that led to Franzl's bridge. An angry man and a giggling boy sought to collect the scattered animals, whose panic and consistent foolishness made so delectable a sight it would have glued the very elect to the spot. A gale of laughter overcame Franzl. He put down his basket, held his sides, and tears ran down his cheeks.

If things had not been so attractive to his curious, alert young spirit, if the sun had not sparkled so on the water, if everybody had not seemed to be enjoying himself, if there had not been a merry-go-round grinding out the "Beggar Student" waltz in the most discordant yet imperatively inviting manner—while the river was the best merry-go-round of all—if he had not heard those boys splashing and shrieking behind those tantalizing boards, if—if—Mr. William Shakespeare says there's "much virtue in an if"—if, in short, Franzl had been a good little boy of a sober and plodding temperament, with ears and eyes wisely but not too well open, or if he had been a certain kind of child of stoic, Sunday-school-book mould, who would have felt, but with heroic virtue resisted, these allurements, certain events which followed might

have been altogether different—in fact, might have proved far less comfortable and happy for all concerned.

The horsemen passed, the train went out of sight, the sheep recovered their proper state of docile irresponsibility, and Franzl reluctantly took up his basket and trudged on. His cheeks were glowing hot. He had baked so long in the sunshine, it seemed to him he was never so warm in his life. When he looked at all that water, he felt that no boy on earth had ever been so warm as he at the moment. The maddening voices of those cool river-urchins followed him as he turned down a long, dusty, sultry street, and left all pleasing sights and sounds behind.

Having delivered his potatoes, he retraced his steps slowly, meditating upon many things which a stern moralist would scarcely have pronounced edifying. Reaching the river, he without hesitation turned up the shore-road instead of crossing the bridge which led to the city, his duty, and patient Leni waiting for the truant. The boys' voices ceased to irritate him, and induced merely a responsive and expectant smile. "You just wait, you fellows!" was the language of his whole personality. When he met an old woman, he wiped

his face on his sleeve in an airy and negligent manner. As he passed some men talking busily, without a glance at him, he looked the other way and whistled very loud. He also stared somewhat defiantly at a group of little girls playing with dolls under a tree.

But no one knew him, nobody stopped him; there was nothing whatever to turn him from the course which he had undertaken; and it must be admitted that, being a resolute nature, after he had once made up his mind to backslide, he backslid with great rapidity and aplomb. Farther and farther he strayed from the path of rectitude, following the shore, soon leaving the little town behind and finding green country ways—a meadow belted with poplars, and the river-bank thick with alders and willows. The dense shrubbery was what he sought, since he had no pfennigs for a dressing-room and bathing-gear, like those opulent fellows down by the island. But little cared he for that, as he quickly left clothes and basket under a bush, and plunged into the tempting depths with a rapturous sense of freedom and power, as if he could ride the crest of a wave as well as any Triton of them all.

His enjoyment was vast, and unruffled by the

faintest breath of self-reproach. His conscience for the moment was dormant. This water was what he had craved, and now that he had it, he basked and revelled and gloried in it, from the crown of his head to the tips of his toes. After some time devoted to purely physical enjoyment, an infinite variety of dolphin tricks, lazy self-communion, and the agreeable discovery that he had gained wind, strength, and stroke, he deigned to cast his eyes upon the world of which he had been utterly oblivious.

At some distance beyond his bush dressing-room, the shore curved gently toward lawns and villas, while across the little cove stood an old brown building which looked like a mill. It was the Water House of which he had heard some talk at the market. It served to regulate and control the supply of water for the mills, and was also immortalized in school-girl drawing-books, budding talent sketching from nature being often conducted to this picturesque spot. The stream near it had the reputation of treacherous currents and eddies, and was a dangerous and unlucky place for swimmers, which prudent children should avoid; but proud experts occasionally sought its whirling waters. Franzl, peering about in every direction,

thought it would be a fine thing to go up and swim in the "Whirlpool," and then brag of it. Inspired by this lofty motive, he struck out toward the Water House. Swimming into the cove, he presently perceived two or three boys walking on logs which, loosely bound together, made an insecure floor far out over the water. On the shore a little girl was hopping frantically about, and calling to them to come back. He would have recognized the motions, even without the voice, as Hildegard Normann's, and instantly, with the consciousness of Kurt's presence, Franzl's intense joy in his escapade was dead and gone. The water might have been sawdust for all the pleasure it gave him. He watched the boys greedily, the old tormenting thoughts reborn in his heart, as he saw Kurt advancing, laughing, chattering, boasting, pushing, being pushed, and calling teasing replies to the frightened little girl on shore. Franzl determined to swim nearer, "show off," and do some things Kurt couldn't for the life of him.

The boys in high glee grew more reckless every moment. Kurt was on a nearly detached log, daring the others to follow, and announcing mockingly that nobody was so sure-footed and cool-headed as he. Thus taunted, one of his friends stepped on

the other end, the log bobbed, pitched, rolled, and precipitated both boys into the water. Hildegard screamed, Franzl laughed with malicious delight, the boys talked all together, one knelt and helped his friend, who succeeded in clutching the slippery bark and scrambled into safety. He stood a dripping and discomfited figure, gesticulating, and explaining how he had happened to fall. Franzl swam nearer, laughing still and thinking it awfully good fun. Hildegard, shrieking wildly, had run up the bank for help. But where was Kurt? Franzl had not seen him rise once. The boys, too, were evidently anxious.

"Kurt!" they cried. "Kurt, come up! Don't fool any more!"

The moment Franzl became conscious that there was actual danger, he shot forward with all his strength and speed to the rescue. He was possessed soul and body by the instinct to save a human life, his every sense was on the alert.

"He's under the log," he thought, "and the current is too strong for him and he's got his clothes on."

Like a flash he turned and swam some rods below the place of the accident, plunged deep, swimming under water and under the logs. He

saw nothing and came up an instant to the surface.

"Oh, haven't you got him?" cried the frightened boys.

Franzl dived again.

With his blurred under-water vision, he perceived a big dark, indistinct mass which he with a bound approached. He clutched Kurt's hair and then his coat, swam with one arm and dragged the heavy weight—how he never knew—but he made a desperate effort to remember where the logs lay, and not lose his bearings, so that he could get to an opening as soon as possible. The current was so powerful he had to swim with it, and presently saw by the light that they were freed from their dangerous prison and could come up to the surface. With his last strength he got his right arm around Kurt, the other round a log, and hung breathless, exhausted, clutching him frantically and in mortal terror that he was dead. His face was ghastly, his eyes staring, his mouth open, his head fell helplessly forward. Franzl kept the poor head above water. Men were already gathered on the bank, and several, half-stripped, had plunged for the two children. As rapidly as they came, it seemed ages to Franzl be-

fore they removed the cold unconscious body from his convulsive embrace.

The Normanns' coachman took Kurt in his arms.

"The poor boy's dead," he exclaimed, as he bore him away; "quite dead."

"You rub him," cried Franzl, fiercely. "Don't you let him be dead!"

"Here, you brave little fellow, take my hand and come up," said one of the men.

"Who are you? What is his name?" asked several voices.

Franzl's heart was ready to burst with excitement and fear. Without a word he swam off to get rid of the strangers, but not far, for he was weak. On the bank, in the sunshine, screened by clustering bushes, he stretched himself out and grew warm again. Overcome by fatigue he slept, how long he did not know, but it was about noon he saw by the sun when he awoke. Strengthened, but still feeling queer and shaky, he swam down the stream to the spot where his little mound of personal effects, with the potato-basket as private seal on top, stood unmolested.

Soon he was crossing the bridge upon which he had loitered before all this happened. The bridge was the same, but its glamour had departed.

Nothing had any charm for him. When he reached the market, he was relieved to find that Leni had gone home. He was so very drowsy that after eating a bit of bread, he concluded to disappear under a bench where the women would not be apt to look for him, and here, concealed also by an empty meal-bag, he fell into a long, profound sleep, from which he waked refreshed and well.

All his thoughts were with Kurt. Was he dead? Must he die? When Franzl approached the Normann house that evening, his heart beat fast, and he could not muster courage to go in and ask Nanni what he longed and feared to know. He saw a little boy in the park and prevailed upon him to run up and ask the cook if the boy that had fallen into the water was dead or alive. The child went willingly, and Franzl waited, consumed by anxiety and dread.

"He's alive. They've worked over him all day. They thought he was dead. But his mother wouldn't give him up when everybody else thought he was gone. The whole family is out there in the friend's house, where his mother was making a visit when it happened. They have just telephoned the cook. She is crying and laughing like anything."

Franzl gave the astonished boy a violent shake and a hug, and resumed his homeward way, tears rolling down his cheeks. It was a matter of utter indifference to him that some boys hooted and called him "cry-baby." He experienced no desire to punch them.

The long walk quieted his excitement somewhat, and Leni, in the twilight, perceived nothing unusual in his manner as he entered the kitchen.

"Why did you stay away so long?" she asked coldly, as she gave him his supper.

"I went swimming."

"What made you do it, when I said I needed you?"

"The water made me. It put the old Nick into me, Leni."

She repressed a smile, hesitated, and finally said:

"I should have scolded you well if I'd been there when you came back to the market. But it's a good many hours since then, and—the first time you've run off. Don't do it again."

"Then you'd better not send me over there," he returned, now dwelling with delight on the remembrance of his swim.

"I would rather send you, and give you time to go in," she rejoined, quietly. "I didn't say, Don't swim again. I said, Don't run away again. It isn't business."

"You're a good one," he exclaimed, gratefully.

He found the warm soup comforting, Leni had been generous toward his misdemeanor, and Kurt was going to have his other face again, not that wet, awful one. Altogether things were happy, yet he could not help living over that terrible strain and pull.

Presently he said, in a shy, indifferent tone:

"There were some other fellows out there."

"Were there?" Leni replied, her thoughts elsewhere.

"One of them fell off a log."

"Did he?" the girl said, mechanically.

"I got his head up."

"Did you?"

"Yes, and he's all right."

There was a strong note of exultation in his voice, but Leni was not paying attention.

After a long pause he said:

"It isn't much use to hate people, is it, Leni?"

"I don't know that I ever really hated any-

body," she returned, with a sigh, "but sometimes I don't like, about as hard as I can."

"Because," continued the child, "after you hate them you have to unhate them, and then you find you've been wasting your thoughts."

IX.

Franzl's desire to see Kurt's "old" face, with its supercilious and insolent smile, was so great that he entered the Normanns' courtyard with his full cans, a good half-hour earlier than usual. He felt extremely sheepish, not in the least from overweening consciousness of heroism, but simply because he, for the first time since the day he met Kurt, did not approach the house eager to take offence and with scowling animosity seated on his brow.

He was therefore astonished beyond measure when buxom Nanni hugged and kissed him tumultuously, and Hildegard seized his hands and danced up and down and said: "Oh, dear me, oh, dear me, oh, dear me, oh, dear me!" as fast as her tongue would go, and could think of nothing more appropriate to remark. But his discomfort increased tenfold when Kurt's dreaded mamma wept over him, and poured incoherent ejaculations upon him, and Fräulein Doris smiled like an

angel and murmured, "Dear little boy! Dear Franzl!" and finally took his hand and led him along the corridor, saying:

"Papa wants you. You must come to papa."

This was the worst of all. Not like a conquering hero, but frowning and reluctant, the boy entered the Major's study and stood with the air of a culprit before the tribunal.

The tall officer rose from his chair at the writing-table, came forward with his long military step, and without a word looked for some moments at the little figure.

"My brave little man"—the voice accustomed to command a squadron, was low and unsteady—"you have made me your debtor for life." Von Normann placed his hands on Franzl's shoulders.

The boy squirmed and wished he were on the other side of the door, but presently became interested in the major's long-legged boots.

"You risked your life for my beloved son," the deep voice went on, "and you have made us a glad house this day, instead of a house of mourning."

Now, Franzl had not looked at the matter in this light, and the close proximity of the gentleman,

together with the solemnity of his tone, rendered the child hopelessly unreceptive of other people's views of his conduct as well as taciturn as to his own. Having his chin raised—a procedure which he detested—and being forced to bear a long, thoughtful scrutiny, he discovered with surprise, that in spite of the gray hair, weather-beaten face, and the bigness and awfulness of the major, he had Fräulein Doris's gentle questioning gaze.

"Such a child," murmured von Normann, "and such courage! To think what it is you have done for me—restored to me! To think that you have saved my only son's life!"

"I got his head up," Franzl admitted, in a tone which from embarrassment sounded sullen.

"Got his head up! You saved him—swam with him—pulled him along under those logs, a merciful Heaven alone knows how—and Kurt as large as you!"

"Oh, no, I'm bigger," Franzl broke out, "and a great deal stronger. I could have pulled him out if he'd been twice as heavy."

A twinkle was visible an instant in the major's eyes.

"It was not only your strength," he said, simply, it was——" He hesitated. He had the kindest

heart in the world, and a loyal, grateful spirit, and was resolved to watch and further this boy's interests always; but the good major entertained thoroughly conservative views, and disapproved of turning the heads of the lower classes even if they did save lives. The boy, it was true, with sturdy unconsciousness of the greatness of his deed, seemed to regard it merely as an exhibition of muscle. But perhaps he had had praise enough for the moment. The women would surely spoil him if they could. It would be wisest to find out gradually what would be best for him, to study his tastes, capabilities, and wishes. Physically, he was a beautiful specimen, and no man could have evinced a more gallant spirit. It was a responsibility—a sacred duty to do the right thing for him. In the meantime until graver matters should be decided, one could give the little fellow a great pleasure.

"We shall have time to talk of many things when we know each other better," the major said, amiably; "I am going to look well after you."

To Franzl this sounded ominous as well as superfluous, since he was perfectly able to look after himself. He stared and said nothing.

"But tell me some wish of yours, something

that you want very much"—the major went on in the kindest tone—"something that I can do at once to make this a happy day for you."

He waited, smiling indulgently upon the shabby, handsome boy, and rather curious to hear his reply.

"Oh, it's happy enough. There isn't anything the matter with it," Franzl answered, unabashed now that the major was asking him straight questions and not making him feel foolish.

That gentleman concluded the boy's apparent indifference might be a concession to peasant-etiquette, and waited with benevolent expectation.

"Well? What shall it be? What shall I give you?"

"Nothing," Franzl replied, his manner so simple, his glance so bold and direct, it was impossible to doubt his sincerity.

"Nothing?" repeated the major.

"Why, no," the boy returned, smiling charmingly, for he thought he would have a room like that by-and-by, with armor and guns and swords, and a big horn crosswise on the wall.

"But you really must tell me something, my dear boy," urged the major. "Give me the happiness of doing some trifling service for you to-

day. You surely have needs and wants. Everybody has. If I should propose this to my boy, he would tell me fifty things, I assure you. Don't hesitate. Don't be shy. Remember it was my darling's life that you saved. I can never, never do enough for you."

"I went swimming for fun," Franzl remarked stolidly. "They don't pay you for swimming."

"Good heavens, child," von Normann exclaimed, not without a trace of impatience at this obtuseness or opposition; "can't you understand it's my son's life we are discussing? I presume you won't deny that you saved him."

"I suppose I did," Franzl conceded, reflectively, "but I'd have gone for anybody else as quick. When you see them fall in, and don't see them come up again, you have to go for them, you know."

Von Normann gave him a keen glance, turned, and walked up and down the room.

The boy's gaze followed the stately, martial figure with approval. He would have a uniform, too, some day, with tight legs, high boots, and all.

"Let us be serious," said the Major. "I shall put some money in the bank for you to-day, for one thing."

Franzl looked quite unconcerned. The only money which he understood was money that he could see, feel, and chink.

"But we can talk of that later," the major continued, edified to observe that the child evinced no desire to occupy himself with so vague and uninteresting a subject.

"What the deuce of a boy it is!" thought von Normann. "One can make no headway with him."

"Now see here. I haven't much time."

"Neither have I," returned Franzl, pleasantly.

The major smiled, put his hands behind him, and looked down steadily at his guest.

Franzl also, very erect, and with his hands behind him, stood watching with much interest the phenomenon of Fräulein Doris's pleasant eyes under bushy gray eyebrows.

"The children call you Franzl. Franzl what?"

"Reiner."

"How old are you?"

"Twelve in January."

"Tyrolean, as I hear from your accent."

"From Heilig-Kreuz, in the Venter Thal."

"You have snow enough there, eh?"

"They have more at Vent. The avalanches

snow them up there for six or eight months. But I could come down in March from Heilig-Kreuz."

"You came down in March?"

"Why, yes, to the child-market in Ravensburg."

"Not alone?"

"I started alone—and was alone in the mountains. Down below sometimes I met people, and sometimes I didn't."

"What is your father?"

"He was a hunter and guide. He is dead—my mother too."

"Ah! No family, then? No brothers and sisters?"

"I have a family—a small one."

"But not here."

"No, not yet."

"You are with Christian Lutz?"

"Yes."

"Does he treat you well?"

"Well enough. But it's Leni I see most. She is good."

"How long do you work a day?"

"From half-past four in the morning till eight in the evening."

"Enough to eat?"

"Yes."

"Anything to complain of?"

"No."

"Hm!" said the major.

"Of course!" thought Franzl. "They always have to 'Hm' at a fellow."

"You are young to pull that cart from Waldheim to Wynburg."

"The older ones don't pull theirs better."

After a moment the major asked:

"Have you thought what trade you'd like to learn?"

"I have thought, but haven't decided yet."

"If you'll decide, I'll see to the details. I'll get you a good place at once."

"But I like it where I am. I like Leni. Then I'm sold till next March. He bought me at the child-market."

"But I could buy you on higher terms. I know Lutz. You'll find he'll sell."

"You can't sell yourself for a year, and then cut it short," Franzl gravely explained. "It would be like cheating when you measure milk. That isn't business."

The major laughed heartily.

"You are quite right, Franzl. Your logic beats mine every time. Keep your engagement, by all

means. And March is not very far off. But don't sell yourself to anybody else before coming to me. I promise to pay highest. By the way, what is the Ravensburg market-price for a fine little fellow like you?"

"Fifty marks," was the proud reply. "Only very few old boys get more."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed the major, abruptly; then again and more vigorously: "Upon my word!" but Franzl had no idea what he meant.

"Once more and for the last time, there is positively nothing that you want?"

"Oh, there are some things I want, but you see I am going to get them myself later," the child replied, with his brave young voice.

"Which means that there is nothing whatever you want of me to-day?"

"Nothing."

The major raised his eyebrows and shook his head slightly.

"Then I wish I was as rich as you, and as independent."

The boy was looking critically at a rifle on the wall.

Von Normann took it down and put it in the child's hands, saying pleasantly:

"It is too long for you, or you could have it. Would you like a small one?"

"Thank you, no," Franzl returned, with dignity. "I have one of my own at home. It was my father's, and it is quite as long as this one."

The major turned to replace the rifle and conceal a smile, asked Franzl to wait an instant, and left the room.

"Doris, my dear," he said, "that's a child after my own heart. Sturdy, sound, brave, and proud as a Spanish grandee. But peasant pride, you know. No sickly longings to rise above his station; no discontent; no desire for luxuries. Why, my dear girl, would you believe it, I have tried my best and I can't induce him to say he wants anything whatever! You must try, Doris. Perhaps you will wheedle it out of him. You'd wheedle anything out of anybody."

"I'm wheedling a deep wrinkle out of your forehead, papa," smoothing it with her soft palm. "It's a very peculiar wrinkle, and always comes when you mount your hobby that people should be contented in their stations. But I'm glad you like Franzl. We would love him whatever he was, for what he did yesterday, but he is really a lovely boy, papa."

"There is admirable stuff in him, if he doesn't get notions. I don't want him spoiled in this house, you understand."

"Oh, papa, as if you wouldn't spoil him first of all! As if you hadn't spoiled all of us!"

"That's altogether different. But we'll talk of these things later. Try to gain his confidence and help him to think of something he wants. I asked him casually, supposing he would answer on the instant like any other child. He looks so honest I must believe him, yet it is incredible that the little rascal has risen above all human wants and desires. So I'm puzzled and feel like carrying my point. No doubt you can do better with him, but don't flatter him, Doris. There is refreshing integrity in the boy."

"You wouldn't accuse me of tampering with it, would you, papa, if I should give him a large slice of bread-and-butter, spread extra thick with strawberry jam?"

"I must go," Franzl said, at once, as father and daughter returned to the study. "I must hurry, or I shall be late."

"But you'll come back? I want to see you so much, and Kurt has asked for you. He's fallen asleep again now."

"Oh, I can't. You see I ran away yesterday. I can't again to-day."

"No, we don't want any deserters," the major said, smiling. "But what have you to do?"

"There's no market. After my rounds I go home and work."

"If I make it right with Lutz? If I say I am keeping you?"

Franzl still looked doubtful.

"How will he know?"

"I'll send my Bursch."

Franzl's eyes sparkled.

"A soldier on horseback with a message about *me?*"

"Yes."

"Will he say it loud, so that all the men will hear?"

"His voice is powerful," the major said, soberly, "and I will give him special orders to roar."

"And the milk-cart?"

"Must it go back at once?"

"Of course," Franzl returned, instructively. "Didn't you know they wash the cans?"

"At least I have always hoped so," the major rejoined, meekly. "He can take it up, I suppose."

"A man in uniform with my milk-cart?"

"Yes."

Franzl flushed.

"All right. I'll come."

"When and where shall he meet you?"

"Here, at eleven."

The Bursch and Franzl were both punctual. After giving the man some lordly directions, the boy went into the house. Doris received him and led him at once into her mamma's dressing-room, where Kurt was installed in high state.

"Mamma can't let him out of her sight," the young girl informed him. "She has to look at him every instant to see that he is all there. But I don't blame her."

The room was slightly darkened; there was a mingling of sweet odors in the air, a profusion of rose-color and lace on the bed where Kurt lay—"swaddling clothes," he disrespectfully called his environment.

"I wouldn't miss this meeting for worlds!" whispered Frau von Normann to Doris.

"Hullo, Franzl, how are you?" said Kurt, with a very dreadful leer.

"How are you?" returned Franzl, with a grin.

Kurt put out his hand. Franzl took it.

"I say—that *was* a muddle!" remarked the invalid; which was all the speechifying ever made by the two upon the subject of Kurt's danger and Franzl's pluck, or any emotional phase of the accident—at least while they were cubs.

"Why didn't you come up?" Franzl demanded bluntly, after some minutes employed in a satisfying stare at Kurt's face, which had lost not a whit of its mocking flexibility.

"That's what I'd like to know myself," drawled Kurt. "I suppose I must have hit my head on the log. Papa thinks so. I don't remember a blessed thing from the moment I fell until I opened my eyes in a strange room, and mamma was crying all over me."

"I shouldn't have hit my head," Franzl asserted, with extreme arrogance; "or if I had——"

"Oh, come, now!" interrupted Kurt, hotly. "I'd just like to know how you'd have helped it."

But before Franzl could expound his theories, discreet Doris, observing signs of electric disturbances in the atmosphere, had drawn him out of the room, telling him Kurt's chest still troubled him, and talking made him cough.

Frau von Normann frequently described the scene to her chosen friends, and declared that it

was the most touching thing she ever saw, and it was no doubt in her eyes, which were all she had to see with. She always beheld her son's head in a nimbus, the radiance of which in this instance illumined his little vagabond companion. After all, Shakespeare and Goethe could only see with their own eyes; the highest and meanest of us are subject to this limitation, and when that formidable person, the critic on the war-path, seeks to drive poets and painters all in one direction, he betrays a naïve egotism, for what he really says is: "Paint your pictures of life as my eyes behold it," and this is something never yet on land or sea; for only a woman in love ever sees with somebody else's eyes—and she not for long. "*Look in thine own heart and write*," said the poet.

Frau von Normann, furthermore, was at first a little annoyed that the facts of the drowning episode were not reversed. It would have seemed to her more fitting had Kurt saved Franzl.

Even Sir Walter Scott confessed that he could not repeat a story without giving it a new hat and cane. Frau von Normann was still more liberal. But however she told her tale, the little milk-boy, to her secret surprise, invariably received the plaudits and bore off the laurels. She gradually

adapted herself to the situation, took Franzl under her wing with a graciousness which was exceedingly discomposing to him, and with the admirable mental elasticity of a certain type of mother, persisted in interpreting the whole episode as a beautiful tribute to her darling's lovableness.

"Kurt is so noble, so winning," she declared. "Everybody loves him. Think how devotedly attached to him that child must have been to risk his life for him. Really it shows unusual power of appreciation in a boy of his station. Darling Kurt!"

X.

In Doris's room, Franzl felt uncommonly comfortable. She did not ask him questions like the Major, or overpower him with grandeur and lace-ruffles like her mamma, but put him in a low chair, gave him a large dish of peaches and cream, and told him she wanted him to see her cat, for he was a very curious cat with most original ways of his own.

"Othello!" she called.

A great silver-gray Angora cat stalked majestically from the next room.

"This is my friend Franzl," the young girl politely informed him.

Franzl laughed incredulously.

"Oh, he can't understand that," he exclaimed.

"Watch him and let him do what he pleases."

Othello came directly to Franzl, sniffed boots and clothing, stood on his hind-legs with his broad soft paws on the boy's arm, scented him—hands, face, and hair—gave him a straight long

look in the eyes, turned away, and lay down at Doris's feet. There was no purring, nothing insinuating or catty, only a clear-headed, cold, and dignified inspection of the stranger.

"Why, he's like a dog!" Franzl cried.

"Indeed, he is in many respects. He will never do that again to you. He knows you now. He examines every stranger, and has strong likes and dislikes. Mamma has some visitors at whose feet he springs the moment he sees them. They are not very fond of him. He treats others with indifference, and some he likes and welcomes. He doesn't scratch, that is, he scratches Kurt but has never scratched me. He has a way of lifting his paw, curving it, and striking swiftly and hard when he is displeased. He is fond of the odor of flowers, particularly violets."

"What else does he do?" demanded Franzl, eagerly.

"He plays hide-and-seek with Kurt and Hildegard. He eats fine white bread of a particular kind for his breakfast and won't touch any other, and he doesn't like milk. You see he did not deign to notice your cream."

"But what does he drink?"

"Water, and sometimes a little soup."

"Is he your own cat?"

"Yes. He belonged to a girl friend of mine, and it's very odd, but he followed me home several times, very solemn, his tail straight up in the air like a flag-staff. Finally she gave him to me, and although she lives near us, he has never gone back once. So you see he is more attached to people than to places, and that is more like a dog than a cat, isn't it? Altogether he is a very remarkable animal, aren't you, Othello?"

"What is it you call him?"

"Othello."

"What's that?"

"He's a man in a story-book, one of the best story-books in the world. He was very kind-hearted but jealous. So is my cat. He is jealous when I write, and tries to knock away my pen, and waves his tail between me and the paper. He is jealous when I read, and calmly puts himself between me and my book and brushes my face with his tail, until I speak to him and pay him what he thinks is proper attention. He has a very expressive tail. His name used to be Peter. He didn't mind at all when I changed it."

"And you didn't say, 'Kitty, Kitty!' just now, you only said Othello once."

" You see," returned Doris, smiling. " He is a character. Another thing. Look, Franzl."

She took a bird-cage from its place at the window and put it on the floor. Othello opened his eyes lazily, blinked without apparent interest or desire, and closed them. The canary paid as little attention to him.

" He is often in the room alone with Mignon, and could easily put his paw through the wires, but never goes near him."

" Did you ever try him with the bird out of the cage ? " Franzl asked, excitedly. " Because it would be awful fun to see if he goes for him, you know. Now, if you should let the bird hop along the carpet just in front of Othello's nose while he's asleep ? "

" It might be fun for you and Othello, but I fancy Mignon wouldn't enjoy it much, and it wouldn't make me very happy. Othello is used to the cage, but not to birds hopping before his nose. While I admire his wonderfully good breeding, and his way of viewing things in the light of pure reason, he is very quick and fierce sometimes, and I don't know what wild-beast instinct might tempt him to lift that swift paw and slay my poor birdie, before he remembered what a fine civilized,

genteel cat he had become. Of course, he'd be sorry afterward, but that wouldn't help Mignon or me."

"No," Franzl admitted, regretfully, "but it would be awfully good fun."

Doris smiled and rehung the bird-cage.

"What did you call that bird?"

She told him.

"Why do you call him that?"

"It's only French for darling," she returned, carelessly.

"Oh, is that all?" he said, encouraged; "it isn't hard when you know, is it?"

Suddenly he flushed, started, looked excited, uncertain, cast a rapid glance at the pictures, at a book-case, a writing-table upon which were books and papers, at the young girl who was smiling in the sweetest, most tranquil way, rearranging some violets in a low dish on the table near her, and removing a few which Othello had not only smelled but chewed.

"Oh," Franzl broke out, "I wish you'd tell me what the great crowd of men coming down the middle of the street meant. Kurt was in front with yellow gloves. What were they doing? What did that priest, with his arm out and his head

thrown back, want? Why did they whip themselves? Why were their backs bare and bloody? Why were they so hungry and thin and white, with such awful eyes?"

Doris walked a few steps away from him.

"Dear little Franzl!" she murmured, soothingly.

"Why did they have that child, all skin and bone, on a litter? Why did they kiss his clothes? Where did they come from? Where were they going? Why were there miles and miles of them coming along behind as far as you could see?"

He had risen and approached Doris, until he stood close to her, grasping the table, scowling in his passionate eagerness, fiery and indomitable search shining in his eyes.

Doris covered his rough brown hands with her own.

"I don't know how to tell you quite, dear," she began.

The child groaned.

"Oh," he cried, desperately, "not even you!" his disappointment so intense that she hastened to say:

"You misunderstood, Franzl. I can tell you, but perhaps you wouldn't understand, because

there are things that go before and I don't exactly know where to begin."

"I don't care about the things that go before. It's those men I want to know about," he said, imperiously.

"It was a great many hundred years ago—six or seven hundred—when those men used to march through the streets in Italy."

"Is it true—what you're saying?"

"Perfectly. They thought it would please God if they whipped their backs until they bled."

"Did it?"

"I cannot believe that it did. But all over the earth, at all times, among all nations, people have been trying to find God, trying to please him, trying to find a way to heaven and life after death; and sometimes they have done very queer things, even cruel things, because when a great many men get an idea into their heads they want everybody else to think exactly as they do, and they'll fight for it and hurt themselves and other people for it, and, it's like a fever. It makes them wild, and they think nobody ought to have any way but their way of finding God. Is it too hard for you, Franzl?"

"Oh, I don't call this very hard. Were they hunting for God down that street?"

He was drawing nearer and nearer. His face almost touched hers. His eyes devoured hers. His breath was quick and audible.

She hesitated, considering how she should re-attack the subject.

"No, dear. It's not quite that. You see, there had been wars."

"Real wars? Is it true?"

"Real and terrible wars in a far-off land."

"What were they fighting about? Did those men fight?"

"Franzl, you must try not to be quite so—quick. You want the whole world all at once. The wars were about the Holy Land. The Holy Land is in the East, where Christ used to live. A great many nations sent armies to take the land away from the heathen. There were long wars and several times—seven or eight wars, and they didn't accomplish what they undertook. However, the nations became acquainted and learned useful things from one another, and a great many from the enemy too. But afterward there was confusion everywhere, because these wars had made such changes in people's minds. Besides, when the soldiers came home they brought diseases with them. There was a terrible plague. There

was a famine. Everything was topsy-turvy. Then these men that you saw in the picture started up. They declared God was angry and the only way to please him was to scourge—that is, whip the body. Baptism and the sacraments were of no use, they said, the only true religion was scourging. So they marched through the streets scourging themselves, and all the time people joined them—rich and poor—young and old. I am afraid I don't make it very clear to you, Franzl?"

"I understand very well," he said, haughtily. "Fighting isn't hard to understand. What was that priest in front doing?"

"He was motioning to the people to clear the way."

"What were they doing with that little skin-and-bone boy with his eyes sunken in?"

"He was dying, he had scourged himself so. He was almost a saint. They were worshipping him."

Franzl drew a deep breath, as if an enormous load had been lifted from him. How much or little he understood she had no idea. His face cleared, he smiled brilliantly.

"Nothing's hard when you know it," he re-

marked. "But I wouldn't have been any such fool. I'd have hit some other fellow's back. I'd have——" He did not finish his mighty boasts audibly, but was evidently satisfied with his reflections.

"One thing more, Franzl. The reason you cared about the picture, the reason you have seen it so plainly since, is because it is a strong picture. If a poor artist had painted it, you would have forgotten. But this painter—his name is Marr—felt the story and knew how to tell it on canvas and make it real; and that is why the procession comes marching down toward one and reaches so far behind, and is so moving and alive, and the figures are so strong and the faces so strained and fierce."

"Did any of them ever get well?"

"I presume so," she replied, with an amused look. "But, Franzl, I haven't told you their names. The Flagellants. That is a hard word, isn't it?"

"Words are never hard if you know what they mean," he returned, sententiously. With infinite confidence in Doris, and the rattling ease acquired by long practice, he suddenly opened fire:

"*Phyllis in-spe,*
Faun altruistic,
Incorrigible quid-pro-quo,
Æschylus catapult,
Walhalla propensities,
Bohemian Hindu,
Scylla Charybdis,
Encyclopædia,
Lupus-in-fabula,
Ganymede Berserker,
Blessbleege and *ethics.*

What do they mean, please?"

Doris broke into uncontrollable laughter.

"O Franzl, Franzl, where did you get that rigmarole?"

"Rigmarole—twenty-one — twenty-one—rigmarole," repeated the boy, mechanically. Then with a certain anxiety:

"But don't you know them?"

"I think so," she returned, laughing a little still, in spite of herself—"if you'll say them slower. I didn't quite hear all of them."

"Are they funny words?" he asked, solemnly.

"Not at all, Franzl. The reason I laugh is because it strikes me as funny for a little boy to

say them together and all at once. They are very good words. I'll tell you all I can about them."

"I didn't hear them all at once," he explained.

"No, I presume not. And why did you say them so, so—quite in that way?"

"Oh, I've been singing them, you know, going up and down the road."

"You dear child!"

"I was afraid I'd forget, so I hung on to them by my teeth. I don't forget much of anything. Sometimes I wish I could, because I can never get my thinking done, and it's tiresome. But I thought I might forget these because I only heard them a word at a time, so I strung them together to keep them."

"Where did you hear them?"

"Herr Arno said most of them. Herr Heinrich some. When they are together their talk is awful. I thought I'd have to wait till I got big, and then I could find them out myself."

"But have you asked no one? Why didn't you ask Herr Arno?"

"I did almost—once—but I don't know him as well as I do you and Leni, and he began to sling some more at me, so I got discouraged and gave it up. And there wasn't anybody else to ask except

Leni—and she's busy, you know, and she says she never minds such nonsense. I suppose that's the way she feels," he added gallantly, watching Doris, with a sudden air of defiance.

"I presume it is," she said, kindly. "How long have you stored your words away?"

"From the day I began with the milk. That was in March. Herr Arno said three that very morning."

"He would have told you them gladly and far better than I can. You must ask him next time. He would be pleased to have you ask him anything. He never dreamed that you listened or cared. Now say your words, Franzl—very slowly."

He said them slowly, loudly, emphatically, some right, some wrong, some dislocated almost beyond recognition, his eyes fixed earnestly upon hers, and she dared not laugh.

She explained them one by one, as simply and briefly as she could. It was no easy task. Franzl's interpolations were rather mirth-provoking, his comprehension of what seemed to her difficult points sometimes amazed her, while easy things were often hopelessly beyond his grasp. Toward the Greek gods he manifested considerable hostil-

ity and contempt. "Come now, Fräulein Doris," he remarked, shaking his head with an incredulous smile, "that isn't sense—they've been lying to you." But his interest was unflagging, his cheeks were flushed, his eyes always staring into hers.

She galloped through ancient and modern times, history, geography, poetry, mythology, biography, and the dictionary, and paused to take breath, wondering what manner of witches-dance she had created in the unfortunate child's brain.

"Oh," said Franzl, "I like it awfully, I wanted it more than anything. All these months they've been whirling inside my head. Words are awful things when they keep at you."

"You wanted this more than anything?" she exclaimed. "*This?* Only to be told what these words mean? It isn't possible that this is your dearest wish?"

"I wanted it deep down inside of me. When it's deep inside of you, you can't talk about it, you know. I wanted to know about the men and the words. It has been awful." He gave a long sigh of remembrance and relief.

"Oh, papa, what a shock is in store for you!" Doris thought. "This is your model-child contented with his present lot."

"Now," said Franzl cheerfully, his mental appetite unsatiated, "what is a blessbleege?"

"A what?"

"A blessbleege! Herr Arno said it to Kurt, and Kurt said it himself."

She bit her lip.

"Ah yes, I see."

She looked at him rather hopelessly. How was she ever going to explain to this milk-boy the supremely proud motto of her proud old house? She was a girl of modern and liberal ideas. No mouldy prejudice impeded her progress, dimmed her sight, dwarfed her soul, or restrained her loving, helpful hand, nevertheless she cared for the family motto. While she had no overweening vanity in her long descent, she would rather than not look back upon a fine ancestral perspective. The historical dignity of the Normanns was interesting to her, nor did it seem to her a worthless thing in the present, that the race in the past had been, taking it all in all, an honorable one. Sometimes she wondered if she were too romantic, if the merely picturesque element of lineage fascinated her, for she cherished an affection for family tradition side by side with what her father considered almost revolutionary sentiments—a sturdy disregard for social honors

and no sympathy with certain belittling rubrics which governed the women about her. If it were an advantage, a benign influence of which one might frankly be glad, to have able, honorable, and well-bred parents, then why not also be honestly thankful that one's grand-parents, great-grand-parents, and more remote progenitors were also honorable? It was certainly pleasanter and more promising than if they had been criminals. It seemed to her that this was a sensible way of regarding it, and she wished, for her part, that the whole world were so educated that each soul, not now able to look back upon satisfactory ancestors, could at least make himself worthy of becoming the noble ancestor of a future line. Aristocracy of mind and character—when all should reach it, all would be noble. As to the motto — she loved it. It meant much to her, as it had to the men and women of the race for centuries. In the family annals were brave tales how they had died for the indefinable spirit of their *noblesse oblige.*

Many such thoughts flitted through her mind. Yet, what should she say to Franzl? How could the baroness accentuate her privileges before this child destitute of all of them? How could she,

under his trustful, unfaltering gaze, expatiate upon worldly distinctions, and the dignity and virtues of hereditary nobility? It would be insolence and fatuity.

Suddenly a lovely smile from her very heart played over her face. Of what, then, was this child destitute? What had his brave soul prompted but yesterday? What did she prize in the whole ancestral vista, if not the resolute spirit, the loyal heart, the clear brain? How was any of them nobler than this poor little, untaught boy? Out of his beautiful ardent eyes, his spirit pleaded for enlightenment, for truth. Without traditions, or motto, or race, or rank, or any moral aid in his surroundings, he had done the high-hearted deed which made the milk-boy brevet chevalier. A long-dead Normann was promoted for extraordinary bravery on the field of battle. Wounded and against heavy odds, he saved the life of his friend. He did not reason or know why. Nor did Franzl. And they were equal — brothers in soul-rank; what other nobility was worth anything, or had any right to exist?

"Ah, Franzl," she said, her voice sweet and moved: "*noblesse oblige* means different things at different times, but always that the more one has,

the more one must give—that one has not one's gifts for one's self. Sometimes it means one must give love, sometimes courtesy, or silence, or speech, or work, or forgiveness, or patience, or strength—it is often indeed the thing that is hardest to give—but whatever it may be, one gives because one must, since one has received so large gifts one's self. And the most precious thing a man can give is his life, and that is what you were ready to give yesterday, because *noblesse oblige* was in your heart, although you did not know or think. You had more courage, more strength, more skill, more brain than the others—that is why you gave of them all. You were pitiful and generous, that is why you could not see Kurt drown before your eyes without risking your life to save him. And now you know what *noblesse oblige* means, Franzl."

Once more came his long-drawn, satisfied sigh. He had gradually pressed against her knee, was in her face and eyes, and almost down her throat. He was far from clean, and smelled of stables and bucolic things generally; but Doris loved him and thought him beautiful with the unfathomable clearness of his gaze, and now and then a flashing glance that startled her, it was so keen and domi-

nant, so out of place on the roundness of his pretty brown face.

"It's more comfortable when you know things. I like it awfully—your talk. But," he added, with a little explanatory air, a touch of masculine superiority and knowledge of facts—"I didn't do all those things you said. I didn't blessbleege a minute. There isn't any time, when a fellow is under water. I only went for him. You would yourself, if you'd seen him go down and not seen him come up again."

XI.

"You leave the boy to me," said the major, oracularly.

"But, papa," complained Hildegard, "between you and Doris I shan't have him at all. The other day she kept him so long, I really almost listened at the key-hole."

Kurt laughed derisively.

"Almost! I say! If 'almost' means being doubled up with your ear so close I could have shot a pea straight into it from the other side of the door, then I don't know what 'quite' means."

"Be quiet, children," said Doris. "Kurt, don't tease."

"You leave that boy to me," repeated the major, ignoring the intermezzo, and nodding his head with decision and benevolent intentions.

"I think," Frau von Normann remarked, "that the kindest thing we can do is to let him play with Kurt now and then, on a Saturday afternoon. It will be a refining influence, and——"

At this moment Hildegard, incited by one of her brother's most satanic facial contortions, choked violently and had to be sent from the table.

"Isn't she very noisy?" the major asked, with a helpless expression. "It seems to me she's always doing something."

"I made her laugh, papa. She goes off with a look, you know."

"If you call that fiendish thing a look, Kurt," Doris said, in an undertone.

"Don't lecture him, Doris, remember he's not yet fully recovered," urged his mamma. "Kurt, darling, you'd better go. You'll be late at your drawing."

"It is a great responsibility," the major went on, "our conduct to that boy. The fact that we like him personally does not simplify matters, it complicates them. It increases the danger of spoiling him. He is a bright, handsome, manly little fellow. I grant that he has become a part of us, of our thoughts and conscience, of our lives, and that we can never to the end of our days fail to consider his interests. Precisely for these reasons, I say leave him to me. Unless you want to ruin his future, want to make him a discontented, miserable hobbledehoy, neither honest peasant nor honest

anything else, don't flatter him, don't rouse longings for the impossible in him, don't weaken and confuse him, leave him where he is and where he belongs. Trust me a little in this matter, Doris. I've seen enough misery made by injudicious benevolence. Your sentiment and theories get the better of your judgment. I tell you simply I am Franzl's friend."

"He couldn't have a better friend on earth," Doris rejoined, affectionately. "Only, papa, I really don't think you or anybody else can stop him."

"Stop him? Stop him? Pray, who wants to stop him?"

"I am sure, Doris, your papa intends to do everything for him in the most generous way, and in whichever direction he manifests taste and ability. Nothing could be kinder or wiser than your papa's plans."

"But I do not propose to go so fast that the boy's head will be turned."

"If I could show you how he felt that day, papa. He was quite at his ease, I am sure, yet he only wanted to find out the meaning of things. I told you, but——"

"But you and I don't regard it in the same

light, my dear. I presume it was like fortune-telling—a kind of reflex action. I have always found that when clairvoyants, chiromancers, and all other old witches tell silly people marvellous things, the data have been skilfully extracted from the prey."

He laughed indulgently.

"No, papa, I suggested nothing. It was all his own self—his initiative; and he cared—I cannot tell you how intensely he cared. He was passionately eager."

"My dear child! When was a bright boy not curious? Curiosity is a dominant characteristic of childhood. I see nothing phenomenal in him. I observe with pleasure that he has exceptional simplicity and sturdiness. It is a healthy sign, and I like his want of greed, his all-pervading content."

"Oh, papa, papa!"

"Yes, my dear, that is it. A child who cannot be induced to mention one single thing that he wants, who evidently wants nothing, is contented. Diogenes in his tub couldn't surpass him. And I say roundly, whoever makes him discontented does him unspeakable harm. Whoever wisely aids him, not dragging him out of his own station, but helping him to become a good peasant-farmer, a good

master-workman, a good corporal, if you will, is his friend."

"How dare one say to any human spirit, 'Thus far and no farther?'" murmured the girl, thoughtfully.

"I have said nothing of the kind," returned the major, dryly. "I've made no remarks whatever to Franzl's spirit. I am merely regarding the matter from a sober and practical point of view. The problem is: how shall we best help a healthy, hearty milk-boy to become an honest and happy man?"

"A milk-boy who has proved himself a hero!"

"Precisely. Why not? Are there not heroes in the ranks? But personal bravery is not sufficient cause to make a field-marshal out of a private. There must be privates, and small farmers, and day-laborers, and all parts of the social machine. Brave? Of course they are brave. Do I underrate them? The braver they are the better for the nation, which needs true men in all classes. But it will be cruelty, not kindness, to make that boy something for which he was not meant. What is success, at best, for any of us? The sum total of a series of well-concealed failures. There's scarcely an ambitious man that

doesn't have to acknowledge to himself, after a lifetime of striving, that the game wasn't worth the candle. You leave that boy to me. He shall struggle with tools or the stubborn earth as he will, but not with ideas if I can help it. Ideas are fatal to a man such as he will be. They'll make a vulgar agitator of him. Don't rouse his ambition, which would be in his case but another name for vanity. Let him remain simple and unspoiled. Don't modernize him. Don't pervert him. I mean well by the boy. I know what I'm talking about."

"It is the old question, papa," she said, gently. "We have discussed it so many times."

"Yes, in general. Never before with a boy's future in the scales."

"Of course, Doris, you will agree to think as your papa does."

Doris laughed, went over to her father, stood behind his chair, and kissed the middle of his bald spot.

"Papa and I understand each other very well." She put her arms round his neck, her chin on the top of his head.

"That may be," he grumbled, "but if my squadron were as badly drilled and insubordinate

as my home regiment, I should be cashiered. Will you or will you not leave that boy to me, Doris? Come around where I can see you."

"May I answer his questions?"

"I have not the least objection. It is not his head I fear, it is yours."

"Ah!"

"You may go out to the farm, have him here, make him feel free and comfortable with us all. The more strongly he believes we are his friends, the better I shall like it. I simply beg you to refrain from any attempt to change the current of his ideas."

"Oh!"

"Am I to interpret your 'Ohs!' and 'Ahs!' and wise prophetic looks, and amused eyes and little impertinent smiles as assent to my request?"

"I agree to refrain from any conscious attempt to change the current of Franzl's ideas. Meanwhile I understand that I am permitted to answer any questions that he may ask me," she said, demurely.

"Conscious attempt? What does that mean, slyboots?"

"It means that I am very high-principled and punctilious in making my contract with you. If

Franzl demands explanations of me, how can I answer for ideas which my words may suggest?"

He laughed good-humoredly.

"Be tranquil upon that point. The boy's imagination is not so inflammable as you think."

"May I give him books? For instance, 'Greek Heroes,' which he has at present?"

"Oh, fairy tales won't turn him into an anarchist."

"That's your risk. Then it's a bargain. But for how long?"

"What? Must I set limits to my experiment?"

"I should think it would be fair. Because, papa, when you admit that you have failed, then it is my turn, isn't it?"

"Very good. When I admit that."

"Does a man ever admit that he has made a mistake, mamma?"

"I think not, dear. When we make mistakes they explain them to us. When they make mistakes, we are expected to ignore."

"Come, come, I'll promise to be honest. But you'll have to wait some time for my recantation," he added with a chuckle.

"Your papa is right about the boy, Doris. It would be disastrous should you interfere."

"But I have promised not to interfere, mamma. I shall merely wait."

"Papa," began Hildegard, who had stolen into the room, ashamed of her explosive exit, "everybody is talking about Franzl and nobody lets me speak, and I've thought of something perfectly splendid."

"That's right, my darling. Out with your scheme. I don't doubt it's better than your sister's. It is evident that we, one and all, wish to pilot Franzl. Now, what's your idea, Hildegard?"

"Franzl won't say what he wants, you know; and you are going to the manœuvre, you know; and when you come home it will be almost Christmas, you know; and if you would let him have three wishes for Christmas, you know, he would have time to think, you know; and everybody wants something at Christmas, you know, and that would be splendid——"

"You know!" concluded the major, putting his arm around her. "That sounds like the legitimate drama, Hildegard. You want me to play fairy-godmother, don't you?"

"Yes, and I'll tell him what he wants."

"Child, child, you too! That's exactly what

you'll not do. How you all want to unfranzl Franzl! Even this baby is a woman at heart, and intends to lead him a pretty dance. But if you'll not tell him what to wish, I have nothing against your little comedy. I should greatly like to give him a pleasure, and as you say, he'll surely have Christmas wishes."

"Then may I tell him, myself?"

"Yes, and perhaps you'll succeed better than Doris or I. If his wishes are reasonable and in my power, he shall have them. I wouldn't dare say as much to you or that rascal Kurt, but Franzl's views are more modest."

"Is it a promise, papa?"

"It's a promise, my darling."

"You hear, mamma! You hear, Doris! It is a promise and it's my own thought, and I may tell Franzl, myself."

"But not a hint, remember, otherwise I won't play. I'll refuse to be godmother."

"No, indeed, papa. I wouldn't spoil the fun for anything."

"Mind, you are not even to question him beforehand."

"Of course not. I'm not half so silly as I act."

"That's very encouraging, I'm sure, my dear. It

would be well for many people if they could say the same. Christian Lutz, for instance, although 'silly' might not be my choice of words to express his animus. I saw him this morning."

"Oh, papa, why didn't you say so before?" Doris exclaimed.

"I wanted to plan the campaign first and crush incipient rebellion."

"They crush best who crush last," she retorted.

"Isn't that silly too, papa?" demanded Hildegard, gravely.

"Undoubtedly. It is always silly to be saucy to one's papa. Lutz is a donkey and incapable of seeing beyond his own pasture! He evidently didn't want to talk with me at all, but I plainly intimated I didn't propose to ride up to Waldheim for nothing. I dismounted and kept one of his men walking my horse up and down, and Lutz finally consented to listen to me, because he saw I meant to stay until he did. He wants the boy."

"Everybody wants Franzl!" cried Hildegard, jubilant.

"I made no suggestion to shorten the boy's time with him. Franzl himself, with very proper feeling, declined that, and aside from the fact that he ought to keep his word, I don't want any sudden trans-

planting of him. He must continue to take himself simply, and everything we do must be sober, practical, and well considered."

"Do you know sometimes I detest the sober and practical," Doris remarked, with a little shrug, "and I don't think it is always very intelligent either."

"It is clever enough for an old-fashioned man like me, my dear. Lutz would agree to nothing. I told him how strong an interest we feel in Franzl, and what he had done for us. Lutz looked gloomy and said it was bad for the boy. There is no doubt he regards it as a personal misfortune that Kurt didn't drown."

"The wretch!" exclaimed Frau von Normann.

"I suggested gradually lightening Franzl's work, and proposed an indemnity. Lutz declined, flatly declaring nobody in his employ was ill-fed or badly used, and Franzl's work was his affair. He evidently wanted no interference."

"Peculiar, wasn't it, papa?"

"I told him I had plans for Franzl when his time was out. Lutz retorted so had he, and as he had taken the trouble and expense of bringing the boy up from Ravensburg he had the first claim. I assure you I was tolerably curt with the stubborn

old fool. He is selfish as sin, and hard as the nether millstone. He intends to do with that boy precisely as he thinks best, without regard for any more enlightened opinion."

The major was so absorbed in his narrative that he failed to observe his daughter's eyes and smile.

"School is in the bond. Franzl is to go in November. Lutz cannot help that, but he would if he could. Still he is what they call a strictly moral man, and he will keep his word. That sensible little Leni came out and spoke up like a man, and we together, by appealing to his cupidity, obtained one concession. Franzl may go to the Knabenhort every day, that is, to school in the afternoon and then to the Hort from four to seven. Leni urged that those last hours of the winter days could easily be spared, and I pay well for each hour. Fancy the heathen darkness of a man in this age of the world, who if he could, would prevent a boy from going to school, and condemn him to a life not far removed from that of the cattle he tends."

"It is incredible, papa!" Doris said, soberly.

"It is shameful, it is barbarous," returned the good major, with righteous indignation. "I do not know if Franzl is really valuable to him, or

whether the boy's worth increases in proportion as we show interest in him. But one thing is certain. Old Lutz is bound to be as disobliging and churlish as possible, and will do his best to keep the child in his clutches after March. However, I'm content with the results of my first mission. Franzl will go to the Hort, and it will be an excellent thing for him. If there is a charity that is wise, healthful, doing good and harming no one, it is this. There he will have a few hours every day in a comfortable place, where he'll get something to eat, learn his lessons, then read or draw or carve wood, or play games, or do anything he likes. And all the time, mind you, he won't be getting notions into his head. Boys of his own class, promising boys too, are his companions. At fourteen they begin to learn a trade. They will know enough and not too much. That's where Franzl belongs, among his peers."

"I agree with you, papa. You cannot please me more than by sending him to the Hort—for the present."

"I think," said Frau von Normann, "if you two are going to discuss these things for an indefinite time, Hildegard and I will go to drive and call for Kurt. The dear boy ought not to walk too much

to-day. I may make a few visits too; I should like to hear some interesting conversation," she added, with a slight laugh. "I am sure I approve of philanthropy as much as anyone, but it does get very dull, morning, noon, and night. I have listened patiently to the chapters upon Franzl and Lutz, but if you are now going to discuss the Hort, I'd better retire. Why do you never talk of people we know? Aren't our acquaintances fellow-creatures too? Why always these 'sons of the soil?'"

"If you make visits this afternoon, my dear," the major replied, smiling and lighting a cigar, "you will come home with the most interesting *hautes nouveautés*, and then it will be our turn to listen."

"I am flattered that you approve my course, Doris," he resumed. "It is the best place for him. It keeps the boys out of mischief. It is humanizing, educating, comforting, and——"

"Conservative, I suppose you think," she added, with a laugh.

"I trust so," he returned, devoutly. "The director impressed me as a sensible man. I heard none of your scatter-brained ideas down there. I even went so far as to ask if they ever advance a particularly bright boy to a higher school, and I

was informed—to my immense satisfaction, my dear little revolutionist—that they had invariably found such a step a misfortune for the boy."

Doris laughed merrily.

"Oh, I can hear that benevolent old owl answering you. 'Certain social prejudices, crystallized —as it were—the solidarity of existing relationships—one might say—the prevailing local tendencies and inherent idiosyncrasies—so to speak —combine to render it inexpedient to distinguish one boy beyond his mates—as it were—or make him, as one might say—conspicuous.'"

"Witch!"

"That's what he told you, isn't it?"

"Approximately—yes, and very good sense I thought it."

"Very good polysyllabic words, good mouthfuls!"

"Perhaps you'll like him better when I tell you that he knows every boy in the Hort, every face, every family. To know nearly a thousand boys individually requires special talent. Each evening he visits one branch, on some days two. He is devoted to the boys, and he declares although they are from the very dregs of the people, coarse enough, unmannerly and rough, he has not

yet found one irreclaimably vicious nature, not in the four years in which this thing has been in existence. He does not know among the hardest cases one out-and-out bad fellow."

"I do like him. I think he is goodness itself to give so much time and affection to the boys. He is always lovely, and it's only in certain lights that he is a lovely old fossil!"

"How do you know him so well?"

"I heard him talk to the boys of the St. John Hort, when I went down to give them season tickets to the swimming school. Then Herr Theobald has spoken of him."

"Ah! The director said Theobald came often and was in high favor with the boys. He can do anything he likes with them."

"Yes, he is kind," Doris said, coloring slightly.

"I am by no means sure that he has been kind to me." The major looked keenly at her. "I presume I have to thank him for a good part of your philosophy."

"I think not," she replied, gravely. "He made some things clearer to me, but he did not set me thinking."

"Who did, then?"

"You, papa."

"I? I was that scoundrel?"

"Yes, you," she repeated, softly. "You are so sure, so very sure how everything ought to be, what people ought to believe in religion, how society should conduct itself, how the poor should feel and act, that at first I began to ask how does he know, and then to wonder, and then to doubt, and then sometimes to think the contrary."

"Is it possible that I am a dogmatic old fool?" he asked, in honest bewilderment.

"No, papa, you are a darling," Doris replied, with considerable emotion in her low, loving voice. "You are the dearest, best man in the world, and nothing and nobody shall ever come between us, you may be sure of that. We may think differently sometimes. That's no matter. Thinking isn't loving. We don't love differently; we love alike and I love you dearly, and if I cannot always do all that you expect of me, at least, I will never do anything against your wish, no, not on any account, no, not for anybody—ever—ever—ever!"

As she leaned over him, he saw her eyes were wet. She stroked his cheek in her caressing fashion, kissed him warmly, and left the room.

"Bless my soul!" said the major, staring blankly at the door which she had closed behind her.

XII.

One November afternoon, Franzl, with the air of an infuriated bandit, walked into the St. John Knabenhort. As in this particular assembly of youths, a stormy brow and glaring eyes were the rule and not the exception for new-comers, his tragic manner caused no panic. The master, having successfully tamed many a fiercer desperado, had no misgivings as he motioned him to a seat.

He had come most reluctantly. At the very door, indeed, he had seriously meditated flight, but as he had let himself be persuaded by Fräulein Doris and Leni and Herr Arno Theobald, and even the major in full uniform, to at least go and see what a Hort was, he decided he might as well face the thing itself as those four persons, in case he should run away. Still he did wish they would let a fellow alone. With his heart in his boots, feeling queer and shy, he gave a tremendous knock as if he were Thor with his hammer, and entered the cheerful room, dark and terrible like a

pirate chieftain, or a Corsican with vendetta in his soul.

It was bad enough to have to go to school without having to go to another school on top of it. They all said it wasn't a school, but if it wasn't a school, then what sort of a thing was it, that's what he'd like to know, and that's what he intended to find out. Glowering at the world in general, his roving glance went on a voyage of discovery.

His neighbor on the right was a pale, fat, dough-faced boy, overgrown, unhealthy, big, and young. Franzl nudged him tentatively. The child gave him a stupid stare and continued to work at an example in simple addition on his slate, where he persistently based his calculations upon the original hypothesis that five and three are nine. Franzl not finding him a foeman worthy of his steel, peered curiously over the fat shoulder. Spying the 9, he dived at it with a wet and energetic thumb, making a fine smooch and whispering "Eight, stupid, eight!" Looking up, he met the quiet smile of the master.

"That's queer," reflected Franzl. "They hit you generally for less."

He now turned to his neighbor on the left, and inspected him as if learning him by heart. He

was a child with a hollow breast, claw-like hands, and so big a head that Franzl contemplated it on all sides with frank amazement.

The boy turned a pair of brilliant eyes toward him and smiled like a girl. Franzl, concluding not to nudge him, wondered why he had so many veins. He was reading Schiller's "Robbers," and on his slate were some algebra examples neatly done and wholly unintelligible to his inquisitive neighbor.

As the Knabenhort was nearly as gossippy as court society, it was not many days before Franzl knew why Artur looked so ill and had so many veins, and that he was the cleverest boy in the Hort, and had hip disease, and used to be well enough until one day, when his drunken mother desired to flog him with the end of a rope, he being only a very little boy, was wild with fright, and jumped from an open window of a third story. When the director heard of him, he had been lying six weeks on his back in bed, with his legs broken, and every day and all day he was alone staring at the ceiling, until his mother, who was not always intoxicated and who was very fond of him in her sober intervals, came home from her work at night. The director brought him a story-

book, the first he had ever had. He did difficult mathematical problems for amusement, and was far beyond his age and school in all his lessons. An inveterate reader, his taste in literature was exclusively for romantic poetry and adventure. Whatever was wild, exciting, improbable, replete with action and life, in short of things which he could never do and scenes most removed from his mother's poor bare room and all that he knew best, appealed most strongly to the lame boy.

Of many boys there, tales akin to Artur's family history could be told and were well known to the Director, although not in every instance of alcoholic infelicity had an open window presented itself before a frightened child, or hip disease accentuated the catastrophe. Some boys, too, were less excitable than Artur, and took their rope-ends and other parental diversions stolidly. All in all, they were good-looking boys. Some of them had the pasty color produced by poor food and bad air, many were frail, but others were defiantly rosy, and their straight features and intelligent heads would not have been amiss in more distinguished families than those which produced them. Their costumes were rather odd, the little coats, mostly philanthropic offerings, were usually too big or

too little, inclined to conceal hands, or to expose over-much bony adolescent wrists. One boy walked proudly about in a long dressing-gown buttoned to the throat to conceal the paucity of undergarments; cuffs were not the fashion at the Hort, but there was an evident struggle toward the collar-ideal.

The room was warm, brilliantly lighted, a casement was open, Franzl observed with satisfaction, as he hated to be cooped up and had longed to break a window-pane in the school-room that afternoon. Now and then somebody, after speaking to the master, went into the next room. Most of the fellows had closed their school-books and put down their slates, but Doughface, patient and content, was still cogitating upon the conflicting theories regarding five and three. Franzl wondered what they were doing in the next room. The door was open. It looked bright in there and he heard voices. They spoke here, too, without reproof from the master. Occasionally a little giggle bubbled up for an instant. Franzl had studied the walls from ceiling to floor, all the pictures and all the pegs, had discovered the boy that giggled, had counted the gas-flames, the boys' noses, and was beginning, with a friendly and interested expres-

sion to count Artur's veins, peering for this purpose close in his face, when a voice said kindly to Doughface:

"You'll get it, Hans. You have time enough. Remember you got one out all alone last week." "5 + 3 = 8," he wrote across the top of the slate.

Franzl, no more given to self-reproach than a bear's cub, could not help observing that the master did not call Hans stupid.

"Artur, come to me when you have finished that. I have a fine book for you and a puzzle. If you get it out you will do more than I can." In an undertone which Franzl heard, however. "When you are tired, go into the office. There is no one there and you can rest in the arm-chair. I'm going your way to-night. Wait for me. I want to see your mother."

Artur smiled his affectionate lingering smile, said he felt very well, seemed on terms of easy companionship with the young man, and buried his big clever head in his book again.

"Come with me, Franzl," leading the way to another room. "Knock at that window and ask the matron what she has for you. You are hungry, of course. I was always hungry at your age."

As Franzl was accustomed to hear Christian Lutz assert that boys ate more than they were worth, that one boy could eat an honest man out of house and home, and that boys were as bad as ravening wolves, the master's tolerance toward the cravings of appetite was an agreeable surprise. A thick slice of rye bread and butter, and a glass of milk disappeared rapidly in this benevolent atmosphere.

When he returned he was asked:

"Have you anything to learn for to-morrow?"

"No, I did it in school. The sums were awful easy. If you know how to reckon milk in your head, you know how to do harder ones every day, and the teacher read the Bible verse aloud, so I know it."

"Then you may do what you like."

"What I like?"

"Certainly."

"May I go home if I want to?"

"Yes. Or if you like to stay, you may read, may go in my room, may learn to draw or carve wood, use tools, play games, or exercise in the gymnasium. All that we ask is that you don't interfere with other people's comfort. In my room some of the boys are studying still, so that those

who choose to read are expected to be quiet. But if they prefer they can go into the tool-room, where it is rather lively, and in the gymnasium they can shout to their heart's content."

"There isn't any school about here anywhere?" asked Franzl, a trifle suspicious.

"No."

"Haven't you got a ferule?"

"There isn't one in the whole building."

"What do you do when a fellow cuts up?"

"Nothing. We have very little cutting up. Why should a fellow cut up when he's happy and amused."

"What would you do if a fellow wouldn't learn his school-lessons here?"

"Nothing. That would entirely concern his teacher. We give every boy the chance to study comfortably, but we don't compel him to learn. Still he'd be foolish if he didn't, wouldn't he? The truth is, the boys do their lessons first as a matter of course, and they know them better since they've had the Hort."

"Wasn't there ever a fellow who wouldn't study here?" persisted Franzl.

"Oh, yes, several. One went into the gymnasium every evening for two weeks, and would not

so much as look into the other rooms, but after that he fell into the ranks."

"What would you have done if he hadn't?"

"We should have let him dangle on the parallel bars till this day."

Franzl laughed, much encouraged.

"The boys know that we try to make things pleasant for them. It is natural they should be willing to please us, isn't it? It would be a pretty mean fellow that would take all he could get and give nothing in return, wouldn't it? At all events I have never found him, that is, after one has taken the trouble to explain the situation."

"Do you like boys?" asked Franzl, solemnly.

"Very much."

The boy contemplated him a while with a penetrating gaze, and at length said:

"May I go into every single room?"

"Yes."

"Will nobody stop me?"

"Certainly not. They will all be glad to see you. If you want to know anything, ask one of the ushers. By the way, Franzl, I've heard a great deal of you from some of your friends, and I remember seeing you several times at Herr Theo-

bald's. I placed you between Hans and Artur because I knew you to be a kind boy."

Franzl's bold air vanished. He shuffled, in considerable embarrassment.

"They are both ill in very different ways."

"Doughface too?" Franzl asked, hastily.

"Yes, Hans too. They have been unfortunate, but they are happy now. They like the Hort. Artur is our best singer. You will hear him at six. Hans is timid and a little slow. The boys like to tease him, and Artur is so small and delicate they jostle and hurt him unintentionally, when they go scuffling through the corridors. You look after them both a little, will you? I like to keep Artur till the last and take him home, when I can."

"All right," Franzl agreed, cheerfully. "I'll knock any fellow down that touches them."

"Not immediately, please," Herr Heinrich returned, smiling, "and certainly not for an accident; but I give you leave to knock any boy down who intentionally mocks Artur's lameness. I never saw but one capable of such cruelty, and I think he was sorry and ashamed after I showed him what he had done. Now good-by for the present. Amuse yourself. Remember you have the right

to go everywhere. It all belongs to you if you choose to belong to it. You are welcome in every room. Don't be afraid it's a school. It is more like a boy's club."

The bread and butter and Herr Heinrich's affability had softened Franzl's aggressive mood, and he was secretly flattered to have two boys put under his protection. Still, in spite of the apparent harmlessness of his surroundings, his previous experience of the relations of boys and men set over them in any restraining and superior position, led him to suspect an inimical element lurking in ambush, and he determined to thoroughly explore the land. Taking Herr Heinrich at his word in the most matter-of-fact sense, Franzl examined every nook and cranny of the room in which he now stood alone. Presently, somewhat to the surprise of the matron, he climbed through her window and began his intelligent survey of the kitchen. With a few trenchant inquiries, he ascertained its end and aim; that there were hundreds of portions of warm milk and bread there every morning for children who never got anything at home before going to school; that there was soup at noon and night, and beef-tea all day for invalids, and coffee in great quantities to sup-

ply the carts some kind people were sending about the streets to win men from grog-shops. Franzl did not wholly understand the system which she explained, but he received agreeable impressions of the matron and her domain, which he left, as he came, through the window.

His hands behind him, very grave and methodical, he proceeded on his tour of inspection, passing through Herr Heinrich's room, where that young gentleman suppressed a smile at the importance of the child's demeanor.

The usher in the second room was also amused at the vision that appeared on his threshold, and that subjected him and every boy and book to a long, calm scrutiny before entering. Some of the children snickered, but Franzl at the moment was master of his fate. He sauntered about, if a movement so dignified may be called a saunter, absorbed in his self-imposed task of verifying Herr Heinrich's statements. They were thus far accurate. Except a pleasant good-evening, the ushers said nothing to him. The boys were studying, reading, drawing, as in Herr Heinrich's room. There were shelves of books, and a few pictures here and there.

The next room was devoted exclusively to draw-

ing, and the boys who came in here were taught. If they preferred to draw as they pleased, and Egyptian perspective to the modern kind, they drew elsewhere. Franzl scrutinized master and pupils, plaster-casts and drawings, with his impressive air of special government-agent, and was moved to ask, pointing at a cast:

"Who is that man?"

"That is supposed to be a head of Achilles," the master responded, politely.

"I know him. He's in my book."

"Do you think you could draw him?"

"Yes," Franzl answered, without one modest misgiving. "Perhaps I'll come in and draw him some day," he added, affably, knowing no reason why he couldn't do what other boys could.

"I should be happy to see you," the master assured him.

He watched the boys in the tool-room some time, and was persuaded there was a great deal here that he could do better than anybody else. In the gymnasium he longed to show those fellows his jump, but decided to postpone his triumph, for it pleased his fancy to regard himself as a critical outsider at first and not to commit himself; besides, he was conscious of a desire to see what

Artur and Hans were doing. Satisfied with his investigations, he walked back to Herr Heinrich.

"It isn't a school," Franzl informed him, judicially. "I don't mind trying it, and I'll stay in your room." He returned to his place.

Hans, after being many times helped toward a more enlightened belief, had reverted to his original theory that 5 and 3 are 9. Franzl, with a fatherly air, seized the slate and rubbed out the entire tottering mathematical structure.

"Here, Doughface," he said, amiably, "you just do that thing right now. No use being all night about it either." Hans, with his simple docile smile began anew, his awkward fingers and dull brain guided by his well-meaning, if imperious, neighbor.

Heinrich left them to their own devices. He knew that Franzl was won and poor little Hans safe, the moment the generous, resolute boy assumed protectorship.

XIII.

WITH an open book before him, Heinrich sat looking at the little fellows, considering them individually and wondering where some, in whom he could mark change and improvement from month to month, almost from day to day, would end. After his own day's work was done he spent three hours every evening with the Hort boys, and they had become more interesting to him than billiards or the club.

He had appeared on this new field indifferent, sceptical, and merely for a few weeks, at the urgent prayer of his cousin, the director, who could not find young men enough, or the right sort of men, to interest themselves in his scheme.

The younger teachers of the gymnasium and all the better public schools were, as a class, busy men on small pay, who eked out their salaries by private lessons, and had little time and less desire, after teaching average boys all day, to devote themselves to worse than average boys in the

Knabenhort. Socially, there were curious difficulties. A duke may be careless of his worldly position, but a small German official of any description, never, and the young stiff-necked pedagogues jealously claimed their prerogative to teach boys of the better class Greek and Latin. Men from the Folk's School, they asserted, should be summoned to struggle with the roughest and most unprofitable little rascals in town. But the Folk's School teachers had these boys all day and trained them conscientiously, on the old-fashioned principle of "spare the rod and spoil the child," as well as that invective, hurled at the top of one's voice at a youngster, is the only known method of driving vulgar fractions into his head. How could they then thrash and scold six hours a day, and at 4 P.M. become calm and winning beings, actuated by sentiments wholly at variance with their own traditions and training? With such problems the good old director was greatly puzzled, until the novel and bold thought occurred to him that men not all day professionally occupied with boys, men whose nerves were not weary and irritable, and who had not learned to regard the species Small Boy as a natural enemy, would be best able to cope with the subtle difficulties of the Hort, the chief of

which unquestionably was to make the boys like it; for if they did not like it they would not come, and that was the end of the matter. School was compulsory until they were fourteen, but the government did not interfere with their right to yell and hoot and fight and run about the worst streets and alleys between daylight and dark, and hang about dramshops, and inquisitively watch the goings-on of their elders—the worst possible thing for their soul's health.

The director presented his views to the gentlemen of the committee, who shook their heads and foresaw failure, as gentlemen of committees are apt to do when confronted with an innovation, forgetting that last year's innovation is this year's habit. They were convinced that only the veritable pedagogue could appreciate the earnestness of the undertaking and establish proper discipline. But they finally agreed to let the director try his experiment—predestined they declared to failure—in one of the eight Horts.

He succeeded in pressing into the service his relative, young Heinrich, an architect just established, whose genius the world had not yet begun to recognize to an absorbing degree, and whose private income permitted him vagaries. His

friend Theobald, less blessed in this world's goods, and at their solicitation, a few other young men employed in coaching boys for various examinations, came also when they could. Both had proved successful in their new sphere, and the Hort was conducted more and more according to their ideas, which were not always those of the committee, or even of the Director. The entire council, for instance, discussed one whole evening with much fervor the question of ferule or no ferule, the majority being of the opinion that it would be impossible without it to control youths used to whacks from their cradles, at home and at school. The young men listened to the arguments *pro* and *con* with much the same feelings as if the point under discussion were, in this nineteenth century, whether the sun revolved round the earth or not; and they gained from the debate, if nothing else, a stronger realization of the marvellous tenacity of prejudice, impeding the action of good heads and hearts. But after the wisdom of ages on the subject of the depravity of youth and the holy uses of chastisement had been exhausted, Arno rose and said briefly, that he would not attempt to reply in detail to the director and gentlemen of the committee, but would merely call their attention to the

fact that he and his friends were not teachers, or men accustomed to beating small boys. They were willing to undertake the work at the Hort, provided they might be left free to exercise their own judgment as to the discipline required. They unanimously believed that these boys met with sufficient roughness elsewhere, and that the Hort, if successful, ought to be a surprise and contrast to their daily life; that, in short, he and his friends rejected the ferule. If it were insisted upon, they begged to withdraw.

The gentlemen of the committee shook their venerable heads again, differed among themselves, and took considerable time to make up their minds. They were honest and kind men who gave their services and money to the Hort, and each heartily desired its good, but if they had not systematically disapproved every modern idea, and stood firm on their moss-grown platform, they would not have been happy or felt that they were doing their duty. They had had a goodly amount of feruling themselves, they urged, and had thrived on it, and lived to be old and respectable.

"You had homes as a counteracting influence," Arno retorted. "These boys have not."

"What would you do if a big rowdy boy of

fourteen should insult you?" asked the director, whose kind heart desired peaceful ways, but whose traditions led him to base small hope on moral suasion with beings whose morals were imperceptible.

"I should probably put him out," replied Arno, "but I require no little polished stick for that purpose."

As candidates for work at the Hort were scarcely to be obtained for love or money, the directors accepted the young men upon their own terms. In four years no ferule had been used and no rowdy boy ejected. Theobald's and Heinrich's youthful pessimism and *Weltschmerz*—which they had fondly believed was intellectual—received a powerful check in contact with the worst gamins of the city. For gradually the conviction took possession of the two students of boy-nature, that for the redemption of the world, the next best thing to casting the beam out of one's own eye is helping children to cast the motes out of their eyes.

So-called charitable work with tough old sinners is apt to prove in the long run, even to the most perennially sanguine temperament, a weary and heart-sickening task. There are too many dragons to slay, and when with the best intentions one

feeds, encourages and gives to the poor and needy, one frequently discovers with dismay that one is feeding and strengthening the dragons too.

But children are the future, children are hope and promise incarnate. Children, by the grace of God, have the right to receive gifts unquestioning. The professional beggar and the professional courtier cringe and lie for small favors, but the child, with wide-eyed indifference, deigns to accept love's gift of a flower or a kingdom, and be he of high or low degree, has no gratitude in his soul. Why should he? Surely, if he finds himself by no fault of his own on this planet, he may justly claim sustenance, clothing, education, and some pleasure too, until able to take care of himself. As to gratitude, that is a cultivated attribute, attainable by but a few choice spirits — generally indeed effervescent—and utterly foreign to childhood, and the childish.

The boys of the Hort marched in, then, and took all that they could get, enjoyed themselves, and were sturdily and honestly thankless. If there was no gratitude, there was also no obsequiousness, and their unconsciousness of obligation had its own dignity. They were told the place was theirs; they took possession. Instead of learning

their school lessons as before in cold, ill-lighted rooms, amid the cries of peevish, ailing babies, and the distractions of squalor, quarrelling, oaths, and blows — warmth, comfort, quiet, and cleanliness were now provided for them. They adapted themselves to the change with the ease with which you or I to-morrow would adapt ourselves to the balmy influences of an inherited million. Food for their stomachs and food for their eager, half-starved minds were given them freely. They partook of both simply, and as their right. Sometimes the visiting clergyman told them they must be humble and grateful. It is to be feared they profited little from his exhortations. How could vigorous, thoughtless young animals, good-natured enough when let alone, fierce when attacked, perceive the true meaning of gratitude and humility.

But they were, after all, quite as humble and grateful as Kurt von Normann and his like. That favored youth was not apt to shed tears of joy over evidences of his parents' goodness, or to thank Providence for his dinner. Why then should one expect more delicacy from these little fellows? Why was it not their right to be taken care of, and made happy, and trained into honest men? Why, indeed, was it not somebody's duty to

atone as far as possible for the disease and vice, and hunger and cold that had hovered over their cradles? For all their early years had failed to show them of cheerfulness, honesty, and kindly refining things. It would really seem that a well-dressed, well-fed, well-educated man of easy means who presumes to stand before such children and instruct them that their first duty is to be humble and grateful, is totally destitute of both justice and humor. It would be more to the purpose if he should take upon his complacent self the burden of humility, and beg the children's pardon for his share of their unmerited wrongs and the world's gross neglect.

The young men learned much of the boys, grew to like and believe in them, hence gained new faith in human nature and courage for the work day by day. There was roughness enough to contend against, greed too, and astounding ignorance, but nothing wholly disheartening. If the boys cheated rather skilfully, they were no greater adepts in trickiness than other schoolboys, and like them were by no means perfidious, hardened hypocrites, but responsive to kindness and reason, administered in small doses and not in high-sounding phrases. The softening influence of the

Hort, and the power of that subtle thing *esprit de corps* on all these waifs and strays, exceeded the most sanguine anticipations. Whoever expected the boys to appreciate the trouble they were giving, to be sentimental, or to kneel and kiss their benefactors' hands, were mightily mistaken. But whoever reckoned upon their pride appealed to, fairly, now for the first time; upon their gregariousness; upon the social instinct of imitation; upon the fact that if you accost the simple child of nature civilly the chances are he gives a decent answer, and that if you make yourself disagreeable, he beats you at your own game; upon the intense satisfaction which children, rich and poor, feel in being treated with deference; upon their natural pleasure in being fed, warmed, clothed, and amused; and upon the affection and good-heartedness of the average young boy, if one knows how to approach him, was doomed to no disappointment.

Heinrich's respect for his boys increased with his knowledge of them. In retrospective and prophetic mood he looked around to-night on their bright busy faces, remembering how hopelessly coarse and bad many had seemed the first day he saw them. He knew from what dens and

holes some had come. He recognized the incalculable force for good in rousing the self-respect of the most seemingly depraved child and in not curbing his sense of personal freedom, even while suggesting the novel thought of the inviolability of his neighbor's rights. There was much which he and Arno longed to do which was not yet practicable. But they worked unwearyingly to impress upon these malleable souls that two and two make four, not only on their slates but all through nature; a simple but vast fact frequently ignored by philanthropists, who in homilies to the poor prefer to accentuate the virtues of submission and content.

To endeavor to convince the parents of the Hort boys that nothing happened without cause, in them anymore than anywhere else, would have been in vain, for they, while for the most part without a breath of real religion or any conception of moral effort, were hopelessly imbued with cant, and ready enough with pious phrases to support their ignorance and superstition. Either the Lord was angry with them and punished them, not for anything they had done, but from what in a man would be called purely personal and arbitrary motives—or "the Lord would provide," whether they

were lazy and profligate or not. Whatever their trouble, whatever their transgression, they shifted the responsibility upon the Lord's shoulders, and expected Him to step in and make good their fatuity and helplessness. That the exercise of their intelligence and self-control would not be displeasing to the Almighty, did not occur to them. If they left a child just beginning to walk, locked in a room alone with a lighted kerosene lamp on a rickety chair, it was inscrutable Providence that tipped over the chair, broke the lamp, and burned the child. The father of one of the boys, while strongly under the influence of grog, had fallen from a scaffolding and been seriously injured, and Heinrich heard him say it was the Lord's will he should fall. Another man, convicted of three most aggravatedly brutal and cold-blooded murders, informed the court that "he would leave it all to the dear Lord."

It seemed worth while, then, with no discussion of creed or dogma, to try to give the children of such parents some sense of personal responsibility, and to teach them something of the law of cause and effect, not only among the grasses, the flowers, and trees, the animal kingdom, the tides, and the stars, but in their own physical and spiritual lives.

It seemed fair to suggest to them, that pain and disease did not indicate God's wrath, but only broken laws, and that He had breathed a spark of His divine spirit into each of them, that they should develop and not smother or stultify it.

As the boys were summoned to the music-room Heinrich observed a little pantomime. Franzl piloting Artur among the hurrying coltish throng, pushed a boy of threatening size and proximity most summarily out of the way, who turned with an angry exclamation and uplifted arm, but seeing Artur, understood and went quietly on.

"Ah," thought Heinrich, "if the world would stop fighting and begin to take care of the children, it would wake some morning—after ages, it may be—and find its prisons empty."

XIV.

The Christmas-tree stood in the Normanns' drawing-room and shone with enchanting effects of color, and two hundred tapers already burned half down. The mingled odors of the pine and of choice roses floated in the warm air. The children had given the servants their presents first, prancing down the hall with delightfully mysterious packages to the group of men and women—including Leni—waiting in joyous expectation scarcely less than Hildegard's. She had presented her papa with his slippers, tarnished with some hopeless tears and precious drops of her thumb's blood, and spoken the poem which she had learned for him, and if there were queer stitches in the one gift and queer slips in the other, Doris had come to the rescue in both instances, and the little girl was triumphant.

"Now, papa," she said, "every present is given, everybody is perfectly terribly happy, and it's time for Franzl's Three Wishes. Kurt has promised not

to tease and interrupt if I'd give him my whole box of chocolate."

"How could you be such a pig, Kurt?" Doris exclaimed.

"Chocolate makes her stomach ache," he answered, indistinctly, his mouth full.

"And your own?" inquired his father.

"Oh, mine aches anyhow on the day after Christmas." He retired to a corner with his fatalism, his goodies, and one of his new books.

"Why shouldn't the dear child have a little freedom on Christmas Eve?" urged Frau von Normann.

"Since the robber-knight is gorging himself, the moment seems propitious," remarked the major. "Let Franzl tell me what he wants."

"Not tell you what he wants, papa," remonstrated Hildegard. "Anybody can do that. You promised he should have Three Wishes. That's quite another thing, don't you know that?"

"Yes, yes, my dear. I'll try to appreciate the difference."

"Oh, I do hope he's got good ones. I always thought they were stupid in the fairy-books. Do you know what I'd have said for my first wish? 'I wish that all my wishes would come true?'"

"But then there would have been no more fairy tale," suggested Doris. "You would have stopped it short. No more wishes—no more mistakes—no more happiness, no more story."

Hildegard looked puzzled.

"Oh—but—you see—I didn't think of that—and if I'd been in the story I'd have wished it to keep on forever—and—oh, dear me—Doris, you've mixed me all up!"

"The philosophy of this discussion is too much for Hildegard and me. It doesn't make us happy. Leave us a few illusions, Doris. Bring on Franzl. Where is the boy?"

"Showing his presents to Leni."

Hildegard danced down the hall and led him back, books under one arm, warm woollen things under the other, a noisy little clock in his hand, rapture on his face, and a large prune in his mouth, its brown decorations visible about his lips.

"Now, Franzl, what can I do for you?" the major asked, in an off-hand fashion.

"Oh, papa, that's not right," urged Hildegard, much distressed. "You must make a speech and everybody must be still—even mamma."

"You see, Hildegard," said a muffled voice from the corner, "I'm not the only one that spoils your

circus. You'll have to bribe them all, and you'd better hurry. The chocolates are more than half gone."

"I forgot, dear. I'll try to be more imposing," the major assured his little daughter.

"Franzl," she whispered, "put down those things and wipe your face, won't you?"

With evident reluctance, he deposited his treasures on the floor near him and rubbed his sleeve across his mouth.

Hildegard with her own handkerchief completed the ceremony, and pulled him to the spot on the carpet where it seemed to her he ought to stand, dancing about him and giving him little approving touches and pats.

Doris induced silence in the family group, and the servants drew nearer.

The major rose and said, as gravely as possible:

"I have the honor to officiate as fairy-godmother this evening in response to the prayer of a little person for whom I entertain feelings of deepest affection, as well as profound respect for her gentle thought of others."

"That's it! That's the way!" whispered Hildegard, pulling his coat-tails encouragingly.

"And I wish that my son and heir, who is stuff-

ing himself in the corner, were half as unselfish as she."

Kurt gave a malicious and chocolate-y gurgle:

"Don't mind me, papa. You'll get off the track."

"No, don't mind him," whispered Hildegard, anxiously.

The major resumed:

"It is then at the request of my daughter Hildegard that I have agreed to grant Franzl three wishes—provided they are reasonable and in my power. But if the method is hers, I may well add that nothing could give me more pleasure than to grant him the dearest wish of his heart. For he has given me and mine our dear boy's life, and our boy is unspeakably precious to us, and"—meeting the glance of Kurt's wicked, satirical eye —"and—and—a great deal better fellow than he looks to-night, at all events!"

"Hear, hear, hurrah!" called Kurt.

"Sh—h!" said Hildegard.

"I must express my appreciation not only of Franzl's courage and manliness, but also of his modesty, good sense, and"—looking pointedly into the corner—"his complete absence of greed. Few boys could or would have waited three

months, knowing I was ready any day to gladly do anything in my power for them."

"I know one that wouldn't," mumbled Kurt.

"Now, in order to make this ceremony long enough and impressive enough to satisfy Hildegard's severely classic and critical taste, permit me to inquire if your wishes are in good running order, Franzl? Have you prepared your part of the entertainment?"

"Not quite right, papa. It sounds almost as if you were making fun," expostulated the little voice at his elbow.

"I've got two of them ready," Franzl replied, promptly.

"Two?"

"I don't think of anything else."

"You are an odd boy!"

"Oh, I say, will you trade the third one?" Kurt proposed. "I'll give you my sled for it—for half of it."

"I've got a sled," returned Franzl, majestically.

"What kind of a one!" sneered Kurt. "An old box. Mine's a double runner."

"O papa, tell Kurt to be still. He promised. He doesn't belong in this at all."

"Kurt, you devote yourself to your own peculiar

joys. You can have no mortgage on Franzl's wish, or play in Hildegard's theatre. You say that you are ready to tell me two wishes, then, Franzl. For form's sake merely, because Hildegard likes me to be dignified, not because I doubt you an instant, no one has suggested either or any part of them to you, and you have mentioned them to none?"

"Nobody knows anything that I'm going to say," Franzl declared, gleefully.

"Then, my dear boy, don't keep us any longer in suspense. What is your first wish?"

The major was conscious of not a little curiosity. Hildegard, one flutter of excitement, would have been best pleased had Franzl asked for a horse with wings or a cap to make him invisible. Frau von Normann, Doris, the guests, the servants in the background, all fixed amused expectant eyes on the child, while Kurt, with a superior man-of-the-world smile, thought that if he were in Franzl's shoes he'd make their hair stand on end.

Franzl stood by the tree and faced the room in a state of rapturous and boundless excitement, not in the least on account of the wishes—he knew very clearly what he had to say—but because of the joy of this wonderful Christmas, of the beau-

tiful bright house and pictures and music—such as he was going to have when he was grown. He remembered his last Christmas and the tiny tree, and his mother smiling and asking him if it wasn't pretty and if he wasn't pleased, and suddenly dropping her head on the table and sobbing as if her heart would break. The lump had come several times that evening, he found himself so often wishing that she could see his things. He wished little puckery bundles didn't take such an awful long time to grow into girls and sisters a fellow could speak to. Sometimes he wished Loisl was as big as Fräulein Doris, and sometimes he'd like her no bigger than Hildegard, and he wouldn't mind if she were like Leni either; but it was long to wait for her to grow into a sensible kind of family that a fellow could take comfort in. As he remembered those ten pink toes, he smiled with lingering fondness, his eyes raised toward the frescoed ceiling—like what he was going to have by and by—his whole presence beautiful, unconscious, and free.

It was but an instant he paused to get his thoughts straightened out—which were tumbling over one another in the queerest way—thoughts of home, of the Hort, of the farm, of all the people

he knew, the white procession, the brook at the child-market, and Pauli's mother with the man's hat on her head.

"I wish," he began in a clear, confident voice and looking squarely in the major's eyes, "that you'd let Leni have Karl, because they want to be a family."

A suppressed frightened exclamation and the hurried opening and closing of a door were heard from the servants' group.

The major stared in astonishment at the boy who, however, gave him no opportunity to respond, but went on with calm truthfulness, every word distinct and sweet:

"You'll have to get Karl some sort of a place, you know, Herr Major. He's got to have some kind of home ready for her. A gardener's place she'd like best. But she doesn't care. She only wants to be a family. She doesn't want meadows or orchards or barns or cattle. She'd rather have the smallest house, the smallest room with Karl."

"But, Franzl," stammered the amazed major.

"There's nothing Karl can't do," continued the child, with his air of illuminated reminiscence. "Her father can't find any fault with him except he's poor. It was three years ago he turned him

out of the house, that very night. It was about a year ago he made up his mind she should marry Andreas Klumpp. When she tells her father Jenny's giving less milk, they look in each other's eyes and see Andreas Klumpp. No matter how hard and long work is, it comes to an end some time, and you can draw a long breath and say, 'That's done, thank heaven!' but if it's inside of you, if it's two people pulling in different directions under one roof, and each as tough as the other, it's awful, it tires you out soul and body. First he said November, and when she told him she'd rather run away, then he said February. The women said she'd better take Klumpp and done with it and wear a decent face on her. What did she want more than the biggest farm for miles and miles? As for Karl, she might as well give him up first as last, for old Christian never changes his mind."

"The deuce he doesn't!" muttered the major, laughing so hard that he had to wipe his eyes.

Franzl went on with the tenacity of the Ancient Mariner.

"Andreas Klumpp is sixty years old, has the palsy, a bald head, and one foot in the grave. It isn't very lively at his house. Of course Leni

can't marry him when Karl is her real family and young and pleasant-looking, with merry eyes, and they are lovers. He came to work when he was a little boy. Her mother loved him like a son. If Leni can almost manage a whole farm year after year when her heart is heavy, it is reasonable to believe she could make a little room warm and cosey and bright, if she felt hopeful and glad. It was quiet that night, so she could tell me things. Sometimes her mouth is sealed. Then she has no one to speak to. If her mother had lived it would have been different."

"Dear little Franzl!" murmured Doris.

"Have you finished?" asked the major. "Are you sure you've reeled off all of it?"

Franzl observed that they were laughing, but did not trouble himself about a trifle like that, being too much absorbed in what he had had on his mind, weeks and weeks.

"Yes, I think that's all, except perhaps you'll let Karl be your gardener or something, because he's only working in his cousin's vineyard now, and perhaps you'd give them a little room. Leni is tired of the fight, and Andreas Klumpp is like a black shadow over everything, and Lutz is hard as a rock, and she's worked as she's never worked

before; and when she knew how hard her father felt toward her, she worked still better, hoping to please him. Wherever a sharp eye, a willing hand, and quick feet could help, they have helped her father, and he knows it. The women may say she's proud and stiff — they do all the time, I hear them—but they can't say she doesn't work, nobody can. He sees how she tries day and night. But it's no use. He's got it into his head his farm and Andreas Klumpp's farm must marry. It makes Leni tired and awful old. She isn't any older than Fräulein Doris, though she looks miles older, Fräulein Doris is so white and soft. It's work that ages women. She's only young with Karl. She wants to be young and happy a little while with him. It isn't any kind of a family if you marry a man with his foot in the grave and the palsy. It's hard for an honest girl to disobey her father. But if he turns her out she'll go. She and Karl belong to each other. That's the long and short of it. She and I have been friends since the first day, and if she's had any comfort since I came it's through me, and that's the truth. She wanted me. She felt kind to me. She thought a good deal about me. She believed I'd bring her good luck, but perhaps that was only a

notion. She remembered how pleasant it was when her mother was alive, and Karl was a little boy and took care of the cows. Grown people want their mothers too. A room would do, but I think she'd like a house better." He smiled prophetically at the carving and frescoes. "Quite a small house would do for them. That's my first wish," he continued confidently, stooping to take up his clock.

"All of it?" gasped the major.

"O Franzl, you are splendid! You're a daisy boy!" cried Hildegard. "Such a beauty wish! Now, papa, it's your turn."

"I don't know that I've ever in my life been so amused," said the major.

Franzl regarded him with solemn wonder.

"We laugh because it's a surprise, dear," Doris explained.

"Yes, a great surprise," her father agreed, emphatically. "I did not anticipate this plunge into a village idyl."

"But you promised, papa, and it is his wish."

"I promised anything reasonable and in my power, my dear. This is an unexpected turn of affairs. I must consider. Upon my word I'm interested, I'm touched. It's astonishing what an

unmitigated brute that sort of man can be. He's what they call an honest man, a moral man, a thrifty man! And now he's going to sacrifice the happiness of a good, faithful daughter, and all for an idea—a selfish, soulless, mercenary, stubborn whim! He's a hard man, a very hard man. It is inconceivable!"

With a fine crescendo effect he worked himself up to a high pitch of virtuous indignation.

"It's not my matter. It's not a thing for children to settle, obviously—still——"

"But we like it, you know," cried Hildegard, "we like it terrible much, it is so grown up."

"Are you going to let Karl be your gardener?" demanded Franzl.

The major reflected.

"The more I think of it the less I see any reason why I should not give him a situation, provided he's a good man. I'm free to engage anybody that suits me, am I not? I always need extra help toward spring, don't I? I can take Christian Lutz's son-in-law as well as anybody else, can I not? Of course I do not assume any responsibility in respect of people's feelings and matrimonial intentions, but that Lutz is an uncommonly disobliging, mulish fellow. He intends to

annoy me and oppose me, and it seems, to annoy and oppose everybody else. It will be a healthy thing for him to find out others can oppose too. Upon my word I sympathize with the young people. I'll do what I can. Unmannerly fellow, that Lutz! I wish you'd heard him talk to me, or rather not talk to me, perhaps I ought to say. At all events, when he spoke, and when he didn't speak he was equally obnoxious. Why shouldn't that nice, modest, pretty girl Leni have the man she wants? Here, Franzl, here's my hand on it. You've got me into curious business, but I'll try Karl as under-gardener."

"And the house?"

"It goes with the place."

"All right," said Franzl, with a satisfied smile. "Of course I knew you would," he added, approvingly.

"Thank you," returned the major.

"Now please, papa, make them be still again for the second wish. Please *shoo* at Aunt Helene."

"Isn't one enough," asked Doris, with vague uneasiness, "so good a one too? Shan't we let Franzl keep the other till next time?"

"Why, Doris!" exclaimed Hildegard, in consternation.

"Aren't you tired of it?" Doris threw her arm round her father's neck.

"Not at all, not at all, I'm just getting into the spirit of the thing. I like Hildegard's variety-show. That boy is priceless. My appetite is fairly whetted for his next preposterously droll idea."

"It is only—I thought—perhaps——"

"What is it? Why, Doris, you are pale, aren't you?"

"It's nothing, papa, nothing that I really know." She glanced hastily round the room. There was no stranger there, only tolerably harmless aunts and cousins. She had motioned the servants to go out when Franzl began his harangue about Karl and Leni. She stooped and kissed her father's forehead."

"But Doris, if you please wouldn't interrupt!" Hildegard pleaded. "You can kiss papa any time—just when Kurt for once in his life is quiet, too!"

"Now Franzl, my boy," said the major, genially, graciously, putting one knee comfortably over the other, "what's the second one?"

"I wish," the boy began, in the simplest, most tranquil way, "that you'd please let Fräulein

Doris and Herr Arno be a family too, because she likes him, she's always known him, he's awful good to me and the other boys, and he's worth six of Count Rosen, who is at the officers' riding-school in Hanover, and head over heels in debt—mean debts too—and there's going to be trouble for Fräulein Doris when he comes back in the spring. Down in Wynburg you are doing exactly what they are doing up in Waldheim. It's a kind of trade everywhere, and it's a sin to marry lands and titles together instead of hearts; but if you are poor you haven't much chance. So I thought if you would get Herr Arno a place, some sort of a book-y place, I suppose, it would be a great deal pleasanter, and then Fräulein Doris and he needn't be wishing for something they can't get, quite like Karl and Leni. It must be uncomfortable to be always wishing and wishing," he concluded, easily.

The major had given a start and risen with the child's opening words, but Franzl was not lightly turned from subjects which he had revolved months in his busy mind. What he had come to say, he said, and as to people's looks, there was a great deal in this respect which he found queer but unimportant—if they laughed or glared at him it

didn't seem to make much difference, since he didn't know why, and they always stopped sooner or later.

"Doris!" the major said, with sternness.

"It's quite true," the girl replied, bravely.

"You did not——"

"Know? Oh, papa, could I do such a thing? I suddenly felt—feared what he would say."

"My family affairs," he muttered, staring with haughty incredulity at everybody except the culprit.

"Dear papa, come with me, come into your study, and mamma too. The dear little boy meant no harm. Don't be vexed with him. It won't be worse when we've spoken of it. Perhaps it will be better. Come," she murmured caressingly, slipping her arm in his, her voice somewhat tremulous, her face sweet and resolute, and turning on the threshold to smile at Franzl.

Left to themselves, the children held high carnival.

"Oh, you do it splendidly," Hildegard assured her chief orator and actor, pirouetting wildly about him. "It has gone off even better than I expected. Because the wish ought always to make adventures, you know; and when Beauty said she

wanted only a rose, she got everybody into trouble, and you've made Doris cry, and mamma purse up her lips, and papa terribly angry, and they are in there having secrets; and it's splendid fun, and of course Arno's millions nicer than Count Rosen; and oh, Franzl, you are such a terrible nice little boy!"

While Kurt produced his entire répertoire of grimaces to do justice to the moment, and laughed uncontrollably at what he called Franzl's 'trap to catch a sunbeam,' and rolled on the carpet and kicked his baronial legs as a relief to his feelings.

"Why, Franzl, you have told him to his face he was like old Lutz trading his daughter, and the joke of it is I don't see how he's going to get out of it. You beat me even at impudence. But I'm with you so far as Arno is concerned."

"I don't think you act very sensible," Franzl calmly observed, trying to take his clock to pieces.

"I don't want to act sensible. Anybody'd be a fool who was sensible after hearing you and papa. 'And what is it now, Franzl, my boy?' says papa, smirking as bland as you please, and off goes your bomb!"

"Well, if I had to wish, why shouldn't I wish

what I did wish?" Franzl demanded, hotly. "What are you grinning about, anyhow?"

"At papa, papa!" Kurt called, frantically. "I'm laughing at him and I can't stop if I die for it. And I'm not afraid of you, Franzl, you know, but it's no use quarrelling with me to-night, when I've laughed till I'm weak as a rag and you can batter me and drown me and make an end of me in no time, easier than ever."

"And you are full of my chocolate up to the throat, too," remarked Hildegard, with asperity.

"I don't care when grown people laugh," Franzl said, watching him, suspiciously. "They are always laughing when nobody knows why, but you make me mad."

"Kurt is a terrible tease, you know, but he isn't laughing at your wishes, really. He thinks they are splendid. He never could have thought of them himself."

"No, I couldn't!" roared Kurt, breaking out with a fresh paroxysm. "Nobody could! Oh, it's daisy—it's daisy!"

"It will all end right, you'll see," Hildegard said, joyfully; "and we've made the story, and there are two pairs of them."

"I'm acquainted with lovers," Franzl returned,

loftily. "I used to see them in the Venter Thal."

It was long before the family council adjourned. The tapers had burned low, the children sat on the floor chatting in drowsy, intermittent fashion, when the door opened and they sprang up, expectant.

Doris was pale, wet-eyed, but radiant.

The major came straight to Franzl and stood a few moments looking down with curiously conflicting emotions before speaking.

"My friend—you small but formidable man—I have concluded to grant your second wish. My daughter, with considerable effort, has succeeded in convincing me that it is reasonable and in my power. You seem to be strangely involved in the fate of my family. I shall never forget, I trust not one of us will ever forget, that your fate, so far as human power can shape it, concerns us vitally—our honor and our faithfulness."

He paused, smiling rather sadly on them all.

"I don't know whether you have made me win or lose to-night children. I hope it is all for the best."

"Why, of course," piped up Hildegard, reassuringly. "This is exactly the way it ought to be."

"It is very sudden," remarked Frau von Normann, plaintively, "and trying."

Doris stooped quickly and kissed her hand, whispering, with a mischievous smile:

"He is so very fond of Kurt!"

"Cheer up, papa," said that young gentleman, "it's an awfully good joke, you know, but you are marching out of it with flying colors. I'm proud of you, and I vote for Arno every time."

"Let it be said I have surrendered, after some pretty hot skirmishing—surrendered to youth. It has proved too strong for me. And, Franzl, I feel grateful that you have been generous and not exerted your power to its utmost limit—that you have tempered justice with mercy. I don't think I could bear another of your clever surprises to-night. I'll put that third wish down to your credit. I shall be relieved if we postpone it to an indefinite future."

"I don't mind," returned Franzl, sleepy but dignified, and stretching himself to his extreme dimensions—always his instinct when he stood near the tall major. "I don't want anything more just now. When I do, I will tell you—if I can't get it myself."

XV.

One hundred and twenty boys with their cleanest faces, their straightest backs, and their hair brushed till it stood on end with amazement, sat in long rows in the music-room of the St. John Hort. Now and then an inconsequent grin flickered along the line of preternaturally solemn countenances. The shuffling of legs inevitable in assemblies of boys, whether of blue or some other shade of blood, and doubtless inherent in the nature of the animal, was a prominent feature of this occasion; but if the bases of the little human columns were frisky, the shafts and capitals held themselves with imposing rigidity. It was rare that a giggle of the smallest dimensions broke loose, and any such impropriety was frowned down and suppressed by common consent. A child who was seized with a nervous tickling in his throat, and for his life could not help coughing occasionally, was promptly signalled what would happen to him upon leaving the building. Altogether, distin-

guished sentiments prevailed in the Hort that evening, punctilious observance of the amenities of good society, so far at least as such mysteries had been penetrated, and an uncompromising determination to show to the world that the Hort as a body had nothing to learn in respect of conduct appropriate to a Christmas festival.

The solid integrity of the Hort's demeanor was all the more praiseworthy because subjected to constant temptation. Kurt von Normann, sitting among the patrons and spectators, and shuffling his feet with as much animation as any rag-picker's son, devoted himself assiduously to the task of undermining the virtuous gravity of the juvenile assembly, and even made faces behind the broad backs of church dignitaries. While Hildegard, with her long fair hair, white hat, ostrich plumes, and white fur coat was a distracting vision and set no better example of repose of manner than a humming-bird.

Two tall pines with lighted tapers and glittering gewgaws stood on a platform at the end of the hall, and upon long tables were one hundred and twenty books, one hundred and twenty little mounds of cakes and fruit, and one hundred and twenty brown packages, each containing a box of

writing and drawing materials and three coarse printed pocket-handkerchiefs. As handkerchiefs do not grow in gutters, and few boys of the Hort had ever owned a story-book, and the value of all mundane things depends upon the point of view, the princely munificence of these gifts was destined to make many hearts beat high. Speaking with historical accuracy, there were but one hundred and nineteen boys present. The one hundred and twentieth was grumbling at home with a broken arm and some bruises, the result of over-ambitious and forbidden efforts on the high trapeze in the absence of the teacher.

There was also handsome presents for the Hort as a community, additions to the library, to the games and tools, and a few good engravings. In the background sat such parents as could be prevailed upon to come—Artur's mother quite sober and respectable—the majority pleased and proud of their children.

The ceremonies were a compromise between old and new methods. The young men agreed to defer to the conservative taste of the Committee in the opening exercises, provided they might be free to say what they pleased later. The programme then was conventional and edifying, beginning with

a few introductory remarks by the director, who stated the province and scope of the Hort, its gratifying success, the services and merits of the gentlemen of the Committee, all of whom looked bland and complacent at the tribute to their benevolence. Some of them responded by compliments to the Director, and there was considerable mutual felicitation interchanged by the grown boys before they deigned to consider the little boys sitting there in an inward fever of impatience, yet heroically straining after good behavior.

During a very long extempore prayer the restiveness of the two hundred and thirty-eight legs increased to an alarming degree. It was as if they were on the point of taking to their heels, despite the stolidity of the faces above them. The legs evidently longed to skip about the streets in the freedom of the crisp December night. But mixed sentiments — faint new-born glimmerings of respectability and pride, as well as pleasing visions resulting from a sly cock of one eye at the brown packages, during prayer-time, were not without influence, and heads won. Ornate remarks by different gentlemen followed the prayer, and a deal of well-meant advice to the boys. The visiting clergyman informed the weary, impatient lit-

tle fellows whose young lives knew blows, profanity, hunger, and cold better than food, kindness, and decency, that discipline was necessary to moral growth, and that even their kind Heavenly Father, like their earthly parents, chastised them for their good. As a living example he mentioned their absent comrade, whom he declared God had especially punished for disobedience, breaking his arm and depriving him of the Christmas-feast because he had disobediently ventured upon the high trapeze five minutes before the arrival of the teacher. The clergyman furthermore recommended them to fear God, honor the king, and always be contented in the station in which they found themselves.

His words were rather long, his phrases complex, his voice smooth and monotonous, so that the majority of the boys, already fatigued by the preliminaries, did not listen with closest attention. They had heard it all very often too. The one idea which they clearly received was that God was very angry with Max. It must be true, for a clergyman with a long coat said so. It did not seem in any respect surprising, for in their experience somebody was always angry, whatever boys did, and—except at the Hort—authority and power

were addicted to the administration of corporeal punishment and things were frequently broken; sometimes the stick, sometimes a part of the boy, it didn't matter much which. Still Max was a good fellow, and the best gymnast among them, and there was not a healthy Hort boy who, provided he got the chance, was not ready on the instant to attempt what Max had attempted. As to punishment, whether human or divine, they had always been hit and hurt physically, but it would never occur to them on this account to abandon their circus-tricks.

After the Committee and patrons had enjoyed their own fluency for some time, and told one another how wise, philanthropic, progressive, large-hearted, public-spirited, etc., etc., they all were—the boy with the dressing-gown—like old Grimes's coat, all buttoned down before—stalked superbly into the foreground, and spoke his piece in unimpeachable sing-song. The boys revived and felt that their turn had finally come. Artur limped up to the platform, stood by the piano, turned toward the guests his pale wizened face and the luminous intensity of eyes that looked as if they already saw into the Spirit Land, and unmoved by the presence of strangers, his strong, sweet soprano led his com-

rades. And how the dregs and slums sang! Like glad angels, like pure joyous beings ignorant of sin or pain, yet with that most touching quality which haunts the fresh voices of young boys.

More recitations followed, stirring tales of knights and kings, of brave deeds and high thoughts told by golden-tongued poets to the world, and interpreted by these little men according to the individual receptivity. One after another, awkward and ashamed, in their queer clothes—baggy or pinched as the case might be, but usually made for some other boy's angles—they marched up to the platform and spoke, some with a dull hang-dog mumble, others with a certain dash and freedom in the wrong place, few with any trace of comprehension and sympathy; yet the memory of Goethe and Schiller was not desecrated by their stumbling efforts.

Franzl came up last. He had learned Schiller's "Hostage." It was long, but his omnivorous memory devoured the twenty stanzas of seven lines with little effort. He did not know that it was hackneyed, and he could tell its tale of heroic friendship with great swing and warmth, as if he had discovered it. He had made his newly acquired bow, and was on the point of beginning, when

Arno motioned him to wait and Major von Normann came forward, to the ecstasy of the Hort. Every eye gleamed, and it must be confessed the rascals paid keener attention to each button and stripe of his uniform than to all the advice and admonitions thus far showered upon them.

"On the part of his Majesty the King, I have the honor and happiness to present to my young friend Franzl Reiner a medal rarely bestowed upon a child, nobly merited in this instance by Franzl, who risked his life to save the life of a boy who was not even his friend."

At a gesture from his father, Kurt came forward and attached the shining silver medal to Franzl's jacket, and Kurt's worst enemy must have admitted that he officiated in this ceremony with evident heartiness, and a most gentlemanlike bearing, while on his face was an expression of thoughtfulness and affection much more becoming than his habitual contortions. His virtuous intervals never were of long duration, however, and having distinguished himself for three minutes, he gave Franzl a slap on the back and whispered:

"Now spout, old fellow!"

But Franzl could not, for the boys were cheering and everybody was coming to shake hands

with him and crowd about him, and he never felt so bewildered in his life.

"What does it all mean?" he asked Arno.

"That you are decorated for bravery."

Franzl was prodigiously excited. There was the medal, and the King had sent it, and the King's head was on it, but he knew he could not help diving for Kurt when he didn't come up again. The ladies and gentlemen, all talking at once, confused him. He did not feel happy or clear in his mind about anything. He wanted to rush out of sight, but there was his piece. He was proud of saying the longest one, and knew he said it well.

Presently there was silence. He found himself alone on the platform. The ushers had reseated the guests. The boys' tumult had subsided. Arno nodded to him to begin.

But where was the poem? He stared at the ceiling, at the floor, at the familiar faces. He could not think of one word.

A friendly voice gave him the title and first line. Useless. It was gone, quite gone. His memory, the pride of the Hort as much as Max's muscle and Artur's voice, had deserted him.

He saw the rows of boys. They did not laugh.

It was terribly still. Hildegard gave an audible sob. He caught Kurt's eye. It was indeed an awful moment if Kurt von Normann's mocking face could wear that look of consternation.

Franzl's knees shook under him. He heard his heart beating in his ears. It seemed to him all was lost. He longed to run away where nobody would ever find him, but his feet were glued to the floor. Surely he had stood there years. Heinrich spoke, but Franzl could not understand. His throat felt parched. He moved his hand toward it mechanically and touched the medal. His stage-fright suddenly turned into hot wrath. If they hadn't given him that old medal he wouldn't have forgotten his piece. Something in the very heart of the boy rose up with dogged determination not to be beaten. He threw back his head and looked at them all, yet at no one.

"Give me five minutes," he cried, with desperate, passionate energy, "only five minutes—and I'll say it—every word!"

With a stag-like bound, he was out of the room, followed by the frantic cheers of the Hort boys, and a great stir of sympathy among the visitors. Arno and Heinrich were instantly with him. He did not reply to them, gave but one

swift glance at the open book held toward him, saw no words, only the familiar look of the lines and white spaces, drew a deep breath, smiled rapturously, sprang back to his place and began his poem, his voice clear and confident—as he went on losing himself more and more in the brave tale.

When he had finished and the boys yelled without rebuke, and the people crowded round him again and shook hands with him, and some of the ladies laughed in a queer kind way, he thought it was because he had said his piece so well, and was vastly elated, and resolved to learn one twice as long for next time.

Arno ought properly to have spoken now, but he thought the children had been held unconscionably long in leash, and he chose to let them loose upon their goodies and brown packages instead of haranguing them. A full hour passed in which they ate and gloated over their presents and were happy and unconstrained, and certainly very harmless, while now and then somebody played or sang without interrupting the joyous hum. Many of the visitors had gone when some of the older boys cried: "Herr Arno promised us a speech."

"Your fun is better than my speech."

"No, no," the Hort protested. "We like your kind of talk."

The smallest boys were summarily seated and the chattering ones effectually silenced by a self-appointed police force. In a few moments the room was still, every boy in his place, every eye raised toward Arno, who, in a kind, quiet tone, began:

XVI.

"Boys: Perhaps you think when we hear music, that we all hear it alike. We do not. We all hear the sound, but there is a music within the music which some hear better than others; while a deaf man does not know what he misses when the birds sing, and the wind sweeps through the pines as we used to hear it on our tramps in the woods last autumn. Perhaps you think that when we look at that picture of Sir Walter Scott and his dogs, our eyes see it alike. They do not. We all see the frame, the glass, the figures, but there is a meaning in the lines revealed to some more than to others; while a blind man can never know how the purple dawn chases away the night, and how tender and beautiful the sunset makes our valley and our hills. A man destitute of the sense of smell would care less than we for our violets and mignonette and lilies-of-the-valley, that we love and tend under our windows every spring, and that send their sweet breath through our

open casements until the whole Hort is full of fragrance.

When great men, like Goethe and Shakespeare, speak to us, again we do not hear alike. We all hear the words, but there is something we do not seize. Their inner thought, their spirit does not reach us all. If it did it would make us happy as a Beethoven Symphony does some of us, as that copy of the Sistine Madonna does others. And if we could comprehend all that these great souls mean, then, in one sense, we should be as great as Shakespeare and Goethe and Beethoven and Raphael. According as we understand and feel them, are we near and like them; for this we need the eyes behind the eyes and the ears within our ears.

When a man is blind or deaf, it is sad to think how much of this beautiful world he loses. It is sadder still if his inner eyes are blind, his inner ears deaf; if, with no physical defect, he is unmoved by the music we love, by the noble lines of "The Dying Gaul," which I showed you in the Art Gallery, by the great Titian we saw together, by the lofty columns and vaults of the cathedral, or by deep thoughts such as you have repeated in your poems to-day. He is the most

wretched of men, and he does not know what he misses in our wonderful world.

Boys, we cannot all sing like Artur, and some of us would never be musicians if we should study music all our lives; but most of us can learn each day to care more for and understand better what he sings and the sweetness of his voice. We cannot all draw as well as Paul, but we can become more appreciative of his work. We cannot all carve as cleverly as Robert, but we can learn to estimate more highly his diligence and skill. We cannot all lead in the gymnasium like Max, but we can admire his courage, strength, and suppleness, and the patience he shows each day in his regular exercise. We cannot all memorize as fast and easily as Franzl, but we can take pleasure in his ability and learn, as he will learn, to love more strongly and comprehend better the beautiful things he repeats to us. We all have not Otto's knowledge of insects and birds and plants, and his loving way of understanding their habits and needs, but the closer we sympathize with his intimate acquaintance with the humblest weed and moss and twig, the better for us. Few of us are so gentle and harmless as our little Hans here, but if we grow less rough and imperious and jealous, we imitate

him in the quality in which he surpasses most of us—a forgiving spirit. So day by day, as we go on doing our own work and rejoicing in our comrade's, we shall find that our inner eyes and inner ears which perceive beautiful sights and sounds are developing all the time, until we discover happiness on every side that is hidden from us now.

Boys, once we lived in caves and jungles. By "we" I mean the human race, our ancestors, in far, far-off times. We were like brutes, but there was something divine in us, something that made us wish, something that was not content to live like the beasts of the field. We wished to defend ourselves against the wild animals; we tore down branches of trees for clubs and seized sharp stones for weapons. We were cold and struck fire by rubbing sticks together. We wanted to sail on a river, we hollowed out a tree and made the first boat. When we began to use these things for our needs, that was the beginning of science and art. If we had not wished and worked and struggled, we should be living in caves to-day, provided we were living at all; but if we had not used what intelligence we had, the beasts would have devoured us, because they were the stronger. Out of the wishing of those savage cave-dwellers, and the

wishing and striving of the men that followed through the long ages, came the *Thought* of Shakespeare and Goethe and Michael Angelo and Beethoven and Newton, that ennobles the world to-day. In the depths of the poor cave-dweller's soul was hidden something akin to these mighty men. In the souls of the mightiest and best, of all grand thinkers, teachers, inventors, singers, poets, painters, heroes, saints, and martyrs, still lingers something of the cave-dweller. And you and I, boys, this night, have something of both in us, something always ready to pull us down, and make us like the brutes, something always ready to help us to rise toward heights where the great and good stand. God meant it to be so. He meant us to wish, to work, and to rise.

Wishing, then, is not wrong. But if we knew a man's secret wish we should know the man. I have overheard some of your Christmas wishes. I heard one of you wish for a sugar-candy palace. I think this was a very natural wish. The sugar palace doubtless looked pretty and tempting in the shop window. But by the wish we know that it was a very little boy who thought this, the most desirable thing that the Christ-kind could bring him. I heard another of you say that he wished he had

a horse and two big dogs. I think this a most excellent wish. Even if I did not know him, I should know he was an active, manly fellow who loved animals. I hope he may have them some day. I have no doubt that he will if he wants them enough to work well for them.

There have been legions of poor boys in this world, whose hearts were great to wish and to hold their wish against mighty odds.

Of whom must we first think when we remember poor boys this day? Of Christ, the poorest boy of all, so poor that He did not know where to lay His head. You all know the story of His life. Born in a manger; a humble child; wandering, when a man, homeless—suffering from hunger and thirst and weariness, the companion of outcasts, of wretched men and women, whom He with infinite compassion sought to help and comfort, himself an outcast; hated and scorned by the rich and strong, because His teachings disturbed their comfort—persecuted, acquainted with grief—this was the Christ who has moved the world. The world—society, as we say to-day—spoke ill of Him, because He denounced its errors, its falseness, and hypocrisy. Not only in His last supreme hours, but all His life, His soul was torn with an agony of

longing to open men's eyes and hearts to truth. Centuries have passed. Kingdoms have come and gone. Creeds have lived and flourished and died. Religions, each claiming to be Christ's own, have hated and fiercely fought with one another. To-day scores of sects proclaim Christ under different forms, and with reason, for in all the churches His pure spirit lives: not in their bishops' robes, their endowments, their rites, their prejudices or exclusiveness—not in their phylacteries, as Christ said—but in their charity. The voice of the poor boy of Nazareth has gone out over all the earth, teaching us to be tolerant, to be pitiful, and to seek truth fearlessly. This, boys, is the lesson of Christmas Day, of Christ's Day—peace, good-will to men, love, forgiveness, and fearless truth.

Martin Luther's father was, as you have read, a poor miner. Martin used to sing in the streets for bread. He was often cold, often hungry. I have told you his story. You know that he is famous all over the world for his bravery, his zeal, and his good life, and that his undaunted spirit influenced princes, powers, nations, all Europe.

Haydn, one of the greatest composers, was a poor boy. His father was a wheelwright, his

mother a cook. Rossini, another great musician, was the child of street-singers. Hans Andersen, who wrote the lovely fairy tales I have read to you — tales that have been translated into all the languages of Europe, and even into Chinese, Japanese, and Hindostanee, was a poor shoemaker's son, so ugly and awkward that he was laughed at. His early life was very hard. But he worked and wrote on. Before he died he was greatly loved and honored, and the world remembers him kindly because he has made so many little children happy. I could never tell you all the authors who have been poor. Robert Burns, the Scotch poet, was a very poor peasant. Schiller was poor, Shakespeare, it is said, was poor, so was Molière, the Frenchman who wrote the wonderful plays. You have been told something of them all.

Christopher Columbus, who discovered the New World, was a humble boy, the son of a wool-comber. He was born near Genoa, an Italian sea-port. As a boy he used to love to hang about the wharves, and have long talks with old sailors, and pore over maps and charts. When he wanted to sail westward to reach India, as he supposed, nobody would listen to him. They thought him a dreamer. He went through great hardships and discourage-

ments, but he kept his hope in his heart fifteen long years. At last he got help and sailed. On the unknown seas his men were frightened, begged to go back, wept, threatened and cursed him; but he stood firm, and after seventy days saw land, one of the Bahama Islands. Columbus's life was hard and cruel. He met with great ingratitude and died poor. But to-day we revere his divine patience, and know that his inner eyes beheld land unseen by his fellows.

So it is with the great inventors. Stephenson, the inventor of the locomotive, was a poor little English boy, the son of a colliery laborer. He was so ignorant that his wife taught him to read after they were married. When he was but fourteen he became fireman in the colliery. He delighted in machinery, and was always working and contriving something new. Finally he made his engine. It went only thirty miles an hour. We do not realize to-day how astonished the country people must have been to see it snorting through the fields, but the youngest of you can understand more or less how much his invention has benefited the world. His early life was full of privation and struggle. Afterward he built many engines, owned coal mines, and wealth and honors poured

upon him, but he never changed his simple mode of life and worked diligently always.

Richard Arkwright, inventor of the cotton-spinning machine, was also a poor little English boy, without education. He worked as barber until he was nearly thirty years old. When he was thirty-six, he made a cotton-spinning frame, by which, for the first time, cotton thread could be made by machinery, fine and strong enough for the warp or long threads of cloth, which before his time were of linen, only the weft or cross-threads being of cotton. The workmen and manufacturers tried to ruin him, because they feared his machine would cut off work, for one man with his frame could do as much work as a hundred and thirty men could before; but he succeeded in spite of everything.

Edison, the American who invented the wonderful phonograph I took you to see, and a telephone and improvements in electric light, and many marvellous things, was a poor boy with little education, who sold newspapers on a railway train. He loved chemistry, made a little laboratory, and was always trying experiments, so the people laughed at him and called him lunatic or "looney." One day he almost set fire to the train, and the conductor threw his treasures away.

He then got some old type, and printed a little newspaper which he sold to railway travellers. Now he is honored and admired all over the world. He is always wishing and working, and studying the great laws of nature, and seeing with his inner eyes what the world does not yet see.

Kepler, the famous astronomer, born as you know not far from us, had much trouble all his life, and was very poor. It did not prevent his love for science, and he found out the laws that rule the motion of the planets, by which we are enabled to tell the place of anyone of them in its orbit at any time, past or present. From these laws sprang the great discoveries of Newton, of which I have often told you older boys. Guttenberg, though not born poor, was a poor workingman. Sir Humphry Davy, the great English chemist, was a very poor boy. He did important scientific work, became honored and distinguished for his learning, and invented a safety-lamp which has saved thousands of miners' lives. For this he would not take out a patent, because his object was not to make money, but to help his fellow-men. Robert Fulton, the inventor of the steamboat and first steam war-ship ever made, was a poor boy. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, was poor. So

was Elias Howe, whose improvements on the sewing machine have caused one of the greatest, if peaceful, revolutions the world has known. Benjamin Franklin, one of the most important Americans, was a poor boy whose father was a tallow-chandler. Franklin became a learned and distinguished man, of service to his country and the world. He made many experiments with electricity, and found out how to protect houses with the lightning-rod. Giotto, the famous Italian painter, architect, and sculptor, was a poor little shepherd boy. The story is told that the painter Cimabue found him sketching a sheep on a piece of smooth slate as he was watching his flock on the hillside. Cimabue, struck with his talent, took him home as a pupil. So many of the greatest painters and sculptors were poor, humble, ignorant boys, I cannot begin to tell their names in this short time. Thorwaldsen, whose Christ we have here, was very, very poor, so was Kaulbach, so was the famous French peasant painter Millet. So were many rulers, generals, statesmen—men who have occupied positions of eminence in every field and influenced the thought of their epoch. Not a few of the Presidents of the United States were poor boys who grew to be strong men. Of these, Abraham Lincoln is the

one whose story we in Germany know best, and whose memory we most revere. For he was not only a great ruler, but a wise and lofty spirit, full of tolerance, of compassion, and comprehension. Everywhere we look, we find poor boys who have become great and helpful to humanity. Moses and scores of Bible heroes ; Socrates and Aristotle, of whom I have told you and who were among the greatest men who ever lived, and many other Greek philosophers. The travellers and explorers, too. Stanley, whose "Dark Continent" is in our library, was a poor-house child. Monarchs are glad to do him honor to-day, because he has opened a new world to us and has exhibited marvellous fortitude, force of will, brain-power, and manliness.

Some of these names you know. Some you do not—which does not matter. You will know them the sooner for hearing them. It is a pity to mention them so briefly, for some of these men's struggles have been so vast, so pathetic and heroic, they would touch your hearts and make you love and honor the human race, because it has produced so brave souls. But we shall have time to speak of them later.

They are but a few taken at random from the

vast army of poor boys that has advanced the progress of the world. How did they do it? They wished, and they worked with the strong unconquerable will that gave them courage and patience to contend with obstacles. When rich men have been great—and rich men also have been great and good—they too have worked. No great soul ever lived a life of ease and indolence. Cæsar and Titian and Bismarck were not poor men, but they worked more than most poor men ever dreamed of working. Holbein and Dürer, and ages ago, great Phidias and Praxiteles, were not poor, but they also wished and willed and worked patiently to fix their thought on canvas and in marble. For, remember, great artists and great thinkers, not alone men with spades and trowels, are *workers*.

Looking back, then, at the wishers, you will see that it is worth while to wish. Our wishes change. Perhaps by next Christmas, Fritzchen will not want the sugar palace most. It is good that we can begin each day fresh, and if our wish is small make it larger. Wish for knowledge, and you will get it. Wish for wealth, and you may get it. Neither the one nor the other is in itself valuable, but only as means toward an end, that is, only as

you are in right relations to your fellowmen, only as you are large toward them, and just and helpful. We hear much talk nowadays — you boys hear it also I am sure—about labor and capital, and some very wild ideas about capitalists. There are many capitalists who do a vast amount of good, who have worked hard for their money and who have earned it honestly, and it is as much theirs as the bit of silver belongs to one of you that somebody gives him for running on an errand. It would then be your capital. You would not thank anybody for taking it away from you, because he had earned nothing. Before we hate people for being what we unjustly call more lucky than we, let us consider candidly what immeasurable good such men as the Rothschilds and Sir Moses Montefiore have done in the world; for they have fed the hungry and clothed the poor, and educated and comforted and sustained in private as well as public charities, and while giving poise to kingdoms, have often not let their right hand know what their left had done, in loving, helpful, secret deeds. And therefore, boys, although there are higher and happier goals than wealth alone, set your ambition on becoming capitalists rather than bootblacks; for believe me—as much abused

as capitalists are at the moment, they do more good in the world.

When ten boys run a race, not all can win. One will run fastest. We know that beforehand. If the ten could run alike, there would be no race. But if the one who is beaten worst can forgive the victor, can keep his temper and feel no hate or jealousy, although he really wanted to win, he has done something better than all the fast running in the world. He has climbed far from the caves. So it is in all your play, so it is in your lessons, and so will it be when you are men.

Looking upon all your familiar faces, I see among you boys from families professing the Protestant, Catholic, and Hebrew faiths. For any boy who wishes can come here without distinction of creed, and we of the Hort believe that in all religions, in all nations, at all times, there have been and are great and good men. In opening our doors to all, we feel that we follow the teachings of Christ and of all true lovers of mankind.

What are the mottoes on our walls?

Coarse rice for food, water to drink, the bended arm for a pillow, happiness may be enjoyed even with these, but without virtue, both riches and honor seem to me like the passing cloud.

Who said this? Confucius, the great Chinese teacher, who lived a noble and beautiful life more than five hundred years before Christ.

Faithfulness and sincerity are the highest things, he said too, and also that excellent motto for us workers:

If I am building a house and stop before the last basketful of earth is placed on the summit, I have failed of my work. But if I have placed but one basketful on the plain, and go on, I am really building a mountain.

If it is not right, do not do it; if it is not true, do not say it, said the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, and that is so simple that the very youngest of you can remember and understand it.

What said Zoroaster, the Persian who lived, some scholars believe, many thousand years before Christ?

Think purely, speak purely, act purely.

Is not that as good for the Hort to-day as it was for the Persians, thousands of years ago?

Out of the ancient religions of India we have taken from the Brahmans:

The soul itself is its own witness, the soul itself is its own refuge. Offend not thy conscious soul—the supreme internal witness of men.

And from the Buddhists :

I take my refuge in thy Law of Good.

I take my refuge in thy Order.

There, on the south wall, we have an Egyptian motto written four thousand years ago or more :

Man's heart rules the man. The bad man's heart is what the wise know to be death. He who made us is present with us, though we are alone.

Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life, says the Old Testament, and again :

Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I climb up into heaven thou art there, if I go down into the abyss, thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall cover me.

While Christ, whose birth we commemorate in our festival this evening, gives us many divinely helpful words :

Suffer the little children to come unto me.

Do good to them that hate you.

Blessed are the pure in heart.

Blessed are the peacemakers.

Love one another.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

In all our rooms we have such words, and why?

To show us that men, thousands of years ago, in far-off lands, and in all lands were like us to-day, in spite of error, looking upward, seeking truth—and that the human race is one.

Now, boys, I want to call your attention to an important fact. The same power that placed in us the striving, the desire for good, the seeking after God, the great hunger of the heart, has also surrounded us with laws of which our savage ancestors knew nothing, and we to-day know little enough; but the more we study the meaning of those laws, the more the world grows. One thing is sure, whatever creed a man cherishes, he cannot break those laws without taking the consequences. Whether Protestant or Catholic, if he puts his hand in the fire he burns it. If Confucius, or Zoroaster, or Marcus Aurelius, or St. Paul had disregarded the law of gravitation and walked off a precipice, he would have fallen on the rocks below and broken his bones or been killed. If a Baptist takes deadly poison, he will die as surely as a Methodist. Bad drainage and filth may cause

fever and death whether the people inhabiting the house are Jesuits or Lutherans. No one can cheat the great inexorable laws of the universe.

Once our race was afraid of what it did not understand, of sun and winds and storms, lightning and thunder. We have learned to recognize the sun as our life-giving principle, to watch the marvellous motions of the planets, to use winds and heat and steam, to call down the lightning to serve us, and we know that the powers of nature are our friends, not our enemies, provided we find out their laws. All about us, in the whole universe, in our world, our own bodies, minds, hearts, and souls, such laws, if kept, lead to health and truth and right; if broken, to disease and wrong and misery and ruin. Galileo, Bruno, Newton, and Laplace, Columbus and Magellan, Lavoisier, Volta, Galvani, and Darwin were all studying them. To-day many scholars in many fields are seeking them, in the stars, in electricity, and chemistry, and botany, and geology. Let us humbly and reverently study them too, for they are all manifestations of the Infinite. But the laws are there, whether we refuse to know them or not. The earth and the other planets revolved round the sun before Copernicus found it out and told the world.

The law of gravitation existed before Newton saw the apple fall. The laws would be true even if the whole world denied them still.

When people first saw an engine steaming along the railway they thought it was the devil. I know some old ladies who declare that the phonograph is wicked, and that it is the devil's voice speaking in it. They are very excellent and pious old ladies, and they are positive that all scientific men are doomed to eternal punishment. Within fifty years, when ether was first used, many good people grew much excited about it, and asserted that it was a sinful thing to try to deaden the pain that God sent. People thought Galileo a terrible sinner when he said the earth moved round the sun, and they persecuted him for it. In those days they used to torture and burn men who had strange mathematical and astronomical instruments, and the ones who tried to prevent scholars from studying God's ways were religious people who really believed it their duty to put men in prison when they discovered anything new about the world we live in. If Mr. Edison had lived a few centuries ago, and the Inquisition had examined his workshops, it would probably have condemned him for witchcraft and boiled him in oil.

Yet his researches are reverent. He believes that the existence of a Supreme God is proved by chemistry alone. Like great poets, the inventors also are prophets and seers. There is always opposition, until people have time to accustom themselves to the new thought, that is, to the old truth which is new to them. Nevertheless patient men work on, and day by day learn more of the great laws which God does not reveal to us all at once, but only in response to our search and striving.

Remember, too, they are for us to study in ourselves, in the smallest as in the greatest things, and that what each of us does, what he thinks and feels, is important to the whole world. When Hans does his sums right, the world's arithmetic is the better by exactly those sums. When we conquer the low word, the mean impulse, are cleanly and decent, when we resist the temptation to lie, and speak the truth bravely, the morals of the whole world are higher, and we help not only our brothers who live now, but our brothers who will live when we are dead.

If you learn to be beaten in any race without hating, learn to let people differ with you without thinking them bad, learn, as Voltaire said, to " forgive the virtues of your enemies," learn that men working

in totally different directions may all be working right, because for the progress of the human race; that a Cæsar, a Kant, a Bach, a Pascal, a Buddha, and that glorious, sweet-souled martyr, Father Damien, who went to take care of the poor lepers, all have helped the world; that millions of men and women of whom we shall never hear, near us and in nations far from us, with religious views flatly opposed to ours, are helping the growth of the world to-day—learn all this, and you will indeed have left the caves far, far behind.

You can learn these things. I know you, everyone. I believe in you. But you must *think.* Without thought you cannot grow into just and large-hearted men. If you think, if you ask yourselves what is the cause of this, what will be the effect of that; how by this shall I harm myself, and therefore my brother and the whole world, then your inner eyes and ears—that is your soul, your spirit—will develop. Take this home in your hearts, boys, there is nothing without a cause and every cause has an effect. God's truth is strong enough to bear investigation, whether among the planets, in the tides, or in our own hearts. Our probing can never hurt it or make it less holy. Mysteries there will always be. Not only are we

confronted by mystery when we look up in the sky and consider that our earth is one of many planets circling round the sun, and that there are innumerable suns each with companies of planets revolving round them and probably innumerable inhabited worlds in illimitable space; not only is it a mystery when death comes or a child is born, but the tiniest flower is as great a mystery, and we behold a mystery when we look into our brother's eyes.

Yet the more we search for truth the better we comprehend that precisely because the Supreme Ruler is all-just, He does not, cannot change His laws to suit our unjust and ignorant desires. Since our forefathers believed that the earth was flat, and the sky a canopy over it like a huge blue umbrella, not very far off, and the stars mere stationary points of light twinkling prettily for the sole purpose of pleasing mankind, we have learned something of God's laws, it is true. But never forget that what we know of them, in comparison with the vast unknown things surrounding us on every side, and reaching out beyond the most remote star we see, is but the humblest, tiniest, most insignificant beginning of what men who come after us will know, of what we ourselves may know in some other life.

It is because the laws are there that we can find comfort when cruel sorrow comes to us. In our bitterest grief we know that infinite justice, not caprice, rules all nature. Because of these very laws which govern our spirits as well as our bodies, we dare hope for other lives, other worlds —wherever, whatever they may be. Because of God's laws, feebly as we now discern them, we cannot doubt that divine love is the soul of the universe.

Go on then. Be wishers, thinkers, workers. Fear nothing. Make men of yourselves, men to be trusted whatever your work in life, trusted when alone—at midnight—when none will ever know your thought or your deed. On then, Hort boys, away from the caves—on toward the heights!

I thank you for your attention and courtesy.

Good-night. God bless you."

The boys poured out pell-mell. Arno heard their comments as they passed down the hall.

"I'll box all your ears," said one—"those that show and those that don't."

"I'm going to find a cave and live in it," another announced, "and have a good big knotty club made out of a whole tree, and I'll lie in wait for

people who go to walk in the woods. But I suppose as soon as I begin to have some fun, there'll be a darned old policeman after me."

Arno smiled without surprise or discouragement. He had often listened to society's infantile babble after lectures on great poets, art, astronomy, electricity, or after a powerful tragedy, and the children's talk struck him as no more hopeless, helpless, and flippant than the complacent chatter of grown people about things they do not grasp. He knew too the bravado of his boys, and that the very ones who had spoken might be the first to come to him with thoughtful questions. Something would remain of his appeal to the humanity of the neglected souls. If his words were sometimes above them, what then? Should babies hear baby-talk exclusively, they would never learn the language of mature men.

"A topsy-turvy speech — a revolutionary speech!" said the major, but he did not look very stern.

The Normanns waited at the door for Franzl, who did not come.

Arno went back for him.

The janitor was putting out the lights.

Franzl stood alone in the dim room, his brown

package under his arm. He had forgotten to follow his friends, for his thoughts were leading him in zigzag lightning journeys, from land to land, from age to age, and frowning in his earnestness, his lips compressed and resolute, he was trying to decide whether he would be a Galileo, an Edison, a Raphael, a Christopher Columbus, or a Schiller.

END.

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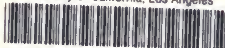
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