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Peter Schlemihl









*"World Classics."*

# Peter Schlemihl

BY

ADALBERT VON CHAMISSO

Illustration by Marold and Mittis



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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

ADALBERT VON CHAMISSO, or *Louis Charles Adelaide de Chamisso de Boucourt*, was born at the castle of Boucourt, in Champagne. He belonged to a noble French family, who derived their title from the ancient town of Chamesson, near Châtillon-sur-Seine. In 1790, when Adalbert was but nine years old, the Revolution forced the Chamissos to leave France. They settled in Berlin; and though in after years the elder members of the family returned to France, Adalbert remained behind in Germany, where by this time were all his sympathies. By birth

*and early education a Frenchman, he became by adoption, by marriage, by occupation, and by achievements in literature, a German.*

*In 1796 Chamisso was made a page to the Queen of Prussia, and two years later entered the Prussian service with a commission as ensign. In 1806, however, unwilling to serve in the campaign of that year against his native country, he gave up the army, and entered into literary life, undertaking in connection with Von Ense and Neumann the publication of the *Musen Almanach*. Friendly intercourse with Madame de Staël at this time, whom he visited at Coppet, was of important bearing in shaping his future life. At Coppet he first began the study of natural history, to which he henceforth devoted himself with such assiduity and success that his*

reputation as a naturalist is almost as great as his literary renown. In 1815 he accompanied Otto von Kotzebue as naturalist in the scientific expedition around the world originated by the Russian, Count Romanzoff. On his return in 1818 he was appointed custodian of the botanical gardens at Berlin.

At the same time he married a charming and wealthy young lady, Antonie Piaste, the marriage proving a happy one. Chamisso passed the next twenty years of his life in steady professional labor, brightened by his success as a writer and by intercourse with an increasing circle of literary friends, among whom were August Neander, Andersen, and Freiligrath. He died at Berlin, August 21, 1838.

The poetic element in Chamisso's nature was genuine and strong, and

*he enriched his adopted language with a number of lyrical poems of beautiful and enduring value. His Lion's Bride, Retribution, Song of Woman's Devotion, and Cousin Anselmo are all remarkable for their power and true pathos. But it is as the author of a prose story, Peter Schlemihl, the man who lost his shadow, that Chamisso's fame will rest. Peter Schlemihl was first published in 1814, and created a sensation at once. While a genuine story for young people, it is also to the older and sympathetic reader an accurate and pathetic allegory of the author's own life.*

## PREFACE.

IT was in 1804, at Berlin, that I used to know Peter Schlemihl. He was a tall young fellow, awkward without being clumsy, indolent but not lazy, for the most part self-contained without seeming to trouble himself about what was going on around him. He was inoffensive, but seemed to have little regard for the proprieties; and always wore a black coat, so old and shabby that it was said of him he ought to be happy if his soul possessed half the immortality of his

cloak. He was the regular butt of our set's witticisms; but all the same I liked him well. Certain traits which we seemed to possess in common established between us a mutual affection.

In 1813 I was living in the country, near Berlin; and having been separated by circumstances from Schlemihl for a long time, I had completely lost sight of him, when one foggy autumn morning, having slept late, I learned upon awakening that a man with a long beard, dressed in a black coat, old and shabby, and wearing large slippers over his shoes, had inquired for me, and left a package for my address. This package contained the autograph manuscript of the "Marvellous History of Peter Schlemihl."

I have sadly abused the confidence of my unfortunate friend. I



showed the manuscript which I ought to have kept concealed, and Fouqué committed the indiscretion of having it printed. Since then I have been punished for my fault. I have been associated in Schlemihl's shame, which I was instrumental in divulging. Meanwhile I have become old, and, withdrawn from the world, the respect of mankind is indifferent to me. I avow to-day, without hesitation, the friendship which I ever possessed for Peter Schlemihl.

This history has fallen into the hands of speculative people who, accustomed to read only for their own instruction, have been anxious to know what a shade was. Many have offered the most curious hypotheses on the subject, while others, doing me the honor to suppose me more learned than I am, have ad-

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dressed themselves to me directly to obtain the solution of their doubts. The questions with which I have been besieged have made me blush at my own ignorance. They have caused me to include in the circle of my studies a subject which up to that time had remained a stranger to it, and I devoted myself to researches the result of which I record below.

#### CONCERNING SHADE.

“An opaque body can never be wholly illuminated by a luminous body at one and the same time, and the part devoid of light, which is situated on the non-illuminated side, is called *shadow* or *shade*. Shade, properly so-called, therefore represents a solid, the form of which depends at once upon that of the luminous body, that of the opaque

body, and upon the position of this latter with regard to the luminous body.

“A shadow seen upon a plane situated behind the opaque body which produces it, is nothing more than the section of this plane upon the solid which represents the shadow.”

HAYY.\*

This, then, is the solid with which we have to deal in the “Marvellous History of Peter Schlemihl.” The science of finance sufficiently impresses upon us the importance of silver; that of shades is less generally acknowledged. My imprudent friend coveted silver, of which he knew the price, and never dreamed

\* Author of “Elementary Treatise on Physics” Vol. II. Sects. 1002 and 1003.

.....  
of a solid. He desires that we should profit by this lesson for which he has paid so dearly, and his experience cries out to us: Think of the solid!

ADELBERT VON CHAMISSO.

BERLIN, November, 1837.



## PETER SCHLEMIHL.

### CHAPTER I.

AT last, after a fortunate, but to me most tedious passage, we reached our destined haven. As soon as the boat had landed me on the shore, I loaded myself with my little possessions, and forcing my

way through the swarming crowd, entered the first and meanest house distinguished by a sign-board. I ordered a chamber; the waiter measured me with a glance, and sent me up to the garret.

I ordered fresh water, and inquired for the abode of Mr. Thomas Jones. "Near the North gate, the first country house on the right-hand side; a large new house of red and white marble, supported by many pillars." Well, it was yet early; I opened my bundle, laid out my newly-turned black coat, clad myself in my sprucest garments, put my letter of introduction into my pocket, and bent my way to the man who I modestly hoped was destined to befriend me.

After I had gone through the long North-street, and reached the gate, I saw the columns glimmering

through the green trees. "It is here, then," I thought. I wiped the dust from my feet with my pocket-handkerchief, arranged my cravat, and rung the bell. The door flew open, the servants narrowly examined me in the hall, but the porter at last announced me, and I had the honour to be summoned into the park, where Mr. Jones was walking with a small company. I knew him instantly by his portly self-complacency. He received me tolerably well, — as a rich man is wont to receive a poor dependent devil; looked towards me, but without turning from the rest of the company, and took from me the letter I held in my hand. "Aye, aye! from my brother; I have not heard from him a long time. Is he well? There," he continued, addressing the company without wait

ing for an answer, and pointed with the letter to a hill, — “there I have ordered a new building to be erected.” He broke the seal, but not the conversation, of which wealth became the subject. “He who is not the master of at least a million,” he interposed, “forgive the expression, is a ragamuffin.” “That is true, indeed,” exclaimed I, with full, overflowing feeling. He must have been pleased with the expression of my concurrence, for he smiled on me and said, “Remain here, young friend; I shall perhaps have time to tell you by and by what I think of it.” He pointed to the letter, put it into his pocket, and turned again to the company. He then offered his arm to a young lady; other gentlemen were busied with other fair ones; every one found some one to whom



he attached himself, and they walked towards the rose-encircled hill.

I lingered idly behind, for not a soul deemed me worthy of notice. The company was extremely cheerful, jocular, and witty; they spoke seriously of trifles, and triflingly of serious matters; and I observed they unconcernedly directed their satires against the persons and the circumstances of absent friends. I was too great a stranger to understand much of these discussions, too much distressed and self-retired to enter into the full merit of these enigmas.

We reached the rose-grove. The lovely Fanny, the queen, as it seemed, of the day, was capricious enough to wish to gather for herself a blooming branch; a thorn pricked her, and a stream as bright as if from damask roses flowed over her deli-

cate hand. This accident put the whole company in motion. English court-plaster was instantly inquired after. A silent, meagre, pale, tall, elderly man, who stood next to me, and whom I had not before observed, instantly put his hand into the close-fitting breast-pocket of his old-fashioned, grey taffetan coat, took out a small pocket-book, opened it, and with a lowly bow gave the lady what she had wished for; she took it without any attention to the giver, and without a word of thanks. The wound was bound up, and they ascended the hill, from whose brow they admired the wide prospect over the park's green labyrinth, extending even to the immeasurable ocean.

It was indeed a grand and noble sight. A light speck appeared on the horizon between the dark waters and the azure heaven. "A tele-

scope here!" cried the merchant; and before any one from the crowds of servants appeared to answer his call, the grey man, as if he had been applied to, had already put his hand into his coat-pocket: he had taken from it a beautiful Dollond, and handed it over to Mr. Jones; who, as soon as he had raised it to his eye, informed the company that it was the ship which had sailed yesterday, driven back by contrary winds. The telescope passed from hand to hand, but never again reached that of its owner. I, however, looked on the old man with astonishment, not conceiving how the large machine had come out of the tiny pocket. Nobody else seemed surprised, and they appeared to care no more about the grey man than about me.

Refreshments were produced; the

rarest fruits of every climate, served in the richest dishes. Mr. Jones did the honours with easy, dignified politeness, and for the second time directed a word to me: "Eat then, you did not get this on your voyage." I bowed, but he did not observe me; he was talking to somebody else.

They would willingly have remained longer on the sod of the sloping hill, and have stretched themselves over the outspread turf, had they not feared its dampness. "Now it would be enchanting," said somebody of the company, "if we had Turkey carpets to spread here." The wish was hardly expressed ere the man in the grey coat had put his hand into his pocket, and with modest, even humble demeanour, began to draw out a rich embroidered Turkey carpet. It was received by the attendants as a

matter of course, and laid down on the appointed spot. Without further ceremony the company took their stand upon it. I looked with new surprise on the man, the pocket, and the carpet, which was about twenty paces long and ten broad. I rubbed my eyes, not knowing what to think, and especially as nobody else seemed moved by what had passed.

I longed to learn something about the man, and to inquire who he was; but I knew not to whom to apply, for I really was more afraid of the gentlemen-servants than of the gentlemen served. I mustered up my spirits at last, and addressed myself to a young man who seemed less pretending than the rest, and who had oftener been left to himself. I gently asked him who that courteous gentleman was in grey

clothes. "Who? — he that looks like an end of thread blown away from a tailor's needle?" "Yes, he that stands alone." "I do not know him," he answered; and, determined as it seemed to break off the discussion with me, turned away, and entered on a trifling conversation with somebody else.

The sun now began to shine more intensely, and to annoy the ladies. The lovely Fanny carelessly addressed the grey man, whom as far as I know nobody had addressed before, with the frivolous question, "Had he a *marquée*?" He answered with a low reverence, as if feeling an undeserved honour had been done him; his hand was already in his pocket, from which I perceived canvas, bars, ropes, iron-work — everything, in a word, belonging to the most sumptuous tent, issuing

forth. The young men helped to erect it; it covered the whole extent of the carpet, and no one appeared to consider all this as at all extraordinary.

If my mind was confused, nay terrified, with these proceedings, how was I overpowered when the next-breathed wish brought from his pocket three riding horses. I tell you, three great and noble steeds, with saddles and appurtenances! Imagine for a moment, I pray you, three saddled horses from the same pocket which had before produced a pocket-book, a telescope, an ornamented carpet twenty paces long and ten broad, a pleasure-tent of the same size, with bars and iron-work! If I did not solemnly assure you that I had seen it with my own eyes, you would certainly doubt the narrative.

Though there was so much of embarrassment and humility in the man, and he excited so little attention, yet his appearance to me had in it something so appalling that I was not able to turn away my eyes from him. At last I could bear it no longer.

I determined to steal away from the company; and this was easy for one who had acted a part so little conspicuous. I wished to hasten back to the city, and to return in pursuit of my fortune the following morning to Mr. J., and if I could muster up courage enough, to inquire something about the extraordinary grey man. Oh, had I been thus privileged to escape!

I had hastily glided through the rose-grove, descended the hill, and found myself on a wide grassplot, when, alarmed with the apprehen-



sion of being discovered wandering from the beaten path, I looked around me with enquiring apprehension. How was I startled when I saw the old man in the grey coat behind, and advancing towards me! He immediately took off his hat, and bowed to me more profoundly than any one had ever done before. It was clear he wished to address me, and without extreme rudeness I could not avoid him. I in my turn uncovered myself, made my obeisance, and stood still with a bare head in the sunshine as if rooted there. I shook with terror while I saw him approach; I felt like a bird fascinated by a rattlesnake. He appeared sadly perplexed, kept his eyes on the ground, made several bows, approached nearer, and with a low and trembling voice, as if he were asking alms, thus accosted me:—

“Will the gentleman forgive the intrusion of one who has stopt him in this unusual way? I have a request to make, but pray pardon —” “In the name of Heaven, Sir!” I cried out in my anguish, “what can I do for one who —” We both started back, and methought both blushed deeply.

After a momentary silence he again began: “During the short time when I enjoyed the happiness of being near you, I observed, Sir, — will you allow me to say so, — I observed, with unutterable admiration, the beautiful, beautiful shadow in the sun, which with a certain noble contempt, and perhaps without being aware of it, you threw off from your feet; forgive me this, I confess, too daring intrusion, but should you be inclined to transfer it to me?”

He was silent, and my head turned

round like a water-wheel. What could I make of this singular proposal for disposing of my shadow? He is crazy, thought I; and with an altered tone, yet more forcible as contrasted with the humility of his own, I replied, —

“How is this, good friend? Is not your own shadow enough for you? This seems to me a whimsical sort of bargain indeed.” He began again, “I have in my pocket many matters which might not be quite unacceptable to the gentleman; for this invaluable shadow I deem any price too little.”

A chill came over me: I remembered what I had seen, and knew not how to address him whom I had just ventured to call my good friend. I spoke again, and assumed an extraordinary courtesy to set matters in order.

“Pardon, Sir, pardon your most humble servant, I do not quite understand your meaning; how can my shadow —” He interrupted me: “I only beg your permission to be allowed to lift up your noble shadow, and put it in my pocket; how to do it is my own affair. As a proof of my gratitude for the gentleman, I leave him the choice of all the jewels which my pocket affords; the genuine divining rods, mandrake roots, change pennies, money extractors, the napkins of Rolando’s Squire, and divers other miracle-workers, — a choice assortment. But all this is not fit for you; better that you should have Fortunatus’s wishing-cap restored spick and span new, and also a fortune-bag which belonged to him.” “Fortunatus’s fortune-bag!” I exclaimed; and great as had been my terror, all my

senses were now enraptured by the sound. I became dizzy, and nothing but double ducats seemed sparkling before my eyes.

“Condescend, Sir, to inspect and make a trial of this bag.” He put his hand into his pocket, and drew from it a moderately sized, firmly-stitched purse of thick cordovan, with two convenient leather cords hanging to it, which he presented to me. I instantly dipped into it, drew from it ten pieces of gold, and ten more, and ten more, and yet ten more;—I stretched out my hand. “Done! the bargain is made; I give you my shadow for your purse.” He grasped my hand, and knelt down behind me, and with wonderful dexterity I perceived him loosening my shadow from the ground from head to foot; he lifted it up; he rolled it together and folded it,

and at last put it into his pocket. He then stood erect, bowed to me again, and returned back to the rose-grove. I thought I heard him laughing softly to himself. I held, however, the purse tight by its strings — the earth was sun-bright all around me, and my senses were still wholly confused.

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At last I came to myself, and hastened from a place where apparently I had nothing more to do. I first filled my pockets with gold, then firmly secured the strings of the purse round my neck, taking care to conceal the purse itself in my bosom. I left the park unnoticed, reached the high road, and bent my way to the town. I was walking thoughtfully towards the gate, when



... Knelt down behind  
me ..





.....

I heard a voice behind me: "Holla! young Squire! holla! don't you hear?" I looked round—an old woman was calling after me: "Take care, sir, take care—you have lost your shadow!" "Thanks, good woman." I threw her a piece of gold for her well-meant counsel, and walked away under the trees.

At the gate I was again condemned to hear from the sentinel, "Where has the gentleman left his shadow?" and immediately afterwards a couple of women exclaimed, "Good heavens! the poor fellow has no shadow." I began to be vexed, and carefully avoided walking in the sun. This I could not always do: for instance, in the Broad-street, which I was next compelled to cross; and as ill-luck would have it, at the very moment when the boys were being released from

school. A confounded hunch-backed vagabond — I see him at this moment — had observed that I wanted a shadow. He instantly began to bawl out to the young tyros of the suburbs, who first criticised me, and then bespattered me with mud: “Respectable people are accustomed to carry their shadows with them when they go into the sun.” I scattered handfuls of gold among them to divert their attention; and, with the assistance of some compassionate souls, sprang into a hackney coach.

As soon as I found myself alone in the rolling vehicle, I began to weep bitterly. My inward emotion suggested to me, that even as in this world gold weighs down both merit and virtue, so a shadow might possibly be more valuable than gold itself; and that as I had sacrificed my riches to my integrity on other

occasions, so now I had given up my shadow for mere wealth; and what ought, what could become of me?

I continued still sadly discomposed, when the coach stopped before the old tavern. I was shocked at the thought of again entering that vile garret. I sent for my baggage, took up the miserable bundle with contempt, threw the servants some pieces of gold, and ordered to be driven to the principal hotel. The house faced the north, so I had nothing to fear from the sun. I dismissed the driver with gold, selected the best front room, and locked myself in as soon as possible.

And how do you imagine I employed myself? Oh, my beloved Chamisso, I blush to confess it even to you. I drew forth the luckless

purse from my bosom, and impelled by a sort of madness which burned and spread within me like a furious conflagration, I shook out gold, and gold, and gold, and still more gold; strewed it over the floor, trampled on it, and made it tinkle, and feasting my weak senses on the glitter and the sound, I added pile to pile, till I sunk exhausted on the golden bed. I rolled about, and wallowed in delicious delirium. And so the day passed by, and so the evening. My door remained unopened, and night found me still reposing on the gold, when sleep at length overcame me.

Then I dreamed of you. I fancied I was standing close to the glass door of your little apartment, and saw you sitting at your work-table, between a skeleton and a parcel of dried plants. Haller, Humboldt, and Linnæus lay open before you;



... Night found me still  
reposing on the gold ...



on your sofa were a volume of Goethe and *The Magic Ring*.\* I looked at you for a long time, then at everything around you, and then at you again; but you moved not, you breathed not — you were dead.

I awoke: it seemed to be yet early — my watch had stopped; I felt as if I had been bastinadoed — yet both hungry and thirsty, for since the previous morning I had eaten nothing. With weariness and disgust I pushed away from me the gold, which but a little time before had satiated my foolish heart: I now in my perplexity knew not how to dispose of it. But it could not remain there. I tried to put it again into the purse — no; none of my windows opened upon the sea. I was obliged to content myself by

\* Another novel of Fouqué.

dragging it with immense labour and difficulty to a large cupboard, which stood in a recess, where I packed it up. I left only a few handfuls lying about. When I had finished my labour, I sat down exhausted in an arm-chair, and waited till the people of the house began to stir. I ordered breakfast, and begged the landlord to be with me as soon as practicable.

With this man I arranged the future management of my household. He recommended to me for my personal servant a certain *Bendel*, whose honest and intelligent countenance instantly interested me. It was he who from that moment accompanied me through life with a sympathizing attachment, and shared with me my gloomy destiny. I passed the whole day in my apartments with servants out of place,



shoe-makers, tailors, and shop-keepers; I provided myself with all necessaries, and bought large quantities of jewels and precious stones, merely to get rid of some of my piles of gold; but it seemed scarcely possible to diminish the heap.

Meanwhile I contemplated my situation with most anxious doubts. I dared not venture one step from my door, and at evening ordered forty wax-lights to be kindled in my saloon, before I left the dark chamber. I thought with horror of the dreadful scene with the school-boys, and determined, whatever it might cost, once more to sound public opinion. The moon at this season illumined the night. Late in the evening I threw a wide cloak around me, pulled down my hat over my eyes, and glided out of the house trembling like a criminal. I walked

first along the shadows of the houses to a remote open place ; I then abandoned their protection, stepped out into the moonshine, resolving to learn my destiny from the lips of the passers-by.

But spare me, my friend, the painful repetition of what I was condemned to undergo ! The deepest pity seemed to inspire the fairer sex ; but my soul was not less wounded by this than by the contumely of the young, and the proud disdain of the old, especially of those stout and well-fed men, whose dignified shadows seemed to do them honour. A lovely, graceful maiden, apparently accompanying her parents, who seemed not to look beyond their own footsteps, accidentally fixed her sparkling eyes upon me. She obviously started as she remarked my shadowless figure ;

she hid her beautiful face beneath her veil, hung down her head, and passed silently on.

I could bear it no longer. Salt streams burst forth from my eyes, and with a broken heart I hurried tremblingly back into darkness. I was obliged to grope along by the houses, in order to feel my steps secure, and slowly and late I reached my dwelling.

That night was a sleepless one. My first care at daybreak was to order the man in the grey coat to be everywhere sought for. Perchance I might be lucky enough to discover him — and oh, what bliss if he as well as I repented of our foolish bargain! I sent for Bendel; he seemed both apt and active. I described to him minutely the man who held in his possession that treasure, without which life was but

a torment to me. I told him the time, the place where I had seen him; particularized to him all the persons who could assist his inquiries; and added, that he should especially ask after a Dollond's telescope, a gold embroidered Turkish carpet, a superb tent, and also the black riding horses, whose history — I did not state how — was closely connected with that of the unintelligible man, whom nobody seemed to notice, and whose appearance had destroyed the peace and happiness of my life.

When I had done, I brought out as much gold as I was able to carry. I laid jewels and precious stones to a still greater amount upon the pile. "Bendel," I said, "this levels many a path, and makes many a difficult thing easy; be not sparing, you know I am not; but go and rejoice your

master with the information on which his only hopes are built."

He went — he returned — and returned late and sorrowful. None of the merchant's servants, none of his guests — he had spoken to all — knew anything about the man in the grey coat. The new telescope was there, but they were all ignorant whence it came. The tent and the carpet were extended on the same hill; the lackeys boasted of their master's magnificence: but none knew from what place these new valuables had come. They had administered to his pleasures; and he did not disturb his rest to inquire into their origin. Their horses were in the stalls of the young men who had rode them; and they lauded the generosity of the merchant, who had that day requested they would keep them as presents. Such was the

light that Bendel threw upon this extraordinary history, and for this fruitless result received my grateful thanks. I beckoned gloomily to him that he should leave me alone.

But he resumed, "I have informed you, Sir, of everything connected with the affair which most interests you. I have also a message to deliver, which was given to me this morning early, by a person whom I met at the door, while I was going out on the business in which I have been so unfortunate. His own words were, 'Say to Mr. Peter Schlemihl, he will see me here no more, as I am going to cross the sea; and a favourable wind beckons me to the haven. But after a year and a day I shall have the honour to seek him out, and perhaps to propose to him another arrangement which may then be to his liking. Remember me

most obediently to him, and assure him of my thanks.' I asked him who he was; and he replied that you knew."

"What was the man's appearance?" I cried, full of forebodings. And Bendel described the man in the grey coat, feature by feature, word for word, precisely as he had depicted him when inquiring about him.

"Miserable mortal!" exclaimed I, wringing my hands, "it was he! it was he himself!" He looked as if scales had fallen from his eyes. "Yes, it was he, it was indeed he!" he cried out in agony; "and I, silly, deluded one, I did not know him—I did not know him—I have betrayed my master!"

He broke out into the loudest reproaches against himself. He wept bitterly; his despair could not

but excite my pity. I ministered consolation to him, assured him again and again that I did not doubt his fidelity, and sent him instantly to the haven, to follow the strange man's steps if possible. But, on that very morning, many vessels which had been kept by contrary winds back in port, had put to sea, all destined to distant lands and other climes; the grey man had disappeared trackless as a shade.





## CHAPTER II.

OF what use would wings be to him who is fast bound in iron fetters? He must still despair, and despair with deeper melancholy. I lay like Taffner by his stronghold, far removed from any earthly consolation, starving in the midst of

riches. They gave me no enjoyment; I cursed them; they had cut me off from mankind. Concealing my gloomy secret within me, I trembled before the meanest of my servants, whom I could not but envy; for he had his shadow, and could show himself in the sun. Alone in my apartments, I mourned through harassing days and nights, and anguish fed upon my heart.

One individual was constantly sorrowing under my eyes. My faithful Bendel ceased not to torment himself with silent reproaches that he had deceived the confidence of his generous master, and had not recognized him whom he was sent to seek, and with whom my mournful fate seemed strongly intertwined. I could not blame him; I recognized too well in that event the mysterious nature of the unknown being.

But, to leave nothing untried, I sent Bendel with a costly brilliant ring to the most celebrated painter in the city, requesting he would pay me a visit. He came — I ordered away my servants, locked the door, sat myself by him; and after praising his art, I came with a troubled spirit to the great disclosure, having first enjoined on him the strictest secrecy.

“Mr. Professor,” I began, “can you paint a false shadow for one who in the most luckless way in the world has lost his own?” “You mean a reflected shadow?” “To be sure.” “But,” he added, “through what awkwardness or what negligence could he lose his own shadow?” “How it happened,” replied I, “that does not matter, but —” I impudently began again with a lie, — “last winter, when he

was travelling in Russia, it froze so severely during the extraordinary cold, that his shadow was frozen to the ground, and it was impossible for him to get it free."

"And I," said the professor, "could only make him a sheet shadow, which he would be apt to lose again on the slightest motion; especially for one whose genuine shadow was so badly fixed, as must be inferred from your account: the simplest and wisest determination for him who has no shadow, is not to go in the sun." He stood up and walked away, after having sent through me a piercing glance which I could not endure. I sunk back on my chair, and veiled my face with my hands.

Thus Bendel found me when he entered. He saw his master's sorrow, and wanted silently and respect-

fully to turn back. I raised my eyes : the weight of my grief was upon me ; I determined to divide it. “ Bendel ! ” I called to him ; “ Bendel ! you who alone see and respect my sufferings, not curiously prying into them, but secretly and devotedly sharing them with me — come to me, Bendel, be the nearest to my heart. The stores of my gold I have not concealed from you ; from you I will not hide the store of my anguish. Bendel, forsake me not. You know I am wealthy, kind, and generous ; and perhaps you think the world should honour me for that : but, you see, I shun the world ; I hide myself from its observation. Bendel, the world has judged me and condemned me ; and Bendel, too, perhaps, will turn from me when he possesses my dreadful secret. Bendel, I am indeed rich, liberal, and

independent, but — heavens! I have no shadow.”

“No shadow!” echoed the good young man in an agony, while bright tears broke from his eyelids; “alas, alas, that I should have been born to serve a shadowless master!” He was silent, and I hid my face in my hands.

At last I tremblingly said, “Bendel, you have now my confidence, — betray it if you will, — away, and bear witness against me.” He seemed struggling with internal emotion; he threw himself at my feet, seized my hand, and bathed it with his tears. “No,” he cried, “let the world say what it may, I will not leave my good master for the sake of a shadow; I will do what is right and not what is prudent; I will remain with you, I will lend you my shadow; I will help you where I can; I will

weep with you." I fell on his neck, overcome with such an unexpected self-devotion. I felt assured he did nothing for the sake of gold.

From that moment my fate and my mode of life changed. It is indescribable how carefully Bendel sought to cover my defects. He was ever before and with me, foreseeing everything, arranging everything, and where unexpected danger threatened, covering me with his shadow, for he was fortunately taller and stouter than I. Again I mingled with mankind, and acted my part in the scenes of the world. It was necessary to assume much singularity and queerness, but these sit well upon a rich man; and while the truth lay concealed, I enjoyed all the honour and esteem to which wealth has a claim. I looked with more calmness on the advancing year and

day, whose close was to bring with them the visit of the mysterious unknown.

I was well aware that I could not remain long in the place where I had been seen without a shadow, and where I might so easily be betrayed; and I thought perhaps more on this, remembering how I had first shown myself to the merchant, which was now a sad recollection to me: consequently I would only make an experiment here, that I might learn how to introduce myself hereafter with more ease and confidence; nevertheless it happened that I was momentarily bound down by my vanity, which is the firm ground in man where the anchor fixes itself.

The beautiful Fanny, whom I again met in another situation, bestowed on me some attention, without recollecting that she had seen



me before ; for now I had both wit and understanding. When I talked, all listened ; and I could not imagine when or how I had acquired the talent of leading and directing the conversation. The impression which I perceived I had produced on the fair one, made me, as she would have me, a very fool ; and from this time I pursued her, where only I could pursue her, through shades and twilight. I was vain enough to make her vain of me ; yet I could not succeed, notwithstanding all my efforts to drive the intoxication from my head to my heart.

But why enter upon the details of an every-day story ? You know, and have often told me, how other wealthy people spend their days. From an old, well-known drama, in which I, out of mere good-humour, was playing a hackneyed part, arose

a singular and incredible catastrophe, unexpected by me, or by Fanny. or by anybody.

According to my custom, one lovely evening I had assembled a large company in an illuminated garden. I was wandering about with my divinity arm-in-arm, separated from the rest of the guests, and endeavouring to amuse her with well-timed conversation ; she looked modestly toward the ground, and gently returned the pressure of my hand. At this moment the moon unexpectedly burst through the clouds ; her shadow alone was there ; she started, looked alarmed at me, then at the earth, as if her eyes were asking for my shadow. All her emotions were painted so faithfully on her countenance, that I should have burst into a loud laugh had I not felt an icy chillness creeping over me.



... Then, the earth,  
of the river, was a king's  
my, under ...



She sunk down from my arms in a swoon. I flew like an arrow through the alarmed company, reached the door, threw myself into the first coach I found waiting there, and hurried back to the city, where, to my misfortune, I had left the foresighted Bendel. He was startled at seeing me — a word told all. Post-horses were instantly ordered. I took only one of my servants with me, an interested villain called Rascal, who had learned to make himself useful by his dexterity, and who could suspect nothing of what had occurred. We travelled a hundred miles before night. Bendel was left behind to dismiss my household, to distribute my money by paying my debts, and to bring away what was most necessary. When he overtook me the next day, I threw myself into his arms, solemnly promising to com-

mit no further folly, but to be more discreet in future. We continued our journey without interruption, passing over the chain of mountains which formed the frontier; and only when on the descent, and separated by the high bastions from the land so fatal to my peace, did I allow myself to be comforted, and hastened away to a watering-place in the vicinity, where I sought repose from my disappointments and my sorrows.

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I must hurry rapidly over a part of my history, on which I should rejoice to linger if I could invoke the living spirit of departed time. But the beautiful associations which animated it once, and which alone could animate its memory, are now extinguished within me. When I

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seek them, — that influence which ruled so mightily over my joys and sorrows, my mingled destiny, — I strike in vain against a rock that gives out a living stream no longer; the divinity is fled! Oh how changed is the aspect of those days of old! My intention was now to act an heroic character; but it was badly studied, and I a novice on the stage was forgetting my part while fascinated by a pair of blue eyes. In the intoxication of the scene, the parents seem eager to close the bargain, and the farce ends in a common mockery. And this is all! So stale, so unprofitable, and so melancholy are the revisitings of what beat once so nobly and proudly in my bosom. Mina, as I wept when I lost thee, even now I weep to have lost thee within me. Am I become so old! Pitiful intellect of man! Oh for a

pulse-beat of those days, a moment of that consciousness! But no! I am a solitary wave in the dark and desolate sea; and the sparkling glass I drank was drugged with misery.

I had previously sent Bendel with bags of gold to fit out a dwelling suitable for me in the town. He had scattered about a great deal of money, and talked mysteriously of the illustrious stranger whom he had the honour to serve (for I did not choose to be named), and this filled the good people with strange notions. As soon as the house was ready for me, Bendel returned to convey me thither. We started immediately.

About an hour's distance from the place, on a sunny plain, a great number of persons in gala dresses arrested our progress. The coach stopped: music, bell-ringing, and cannonading were heard; a loud acclamation rent



the air; and a chorus of singularly beautiful maidens in white robes appeared at the door of the carriage, one of whom, surpassing the rest as the sun surpasses in brightness the stars of evening, stepped forward, and with graceful and modest blushes knelt before me, and presented to me on a silken cushion a wreath of laurel, olive, and rose branches, garlanded together, while she uttered some words, which I understood not, of majesty, awe, and love, whose soft and silver tones enchanted my ear and my bosom, — it seemed to me as if the heavenly apparition had once glided before me in other days. The chorus began, and sang the praise of a good monarch and the happiness of his people.

And this happened, my friend, in the bright sunshine: she continued to kneel some two steps before me,

and I, shadowless, dared not spring over the gulf, that I might fall on my knees in her angelic presence. What would I not have given in that moment for a shadow! I was obliged to conceal my shame, my anguish, my despair, by sinking back into the carriage. Bendel relieved me from my embarrassment; he leaped out from the other side; I called him back, and gave him out of my little casket, which lay close at hand, a rich diamond crown which was intended to adorn the lovely Fanny. He moved forward, and spoke in his master's name, "who neither could," he said, "nor would accept such flattering marks of honour; there must have been some error, though he could not but thank the worthy townspeople for their expressions of kindness." He then took the garland of flowers

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from its place, and put there instead of it the crown of diamonds. His hand assisted the beautiful maiden to rise, and with a look of dignity he sent away the clergy, magistrates, and deputies. Nobody was allowed a further audience. He bade the crowd retire, and make room for the horses, and flung himself into the carriage, and off we went in a rapid gallop to the town, through the arches of flowers and laurels which had been erected. The cannon continued to thunder; the coach at last reached my abode. I turned hastily through the door, dividing the assembly who had gathered together to see me. The mob cried, "God bless him!" under my window; and I ordered double ducats to be scattered among them. At night the town was spontaneously illuminated.

And I knew not yet what all this meant, nor who I was imagined to be. I sent out Rascal to get information. He discovered that the people believed they had certain information that the good king of Prussia was travelling through the country under the title of count; that my adjutant had been recognized, and had discovered both himself and me; in a word, that infinite joy had been felt at the certainty of having me among them. They had ascertained, indeed, that as I wished to preserve the strictest *incognito*, it had been wrong to draw up the veil so intrudingly; but as I had expressed my displeasure with so much graciousness and kindness, surely my generous heart could forgive them.

It was so excellent a joke for my scoundrel servant, that he did as much as possible by his sharp re-

monstrances to confirm the good people in their opinions. He gave me a most amusing account of his proceedings; and as he saw it animated me, he thought to add to my enjoyment by a display of his own knavish tricks. Shall I confess it? I was not a little flattered by even the illusion of being mistaken for the head of the kingdom.

I ordered a feast to be provided on the following evening, under the trees which overshadowed the expanse in front of my house, and the whole town to be invited. The mysterious virtue of my purse, the exertions of Bendel, and the dexterous contrivances of Rascal succeeded in doing wonders in the trifling space of time. It is really astonishing how richly and beautifully everything was arranged in so short a period. Such pomp and superfluity

were exhibited there, and the richly-fanciful illuminations were so admirably managed, that I felt quite at ease; I had nothing to find fault with, and I could not but praise the diligence of my servants.

Evening darkness came on; the guests appeared, and were introduced to me. The word "majesty" was no more whispered; but I often heard, uttered in deep awe and humility, "the Count." What could I do? The word count satisfied me, and from that moment I was Count Peter. But in the midst of the festive crowd I sought but one; at last she appeared; she *was* the crown, and she wore it. She followed her parents modestly, and seemed not to know that she was the loveliest of the assemblage. The forest-master, his wife, and daughter were introduced. I said

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much that was agreeable and obliging to the old people; but I stood before their daughter like a checked boy, and could not utter a single word. At last I stammered forth a request that she would honour the festival by undertaking that office whose badge she bore. With a touching look she begged blushing that I would excuse her. But more abashed before her than she herself, I, as her first subject, offered her my humble tribute; and my glance served as a command to all the guests, each of whom seemed anxious to meet it. Over this joyful festivity presided majesty, innocence, and grace allied with beauty. Mina's happy parents believed that out of respect for them their child had been elevated to these unexpected honours, and I was in an unspeakable transport of joy. I

ordered everything that was left of the jewels, pearls, and precious stones which I had purchased with my perplexing piles of wealth, to be placed in two covered dishes, and distributed in the name of the queen among her playfellows and the ladies present; and I ordered gold to be thrown over the border fence among the joyous crowds.

On the following morning Bendel communicated to me, in confidence, that the suspicions he had formed against Rascal's integrity were fully confirmed: he had yesterday purloined several bags of gold. "Let us not envy," I replied, "the poor devil this trifling booty; I scatter my money about profusely, — why not to him? Yesterday, he and everybody else served me nobly, and arranged a delightful festivity." Nothing further was said about it;



Rascal continued to be my head-servant, and Bendel my friend and confidant. He had imagined my wealth to be inexhaustible, and he cared not to inquire into its source. Entering into my feelings, he assisted me to find out constant occasions to display my wealth, and to spend it. Of the unknown, pale, sneaking fellow, he only knew that without him I could not get released from the curse which bound me, and that I dreaded the man on whom my only hope reposed. Besides, I was now convinced he could discover me anywhere, while I could find him nowhere; so that I determined to abandon a fruitless inquiry, and to await the promised day.

The magnificence of the festival, and my condescension there, confirmed the obstinately-credulous inhabitants in their first opinion of my

dignity. It appeared very soon, notwithstanding, in the newspapers, that the reported journey of the king was wholly without foundation. But I had been a king, and a king I was unfortunately compelled to remain; and certainly I was one of the richest and kingliest who had ever appeared. But what king could I be? The world has never had cause to complain of any scarcity of monarchs, at least in our days; and the good people, who had never seen one with their own eyes, first fixed on one, and then, equally happily, on another; but Count Peter continued to be my name.

There once appeared among the visitors to the baths a merchant, who had made himself a bankrupt in order to get rich; and he enjoyed the general esteem. He was accompanied by a broad, palish shadow.

He wished ostentatiously to display the wealth he had acquired, and he determined to be my rival. I applied to my bag. I drove on the poor devil at such a rate that in order to save himself he was obliged to become a bankrupt a second time. Thus I got rid of him; and by similar means I created in this neighbourhood many an idler and a vagabond.

Though I thus lived in apparent kingly pomp and prodigality, my habits at home were simple and unpretending. With thoughtful foresight, I had made it a rule that no one except Bendel should on any pretence enter the chamber which I occupied. As long as the sun shone I remained there locked in. People said, "The count is engaged in his cabinet." The crowds of couriers were kept in communication by these

occupations, for I dispatched and received them on the most trifling business. At evening, alone, I received company under the trees or in my saloon, which was skilfully and magnificently lighted, according to Bendel's arrangement. Whenever I went out Bendel watched round me with Argus' eyes; my steps were always tending to the forester's garden, and that only for the sake of *her*; the inmost spirit of my existence was my love.

My good Chamisso, I will hope you have not forgotten what love is; I leave much to your filling up. Mina was indeed a love-worthy, good, and gentle girl; I had obtained full possession of her thoughts; and in her modesty she could not imagine how she had become worthy of my regard, and that I dwelt only upon her: but she returned love for love,

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in the full youthful energy of an innocent heart. She loved like a woman; all self-sacrificing, self-forgetting, and living only in him who was her life, careless even though she should perish: in a word, she truly loved.

But I — oh, what frightful moments! — frightful! yet worthy to be recalled. How often did I weep in Bendel's bosom, after I recovered from the first inebriety of rapture! how severely did I condemn myself, that I, a shadowless being, should seal, with wily selfishness, the perdition of an angel, whose pure soul I had attached to me by lies and theft! Now I determined to unveil myself to her; now, with solemn oaths, I resolved to tear myself from her, and to fly; then again I broke out into tears, and arranged with Bendel for visiting her in the forest-garden again in the evening.

Sometimes I allowed myself to be flattered with the hopes of the now nearly approaching visit of the unknown, mysterious old man; and wept anew when I recollected that I had sought him in vain. I had reckoned the day when I was again to expect to see that awful being. He had said a year and a day, and I relied on his word.

Mina's parents were good, worthy old people, loving their only child most tenderly; the whole affair had taken them by surprise, and, as matters stood, they knew not how to act. They could never have dreamed that Count Peter should think of their child; but it was clear he loved her passionately, and was loved in return. The mother, indeed, was vain enough to think of the possibility of such an alliance, and to prepare for its accomplish-

ment; but the calm good sense of the old man never gave such an ambitious hope a moment's consideration. But they were both convinced of the purity of my love, and could do nothing but pray for their child.

A letter is now in my hand which I received about this time from Mina. This is her very character. I will copy it for you.

“ I know I am a weak, silly girl; for I have taught myself to believe my beloved would not give me pain, and this because I deeply, dearly love him. Alas! thou art so kind, so unutterably kind! but do not delude me. For me make no sacrifice — wish to make no sacrifice. Heaven! I could hate myself if I caused thee to do so. No, thou hast made me infinitely happy; thou hast taught me to love thee. But

go in peace! my destiny tells me Count Peter is not mine, but the whole world's; and then I shall feel proudly as I hear that it was he — and he again — that he had done this — that he has been adored here, and deified there. When I think of this, I could reproach thee for forgetting thy high destinies in a simple maiden. Go in peace, or the thought will make me miserable, — me, alas! who am so happy, so blessed through thee. And have not I entwined in thy existence an olive-branch and a rose-bud, as in the garland which I dared to present thee? Think of thyself, my beloved one; fear not to leave me, I should die so blessed — so unutterably blessed, through thee.”

You may well imagine how these words thrilled through my bosom. I told her I was not that which I



was supposed to be; I was only a wealthy, but an infinitely-wretched man. There was, I said, a curse upon me, which should be the only secret between her and me; for I had not yet lost the hope of being delivered from it. This was the poison of my existence, that I could have swept her away with me into the abyss, — her, the sole light, the sole bliss, the sole spirit of my life. Then she wept again that I was so unhappy. She was so amiable, so full of love! How blessed had she felt to have offered herself up in order to spare me a single tear!

But she was far from rightly understanding my words: she sometimes fancied I was a prince pursued by a cruel proscription; a high and devoted chief, whom her imagination loved to depicture, and to give to her beloved one all the bright hues of heroism.

Once I said to her, "Mina, on the last day of the coming month, my doom may change and be decided. If that should not happen I must die, for I cannot make thee miserable." She wept, and her head sunk upon my bosom. "If thy doom should change, let me but know thou art happy; I have no claim upon thee. But shouldst thou become miserable, bind me to thy misery; I will help thee to bear it."

"Beloved maiden! withdraw, withdraw the rash, the foolish word which has escaped thy lips. Dost thou know what is my misery? dost thou know what is my curse? That thy beloved—what he— Dost thou see me shuddering convulsively before thee and concealing from thee—" She sunk sobbing at my feet, and renewed her declaration with a solemn vow.

I declared to the now approaching forest-master my determination to ask the hand of his daughter for the first day of the coming month. I fixed that period, because in the mean while many an event might occur which would have great influence on my fortunes. My love for his daughter could not but be unchangeable.

The good old man started back, as it were, while the words escaped from Count Peter's lips. He fell upon my neck, and then blushed that he had so far forgotten himself. Then he began to doubt, to ponder, to inquire; he spoke of dowry, of security for the future for his beloved child. I thanked him for reminding me of it. I told him I wished to settle and live a life free from anxiety, in a neighbourhood where I appeared to be beloved. I

ordered him to buy, in the name of his daughter, the finest estates that were offered, and refer to me for the payment. A father would surely best serve the lover of his child. This gave him trouble enough, for some stranger or other always forestalled him; but he bought for only the amount of about a million florins.

The truth is, this was a sort of innocent trick to get rid of him, which I had already once done before; for I must own he was rather tedious. The good mother, on the contrary, was somewhat deaf, and not, like him, always jealous of the honour of entertaining the noble Count.

The mother pressed forward. The happy people crowded around me, entreating me to lengthen the evening among them. I dared not linger a moment; the moon was rising

above the twilight of evening; my time was come.

Next evening I returned again to the forest-garden. I had thrown my broad mantle over my shoulders, my hat was slouched over my eyes. I advanced towards Mina; as she lifted up her eyes and looked at me an involuntary shudder came over her. The frightful night in which I had shown myself shadowless in the moonlight returned in all its brightness to my mind. It was indeed she! Had she, too, recognized me? She was silent and full of thought. I felt the oppression of a nightmare on my breast. I rose from my seat; she threw herself speechless on my bosom. I left her.

But now I often found her in tears; my soul grew darker and darker, while her parents seemed to

revel in undisturbed joy. The day so big with fate rolled onwards, heavy and dark like a thundercloud. Its eve had arrived, I could scarcely breathe. I had been foresighted enough to fill some chests with gold. I waited for midnight; it tolled.

And there I sat, my eyes directed to the hand of the clock; the seconds, the minutes, as they tinkled, entered me like a dagger. I rose up at every sound I heard. The day began to dawn; the leaden hours crowded one on another; it was morning — evening — night. The hands of the time-piece moved slowly on, and hope was departing. It struck eleven, and nothing appeared. The last minutes of the last hour vanished; still nothing appeared: the first stroke — the last stroke of *twelve* sounded. I sank hopeless on my couch in cease-

less tears. To-morrow — shadowless forever! to-morrow I should solicit the hand of my beloved. Towards morning a heavy sleep closed my eyes.





### CHAPTER III.

IT was yet early when I was awakened by the sound of voices violently disputing in my ante-chamber. I listened; Bendel was forbidding access to my door. Rascal swore loudly and deeply that he would take no orders from his fel-



low-servant, and insisted on rushing into my apartment. The good Bendel warned him that if such language reached my ears he might perchance lose a profitable place; but Rascal threatened to lay violent hands upon him if he impeded his entrance any longer.

I had half dressed myself. I angrily flung the door open, and called out to Rascal, "What dost want, thou scoundrel?" He retreated two paces, and answered with perfect coldness, "Humbly to request, may it please your lordship, for once to show me your shadow; the sun is shining so beautifully in the court."

I felt as if scathed by a thunderbolt, and it was long before I could utter a word: "How can a servant presume against his master that —" He interrupted me with provoking

calmness: "A servant may be a very honest man, and yet refuse to serve a shadowless master; I must have my discharge." I tried another weapon.

"But Rascal, my dear Rascal, who has put this wild notion into your head? How can you imagine—" But he continued in the same tone, "There are people who assert you have no shadow; so, in a word, either show me your shadow, or give me my discharge."

Bendel, pale and trembling, but more discreet than I, made me a sign to seek a resource in the silence-imposing gold. But it had lost its power; Rascal flung it at my feet: "I will take nothing from a shadowless being." He turned his back upon me, put his hat on his head, and went slowly out of the apartment whistling a tune. I stood

there like a petrification, looking after him, vacant and motionless.

Heavy and melancholy, with a deathlike feeling within me, I prepared to redeem my promise, and, like a criminal before his judges, to show myself in the forester's garden. I ascended to the dark arbour which had been called by my name, where an appointment had been made to meet me. Mina's mother came forward towards me, gay, and free from care. Mina was seated there, pale and lovely, as the earliest snow when it kisses the last autumnal flower and soon dissolves into bitter drops. The forest-master, with a written sheet in his hand, wandered in violent agitation from side to side, seemingly overcome with internal feelings, which painted his usually unvarying countenance with constantly changing paleness and scar-

let. He came towards me as I entered, and with broken accents requested to speak to me alone. The path through which he invited me to follow him led to an open, sunny part of the garden. I seated myself down without uttering a word; a long silence followed, which even our good mother dared not interrupt.

With irregular steps the forest-master paced the arbour backwards and forwards; he stood for a moment before me, looked into the paper which he held, and said with a most penetrating glance, "Count, and do you indeed know one Peter Schlemihl?" I was silent. "A man of reputable character, and of great accomplishments." He waited for my answer. "And what if I were he?" "He," added he vehemently, "who has in some way got

rid of his shadow!" "Oh, my forebodings! my forebodings!" exclaimed Mina, "alas! I knew long ago that he had no shadow!" and she flung herself into her mother's arms, who, alarmed, pressed her convulsively to her bosom, reproaching me with having concealed such a fatal secret from her; but she, like Arethusa, was bathed in a fountain of tears, which flowed abundantly at the sound of my voice, and at my approach tempestuously burst forth.

"And so," cried the forest-master, furiously, "your matchless impudence has sought to betray that poor girl and me; and you pretended to love her, — her whom you have dragged to the abyss. See how she weeps, how she is agonized! Oh shame! Oh sin!"

I was so completely confused that I answered incoherently, "After all,

't was but a shadow, nothing but a shadow — one can manage without it; and surely it is not worth making such a noise about." But I felt so deeply the deception of my language that I was silent before he deigned to give me an answer. I added, "What a man has lost to-day he may find again to-morrow."

He spoke angrily: "Explain to me, sir, explain how you got rid of your shadow." I was compelled again to lie: "A vulgar fellow trod so clumsily upon my shadow that he tore a great hole in it; I sent it to be mended — gold can do everything; I ought to have received it back yesterday."

"Very well, sir, very well," he replied. "You sue for my daughter, others do the same; as her father I must take care of her. I give you three days' respite, which you may







employ in procuring a shadow. Come to me after this ; and if you have one that suits you, you will be welcome. But if not, on the fourth day I must tell you my daughter shall be the wife of another." I attempted to address a word to Mina ; but she clung, violently agitated, closer to her mother, who silently beckoned to me that I should retire. I slunk away as if the world's gates had closed behind me.

Escaped to Bendel's affectionate guidance, I wandered with erring footsteps through fields and woods ; sweat-drops of anguish fell from my brow, deep groans broke from my bosom, within me raged a wild frenzy.

I know not how long it had lasted, when on a sunny heath I found myself held by the sleeve. I stood still, and looked around me. It was the

grey-coated stranger; he seemed to have followed me till he was out of breath. He instantly began, —

“I had announced myself for to-day; you have hardly been able to wait so long, but all is well; you will take good counsel; exchange your shadow again, it only waits your commands; and then turn back. You will be welcome in the forester’s garden: it was but a jest. Rascal, who has betrayed you, and who is a suitor to your betrothed, I will dispose of: the fellow is ripe.”

I stood there still, as if I were asleep. “Announced for to-day?” I reckoned the time over again; it was so. I had erred in my calculations. I put my right hand on the bag in my bosom; he discovered my meaning, and drew back two paces.

“No, Sir Count, that is in good hands, that you may retain.” I

looked on him with staring and inquiring eyes. He spoke: "May I ask for a trifling memento? Be so good as to sign this note." The following words were on the parchment he held:—

"I hereby promise to deliver over my soul to the bearer after its natural separation from my body."

I looked with dumb astonishment, now on the grey unknown, and now on the writing. In the meantime he had dipped a new pen in a drop of my blood, which was flowing from a scratch made by a thorn in my hand. He handed the pen to me.

"Who are you, then?" I at last inquired. "What does that matter?" he answered. "Don't you see what I am? a poor devil: a sort of philosopher or alchemist, who receives spare thanks for great favours he confers on his friends;

one who has no enjoyment in this world except a little *experimentalizing*: but sign, I pray — ay, just there on the right, *Peter Schlemihl*.”

I shook my head. “Forgive me, sir, for I will not sign.” “Not!” replied he, with seeming surprise, “why not?”

“’Tis an affair that requires some consideration, — to add my soul to my shadow in the bargain.” “Oh, oh,” he exclaimed, “consideration!” and burst into a loud laugh. “May I then be allowed to ask, what sort of a thing is your soul? Have you ever seen it? Do you know what will become of it when you are once departed? Rejoice that you have found somebody to take notice of it; to buy, even during your lifetime, the reversion of this X, this galvanic power, this polarizing influence, or whatever the silly trifle

may turn out to be; to pay for it with your bodily shadow, with something really substantial,—the hand of your mistress, the fulfilment of your prayers. Or will you rather deliver over the sweet maiden to that contemptible scoundrel, Mr. Rascal? No, no! look to that with your own eyes. Come hither; I will lend you the wishing-cap too (he drew something from his pocket), and we will have a ramble unseen through the forest-garden.”

I must confess I was sadly ashamed to be thus laughed at by this fellow. I hated him from the bottom of my soul; and I believe this personal antipathy prevented me, more than my principles, from giving the required signature for my shadow, necessary as it was to me. The thought was unbearable, that I should undertake such a walk in

his company. This sneaking scoundrel, this scornful, irritating imp, placing himself betwixt me and my beloved, sporting with two bleeding hearts, roused my deepest feelings. I looked on what had passed as ordained, and considered my misery as irretrievable. I turned upon the man and said. —

“Sir, I sold you my shadow for this most estimable bag of yours; I have repented it enough; if the bargain can be annulled, in the name of —” He shook his head, looked at me with a dark frown. I began again, “I will sell you nothing more of my possessions, though you may offer as high a price as for my shadow; and I will sign nothing. Hence you may conclude that the metamorphosis to which you invite me would perhaps be more agreeable

to you than to me. Forgive me, but it cannot be otherwise; let us part."

"I am sorry, Mr. Schlemihl, that you so capriciously push away the favours which are presented to you: but I may be more fortunate another time. Farewell, till our speedy meeting. By the way, you will allow me to mention that I do not by any means permit my purchases to get mouldy; I hold them in special regard, and take the best possible care of them."

With this he took my shadow out of his pocket, and with a dexterous fling it was unrolled and spread out on the heath on the sunny side of his feet, so that he stood between the two attendant shadows, mine and his, and walked away: mine seemed to belong to him as much as his own; it accommodated itself

to all his movements and all his necessities.

When I saw my poor shadow again, after so long a separation, and found it applied to such base uses, at a moment when for its sake I was suffering nameless anguish, my heart broke within me, and I began to weep most bitterly. The hated one walked proudly on with his spoil, and unblushingly renewed his proposals.

“You may have it — ’tis but a stroke of the pen; you will save, too, your poor unhappy Mina from the claws of the vagabond; save her for the arms of the most honourable Count. ’Tis but a stroke of the pen, I say.” Tears broke forth with new violence; but I turned away, and beckoned him to be gone.

Bendel, who had followed my steps



to the present spot, approached me full of sadness at this instant. The kind-hearted fellow perceived me weeping, and observed my shadow, which he could not mistake, attached to the figure of the extraordinary, grey, unknown one, and he endeavoured by force to put me in possession of my property; but not being able to lay firm hold on this subtle thing, he ordered the old man, in a peremptory tone, to abandon what did not belong to him. He, for a reply, turned his back upon my well-meaning servant, and marched away. Bendel followed him closely, and lifting up the stout black-thorn cudgel which he carried, required the man to give up the shadow, enforcing the command with the strength of his nervous arm; but the man, accustomed perhaps to such encounters, bowed his

head, raised his shoulders, and walked silently and calmly over the heath, accompanied by my shadow and my faithful man. For a long time I heard the dull sound echoed over the waste. It was lost at last in the distance. I stood alone with my misery as before.

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Thus left behind on the dreary heath, I gave vent to countless tears, which seemed to lighten my bosom of its intolerable weight. But I saw no bounds, no outlet, no term to my terrible misery: and with wild impatience I sucked in the poison which the mysterious being had poured into my wounds. When I recalled the image of Mina, her soft and lovely form appeared pale and weeping before me, as I had seen

her in my hour of ignominy; and the shade of Rascal impudently and contumaciously seemed to step between us. I veiled my face, I fled across the waste; but the ghastly vision still pursued me; I ran,—it was close to me. I sank breathless to the ground, and watered it with renewed springs of tears.

And all about a shadow! — a shadow which a stroke of the pen would have restored to me! I mused again on the strange proposal and my refusal. All was dark and desolate within me; I had neither argument nor reason left.

The day rolled by. I calmed my hunger with wild fruits, my thirst with the nearest mountain stream. Night approached; I stretched myself under a tree. The damp dawn awakened me from a heavy sleep, in which I had heard myself groan as

if struggling with death. Bendel had surely lost my traces, and I rejoiced to think so. I determined to return no more among men, from whom I fled like the shy beasts of the mountain. Thus I existed through three weary days.

On the morning of the fourth I found myself on a shady plain, where the sun was shining brightly. I sat down there on the fragment of rock in its beam, for I enjoyed to bask again in its long-forbidden glance. I nourished my heart with its own despair. But I was alarmed by a gentle rustling. I looked eagerly round me preparing to fly; I saw no one; but there passed by on the sunny sand a man's shadow not unlike my own, wandering about alone, and which appeared straying from its owner.

A mighty impulse was roused

within me. Shadow, thought I, art thou seeking thy master? I will be he; and I sprang forward to possess myself of it. I imagined that if I were lucky enough to get into its track, I could so arrange that its feet should just meet mine; it would then attach and accommodate itself to me.

The shadow on my moving fled before me, and I was compelled to begin an active chase after the unsubstantial wanderer. The eager desire to be released from the perplexities in which I stood, armed me with unusual strength. It fled to a distant wood, in whose obscurity it necessarily would have been immediately lost. I saw it; a terror pierced my heart, kindled my burning desire, and gave wings to my feet. I gained on the shadow, approached it nearer and nearer, — I

was within reach of it. It stopped suddenly and turned round towards me; like the lion pouncing on its prey, I sprang forward upon it with a mighty effort to take possession. I felt most unexpectedly that I had dashed against something which made a bodily resistance. I received from an unseen power the most violent thrust which a human being ever felt. The working of terror was acting dreadfully within me; its effect was to close my arms as in a spasm, to seize on what stood unseen before me. I staggered onwards, and fell prostrate on the ground; beneath me on his back was a man whom I held fast, and who now was visible.

The whole affair was now naturally explained. The man must have possessed the viewless charm which makes the possessor, but not his



... forward to  
... of it...





shadow, invisible. He first held it, and afterwards had thrown it away. I looked round, and immediately discovered the shadow of the invisible charm. I leaped up and sprang towards it, and did not miss at last the valuable spoil; unseen and shadowless, I held the charm in my hand.

The man rose up speedily: he looked round after his fortunate subduer, not being able to discover in the broad sunny plain either him or his shadow, which he sought with the greatest anxiety; for he had no reason to suspect, and no time to observe, that I was a shadowless being. As soon as he discovered that every trace was vanished, he raised his hands against himself in the wildest despair, and tore his hair. But this newly-acquired treasure gave me the means and the dis-

position to mingle again among my fellow-men. No pretext was wanting for palliating to my own mind this despicable robbery, or, rather, it wanted no such pretext. With a view of ridding myself of any internal reproaches, I hurried away, not even looking back on the unfortunate victim, whose agonized tones I heard long repeated after me. So, at least, at that time I looked upon the circumstances of that event

I longed to go to the forest-garden, in order to inform myself of the truth of what the hated one had announced to me; but I knew not where I was; and in order to inform myself as to the neighbourhood, I mounted the nearest hill, and saw from its brow the tower of the forest-garden lying at my feet. My heart beat with agitation, and tears, very different from those I had be-

fore shed, burst into my eyes. I was to see her again. An anxious, longing desire hurried my steps down the straightest path. A crowd of peasants I passed unseen going from town; they were talking of me and of Rascal, and of the forester. I would listen to nothing; I hastened by.

I walked into the garden, my bosom trembling with the alarm of expectation. A laugh approached me. I shook, looked eagerly around me, but could perceive nobody. I moved farther forward, and a noise as of the pacing of human feet seemed near me. Still I could see nothing; I thought my ears were deceived; but it was early, — nobody was in Count Peter's arbour, the garden was empty. I rambled over the familiar paths until I came near to the mansion. I heard the same

sound more distinctly. I sat down with a sorrowful heart upon a bank immediately opposite the front door, in a sunny spot. It appeared to me as if I heard the invisible imp laughing insultingly. The key was turned in the door, which opened; and the forest-master walked out with papers in his hand. I felt something like a mist around my eyes; I looked round, and, oh horrible! the man in the grey coat was sitting close to me, looking on me with a satanic smile. He had drawn his wishing-cap over my head. At his feet my shadow and his own lay peacefully one against the other; he was playing carelessly with the well-known parchment, which he held in his hand: and while the forest-master was walking backwards and forwards in the shade of the arbour, he bent himself familiarly to my

ear, and whispered to me these words: —

“Now, then, you have at last accepted my offer, and so we set two heads under one cap. Very good! very good! But pray give me my charm again; you do not want it any more, and are too honourable a man to keep what does not belong to you. No thanks; I assure you I lent it to you from my heart.” He took it gently from my hand, put it into his pocket, laughed insultingly at me, and so loudly that the forest-master looked round attracted by the noise. I sat there as if I had been petrified.

“You must agree,” he rejoined, “that such a cap is much more convenient. It does not cover its possessor alone, but his shadow also, and as many people besides as he likes to have with him. Look, now,

to-day I get two of ye." He laughed again. "You must know, Schlemihl, that what is not done by fair means at first, may be enforced at last; I still thought you would have bought the trifle. Take back your bride (there is yet time), and send Rascal to swing on the gallows; that is an easy matter while we have a rope at hand. Hearken, I give you the cap into the bargain."

The mother came forth, and this conversation followed. "What is my Mina doing?" "Weeping." "Simple child! but can it not be altered?" "No, indeed." "But to give her so soon to another — O husband! you are cruel to your own child." "Mother, you don't see clearly. Even before she has wept out her childish tears, when she finds herself the wife of a rich and noble man, she will be consoled for her

sorrows as if awakened from a dream. She will thank Heaven and us; and that you will see." "God grant it!" "She already possesses a pretty handsome dowry, but after the noise made by that unfortunate adventurer, do you believe that so brilliant a proposal as Mr. Rascal's will soon or easily be found? Do you know what wealth he possesses? He has six million florins in landed property in this country paid for in cash, free from all incumbrances. I have the writings in hand. It was he who forestalled me always in the best purchases. Besides this, he has in his portfolio bills of exchange on Mr. Thomas Jones for above three millions and a half of florins." "He must have pilfered at a pretty rate." "That's all nonsense. He has hoarded wisely where others foolishly squandered." "But a man

who has worn a livery!" "Folly! he has an irreproachable shadow!" "You are right, but —"

The man in the grey coat laughed, and looked full in my face. The door opened, and Mina came out; she was supporting herself on her maid's arm; silent tears were flowing over her pale and lovely cheeks. She sat down in a chair placed for her under the lime-trees, and her father seated himself beside her. He gently seized her hand, and while she wept still more bitterly, addressed her in the gentlest accents.

"Thou art my best, my dearest child; thou wilt be prudent too; thou wilt not grieve thy old father, who thinks only of making thee happy. I well understand, my sweet girl, that this has sadly shaken thee; thou hast wonderfully escaped from



misery. Before the shameless cheat was unveiled, thou lovedst that unworthy one most affectionately. I know it, Mina, but I do not reproach thee. I, too, loved him, while I deemed him to be a rich and noble man. But thou hast seen in what it ended. The veriest vagabond has his own shadow; and shall my beloved, my only daughter, be married to — Oh, no! thou thinkest of him no more. Listen, my Mina; a lover addresses thee, who does not dread the sun, — an honourable man, who is no Count indeed, but who possesses ten millions, ten times more than thou hast ever possessed, — a man who will make my beloved child happy. Do not oppose me; make no reply; be my good, obedient daughter. Let thy affectionate father care for thee, and dry thy tears. Promise me to give thy hand

to Mr. Rascal ; say, wilt thou promise me ? ”

She answered with a dying voice, “ I have no farther will nor wish on earth ; let my father’s will be accomplished ! ” On this Mr. Rascal was announced, and daringly joined the circle. Mina lay in a swoon. My hated evil genius fixed his eyes angrily on me, and whispered in these rapid words, “ Can you bear *that* too ? What runs in your veins instead of blood ? ” With a swift motion he made a slight wound in my hand ; blood gushed forth : he cried, “ Red blood, truly ! sign.” The parchment and the pen were in my hand.







#### CHAPTER IV.

I SHALL expose myself, dear Chamisso, to your criticism, and not seek to elude it. I have long visited myself with the heaviest judgment, for I have fed the devouring worm in my heart. This terrible moment of my existence is everlastingly present to my soul; and I can contemplate it only in a doubting glance, with humility and

contrition. My friend, he who carelessly takes a step out of the straight path, is imperceptibly impelled into another course, in which he will be deluded farther and farther astray. For him in vain the pole-star twinkles in the heavens; there is no choice for him; he must slide down the declivity, and offer himself up to Nemesis. After the false and precipitate step which had brought down the curse upon me, I had daringly thrust myself upon the fate of another being. What now remained, but where I had sowed perdition, and prompt salvation was urgent, — again blindly to rush forward to save? for the last knell had tolled. Do not think so basely of me, my Chamisso, as to imagine that I should have thought any price too dear, or should have been more sparing with anything I possessed

than with my gold? No! but my soul was filled with unconquerable hatred towards this mysterious sneaker in crooked paths. Perhaps I might be unjust to him, yet my mind revolted against all communication with him. But here, as often in my life, and generally in the history of the world, an accident rather than an intention determined the issue. Afterwards I became reconciled to myself. I learnt, in the first place, to respect necessity, and those accidents which are yet more the result of necessity than any will of our own. Then was I also taught to obey this necessity as a wise arrangement of Providence, which sets all this machinery in action, in which we only co-operate by moving and setting other wheels in motion. What must be, will happen; what should have been, was; and not without

the intervention of that Providence, which I at last learnt to reverence in my fate, and in the fate of her who controlled mine.

I know not if I should ascribe it to the strain of my soul under the pressure of such mighty emotions, or to the exhaustion of my physical strength, weakened by the unwonted abstinence of the days gone by, or to that fatal agitation which the approach of this grey adversary produced through my whole frame; but certain it is, that while preparing to sign, I fell into a deep swoon, and lay a long time as in the arms of death.

On coming to my recollection, the first tones that reached my ears were the stamping of feet and cursing. I opened my eyes; it was dark; my hated companion was there holding me, but scolding thus: "Now, is not



that behaving like a silly old woman? Let the gentleman rise up, conclude the business as he intended; or, perhaps he has other thoughts, would like still to weep." With difficulty I raised myself from the ground where I lay, and looked silently around me. The evening was advanced; festive music broke from the brightly-lighted forest-house, and groups of company were scattered over the garden walks. Some drew near who were engaged in conversation, and seated themselves on the benches. They spoke of the nuptials of the daughter of the house with the rich Mr. Rascal; they had taken place in the morning. All, — all was over.

I struck away with my hand from my head the wishing-cap of the instantly-vanishing unknown one, and fled in silence to conceal myself

in the deepest darkness of the wood, hurrying to the garden gate before Count Peter's arbour. But my evil genius accompanied me unseen, pursuing me with bitter words. "This, then, is the reward one is to get for the trouble of taking care, through the live-long day, of the nervous gentleman! And I am then to be fooled at last? Very well, very well, Mr. Wronghead; fly from me, but we are inseparable. You have my gold, and I your shadow; they leave no rest to either. Did anybody ever hear of a shadow abandoning its master? Yours draws me after you, till you condescend to take it again, and I get rid of it. What you have sold, or neglected to do, of your own free-will, that will you be compelled to repair with repugnance and weariness; man cannot oppose his destiny." He continued to talk in the

same tone ; I fled from him in vain. — he was always behind me, ever present, and speaking sneeringly of gold and shadow. I could not repose on a single thought.

Through untrodden, vacant streets I hastened to my abode. I stood before it, looked up, and hardly recognized it. Behind the closed windows no light was burning ; the doors were shut ; no servants appeared to be moving. He stood behind me, and laughed aloud. “ Ay, ay ! but your Bendel is certainly at home ; he was sent hither so thoroughly exhausted that no doubt he has carefully kept house.” He laughed again. “ He will have some stories to amuse you ; take courage. Good-night for to-day, till an early interview.”

I rang again, and a light appeared. Bendel asked from within, “ Who is

there?" When he heard my voice, the poor fellow could scarcely contain his joy; the door flew open, and we lay weeping in each other's arms. He was greatly changed,—weak and ill. My hair had become wholly grey.

He led me through the vacant chambers to an inner apartment, which remained furnished. He fetched meat and drink. We sat down; he again began to weep; he then told me that he had lately beaten the grey-clad, meagre man, whom he had met with my shadow, so lustily and so long, that he lost all trace of me, and had sunk exhausted to the earth; that afterwards, not being able to discover me, he had returned home, and that the mob, excited by Rascal, had raised a tumult, broken the windows of the house, and given full reins to

their love of destruction. Thus they had rewarded their benefactors. One after another my servants had fled. The police of the place had ordered me to leave the town as a suspicious person, allowing me a delay of only four-and-twenty hours to quit their territory. He had a great deal to add to what I already knew of Rascal's wealth and espousals. This scoundrel, who had originated all the proceedings against me, must have possessed my secret from the beginning. It seemed that, attracted by the gold, he had forced himself upon me, and had procured a key for that treasure-chest where he laid the foundation of his fortune, which he now seemed determined to enjoy.

Bendel told me all with abundant tears, and wept anew for joy at seeing me again, and again possessing me; and he rejoiced that, after all

his fears as to what misfortune might have brought me, he found me bearing everything with calmness and fortitude; for such was the form in which despair reigned over me, while I saw gigantic and unchangeable misery before me. I had wept away all my tears; grief could force out no other accent of distress from my bosom. I raised against it, coldly and unconcernedly, my uncovered head.

“Bendel,” said I, “you know my fate. Not without certain guilt does the heavy penalty fall on me. You, innocent being as you are, shall no longer bind your destiny to mine; I will no longer let it be so. To-night I will hasten away. Saddle me my horse. I ride alone; you must remain; I require it. Some chests of gold must yet be here. They are now yours; I shall wander restlessly

through the world. But if a happier day should dawn, and bliss should again smile upon me, I will faithfully think of you; for on your faithful bosom I have wept in many a weary, wretched, sorrowful hour."

The honest fellow obeyed with a broken heart this last command of his master. It agonized his soul; but I was deaf to his representations and entreaties, and blind to his tears. He brought the horse to me; I pressed him while he wept against my breast, sprang into the saddle, and pursued my way under the mantle of night from the grave of my existence, indifferent as to the direction my horse might take. On the earth I had no goal, no wish, no hope.

A foot passenger soon joined me, and after walking some time by my horse's side, begged me, as we were bound the same way, to be allowed to throw the cloak which he carried on the crupper; I quietly allowed him to do so. He thanked me with a graceful address for this trifling service, praised my horse, and thence took the opportunity of lauding the happiness and the influence of the wealthy. He went on, I know not how, in a sort of soliloquy, for I was only a hearer.

He unfolded his views of life and the world, and soon introduced metaphysics, from whence the word was to emanate which should solve all mysteries. He developed his theme with great distinctness, and led forward to its deductions.

You know very well that I have often confessed, since I drove



through the school of philosophy, that I do not consider myself as by any means calculated for philosophical speculations, and that I have altogether renounced that branch of study. From that time I have let many things be settled as they could, renounced much which I might have understood or learnt, and, following your counsels by trusting to my innate senses that voice of the heart, I have gone forward in my own road as far as I was able. This rhetorician appeared to me to build his firmly-cemented edifice with great ability. It seemed to bear itself on its firm and solid foundation, and stood, as it were, on its own absolute necessity. Then I missed in the edifice what I particularly sought; and it was to me merely a piece of art, whose completeness and decorations served only to de

light the eye. But I listened willingly to the eloquent man, who seemed to transfer to himself my observations on my own sorrows; and I should have cheerfully surrendered myself to him, if he would have taken possession of my soul as well as of my understanding.

In the meanwhile time passed on, and morning dawn had imperceptibly stolen over the heaven. I trembled as I looked around, and saw the magnificent colours blending in the east, and heralding the ascending sun; and at that hour, when the shadows stretch themselves out in all their extension, no shelter, no protection was to be discovered — and I was not alone! I looked upon my companion, and again I trembled; it was even the man in the grey coat.

He smiled at my alarms, and with-

out allowing me to utter a word, began, "Let us then, as is the custom of the world, unite our different advantages for a while; we have always time to separate. The road along-side the mountain, if you have not already thought about it, is the only one which you can prudently take. You dare not descend into the valley; and over the hill you will hardly think of returning, as it would lead you whence you came; and the road in which you are is just mine. I see the uprising sun makes you look pale; I will lend you your shadow while we remain together, and this may induce you to bear my being near to you. Your Bendel is no longer with you, but I will do you good service. You do not love me: I am sorry for it; but you may make use of me notwithstanding. The devil is not so black

as he is represented. Yesterday you vexed me, 't is true, but I will bear you no grudge to-day. I have shortened your way thus far, as you must yourself confess; now take your shadow on trial again."

The sun had arisen; travellers were approaching us on the road; and in spite of an internal repugnance, I accepted his offer. He smiled, and let my shadow fall on the ground; it took its station upon that of my horse, and cheerfully moved forward. My mind was in a strange mood. I rode by a body of country people, who were respectfully making room, with their heads uncovered as for a wealthy-looking man. I rode farther, and looked aside from my horse with eager eyes and beating heart on what was once my shadow, but which I had now borrowed from a stranger, ay, from an enemy.

He came on carelessly by my side, and whistled a tune; he on foot, I on horseback. A dizziness seized me, the temptation was too great; I hastily turned the reins, drove both spurs into the horse, and thus went off at full speed through a cross-road. I could not elope with the shadow; it slipped away when the horse started, and waited on the road for its lawful owner. I was obliged to turn round ashamed, the man in the grey coat, as he unconcernedly finished his tune, began to laugh at me, and fixing the shadow again in its place, informed me it would only stick to me and remain with me when I had properly and lawfully become possessed of it. "I hold you fast," he cried, "fast attached to the shadow; you cannot escape from me. A wealthy man like you may want a shadow, —

likely enough ; and you are only to blame for not having earlier looked into the matter.”

I continued my journey on the same road as before. I possessed all the comforts of life and all its luxuries. I could move about freely and easily ; and I possessed a shadow too, though but a borrowed one ; and I imposed everywhere that reverence which wealth commands — but death was at my heart. My marvellous conductor, who represented himself to be the unworthy slave of the richest man in the world, had extraordinary readiness as a servant, and was exceedingly dexterous and clever, the very model of a valet for a wealthy gentleman ; but he never separated himself from my side, and incessantly plagued me, exhibiting the greatest assurance, in order that I should conclude the bargain with

him respecting the shadow if it were only to get rid of him. He was as troublesome as hateful to me; I always stood in awe of him. I had made myself dependent on him; I was still in his power, and he had again driven me into the vanities of the world which I had abandoned; I was compelled to allow to his eloquence full mastery over me, and almost felt he was in the right. A wealthy man ought to have a shadow in the world; and so long as I wished to occupy that station which he had induced me to fill, there was only one outlet for me. But on this I determined, having sacrificed my love and made my existence a curse. I would not transfer my soul to this being — no, not for all the shadows in the world; but I knew not how it would end.

One day we were sitting before a

cave which the travellers who had to cross the mountain were accustomed to visit. There was heard the noise of subterraneous streams roaring from unmeasurable deeps; and the stone that was thrown into the abyss seemed in its echoing fall to find no bottom. He depicted to me, as he had often done, with a luxuriant fancy, and in the glowing charms of the brightest colouring, careful and detailed pictures of the brilliant figure I might make in the world by means of my purse if I had only my shadow again in my possession. My elbows were supported on my knees while I covered my face with my hands, listening to the evil one, my heart twice rent between temptation and my own earnest will. Such internal discord I could no longer endure, and the decisive struggle began.



“You seem to forget, good sir, that I have allowed you to remain in my company only on certain conditions, and that I retained for myself my unrestrained liberty.” “If you order me, I shall move off:” the threat was one to which he was accustomed. I ceased; he sat himself quietly down, and began to roll up my shadow. I grew pale, but I stood dumb while he did so. There was a long silence. He thus broke it:—

“You cannot endure me, sir! you hate me — I know it; but why do you hate me? Is it because when you attacked me on the highway you attempted to steal my charm by force? or is it because you endeavoured fraudulently to get possessed of my property, the shadow which had been confided to your simple honour? For myself, I do

not hate you for that; it is quite natural you should seek to turn your advantages, your cunning, your strength to good account. That you have the most rigid principles, and are honesty itself, is a hobby-horse belief of your own, to which I can have no objection. My notions are not so strict as yours; I only act according to your notions. But did I ever attempt to strangle you in order to possess your valuable soul, to which I really have a great liking? Have I, for the sake of my bartered purse, let loose a servant upon you, and endeavoured to run away with it?" I could answer nothing to all this, and he continued, "Well then, sir, well! You cannot endure me, I understand it, and am not displeased with you for that. It is clear we must part, and you really are become very tedious to

me; but to get rid of my perplexing presence altogether for the future, I will give you a piece of advice, — buy the thing of me." I held out the purse to him. "At the price?" "No!" I sighed deeply, and began again. "Well, then, I insist upon it, we must part; do not stop up my way any longer in a world which is wide enough for both of us." He smiled, and replied, "I go, sir; but I will first instruct you how to summon me, when you wish for the presence of your most humble slave: you need only shake your purse, that its exhaustless pieces may tinkle, and the sound will draw me instantly to you. Everybody in this world thinks of his own interests; you see I also am attending to yours, for I give you spontaneously a new power. Excellent purse! and even if the

moths had devoured your shadow, there would be a strong bond of union between us. But enough: you possess me while you possess my gold; however distant, command your servant. You know I am always ready to do honour to my friends, and that I have for the wealthy an especial regard; that you yourself have seen. But as for your shadow, sir, allow me to assure you your shadow will never be yours but on one condition."

Visions of old time floated in my soul. I inquired hastily, "Did Mr. Jones give you his signature?" He smiled: "With so good a friend it was not necessary." "Where is he — where? By Heavens, I will know!" He put his hand slowly into his pocket, and drew out by the hair the pale and ghastly form of Thomas Jones. Its blue and deadly

lips trembled with the dreadful words, "*Justo judicio Dei judicatus sum : justo judicio Dei condemnatus sum.*" I was horror-struck. I dashed the clinking purse hastily into the abyss, and uttered these last words: "I conjure thee, in the name of God, monster, begone, and never again appear before these eyes." He rose up with a gloomy frown, and vanished instantaneously behind the dark masses of rock which surrounded that wild and savage place.





## CHAPTER V.

I SAT there shadowless and penniless; but a heavy weight had been removed from my bosom, and I was calm. Had I not lost my love, or had that loss left me free from self-reproach, I believe I might have been happy; but I knew not what steps I should take. I searched

my pockets, and found that a few pieces of gold remained to me; I counted them smilingly. I had left my horse at the inn below. I was ashamed to return there, at least till the setting of the sun — and the sun was high in the heavens. I laid myself down in the shade of a neighbouring tree, and fell quietly asleep.

The sweetest images danced cheerfully around me in my delightful dreams. Mina, crowned with a garland of flowers, hovered over me, and cheered me with an affectionate smile. The noble Bendel was there, too, weaving a flowery wreath, and approaching me with a friendly greeting. Many others also were there, and among them methought I saw even thee, Chamisso, in the distant crowd. A bright light shone, but there were no shadows; and



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what was more singular, all appeared happy — flowers and songs, and love and joy, under groves of palms. I could hardly realize, understand, or point out the flitting, swiftly dispersed, and lovely forms; but I enjoyed such visions, I would fain not awake. But I awoke, though I kept my eyes closed, that the vanishing dreams might play a little longer round my soul.

But I opened my eyes at last. The sun was in the heavens, but in the east; I had slept through the night. I took this for a sign that I ought not to return to the inn. I willingly abandoned that which I had so lately left there, and determined to take on foot a by-road, which led through the forest-girded base of the hill, leaving it to fate to determine what might be my lot. I looked not back; I thought not even of apply-

ing to Bendel, whom I had left in wealth behind me, which I might so easily have done. I began to consider what new character I should assume in the world. My appearance was very unpretending: I wore an old black coat, which I had formerly worn in Berlin, and which, I know not how, I had taken for this journey. I had only a travelling-cap on my head, and a pair of worn-out boots on my feet. I rose up, cut a knobbed stick from the spot as a sort of memento, and began my wanderings.

I overtook in the wood an old peasant, who greeted me with great kindness, and with whom I entered into conversation. I first inquired, like a curious traveller, about the road, then about the neighbourhood and its inhabitants, the productions of the mountain, and such matters.

He answered my inquiries talkatively and sensibly. We came to the bed of a mountain stream, which had spread its devastations over a wide part of the forest. I shuddered inwardly before the wide sunny place, and let the countryman precede me. He however stood still in the middle of this frightful spot, and turned round towards me, in order to give me the history of the overflow. He soon observed what was wanting to me, and stopped in the middle of his narrative to say, "But how is this? the gentleman has got no shadow." "Alas! alas!" I replied with a sigh, "I had a long and dreadful illness, and lost my hair, my nails, and my shadow. Look, father, at my time of life, my hair, which has grown again, quite white, my nails sadly short, and my shadow

is not yet springing forth." "Ay, ay," said the old man, shaking his head, "no shadow — that's odd! the gentleman must have had a sad illness." But he did not go on with his story, and at the next cross path he glided away from me without saying a word. Bitter tears trembled again on my cheeks; all my serenity was gone.

With a heavy heart I moved forwards, and sought the society of man no longer. I concealed myself in the thickest of the forest, and was often obliged to wait for hours in order to get over sunny spots, even where no human eye forbade my progress; in the evening I sought a retreat in the villages. At last I bent my course towards a mine in the mountain, where I hoped to find employment under ground; for besides that my situation required me

even to procure my daily bread, I clearly perceived that nothing but the most laborious toil would be any protection from my convulsive thoughts.

A couple of rainy days helped me far on my way, but at the cost of my boots, whose soles were made to suit Count Peter and not a running footman; I soon walked on my naked feet, and was obliged to procure another pair of boots. The next morning I attended earnestly to this affair in a village, where a fair was held, and where old and new boots were exposed in a shop for sale. I selected and bargained for a long time. I was obliged to abandon a new pair which I wished to possess — I was frightened by the extravagant price; and satisfied myself therefore with old ones, which were yet firm and strong, and which

the fair and light-haired shop-boy handed to me for my ready cash with a smile, while he wished me a prosperous journey. I put them on immediately, and went away through a door which lay to the north.

I was lost in my own thoughts, and hardly observed where I put my foot, for I was still planning about the mine, whither I hoped to arrive by the evening, and hardly knew how I should manage to introduce myself there. I had not advanced two hundred paces ere I discovered that I had lost my way; I looked round, and found myself in an antique and desert wood of firs, to the roots of which it appeared the axe had never been laid. I still hastened onwards a few steps, and perceived I was among dreary rocks, surrounded only by moss and stones,

between which lay piles of snow and ice. The wind was extremely cold; and when I looked round, the forest had wholly disappeared. Yet a few paces forward, the stillness of death possessed me. The ice on which I stood stretched boundlessly before me, — a dark mist hung over it; the red sun looked from the edge of the horizon. The cold was intolerable; I knew not how it had happened, but the benumbing frost forced me to accelerate my steps. I heard the roar of distant waters; another bewildered step, and I was on the ice-borders of the ocean. Countless herds of seals dashed splashing into the stream. I followed the sea-shore, and saw again naked rocks, land, forests of birch and pine-trees. I moved forwards for a few minutes — it was burning hot; around me were richly-cultivated rice-fields under

mulberry-trees, in whose shadow I sat down, and looking at my watch, I found it not less than a quarter of an hour since I left the village. I fancied I was dreaming; I bit my tongue to awake myself, and I was aroused most thoroughly. I closed my eyes in order to assemble my thoughts. I heard strange nasal sounds: I looked around; two Chinese, whose Asiatic countenances I could not mistake, were saluting me according to the custom of their country and in their own language; I arose and walked back two steps. I saw them no longer, the landscape was wholly changed: trees and woods had succeeded to the rice-fields. I looked pensively on the trees and plants which were blooming around me, and saw that they were the productions of Southeastern Asia. I went towards a tree, and



all was again changed. I walked forwards like a drilled recruit, with slow paces. Wonderful varieties of countries, fields, meadows, mountains, wastes, and sandy deserts rolled along before my astounded sight; doubtless I had the seven-leagued boots on my legs.

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I fell down on my knees in speechless devotion, and shed tears of gratitude. My future destiny seemed bright in my soul. Shut out from human society by my early guilt, Nature, which I had ever loved, was given me for my enjoyment, spread out like a rich garden before me, an object of study for the guide and strength of my life, of which science was to be the end. It was

no decision of my own. What then appeared bright and perfect in my inner thoughts I have since endeavoured to describe with calm, earnest, unremitting diligence, and my happiness has depended on the intensity of my recollections.

I rose up hastily, in order that by a rapid survey I might take possession of the field in which I wished to make my harvest. I stood upon the mountains of Thibet, and the sun, which had risen a few hours before, was now sinking in the evening sky. I journeyed from the east towards the west of Asia, overtaking the sun in his progress, and passed the boundaries of Africa. I looked round with great curiosity, and crossed it in all directions. As I glanced over the old pyramids and temples of Egypt, I observed in the deserts near the hundred-gated

Thebes the caverns once occupied by Christian anchorites; instantly it occurred impressively and distinctly to me, — there is thy abode. I chose for my future dwelling one of the most secret chambers, which was at the same time roomy, convenient, and inaccessible to the jackals, and moved forward with my staff.

I passed into Europe by the Pillars of Hercules, and after I had taken a rapid survey of its southern and northern provinces I hastened to North Asia, and thence over the polar glaciers to Greenland and America. I rambled through both parts of that continent, and the winter, which had begun to reign in the south, now drove me quickly back northwards from Cape Horn.

I lingered till the day dawned in

Eastern Asia, and after a short repose again entered on my wanderings. I followed the chains of mountains through the two Americas, some of the highest elevations known in our globe. I trod slowly and prudently from height to height, now over flaming volcanoes, and now over snowy cupolas. I was often almost breathless with weariness, but I reached the Elias Mountain, and sprung to Asia across Behring Strait. I pursued the western coast along its numerous windings, and endeavoured to ascertain by special observation which of the islands in the neighbourhood were accessible to me. From the Malacca Peninsula my boots took me to Sumatra, Java, Balli, and Lamboe. I endeavoured, often with peril, and always in vain, to find a northwest passage over the inlets and the

rocks with which the ocean is studded, to Borneo and the other islands of the Eastern Archipelago; but I was obliged to abandon the hope. I sat down at last on the farthest verge of Lamboc, and turning my eyes to the south and east, I wept as if within the grates of a prison that I could proceed no farther. New Holland,\* that extraordinary country so essentially necessary to understanding the philosophy of the earth and its sun-embroidered dress, the vegetable and the animal world, and the South Sea with its zoöphyte islands, were interdicted to me; and thus everything on which I would have gathered together and erected my hopes, was condemned to be left a mere fragment, even in its very origin. O

\* Australia.

my Adelbert, such is the reward for all the labours of man!

In the coldest winter of the southern hemisphere I have stood on Cape Horn, meditating on the two hundred paces or thereabouts, which divided me from New Holland and Van Diemen's Land, careless about the means of returning, and indifferent even though that strange land should lie over me like the cover of my bier. I attempted to cross the polar glaciers towards the west, and with foolishly daring yet desponding steps to pass upon the floating ice, braving the frost and the waves. In vain, — I have never yet been in New Holland. I returned again to Lamboc ; again I sat myself on the outer verge, my face turned to the south and east, and wept again, as if at the fast-closed iron window of my prison.

I rose up at last from this spot, and with a dejected heart journeyed to the interior of Asia. I hastened onwards, perceiving the daybreak towards the west, and at night reached my before-described abode in Thebes, which I had just looked into the previous afternoon.

As soon as I had taken some repose, and the day had dawned upon Europe, my first care was to provide for my necessities. First, stop-shoes; for I had discovered that, however inconvenient it might be, there was no way of shortening my pace in order to move conveniently in my immediate neighbourhood except by drawing off my boots. A pair of slippers, however, produced the wished-for effect; and henceforward I always took care to be provided with a couple of pair, as I often

threw one pair away if I had not time to lay hold of them, when the approach of lions, men, or hyænas interrupted my botanizing. My excellent watch was an admirable chronometer to me for the short period of my peregrinations; but I required a sextant, some philosophical instruments, and books.

In order to obtain all these things, I made some tedious journeys to London and Paris, which were both overshadowed by friendly fogs. As I had exhausted the remainder of my magic gold, I brought with me for the purposes of payment some African elephants' teeth, which I easily obtained, though I was obliged to choose the smallest among them, that they might not be too much for my strength. I was soon supplied and stocked with everything I required,



and began my new mode of life as a retired philosopher

I journeyed over the east, now measuring its mountains, now the temperature of its streams and of its air, now observing its animals, now examining its plants. I hastened from the equator to the pole, from one world to another, comparing experience with experience. The eggs of the African ostrich, or the northern sea-fowl, and fruits, especially tropical palms and bananas, were my usual refreshments. Instead of my departed fortune I enjoyed my *Nicotians*; it served instead of the good opinion of mankind. And then as to my affections: I had a love of a little dog, that watched my Theban cave, and when I returned to it laden with new treasures, it sprang forwards to meet me, making me feel the spirit of humanity

within me, and that I was not quite alone on the earth. But, notwithstanding this, calamity was yet to drive me back to the haunts of men.





## CHAPTER VI.

ONCE, being on the northern coast, having drawn on my boots while I was gathering together my straggling plants and seaweeds, a white bear approached unawares the verge of the rock on which I stood. I wished to throw off my slippers and move off to an adjacent island, which I expected to reach

over a rock whose head towered above the waves. With one foot I reached the rock; I stretched out the other, and fell into the sea; I had not observed that my foot was only half-released from the slipper.

Overpowered by the tremendous cold, I had the greatest difficulty in rescuing my life from this peril; but as soon as I reached the land, I hurried off to the wastes of Libya to dry myself there in the sun. I had, however, scarcely set out ere the burning heat so oppressed my head that I reeled back again to the north very ill. I sought relief in rapid movements; and with uncertain and hurried steps I hastened from the west to the east and from the east to the west. I placed myself in the most rapid vicissitudes of day and night; now in the heats of summer, and now in the winter's cold.

I know not how long I thus wandered over the earth. A burning fever glowed through my veins, and with dreadful agony I perceived my intellect abandoning me. Misfortune would have it that I should carelessly tread on a traveller's heel: I must have hurt him, for I received a violent blow: I staggered and fell.

When I recovered my senses I was comfortably stretched on an excellent bed, which stood among many others in a roomy and handsome apartment. Somebody was sitting near my pillow; many persons passed through the hall, going from one bed to another. They stood before mine, and I was the subject of their conversation. They called me *Number Twelve*: and on the wall at the foot of my bed that number certainly stood. It was no illusion, for I could read it most dis-

tinctly. There was a black marble slab, on which was inscribed in large golden letters my name,

**Peter Schlemihl,**

quite correctly written. On the slab, and under my name, were two lines of letters; but I was too weak to connect them, and closed my eyes again.

I heard something of which Peter Schlemihl was the subject, loudly and distinctly uttered, but I could not collect the meaning. I saw a friendly man and a beautiful woman in black apparel, standing before my bed. Their forms were not strangers to me, though I could not recognize them.

Some time passed by, and I gradually gathered strength. I was called No. 12; and No. 12, by virtue of his long beard, passed off for a

Jew, but was not the less attended to on that account. Nobody seemed to notice that he had no shadow. My boots were, as I was assured, to be found, with everything else that had been discovered with me, in good and safe keeping, and ready to be delivered to me on my recovery. The place in which I lay ill was called the *Schlemihlium*: and there was a daily exhortation to pray for Peter Schlemihl, as the founder and benefactor of the hospital. The friendly man whom I had seen at my bedside was Bendel: the lovely woman was Mina.

I lived peaceably in the *Schlemihlium*, quite unknown; but I discovered that I was in Bendel's native place, and that he had built this hospital with the remainder of my once unhallowed gold. The unfortunate blessed me daily, for he

had built it in my name, and conducted it wholly under his own inspection. Mina was a widow; an unlucky criminal process had cost Mr. Rascal his life, and taken from her the greater part of her property. Her parents were no more. She dwelt here like a pious widow; and dedicated herself to works of charity.

She was once conversing with Mr. Bendel near the bed No. 12. “Why, noble woman, expose yourself to the bad air which is so prevalent here? Is your fate then so dreary that you long for death?” “No, Mr. Bendel: since I have dreamt out my long dreams, and my inner self was awakened, all is well, — death is the object of neither my hopes nor my fears. Since then, I think calmly of the past and of the future. And you — do you not yet serve your



master and friend in this godlike-manner, with sweet and silent satisfaction?" "Yes, noble woman — God be praised! Ours has been a marvellous destiny. From our full cup we have thoughtlessly drunk much joy and much bitter sorrow: 't is empty now. Hitherto we have had only a trial; now, with prudent solicitude, we wait for the real introduction to substantial things. Far different is the true beginning; but who would play over again the early game of life, though it is a blessing, on the whole, to have lived? I am supported by the conviction that our old friend is better provided for now than then." "I feel it too," answered the lovely widow; and they left me.

This conversation had produced a deep impression within me; but I doubted in my mind if I should

discover myself, or set out unknown from the place. I decided, however; I ordered paper and pencil to be brought to me, and wrote these words:—

“Your old friend, too, is better provided for than formerly; and if he do penance, it is the penance of reconciliation.”

On this, finding myself better, I desired to dress myself. The keys were deposited on the little trunk which stood close to my bed. I found in it everything that belonged to me. I put on my clothes, and hung over my black coat my botanical case, where I found again, with transport, my northern plants. I drew on my boots, laid the note which I had written on my bed, and when the door opened was far on my way towards Thebes.

A long time ago, as I was tracing

back my way homewards along the Syrian coast, the last time I had wandered from my dwelling, I saw my poor Figaro approaching me. This charming spaniel seemed to wish to follow the steps of his master, for whom he must have so long waited. I stood still, and called him to me. He sprang barking towards me, with a thousand expressions of his innocent and extravagant joy. I took him under my arm, for, in truth, he could not follow me, and brought him with me safely home.

I found everything thus in order, and returned again, as my strength returned, to my former engagements and habits of life. And now for a whole twelvemonth I have refrained from exposing myself to the unbearable winter's cold.

And thus, my beloved Chamisso, — thus do I yet live. My boots

have not lost their virtues, as the very learned tome of Tieckius, *De rebus gestis Pollicilli*, gave me reason to apprehend. Their power is unbroken : but my strength is failing, though I have confidence I have applied them to their end, and not fruitlessly. I have learned more profoundly than any man before me everything respecting the earth : its figure, heights, temperature ; its atmosphere in all its changes ; the appearance of its magnetic strength ; its productions, especially of the vegetable world, — all in every part whither my boots would carry me. I have published the facts, clearly arranged with all possible accuracy, in different works, with my ideas and conclusions set down in various treatises. I have established the geography of interior Africa and of the North Pole, of central Asia and

its eastern coasts. My *Historia Stirpium Plantarum utriusque Orbis* has appeared, being but a large fragment of my *Flora universalis Terræ* and a companion to my *Systema Naturæ*. In that I believe I have not only increased the number of known species more than a third (moderately speaking), but have thrown some light on the general system of nature and the geography of plants. I am now busily engaged with my Fauna. I will take care before my death that my MSS. be disposed in the Berlin university.

And you, my beloved Chamisso, you have I chosen for the keeper of my marvellous history, which, when I shall have vanished from the earth, may tend to the improvement of many of its inhabitants. But, my friend, while you live among

mankind, learn above all things first to reverence your shadow, and next your money. If you will only live for Chamisso and his better self, you need no counsel of mine.











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