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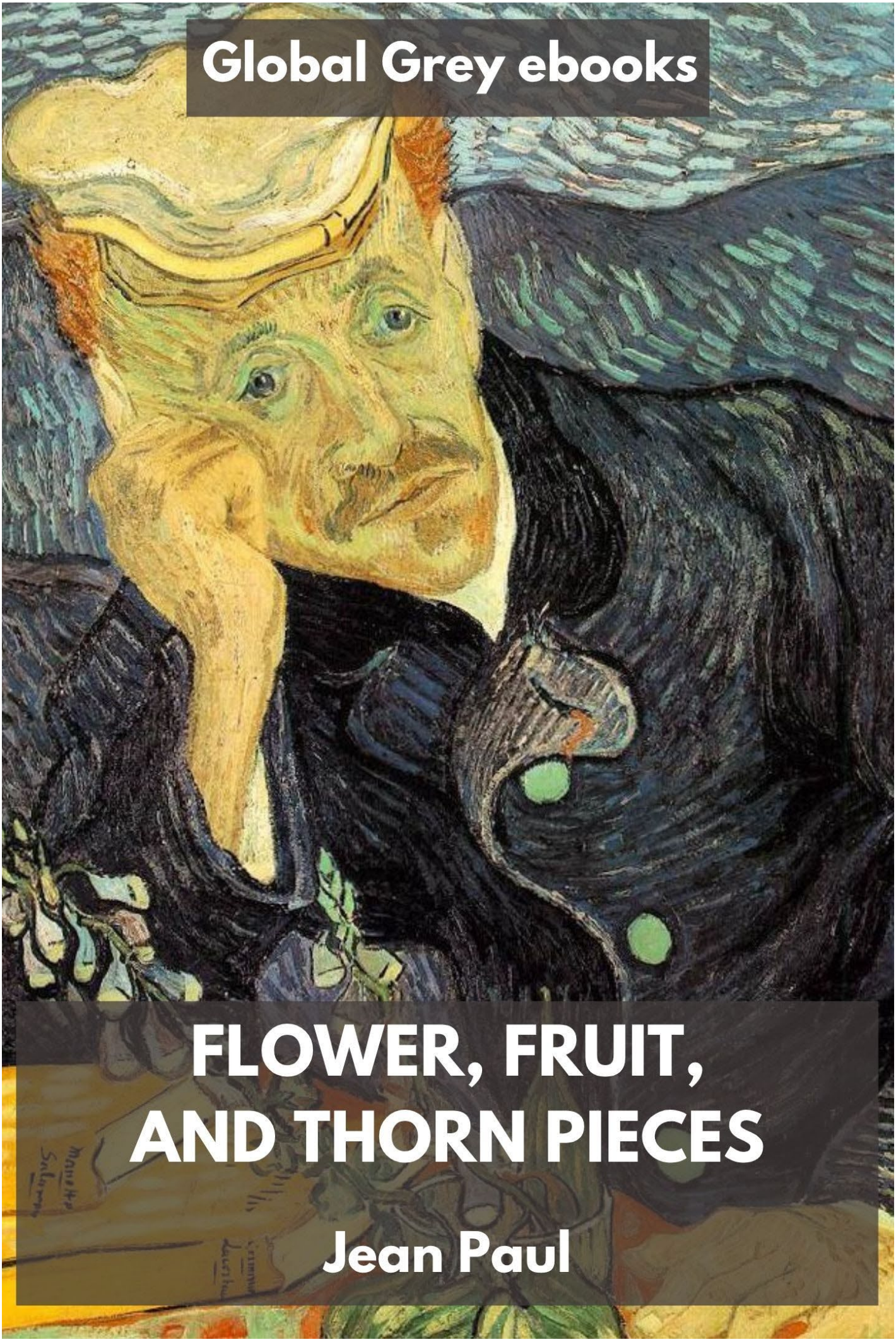

FLOWER, FRUIT, AND THORN PIECES

Jean Paul

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JEAN PAUL

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Preface To The Second Edition

What advantage shall I reap in giving to the world this, my new edition of 'Siebenkæs,' embellished and perfected as it is with all the additions, corrections, and improvements which it has been in my power to make? Can I expect to be any the better for it? People will, I daresay, buy it and read it; but not give much of their time to the study of it, nor be sufficiently detailed and thorough in their criticism of it. The Pythia of Criticism has hitherto been chary of her oracles to me, as the Greek Pythia was to other inquirers; she has chewed up my laurels, instead of crowning me with them, and prophesied little or nothing. The author very distinctly remembers setting to work, for instance, at the second edition of his 'Hesperus,'[1] with his pruning-saw in his left hand and his oculist's knife in his right, and applying both instruments to the work to an extraordinary extent; it was in vain, however, that he looked for anything like an appreciative notice of it, either in literary or non-literary publications. Similarly, in all his new editions (those of 'Fixlein,' the 'Preparatory School,' and 'Levana,' are proofs and witnesses[2]), however he may set to work, hanging up new pictures, turning some of the old ones' faces to the wall—marching off some ideas, relieving them by others—making characters conduct themselves better, or worse, or hit upon better, or upon worse, ideas, as the case may be,—the deuce a reviewer takes the least notice of it, or says a word to the world on the subject. But in this way I learn little, am not told where I have done pretty well, or the reverse, and am *minus*, perhaps, some little bit of praise and encouragement which I may deserve.

This is how the question stands, and several consequences follow as matters of course; the indifferent class of readers consider the author incapable of making any critical emendations, while the enthusiastic class think none are necessary—their common point of agreement being the supposition that he absorbs and emits the whole thing with the same natural, matter of course, ease and absence of effort as the Aphides, the plant-lice, do the honey-dew, which is in such request with the bees, though, unlike the said bees, he is not very clever at making the wax for it.

Then there are a good many who think every line should be left in the condition in which it first flowed, or burst, spontaneously from its author's fancy—just as if corrections were not themselves spontaneous outbursts as well as the other. Other readers prefer to belong to none of the above factions and consequently belong, to some extent, to all. Were it my object to express myself briefly, I should merely have to do so as follows:—firstly, they say, it would be much better if he simply spoke artlessly out whatever he finds it in his heart to say! and (if this is just what one happens to have done), secondly, how much better would be the effect of that which he finds it in that heart of his to say, and how much it would be improved, were it to be done according to the canons of taste and criticism! I can express these ideas likewise in a more roundabout form, as follows:—If a writer curbs himself too closely, if he thinks less about the strong throb of his heart than about the delicate arterial network and plexus of taste, and breaks up its broad stream into fine, minute, dew-drops of the invisible perspiration of criticism—then they say—"the fact is, that the

[1] Name of one of the author's other works.
[2] Other works of his.

thicker and more powerful a jet of water is, the higher it shoots, penetrating the atmosphere, and overcoming its resistance; whilst a more delicate jet is dissipated before it gets half as far." But, when the author does just the reverse of the above; when he presses out all his overflowing heart in one gush, and lets the blood-billows flow when and how they will, then the critics point the *following* moral—doing it, however, in a metaphor other than I should have expected of them—"A work of art is like a paper kite, which rises the higher the more the boy pulls and holds back the string, but falls the moment he lets it go."

We return at last to our book. The most important of the emendations made upon it are, perhaps, the historical; for, since the first edition appeared, I have had the good fortune—partly because I have had an opportunity of visiting and seeing Kuhschnappel itself, the scene of the story (as was some time since stated in Jean Paul's letters), partly from my correspondence with the hero of it himself—of becoming acquainted with family circumstances and occurrences which, probably, I could not have got at in any other way, unless I had sat down and coolly invented them. I have even made prize of some fresh Leibgeberiana, which I am happy to be able now to communicate to the public.

The new edition is also improved by the banishment of all those foreigners of words which occupied places more appropriately to be filled by natives of the country; also by a critical cleansing away of all the genitive final s's of compound words. But really the labour of sweeping and striking out letters and words all through four long volumes can be estimated so highly by nobody, not even by Posterity, as by the sweeper and striker-out himself.

Another of the improvements made in the Second Edition is, that I have placed both the "Flower-pieces" at the end of the second volume[3] (for in the former edition they came both at the beginning of the first), and that it is no longer the first volume, but, much more appropriately, the second, which closes with the first Fruit-piece.

And lastly, it may, perhaps, be reckoned as one of the minor improvements, that in the two Flower-pieces—particularly in that of the Dead Christ—I have not *made* any improvements, but left everything as it was, and not attempted to scrape away any of the golden writing-sand with which I had made the letters a little rough and illegible.

The above are the principal alterations, concerning which I should be so glad to be favoured with the opinions of able reviewers, to the increasing of my information, perhaps also of my reputation. But, as there could not be a more troublesome business than the comparing of the old book with the improved one, page by page, as it were, I have deposited in the school-book shop the printed copy of the old edition, in which all the writing-ink emendations of the printing-ink, that is to say, all the places which have been written or stroked through, can be easily seen at a glance, often half and whole pages done to death, so that it would really astonish you. Critics not on the spot must, indeed, content themselves with laying the volumes of each of the editions into the opposite scales of a grocer's balance, and then looking, when they will see how much the new edition outweighs the old. From my strict and anxious treatment of my Second Edition, then, all critics may form an idea of my strict and anxious treatment of my first; they may also form an idea how much I struck out of my manuscript before printing, when they observe how much I have struck out after printing.

[3] Second Book in the translation.

Dr. Jean Paul Fr. Richter.
Bayreuth, *September*, 1817.

Preface

WITH WHICH I WAS OBLIGED TO PUT JACOB OEHRMANN, GENERAL DEALER, TO SLEEP, BECAUSE I WISHED TO NARRATE THE "DOG POST DAYS"[4] AND THESE PRESENT "FLOWER-PIECES," &C., &C., TO HIS DAUGHTER.

On Christmas Eve of 1794, when I came from the publishers of the two works in question, and from Berlin, to the town of Scheerau, I went straight from the mail coach to the house of Mr. Jacob Oehrmann (whose law affairs I had formerly attended to), having with me letters from Vienna which might be of considerable service to him. A child can see at a glance that at that time there was no idea of anything connected with such a matter as a Preface in my head. It was very cold—being the 24th of December—the street lamps were lighted, and I was frozen as stiff as the fawn which had been my fellow-passenger (a "blind" one[5]), by the coach. In the shop itself, which was full of draughts and other kinds of wind, it was impossible for a preface-maker of any sense, such as myself, to set to work, because there was a young lady preface-maker—Oehrmann's daughter and shop-girl—already at work making oral prefaces to the little books she was selling—Christmas almanacs of the best of all kinds—duodecimo books, printed on unsized paper indeed, but full of real fragments of the golden and silver ages—I mean, the little books of mottoes, all gold and silver leaf, with which the blessed Christmas gilds its gifts like the autumn, or silvers them over like the winter. I don't blame the poor shop-wench that, besieged as she was by such a crowd of Christmas Eve customers, she hardly had a nod to throw at me, old acquaintance as I was; and, although I had only that moment arrived from Berlin, she showed me in to her father at once.

All was in a glow in there, Jacob Oehrmann as well as his counting-house. He, too, was sitting over a book, not as a preface-maker, however, but as a registrator and epitomator; he was balancing his ledger. He had added up his balance-sheet twice over already, but, to his horror, the credit side was always a Swiss oertlein (that is, 13½ kreuzers, Zürich currency) more than the debit side. The man's attention was wholly fixed upon the driving-wheel of the calculating machine inside his head; he hardly noticed me, well as he knew me, and though I had Vienna letters. To mercantile people, who, like the carriers they employ, are at home all the world over, and to whom the remotest trading powers are daily sending ambassadors and envoyés, namely, commercial travellers—to them, I say, it makes little difference whether it be Berlin, Boston, or Byzance, that one happens to arrive from.

Being well accustomed to this commercial indifference to fellow mortals, I stood quietly by the fire, and had my thoughts, which shall here be made the reader's property.

I cogitated, as I stood at the fire, on the subject of the public in general, and found that I could divide it, like man himself, into three parts—into the Buying-public, the Reading-public, and the Art-public, just as speculative persons have assumed that

[4] The chapters in one of the author's books are called "Dog Post Days," for a reason therein explained.
[5] This means, in German, one who pays no fare. Puns which are not translatable must be "explained," or else the sentence left out.

man consists of Body, Soul, and Spirit. The Body, or Buying-public, which consists of scholars by trade, professional teachers, and people engaged in business—that true *corpus callosum* of the German empire—buys and uses the very biggest and most corpulent books (works of *body*), and deals with them as women do with cookery books, it opens them and consults them in order to be guided by them. In the eyes of this class the world contains two kinds of utter idiots, differing from each other only in the direction taken by their crack-brained fancies, those of the one going too much downward, those of the other too much upward; in a word, philosophers and poets. Naudæus, in his 'Enumeration of the Learned Men who were supposed to be Necromancers in the Middle Ages,' has admirably remarked that this never was the case with jurists or theologians, but always with philosophers. It is the case to this day with the wise of the world, only that, the noble idea of "wizard" and "witchmaster,"—whose *spiritus rector* and grand master seems to have been the devil himself—having got degraded to a name applied to great and clever men and conjurors, the philosopher must be content to put up with the latter signification of the term. Poets are in a more pitiable case still; the philosopher is a member of the fourth faculty, has recognised official positions—can lecture on his own subjects; but the poet is nothing at all, holds no state appointment—(if he did he would no longer be "born," he would be "made" by the Imperial Chancery), and people who can criticise him and pass their opinions upon him throw it in his teeth without ceremony that he makes plentiful use of expressions which are current neither in commerce, nor in synodal edicts, nor in general regulations, nor in decisions of the high court of justiciary, nor in medical opinions or histories of diseases—and that he visibly walks on stilts, is turgid and bombastic, and never *copious* enough or *condensed* enough. At the same time, I at once admit that, in the rank thus assigned to the poet, he is treated very much as the nightingale was by Linnæus, which (as he was not taking its song into account) he, no doubt properly, classed among the funny, jerking water-wagtails.

The second part of the public, the Soul, the Reading-public, is composed of girls, lads, and idle persons in general. I shall praise it in the sequel; it reads us all, at any rate, and skips obscure pages, where there's nothing but talk and argument, sticking, like a just and upright judge, or historical inquirer, to matters of pure fact.

The Art-public, the Spirit, I might, perhaps, leave altogether out of consideration; the few who have a taste, not only for all kinds of taste, and for the taste of all nations, but for higher, almost cosmopolitan beauties, such as Herder, Goethe, Lessing, Wieland and one or two more—an author has little need to trouble himself about *their* votes, they are in such a minority, and moreover, they don't read him. At all events, they don't deserve the dedication with which I, at the fireside, came to the conclusion that I would bribe the great Buying-public, which is, of course, what keeps the book trade going. I resolved, in fact, regularly to dedicate my 'Hesperus,' or the 'Kuhschnappler Siebenkæs,' to Jacob Oehrmann; and through him, as it were, to the Buying-public. To wit, in this way:—

Jacob Oehrmann is not a man to be despised, I can tell you. He served as porter of the Stock Exchange in Amsterdam for four years, and rang the Exchange bell from 11.45 till 12 o'clock. Soon after this, by scraping and pinching, he *became* a "pretty rich house" (though he *kept* a very poor one), and rose to the dignity of seal-keeper of a whole collection of knightly seals pasted on to noble, escheated, promises to pay. True, like celebrated authors, he assumed no municipal offices, preferring to do nothing but write; but the town militia of Scheerau, whose hearts are always in the

right place (that is to say, the safest), and who bravely exhibit themselves to passing troops as a watchful corps of *observation*, insisted upon making him their captain, though he would have been quite content to have been nothing but their cloth contractor. He is honest enough, particularly in his dealings with the mercantile world; and, far from burning the laws of the Church, like Luther, all he burns even of the municipal law is a title or two of the Seventh Commandment, indeed, he only *makes* a *beginning* at burning them, as the Vienna censorship does with prohibited books; and even this only in the cases of carriers, debtors, and people of rank. Before a man of this stamp I can, without any qualms of conscience, burn a little sweet-smelling incense, and make his Dutch face appear magnified, to some extent, like a spectre's through magic vapour.

Now I thought I should portray, in his likeness, some of the more striking features of the great Buying-public; for he is a sort of portable miniature of it—like itself, he cares only for bread-studies, and beer-studies, for no talk but table-talk, no literature but politics—he knows that the magnet was only created to hold up his shop-door key if he chooses to stick it on to it—the tourmaline only to collect his tobacco ashes, his daughter Pauline to take the place of both (although she attracts stronger things, and with greater attractive power than either)—he knows no higher thing in the world than bread, and detests the town painter, who uses it to rub out pencil marks with. He and his three sons, who are immured in three of the Hanse towns, read or write no other, and no less important, books than the waste-book and the ledger.

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"May I be d—d," thought I, as I was warming myself at the stove, "if I can paint the Buying-public to greater perfection than under the name of Jacob Oehrmann, who is but a twig, or fibre, of it; but then it couldn't possibly know what I meant" it occurred to me; and on account of this error in my calculations, I have to-day hit upon quite another plan.

Just as I had committed my error the daughter came in, rectified her father's, and brought out the balance correctly. Oehrmann looked at me now, and became to some extent conscious of my existence; and, on my presenting the Vienna epistles by way of credentials (epistles of this kind are more to him than poetical, or St. Pauline, epistles)—from being a mere fresco figure on the wall, as I had been up to that time, I became a something possessed of a mind and a stomach, and I was asked (together with the latter) to stay to supper.

Now, although the critics may set all the cliques and circles of Germany about my ears—aye, and have a new Turkish bell cast specially for the purpose—I mean to make a clean breast of it here, and state in plain words that it was solely on account of the daughter that I came, and that I stayed, there. I knew that the darling would have read all my recent books, if the old man had given her time to do it; and for that very reason it was impossible for me to blink the fact that it was incumbent upon me as a simple duty to talk, if not to sing, her father to sleep, and then tell his daughter all that I had been telling the world, though the agency of the press. This, as of course you perceive, was why I usually came there to have a talk on the evenings of his foreign mail days, when it didn't take much to put him to sleep.

On the Christmas Eve, then, what I had to do was to condense and abridge my "45 Dog Post Days" into the space of about the same number of minutes; a longish business, rendering a sleep of no brief duration necessary.

I wish Messrs. the Editors and Reviewers, who find much to blame in this proceeding of mine, could have just sat down, for once in their lives, on the sofa beside my namesake Johanna Paulina; they would have related to her most of my biographical histories in those cleverly epitomised forms in which they communicate them in their magazines and papers to audiences of a very different type. They would have been beside themselves with rapture at the truth and felicity of her remarks, at the natural, unaffected, simplicity and sincerity of her manner, at the innocence of her heart, and at her lively sense of humour, and they would have taken hold of her hand, and cried "let the author treat us to comedies half as delicious as this one which is sitting beside us now, and he is the man for us." Indeed, had these gentlemen, the editors and reviewers, got to know a little more than they do about the art of briefly extracting the pith and marrow of a book, and had they been able to move Pauline just a little more than I think such great critical functionaries could be expected to do; and had they then seen, or more properly, nearly *lost* sight of, that gentle face of hers as it melted away in a dew of tears (because girls and gold are the *softer* and the more *impressionable* the *purer* they are), and had they, as of course they would have done, in the heavenliness of their emotion, well-nigh clean forgotten themselves, and the snoring father——

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Good gracious! I have got into a tremendous state over it myself, and shall keep the preface till to-morrow. It is clear that it must be gone on with in a calmer mood.

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I thought I might take it for granted that the master of the house would have tired himself so much with letter-writing on the Christmas Eve, that all that would be wanted to put him to sleep would be some person who should hasten the process by talking in a long-winded and tedious style. I considered myself to be that person. However, at first, while supper was going on, I only introduced subjects which he would understand. While he was plying his spoon and fork, and till grace had been said, a sleep of any duration was more than could be expected of him. Wherefore I entertained him with matter of interest and amusement, such as my blind fellow-passenger (the fawn), one or two stoppages of payment—my opinions on the French War, and the high prices of everything—that Frederick Street, Berlin, was half a mile in length—that there was great freedom, both of the press and of trade, in that city. I also mentioned that in most parts of Germany which I had visited, I had found that the beggar boys were the "revising barristers" of and "lodgers of appeals" against the newspaper writers; that is to say, that the newspaper makers bring to life, with their ink, the people who are killed in battle, and are able to avail themselves of these resurrected ones in the next "affaire;" whilst the soldiers' children, on the other hand, like to kill their fathers and then beg upon the lists of killed: they shoot their fathers dead for a halfpenny each, and the newspaper evangelists bring them to life again for a penny. And thus these two classes of the community are, in a beautiful manner, by reciprocity of lying, the one the antidote to the other. This is the reason why neither a newspaper writer, nor an orthographer, can strictly adhere to Klopstock's orthographical rule, only to *write* what you *hear*.

When the cloth was off, I saw that it was time for me to set my foot to work at the rocking of Captain Oehrmann's cradle. My 'Hesperus' is too big a book. On other occasions I should have had time enough. On these occasions all I had to do to get the great Dutch tulip to close its petals in sleep was, to begin with wars and rumours

of wars—then introduce the Law of Nature, or rather the *Laws* of Nature, seeing that every fair and every war provides a fresh supply—from this point I had but a short step to arrive at the most sublime axioms of moral science, thus dipping the merchant before he knew where he was into the deepest centre of the health-giving mineral well of truth. Or I lighted up sundry new systems (of my own invention), held them under his nose, attacked and refuted them, benumbing and narcotising him with the smoke till he fell down senseless. Then came freedom! Then his daughter and I would open the window to the stars and the flowers outside, while I placed before the poor famished soul a rich supply of the loveliest poetical honey-bearing blossoms. Such had been my process on previous occasions. But this evening I took a shorter path. As soon as grace was said, I got as near as I could to complete unintelligibility, and proposed to the house of business of Oehrmann's soul (his body) the following query: whether there were not more Kartesians than Newtonists among the princes of Germany. "I do not mean as regards the animal world," I continued slowly and tediously. "Kartesius, as we know, is of opinion that the animals are insentient machines, and consequently, man, the noblest of animals, would be improperly comprehended in this dictum; what my meaning is, and what I want to know, is this—do not the majority (of the princes of Germany) consider that the essentiality of a realm consists in Extension, as Kartesius holds that of matter to do, only the minority of them holding, as Newton (a greater man) does of matter, that its essentiality consists in Solidity."

He terrified me by answering with the greatest liveliness, and as broad awake as you please, "There are only two of them that can pay their way—the Prince of Flachsenfingen and the Prince of——"

At this point his daughter placed a basket of clothes come from the wash upon the table, and a little box of letters upon the basket, and set to work printing her brothers' names at full length upon their shirts. As she took out of the basket a tall white festival tiara for her father, and took away from him the base Saturday cowl which he had on, I was incited to become as obscure and as long-winded as the night-cap and my own designs called upon me to be.

Now, as there is nothing about which he is so utterly indifferent as my books, and polite literature in all its branches, I determined to settle him, once for all, with this detested stuff. I succeeded in pumping out what follows.

"I almost fear, Captain, that you must have rather wondered that I have never enabled you to make acquaintance in anything like a very detailed or explicit manner with my two latest *opuscula*, or little works; the elder of the two is, curiously enough, called 'Dog Post Days,' and the later 'Flower-pieces.' Perhaps, if I just give you a slight idea to-night of the principal points of my forty-five Dog Post Days, and then fetch up with the Flower-pieces this day week, I shall be doing a little towards making amends for my negligence. Of course, it's my fault alone, and nobody else's, if you find you don't quite know what the first of the two may be *about*—whether you are to suppose it to be a work on heraldry or on insects—or a dictionary of some particular dialect—or an ancient codex—or a Lexicon Homericum—or a collection of inaugural disputations—or a ready reckoner—or an epic poem—or a volume of funeral sermons. It really *is* nothing but an interesting story, with threads of all the above subjects woven into it, however. I should be very glad myself, Captain, if it were better than it is; and particularly I wish it were written with that degree of lucidity that one could half read it, and half compose it even, in his sleep. I do not know, Captain, quite what your canons of criticism may be, and hence I cannot say

whether your taste is British or Greek. I must admit that I shrewdly suspect that it is not much in the book's favour that there are parts of it to be found—I hope not very many—in which there are more meanings than one, of all kinds of metaphors and flowery styles hashed up together, or an outside semblance of gravity with no reality behind it, but only mere fun (you see Germans insist upon a businesslike style), and (which I am most of all afraid is the case), though the book is of some considerable extent, my attempts at imitating the romances of chivalry so popular in the present day (which so often *seem* as if they really must have been written by the old *artless* knights themselves, fellows who were better at wielding the heavy two-handed sword than the light goose quill)—that my attempts, I say, at imitating these romances have scarcely been attended with that amount of success at which I have aimed at attaining. Perhaps, too, I might oftener have offended the modesty and the ears of the ladies, as many men of the world have thought I might; for, indeed, books which do not offend the ears of the great—but only those of the chaste—are not considered the most objectionable."

I saw here, when too late, that I had struck on a subject which enlivened him up prodigiously. I did, indeed, instantly make a jump to a quite different topic, saying, "it is probably the safest way of all, to have improper books deposited in *public* libraries, where the librarians are of the usual type, because the rudeness of their manners and their disagreeable behaviour, does more to prevent these books from being read than an edict of the censorship." But Jacobus would speak out his thought, "Pauline, don't let me forget that the woman Stenzin hasn't paid her fine yet."

It was uncommonly annoying that, just when I got sleep lured on to within a step or two of him, the Captain should all of a sudden draw his trigger and let off a thing calculated to blow all my sleeping powder to the four winds of heaven. There is nobody more difficult to weary than a person who wearies everybody else. I would rather undertake to weary out a lady who happens to have nothing to do in five minutes' time, than a man of business in as many hours.

Pauline, the darling, anxious to hear the stories which I had accompanied in manuscript to Berlin, put slowly into my hand one by one the following letters from her letterbox: "STORY"—i. e. she wanted to be told the "Dog Post Days" that evening.

So I set to work again, and, with a sigh, began in this way: "The fact is, Mr. Oehrmann, that your humble servant here will soon be setting letters of this sort flying about in Berlin, by his new book, and my 'Post Days' may be printed on shirts quite as fine as those your sons' names are being printed upon, if the people happen to have made their paper from such. But, indeed, I must admit to you that as I was sitting on the coach on my way to Berlin, with my right foot under my manuscripts, and my left beneath a bale of petitions on their way to the Prince of Scheerau, with the army, the only thing I had in the way of a comforting thought was this very natural one, 'Devil make a better of it all!' Only he's just the very last person to *do it*. For, good heavens! in an age like this present age of ours, when the instruments of universal world history are only *being tuned* in the orchestra before the concert begins, that is to say, are all grumbling and squeaking together in confusion (which was why on one occasion the tuning of the orchestra pleased a Morocco Ambassador at Vienna much better than the opera itself)—in such an age, when it is so hard to tell the coward from the brave man—him who lets everything go as it pleases from him who strives to do something great and good—those who are withering up from those who are flourishing and promising fruit, just as in winter the fruit-bearing trees look

much the same as the dead ones—in such an age, there is only one consolation for an author, one which I have not yet spoken of to-night, and it is this: that, after all, though it be an age in which the nobler kinds of virtue, love, and freedom, are the rarest of Phœnixes and birds of the sun, he can manage to put up with it, and can go on drawing vivid pictures and writing lively descriptions of all the birds in question, until they wing their way to us in the body. Doubtless, when the originals of the pictures *have* fairly come and taken up their abode here on earth, then will all our panegyrics of them be out of place, and loathsome to the palate, and a mere threshing of empty straw. People who are *incapable of business* can work for the press."

"There's work, and there's work," the merchant, wide awake, struck in; "it all depends—Now TRADE keeps a man; but book-writing isn't much better than spinning cotton, and spinning is next door to begging—not meaning anything personal to yourself. But all the broken-down book-keepers and bankrupt tradesmen take to the making of books—arithmetic books, and so on."

The public sees what a poor opinion this shopkeeper-captain had of me, because *my* business was only the making of books, though in old days I had been continually running in to him day and night, as notary depute, for the protesting of bills. I know the sort of view many people take of the *convenances* of society; but I think anyone on earth will consider that, after being treated in this style, I was to be excused for going quite wild on the spot, and responding to the fellow's impertinence, although he was no longer quite in his five senses, in no less formidable a manner than by repeating, accurately and without abridgment, my "extra leaflets" from my 'Hesperus.'

This, of course, was bound to put him to death—sleep, I mean.

And then thousands of propitious stars arose for the daughter and the author—then commenced our feast of unleavened bread—then I could sit down with her at the front window, and tell her all that which the public has for some time had in its hands. Truly there can be nothing sweeter than to some kind tender heart, hemmed in on all sides and besieged by sermons—which cannot refresh itself at so much as a birthday ball, were it only the superintendent's and his wife's, nor with a novel, though its author be the family legal adviser: to such a beleaguered famishing heart, I say, it is more delicious than virgin honey to march up with a strong army of relief, and, taking hold of some mesh in the nun's veil which is over the soul, tear it wider, let her peep through and look out at the glimmer of some flowery eastern land—to wile the tears of her dreams to her waking eyes—to lift her beyond her own longings, and at a stroke set free the fond tender heart, long heavy with yearning, and bound in bitter slavery—to set it free, and to rock it softly up and down in the fresh spring breeze of poesy, while the dewy warmth gives birth to flowers therein of fairer growth than those of the country round.

I had just finished by one o'clock. I had taken only three hours to the three volumes of my story, because I had torn out all the "extra leaves." "If the father is the Buying-public, the daughter is the Reading-public, and we must not plague her with anything that's not purely historical," I said, and sacrificed my most precious digressions, for which, moreover, such an enchanting neighbourhood is not quite the proper soil.

Then the old man coughed, got up from his chair, asked what o'clock it was, wished me good night, and opening the door saw me out (thereby depriving me of a good one), and saw me no more till that night week, on New Year's Eve.

My readers will remember that I had promised to come on that evening, because I had to make a brief report to my client concerning my "Flower-pieces"—this very book.

I assure the gentle reader that I shall report the events of the evening exactly as they occurred.

I appeared again, then, on the last evening of the year 1794, on the red waves of which so many bodies, bled to death, were borne away to the Ocean of Eternity. My client received me with a coldness which I attributed partly to that of the temperature outside (for both men and wolves are most ferocious in hard frost), partly to the Vienna letters which I had—NOT with me; and on the whole, I had but little to say to the fellow on this occasion. As, besides, I was going to leave Scheerau on the New Year's Day by the Thursday coach, and was very anxious to lay before my dear Pauline some more *Paulina*, namely these sketches, because I knew that whatever other wares she might find upon her counter, these wouldn't be among them—I consider that no editor who has any principles whatever can possibly get into a passion at my *having* duly appeared. Let any hot-headed person of the sort just listen to the plan I had. I wanted first to give to this silent soul-flower the Flower-pieces, two dreams made of flowers put together mosaic-fashion—next the Thorn-pieces,[6] from which I had to break away the thorns, that is, the satires, so that nothing remained but a mere curious story and lastly, the Fruit-piece was to be served up last, as it is in the book itself, by way of dessert; and in this ripe fruit (from which I had previously orally expressed all the chilling ice-apple juice of philosophy, which the press has, however, left in) I meant to appear at the end of the day, myself as Appleworm. This would have led by easy steps to my departure or farewell; for I did not know whether I should ever again see or hear of Pauline, this flower-polypus, stretching out eyeless, palpitating, tentacula, from mere INSTINCT towards the LIGHT. With the old decayed wood on which the polyp was blooming I, of course, having no Vienna letters, had little to do.

But near as it was to the time for wishing new year's wishes, the old year was doomed to end with wishes unfulfilled.

Yet I have little to blame myself about; for, as soon as ever I came in, I did my best to tire out the live East India House and put him to sleep, and I continued to do so while he sat there. The only agreeable remarks I made to him were, that when he had said some insulting things about my successor, his present legal adviser, I extended them so as to apply them to the legal profession in general, thus elevating the mere pasquinade into the nobler satire: "I always picture lawyers and clients as two strings of people with buckets or purses near a kind of engine for quenching money thirst—the one row, the clients, always passing away with their buckets, or purses, empty, and the other row standing and handing each other buckets or purses full," said I.

I think it was not otherwise than on purpose, that I painted to him the great Buying-public with lineaments much like his own—for he is a small Buying-public, only a few feet long and broad. In fact, I made on him an experiment to ascertain what the Buying-public itself would say to the following ideas.

"The public of the present day, Captain, is gradually getting to be a flourishing North India Company, and, it seems to me, it will soon rival the Dutch, amongst whom

[6] This is how all these pieces were really arranged in the first, unimproved edition; but I am sure Pauline won't be offended that, in the second edition (so strikingly improved) I have adverted more to the entire German empire, and arranged them very differently.

butter and books are articles of *export* trade only; the attic salt *they* have a taste for, is that which Benkelszoon used for pickling fish with. Though they have provided Erasmus, in consideration of *his* salt (of a better quality), with a statue (he never *ate* salt, by the way), yet I think this was excusable in them, when we remember that they first had one erected to the fish-curer in question. Even Campe, who by no means classes the inventors of the spinning-wheel and of Brunswick beer beneath the constructors and brewers of epic poems, will coincide with me when I say that the German is really being made something of at the present day; that he is positively becoming a serious, solid, well-grounded fellow—a tradesman, a man of business; a man getting past his youthful follies, who knows *edible* from *cogitable* matter (when he sees it), and can winnow out the latter from the former; who can distinguish the printer from the publisher, and the bookseller (as the more important) from both; he is becoming a speculative individual who, like the hens who run from a harp string with fox-gut, can't bear the noise of any poet's harp whatever, were it strung with the harper's own heart-strings—and who will soon come to suffer no pictorial art to exist, except upon bales of merchandise,[7] nor any printing except calico-printing."

Here I saw, to my amazement, that the merchant was asleep already, and had shut the window-shutters of his senses. I was a good deal annoyed that I had been standing in awe of him, as well as talking to him, all this time unnecessarily; I had been playing the part of the Devil, and he that of King Solomon, supposed by the evil one to be alive when he was dead.[8]

Meantime, with the view of not waking him up by means of a sudden change of key, I went on talking to him as if nothing had happened, speaking to him all the time I was slipping away from him further and further towards the window with an exceedingly gradual *diminuendo* of my tone, as follows:—"And of such a public as this, I quite expect that a time will come when it will value shoe leather much above altar-pieces,[9] and that, when the moral and philosophical credit of any philosopher chances to be in question, its first inquiry of all will be, 'is the fellow *solvent*?' And further, my beloved listener (I continued in the same tone, so as not to run the risk of waking the sleeper by any change in the *kind* of sound), it is to be hoped and expected that I shall now have an opportunity of going through, for your entertainment, my Flower-pieces, which have not even been committed to paper as yet, and which I can quite easily finish this evening, if *he* (father Jacobus) will have the goodness to sleep long enough."

I commenced, accordingly, as follows:—

P.S. But it would be too utterly ridiculous altogether, if I were to have the whole of the Flower and Thorn pieces, which are all in the book itself, printed over again in the *preface*! At the end of book the first, however, I shall give the continuation and conclusion of this preface, and of the New Year's Eve, and shall then go on with the second book, so that it may be ready for the Easter fair.

[7] I earnestly beg that section of the public the description of which is here levelled at the head of the shopkeeper-captain not to suppose it is meant for *them*; they must see that I am only joking, and my intention, of course is clear.

[8] The Koran says, the devils were compelled to serve and obey Solomon. After his death he was stuffed, and, by means of a stick in his hand, and another propping him up about the *os coccygis*, kept on such an apparent footing of being alive, that the devils themselves were taken in by it, until the hinder axis of him was eaten by worms, and the sovereign rolled over topsy-turvy.—See Boysen's Koran in Michaelis' 'Orient. Bibl.'

[9] Untranslatable pun.

Jean Paul Fr. Richter.
Hof, *7th November*, 1796.

Book I

Chapter I

A WEDDING DAY, SUCCEEDING A DAY OF RESPITE—THE COUNTERPARTS—DISH QUINTETTE IN TWO COURSES—TABLE-TALK—SIX ARMS AND HANDS.

Siebenkæs, parish advocate[10] for the royal borough of Kuhschnappel, had spent the whole of Monday at his attic-window watching for his wife that was to be, who had been expected to arrive from Augspurg a little before service-time, so as to get a sip of something warm before going to church for the wedding.

The Schulrath of the place, happening to be returning from Augspurg, had promised to bring the bride with him as return cargo, strapping her wedding outfit on to his trunk behind.

She was an Augspurger by birth—only daughter of the deceased Engelkraut, clerk of the Lutheran Council—and she lived in the Fuggery, in a roomy mansion which was probably bigger than many drawing-rooms are. She was by no means portionless, for she lived by her own work, not on other people's, as penisoned court-ladies'-maids do. She had all the newest fashions in bonnets and other headgear in her hands earlier than the richest ladies of the neighbourhood, albeit in such miniature editions that not even a duck could have got them on; and she erected edifices for the female head at a few days' notice, on a large scale, after these miniature sketches and small-scale plans of them.

All that Siebenkæs did during his long wait was to depose on oath (more than once) that it was the devil who invented *seeking*, and his grandmother who devised *waiting*. At length, while it was still pretty early, came, not the bride, but a night post from Augspurg, with an epistle from the Schulrath to say that he and the lady "could not possibly arrive before Tuesday. She was still busy at her wedding-clothes, and he in the libraries of the ex-Jesuits, and of Privy Councillor Zopf, and (among the antiquities) at the city gates."

Siebenkæs's butterfly-proboscis, however, found plenty of open honey cells in every blue thistle blossom of his fate; he could now, on this idle Monday, make a final application of the arm file and agate burnisher to his room, brush out the dust and the writing-sand with the feather of a quill from his table, rout out the accumulations of bits of paper and other rubbish from behind the mirror, wash, with unspeakable labour, the white porcelain inkstand into a more dazzling whiteness, and bring the butter-boat and the coffee-pot into a more advanced and prominent position (drawing them up in rank and file on the cupboard), and polish the brass nails on the grandfather's leather arm-chair till they shone again. This new temple-purification of his chamber he undertook merely by way of something to do; for a scholar considers the mere *arranging* of his books and papers to *be* a purification as of the temple, at least so maintained the parish advocate, saying further, "orderliness is, properly defined, nothing but a happy knack which people acquire of putting a thing for twenty years in the *old* place, let that place be where it will."

Not only was he tenant of a pleasant room, but also of a long red dining-table, which he had hired and placed beside a commoner one; also of some high-backed arm-chairs: moreover the landlords or proprietors of the furniture and of the lodgings

[10] Or "Poor's Advocate" (more literally). The appointment so named, exists, or lately existed, in Scotland.

(who all lived in the house) had all been invited by him to dinner on this his play Monday, which was an excellent arrangement, inasmuch as—most of the people of the house being working-men—their play Monday and his fell together; for it was only the landlord who was anything superior, and he was a wig-maker.

I should have had cause to feel ashamed of myself had I gone and used my precious historical colours in portraying a mere advocate of the poor (a fit candidate for his *own* services in that capacity). But I have had access to the documents and accounts relating to my hero's guardianship during his minority, and from these I can prove, at any hour, in a court of justice, that he was a man worth at least 1200 Rhenish guldens (*i.e.* 100*l.*), to say nothing of the interest. Only, unfortunately, the study of the ancients, added to his own natural turn of mind, had endowed him with an invincible contempt for money, that metallic mainspring of the machinery of our human existence, that dial plate on which our value is read off, although people of sense, tradespeople for example, have quite as high an opinion of the man who acquires, as of him who gets rid of it; just as a person who is electrified gets a shining glory round his head whether the fluid be passing into or out of him. Indeed, Siebenkæs even said (and on one occasion he did it) that we ought sometimes to put on the beggar's scrip in jest, simply to accustom the back to it against more serious times. And he considered that he justified (as well as complimented) himself in going on to say, "It is easier to bear poverty like Epictetus than to choose it like Antoninus; in the same way that it is easier for a slave to stick out his own leg to be cut off, than for a man who wields a sceptre a yard long to leave the legs of his slaves alone." Wherefore he made shift to live for ten years in foreign parts, and for half a year in the imperial burgh, without asking his guardian for a single halfpenny of the interest of his capital. But as it was his idea to introduce his orphan, moneyless bride as mistress and overseer into a silver mine all ready opened and timbered for her reception (for such he considered his 100*l.* with the accumulated interest to be), it had pleased him to give her to understand, while he was in Augspurg, that he had nothing but his bare bread, and that what little he *could* scrape together by the sweat of his brow, went from hand to mouth, though he worked as hard as any man, and cared little about the Upper House of Parliament or the Lower. "I'll be handed," he had long ago said, "if I ever marry a woman who knows how much I have a year. As it is, women often look upon a husband as a species of demon, to whom they sign away their souls—often their child—that the evil one may give them money and eatables."

This longest of summer days and Mondays was followed by the longest of winter nights (which is impossible only in an astronomical sense). Early next morning, the Schulrath Stiefel drove up, and lifted out of the carriage (fine manners have twice their charm when they adorn a scholar) a bonnet-block instead of the bride, and ordered the rest of her belongings, which consisted of a white tinned box, to be unloaded, while he, with her head under his arm, ran upstairs to the advocate.

"Your worthy intended," he said, "is coming directly. She is getting ready at this moment, in a farm cottage, for the sacred rite, and begged me to come on before, lest you should be impatient. A true woman, in Solomon's sense of the term, and I congratulate you most heartily."

"The Heir Advocate Siebenkæs, my pretty lady?—I can conduct you to him myself. He lodges with me, and I will wait upon you this moment," said the wig-maker, down at the door, and offered his hand to lead her up: but, as she caught sight of her second bonnet-block, still sitting in the carriage, she took it on her left arm as if it had been a baby (the hairdresser in vain attempting to get hold of it), and followed

him with a hesitating step into the advocate's room. She held out her right hand only, with a deep curtsey and gentle greeting, to her bridegroom, and on her full round face (everything in it was round, brow, eyes, mouth, and chin) the roses far out-bloomed the lilies, and were all the prettier to look upon as seen below the large black silk bonnet; while the snow-white muslin dress, the many-tinted nosegay of artificial flowers, and the white points of her shoes, added charm upon charm to her timid figure. She at once untied her bonnet—there being barely time to get one's hair done and be married—and laid her garland, which she had hidden at the farm that the people might not see it, down upon the table, that her head might be properly put to rights, and powdered for the ceremony (as a person's of quality ought to be) by the landlord, thus conveniently at hand.

Thou dear Lenette! A bride is, it is true, during many days, for everyone whom she's not going to many, a poor meagre piece of shewbread—and especially is she so to me. But I except one hour, namely, that on the morning of the wedding-day, when the girl, whose life has been all freedom hitherto, trembling in her wedding dress, overgrown (like an ivied tree) with flowers and feathers, which, with others like them, fate is soon to pluck away—and with anxious pious eyes overflowing on her mother's heart for the last and loveliest time; this hour, I say, moves me, in which, standing all adorned on the scaffold of joy, she celebrates so many partings, and one single meeting: when the mother turns away from her and goes back to her other children, leaving her, all fainthearted, to a stranger. "Thou heart, beating high with happiness," I think then, "not always wilt thou throb thus throughout the sultry years of wedded life; often wilt thou pour out thine own blood, the better to pass along the path to age, as the chamois hunter keeps his foot from sliding by the blood from his own heel." And then I would fain go out to the gazing, envious virgins by the wayside leading to the church, and say to them, "Do not so begrudge the poor girl the happiness of a, perhaps fleeting, illusion. Ah, what you and she are looking at to-day is the strife- and beauty-apple of marriage hanging only on the sunny side of love, all red and soft; no one sees the green sour side of the apple hidden in the shade. And if ye have ever been grieved to the soul for some luckless wife who has chanced, ten years after her wedding, to come upon her old bridal dress, in a drawer, while tears for all the sweet illusions she has lost in these ten years rise in a moment to her eyes, are you so sure it will be otherwise with this envied one who passes before you all joy and brightness now?"

I should not, however, have performed this unexpected modulation into the "remote key" of tenderheartedness, had it not been that I managed to form to myself a picture so irresistibly vivid of Lenette's myrtle wreath, beneath her hat (I really had not the slightest intention to touch on the subject of my own personal feelings), and her being all alone without a mother, and her powdery white-flower face, and (more vivid still) of the ready willingness with which she put her young delicate arms (she was scarcely past nineteen) into the polished handcuffs and chain-rings of matrimony, without so much as looking round her to see which way she was going to be led by them——

I could here hold up my hand and take oath that the bridegroom was quite as much moved as myself, if not more so; at all events, when he gently wiped the Auricula dust from the blossom-face, so that the flowers there were seen to bloom unobscured. But he had to be careful how he carried about that heart of his—so full to the brim of the potion of love, and tears of gladness—lest it should run over in the presence of the jovial hairdresser and the serious Schulrath, to his shame. Effusion was a thing he

never permitted himself. All strong feeling, even of the purest, he hid away, and hardened over: he always thought of poets and actors, who let on the waterworks of their emotions to play for show; and there was no one, on the whole, at whom he bantered so much as at himself. For these reasons, his face to-day was drawn and crinkled by a queer, laughing, embarrassment, and only his eyes, where the moisture gleamed, told of the better side of this condition. As he noticed presently that he wasn't masking himself sufficiently by merely playing the part of barber's mate, and commissary of provisions (of the breakfast), he adopted stronger measures, and began to exhibit himself and his movable property in as favourable a light as possible to Lenette, inquiring of her whether she didn't think her room "nicely situated," and saying, "I can see into the senate house window, on to the great table, and all the ink bottles. Several of these chairs I got last spring at a third of their value, and very handsome they are, don't you think so? My good old grandfather's chair here, though" (he had sat down in it, and laid his lean arms on the chair's stuffed ones), "does, I think, take the precedence in the grandfather dance:[11] 'how they so softly rest,' arm upon arm! The flowers upon my table-cloth are rather cleverly done, but the coffee-tray is considered the better work of the two, I am given to understand, on account of its flora being japanned; however, they both do their best in the flower line. My Leyser with his pigskin 'Meditations' is a great ornament to the room: the kitchen, though, is the place—better still than this room; there are pots, all ranged side by side—and all sorts of things—the hare-skinner and the hare-spit—my father used to shoot the hares for these."

The bride smiled on him so contentedly that I must almost believe she had heard the greater part of the story of the 100*l*. (with interest) in her Fuggery through twenty united ear- and speaking-trumpets. I shall be the more inclined to believe this if the public should happen to be looking forward eagerly to the hour when he is to hand it over to her.

It may not be otherwise than agreeable to my fair readers to be informed that the bridegroom now put on a liver-coloured dress coat, and that he walked to the church with his dress-maker without any dress cravat, and with no queue in his hair, picturing as he went, to his own satirical delight, the slanderous glances with which the fair Kuhschnappelers were following the good stranger girl across the market to the sacrificial altar of her maiden name. He had said on a previous occasion, "We ought rather to facilitate than obstruct backbiting, to a moderate extent, in a married woman, as some slight compensation for lost flatteries."

The Schulrath Stiefel remained in the bridal chamber, where he sketched the outlines of a critique on a school-programme at the writing-table.

I see before me, as I write, the lovers kneeling at the altar steps; and I should like to cast wishes at them (as flowers are thrown), especially a wish that they may be like the married in Heaven, who, according to Swedenborg's vision, always merge into one angel—although on earth, too, they are often fused, by warmth, into one angel, and that a fallen one—the husband (who is the head of the wife) representing the butting head of this evil one; this wish, I say, I would fain cast at them; but my attention, in common with that of all the wedding company is riveted by an extraordinary circumstance and puzzling apparition behind the music desks of the choir.

[11] The "Grandfather Dance" is equivalent to the English "Sir Roger de Coverley."

For there appears there, looking down at us—and we all looking up at it—Siebenkæs's *spirit*, as the popular expression has it, *i.e.* his body, as it *ought* to be called. If the bridegroom should look up he might turn pale, and think he saw himself. We are all wrong; he only turns red. It was his friend Leibgeber who was standing there, having many years ago vowed to travel any distance to his marriage, solely that he might laugh at him for twelve hours' time.

There has seldom been a case of a royal alliance between two peculiar natures like that between these two. The same contempt for the childish nonsense held in this life to be noble matter, the same enmity to all pettiness and perfect indulgence to the little, the same indignation with dishonourable selfishness, the same delight in laughing in this lovely madhouse of an earth, the same deafness to the voice of the multitude, but not to that of honour; these are but some of the first at hand of the similarities which made of these two but one soul doing duty in two bodies. And the fact that they were also foster-brothers in their studies, having for nurses the same branches of knowledge, including the Law herself, I do not reckon among their chief resemblances; for it is often the case that the very identity of study becomes a dissolving decomponent of friendship. Indeed, it was not even the dissimilarity of their opposite poles which determined their mutual attraction for each other (Siebenkæs leant towards forgiving, Leibgeber towards punishing; the former was more a satire of Horace, the latter a street ballad of Aristophanes with unpoetic as well as poetic harshnesses). But, as two female friends are fond of being dressed alike, these two men's souls had put on just the same frock-coat and morning costume of life; I mean, two bodies of identical fashion, colour, button-holes, finishings, and cut. Both had the same flash of the eyes, the same earthy coloured face, the same tallness, leanness, and everything. And indeed, the Nature freak of counterpart faces is commoner than we suppose, because we only notice it when some prince or great person casts a corporeal reflection.

For which reason I very much wish that Leibgeber had not had a slight limp, so that he might not have been thereby distinguishable from Siebenkæs, seeing, at least, that the latter had cleverly etched and dissolved away his own peculiar mark by causing a live toad to breathe its last above it. For there had been a pyramidal mole near his left ear, in the shape of a triangle, or of the zodiacal light, or a turned-up comet's tail, of an ass's ear in short. Partly from friendship, partly from the enjoyment they had in the scenes of absurdity which their being confounded with each other gave rise to in every-day life, they wished to carry the algebraic equation which existed between them yet a step further, by adopting the same Christian and surname. But on this point they had a friendly contest, as each wanted to be the other's namesake, till at length they settled the difference by *exchanging* names, thus following the example of the natives of Otaheite, among whom the lovers exchange names as well as hearts.

As it is now several years since my hero was thus lightened of his worthy name by this friendly name-stealer receiving the other worthy name in exchange, I can't do anything to alter this in my chapters. I must go on calling him Firmian Stanislaus Siebenkæs as I did at the beginning, and the other Leibgeber; although it is quite unnecessary for any reviewer to point out to me that the more comic name of Siebenkæs would have been better suited to this more humoristic newcomer, with whom, however, the world shall yet be better acquainted than I am myself.

When these two counterparts caught sight of one another in the church, their blushing faces crinkled and curled oddly, at which the looker-on laughed, until he compared the faces with the eyes, which glowed warm with the deepest affection.

While the wedding-rings were being exchanged, Leibgeber in the choir took from his pocket a pair of scissors and a quarto sheet of black paper, and cut out a distant view of the bride's profile. This cutting out of likenesses he generally gave out as being his cookshop and bakery upon his perpetual journeyings; and as it appears that this strange man does not choose to disclose upon what eminences the waters gather which well up for him down in the valleys, I am glad to quote (and express my own belief in) a frequent saying of his regarding his profile cutting—"In the process of clipping, slices of bread, we know, fall with the cuttings for the bookbinder, the letter-writer, and the lawyer, when the paper is white; but in clipping *black* paper, whether profiles or white mourning letters with black borders, there fall many more: and if a man is versed in the liberal art of painting his fellow Christian blacker than he is—with more members than one—the tongue for instance can do it to some extent—then Fortune, the Babylonish harlot, will ring that man's bells (his dinner bell, and his little altar bell), till her arm is half crippled."

While the deacon was laying his hands on the pair, Leibgeber came down and stood at the red velvet steps of the altar. And when the ceremony was over he made, on the occasion of a meeting such as this, after a separation of some half-a-year or so, the following somewhat lengthy speech:—

"Good morning, Siebenkæs."

They never said more to each other, though years might have elapsed; and at the resurrection of the dead, Siebenkæs will answer him, just as he did to-day,—

"Good morning, Leibgeber."

The twelve hours of banter, however, which friends often find it an easy matter to threaten each other with in absence, are an impossibility to the tender heart, keenly enough alive though it may be to the humorous sides of matters, when it is moved (as in this case) at the sight of the friend passing into the vestibule of some new labyrinth of our subterranean existence.

I have now before my writing-desk the long wedding-table set out; and I am sorry that no painting of it occurs on any of the vases buried at Herculaneum, as it would have been dug out with the rest, and an exact copy of it given in the Herculanean illustrations, so that I could have inserted the copy in place of anything else. Few have a higher opinion of the powers of my pen than I have myself; but I see quite well that it is neither in my power nor in my pen's to *half* portray, and that in a feeble style, how the guests—there were almost as many there as there were chairs—enjoyed themselves at the dinner; how, moreover, there was not one single rogue among them (for the bridegroom's guardian, Heimlicher von Blaise, had sent an excuse, saying he was very sick indeed); how the landlord of the house, a jovial, consumptive Saxon, did something towards expediting his departure from this life by his powdering and his drinking; how they banged the glasses with the forks, and the table with the marrowbones, that the former might be filled and the latter emptied; how in all the house not a soul, not even the shoemaker or the bookbinder, did a stroke of any other work but eating, and how even the old woman Sabel (Sabine) who squatted under the mouse-coloured town gate, shut up her stall on this one day before the closing of the gate; how not only was there *one* course served up, but a second, a "Doppelgänger." To anyone, indeed, who has dined at great men's tables, and there remarked how fine dishes, if there are two courses, have got to be marshalled according to the laws of rank, it will not appear unheard of or over

splendid that Siebenkæs (the hairdresser's wife had done the cooking on this occasion) provided for the first course.

1. In the centre the soup-tub, or broth fishpond, wherein people could enjoy the sport of crayfish-catching with their spoons, although the crayfish, like the beavers, had in this water no more than Robespierre had in the convent—that is to say, merely the tail.

2. In the first quarter of the globe a beautiful beef torso, or cube of meat, as pedestal of the entire culinary work of art.

3. In the second, a fricassée, being a complete pattern-card of the butcher's shop, *sweetly* treated.

4. In the third, a Behemoth of pond-carps, which might have swallowed the prophet Jonah, but which underwent his fate itself.

5. In the fourth, a baked hen-house of a pie, to which the birds had sent their best members, as a community does to parliament.

I cannot deny myself and my fair readers the pleasure of just slightly sketching for them a little "cookery-piece" of the second course.

1. In the middle stood, as a basket of garden-flowers might, a pile of cress-salad. 2. Then the four corners were occupied by the four syllogistic figures, or the four faculties. In the first corner of the table was, as first syllogistic figure and faculty, a hare, who, as antipode of a barefooted friar, had kept on his natural fur boots in the pan, and who, as Leibgeber justly remarked, had come from the field with his legs safe and sound in spite of the enemy's fire, more fortunate, in this respect, than many a soldier. The second syllogistic figure consisted of a calf's tongue, which was black, not from arguing, but from being smoked. The third, crisped colewort, but without the stalks: this, ordinarily the food of the two preceding faculties, was on this occasion eaten along with them; thus is it that in this world one goes up and another down. The concluding figure was made up of the three figures of the bridal pair and an eventual baby baked in butter; these three glorified bodies, which, like "the three children," had come forth unscathed from the fiery furnace, and had raisins for souls, were eaten up bodily, skin and bones, by those cannibals the guests, with the exception of an arm or so of the infant, which, like the bird Phœnix, was personified ere it existed.

This picture draws me on. But it ought to be coloured, and as regards the luxury of the feast, it would not be passing it over too lightly were I to compare it to a Saxon electoral banquet, by reference to which I might illustrate it. It is true, the electors of that country require a good deal (and on that account they used to be weighed every year); and I am quite aware that at the beginning of the 16th century, a Saxon treasurer made the following entry in his accounts:—"This day was our gracious sovereign at the wine, with his court, for which I have had to disburse the sum of fifteen gulden (25*s*.). That's what I *call* banquetting!" But what would the Saxon treasurer have written? how he would have lifted his hands up with amazement if he had read in my very first chapter that a poor's advocate had gone and spent three gulden and seven groschen more than his royal master!

As is the case with many natural springs, the fountains of mirth, which welled but slowly in the daytime, jetted up higher in the hearts of the guests as the evening came on. The two advocates indeed told the company that, as they remembered from their college days, though the privilege formerly possessed by every German of drinking

his fill had been but too much curtailed by emperors and parliaments, and the imperial decrees of 1512, 1531, 1548, and 1577 permitted no drunkenness, yet they did not prohibit Kuhschnappel from exercising the right common to all imperial states, of abrogating imperial statutes in cases where local laws exist within their own boundaries. The Schulrath alone could not quite see (and he shook his head about it internally to himself twenty times) how two scholars, two lawyers at all events, could go on gravely joking with a set of such unlearned plebeians and empty heads as were here supported upon elbows;—joking with them, and actually conversing about the utter rubbish which they talked. More than once he spliced on threads of scholarly speech, concerning the newest, most highly elaborated school addresses, as well as sundry critiques on the same, but the advocates would have nothing to do with his threads, but made the bookbinder speak the apprentice speech he made at his admission to the rank of master, to which the shoemaker, of his own motion, stitched and cobbled on one which *he* had made on a similar occasion.

Siebenkæs remarked to the company in general that in the upper circles of society people are much graver, and more tedious, and empty than in the lower; that in the former, if any party happens to come to an end without accursed tedium, people talk of it for a whole week, whereas in the latter everyone contributes so much to the merry picnic of conversation that the only thing there generally is not enough of, is beer. “Oh!” he went on, “if everyone of our condition would but think of it, he would but envy those of a lower; how accurately, in a figurative sense too, does that old truth hold good, that coarse linen keeps one much warmer than fine linen, or even silk, just as a wooden house is easier warmed than a stone one—and the stone one again doesn’t get cool so soon as the wooden in summer—or as coarse brown flour is much more nourishing than the fine white, as all the doctors tell us. And I cannot bring myself to believe that ladies in Paris who wear diamond hairpins, lead half such happy lives as the women there who get their living by picking up old hairpins out of the street sweepings; and many a one whose fuel is nothing but dry fir-cones, gathered by himself as a substitute for fir-fuel” (here the fuel economising company thought vividly of their own case), “is often quite as well off on the whole as people who can preserve green cones in sugar and eat them.”

“Friend Parish Advocate,” said Leibgeber, “there you hit it! In the tap-room and the bar-parlour the worst is at the beginning, the blow, the kick, the angry word come first of all; the pleasure swells with the reckoning. The reverse is the case in the palace; in a ‘palais’ for the ‘palais’ everybody’s enjoyment goes into his mouth at the same instant; just as the little Aphides on the leaves all lift up their tail-ends, and squirt out the honey at the same moment,[12] in the palace it is absorbed with like simultaneousness and sociability. Tediousness, again, annoyance and satiety, are only mixed up ingeniously among the various pleasures which are served up and administered in the course of a great entertainment, just as we give a dog an emetic by rubbing him all over with it, so that he may bring it to operate by licking it slowly off.”

And other similar sayings were spoken. When once any pleasure has reached a considerable height, its natural tendency is to become greater. Many of the lower class members of the sitting exercised the privilege of drink, and of the special inquisition, to say “Thou” to one another. Even the gentleman in the red plush coat (the Schulrath was given to wear one in the dog-day holidays) screwed up his lips, and smiled in a seductive manner, as elderly maiden ladies do in the presence of

[12] Wilhelm’s ‘Recreations in Natural History. Insects.’ Vol. i.

elderly single gentlemen, and gave hints that he had got at home a couple of real Horatian bottles of champagne. “Not sparkling then, I’m sure?” Leibgeber answered inquiringly. The Schulrath, who thought the best kind of champagne exactly the worst, replied with some self-consciousness, “If it isn’t sparkling, well and good, I swear I’ll drink every drop of it myself.” The bottles appeared. Leibgeber, taking the first one, carefully filed through its barrier chain, removed the cork and opened it as if it had been a last will and testament.

What I maintain is, that, even should the two balsam-trees of life, namely wit and the love of our fellow men, be withered away up to the very topmost twig, they can still be brought to life by a proper shower out of the watering pot of these said bottles—in three minutes they will begin to sprout. As the glad, wild essence, the wine of the silver foam, touched the heads of the guests, every brain began to seethe and glow while fair air-castles rose in each amain. Brilliant and many tinted were the floating bubbles blown and set free by the Schulrath Stiefel’s ideas of all categories, his simple as well as his compound ideas, his innate ideas, and also his fixed. And can it ever be forgotten that he ceased to make learned statements, except on the subject of Lenette’s perfections, and that he told Leibgeber in confidence, that he should really like to marry, not indeed, “the tenth Muse, or the fourth Grace, or the second Venus—for it was clear who had got *her* already but some step-sister goddess, a distant relation or other of hers.” During the whole journey, he said, he had preached from the coachbox, as from a pulpit, enlarging to the bride on the subject of the blessedness of the married state, painting it to her in the brightest colours, and drawing such a lively picture of it, that he quite longed to enter into it himself: and the bridegroom would have thanked him if he had seen how gratefully she had looked at him in return. And, indeed, the bride was a great success, and happy in all she did that day, and particularly that evening; and what became her best of all was that on such a high day as this, she waited upon others more than she let herself be waited upon—that she put on a light every-day dress—that even at this advanced stage of her own education she took private lessons in cookery and household matters from her female guests, who aired their own theories on these subjects—and that she already began to think about to-morrow. Stiefel, in his inspired state, ventured upon exploits which were all but impossible. He placed his left arm under his right, and thus supporting its weight and that of its plush sleeve, in a horizontal position, snuffed the candle before the whole company, and did it rather skilfully on the whole; somewhat like a gardener on a ladder holding out his pruning shears at arm’s length to a high branch and snipping off the whole concern by a slight movement of his hand at the bottom. He asked Leibgeber plump out to give him a profile of Lenette, and later on, when he was going away, he even made an attempt (but this was the only one of his ventures which failed) to get hold of her hand and kiss it.

At length all the joy-fires of this happy little company burnt down like their candles, and one by one the rivers of Eden fell away into the night. The guests and the candles got fewer and fewer; at last there was only one guest there, Stiefel (for Leibgeber is not a guest), and one long candle. It is a lovely and touching time when the loud clamour of a merry company has finally buzzed itself away into silence, and just one or two, left alone, sit quietly, often sadly, listening to the faint echoes, as it were, of all the joy. Finally, the Schulrath struck the last remaining tent of this camp of enjoyment, and departed; but he would not for a moment suffer that those fingers, which, in spite of all their efforts, his lips could not touch, should be clasped about a cold brass candlestick, for the purpose of lighting him downstairs. So Leibgeber had

to do this lighting. The husband and wife, for the first time, were alone in the darkness, hand in hand.

Oh, hour of beauty! when in every cloud there stood a smiling angel, dropping flowers instead of rain, may some faint reflection from thee reach even to this page of mine, and shine on there for ever.

The bridegroom had never yet kissed his bride. He knew, or fancied, that his face was a clever one, with sharp lines and angles, expressing energetic, active effort; not a smooth, regular, "handsome" one: and as, moreover, he always laughed at himself and his own appearance, he supposed it would strike other persons in the same light. Hence it was that, although as an every-day matter he rose superior to the eyes and tongues of a whole street (not even taking the pains mentally to snap his fingers at them), he never, except in extraordinary moments of dithyrambics of friendship, had mustered up the courage to kiss his Leibgeber—let alone Lenette. And now he pressed her hand more closely, and in a dauntless manner turned his face to hers (for, you see, they were in the dark, and he couldn't see her); and he wished the staircase had as many steps as the cathedral tower, so that Leibgeber might be a long time coming back with the candle. Of a sudden there *danced* (so to speak) over his lips a gliding, tremulous kiss, and—then all the flames of his affection blazed on high, the ashes blown clean away. For Lenette, innocent as a child, believed it to be the bride's duty to give this kiss. He put his arms about the frightened giver with the courage of bashfulness, and glowed upon her lips with his with all the fire wherewith love, wine and joy had endowed him; but—so strange is her sex—she turned away her mouth, and let the burning lips touch her cheek. And there the modest bridegroom contented himself with one long kiss, giving expression to his rapture only in tears of unutterable sweetness which fell like glowing naphtha-drops upon Lenette's cheeks, and thence into her trembling heart. She leant her face further away; but in her beautiful wonder at his love, she drew him closer to her.

He left her before his darling friend came back. The tell-tale powder-snow which had fallen on the bridegroom—that butterfly-dust which the very slightest touch of these white butterflies leaves upon our fingers (and hence it was a good idea of Pitt's to put a tax on powder in 1795)—told some of the story, but the eyes of the friend and the bride, gleaming in happy tears, told him it all. The two friends looked for some time at each other with embarrassed smiles, and Lenette looked at the ground. Leibgeber said, "Hem! Hem!" twice over, and at length, in his perplexity, remarked, "We've had a delightful evening!" He took up a position behind the bridegroom's chair, to be out of sight, and laid his hand on his shoulder, and squeezed it right heartily; but the happy Siebenkæs could restrain himself no longer; he stood up, resigned the bride's hand, and the two friends, at last, after the long yearning of the long day, as if celebrating the moment of their meeting, stood silently embracing, united by angels, with Heaven all around them. His heart beating higher, the bridegroom would fain have widened and completed this circle of union, by joining his bride and his friend in one embrace; but the bride and the friend took each one side of him, each embracing only him. Then three pure heavens opened in glory in three pure hearts; and nothing was there but God, love, and happiness, and the little earthly tear which hangs on all our joy-flowers, here below.

In this their great joy and bliss, overborne by unwonted emotion, and feeling almost strange to each other, they had scarce the courage to look into each other's tearful eyes; and Leibgeber went away in silence, without a word of parting or good night.

Chapter II

HOME FUN—SUNDRY FORMAL CALLS—THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE—A LOVE QUARREL, AND A FEW HARD WORDS—ANTIPATHETIC INK ON THE WALL—FRIENDSHIP OF THE SATIRISTS—GOVERNMENT OF KUHSCHNAPPEL.

There is many a life which is as pleasant to live as to write, and the material of this one, in particular, which I am engaged in writing, is as yet always giving out, like rosewood on the turning lathe, a truly delicious perfume, all over my workshop. Siebenkæs duly arose on the Wednesday, but not till the Sunday was it his intention to deposit in the hands of his diligent house goddess—who put a cap on to her cap-block in the morning before she put one on to herself—the silver ingots from his guardian's coffer (wrapped in blotting paper), her palisades of refuge in the siege of this life; for in fact he couldn't do so any sooner, because his guardian had gone into the country, that is to say, out of town, till the Saturday night. "I can give you no notion, old Leibgeber," said Siebenkæs, "what a joy I feel in looking forward to how this will delight my wife. I'm sure, to give her pleasure, I could wish it were three thousand dollars. The dear child has always hitherto had to live from bonnet to bonnet, but how she *will* consider herself a woman set up on a sudden for life, when she finds she can carry out a hundred housekeeping projects, which, I see as well as possible, she has got in her head already. And then, old boy, with the money in our hands, we shall begin the keeping of my silver wedding directly, the moment the evening service is over—there shall be a good half-florin's worth of beer in every room in the house. Look here! why shouldn't the dove, or call him the sparrow, of *my* hymen play out beer on the people as the two-headed eagle in Frankfort does wine at a coronation?" Leibgeber answered, "The reason he can't is, that the prey he catches is of quite another brand. The sour wine (of the Frankfort eagle) is but the grapeskins—the feathers, the wool, and the hair which eagles always eject."

It would be of no use whatever—because hundreds of Kuhschnappelers would correct my statement in their local paper, the 'Imperial News'—if I were to tell a falsehood here (which I should like very much to do), and assert that the two advocates spent the short week of their being together with that gravity and propriety which, becoming as they are to mankind in general, do yet more particularly secure to scholars and to the learned the respect and consideration of commoner minds, to say nothing of the Kuhschnappelian intelligences.

Unfortunately I have got to sing to another tune. In the town of Kuhschnappel, as in all other towns, provincial, or metropolitan, what Leibgeber was least of all conspicuous for was a proper gravity of deportment and behaviour. Here, as elsewhere, his first proceeding was to get an introduction to the club, as a stranger artist, in order that he might ensconce himself on a sofa, and, without uttering a word or a syllable to a human being, go to sleep under the noses of the company of the "Relaxation" as the club was called. "This," he said, "was what he liked to have the opportunity of doing in all towns where there were clubs, casinos, museums, musical societies, &c.; because to sleep in any rational manner at night in one's ordinary quiet bed was a thing which *he*, at least, found he was seldom able to manage, on account of the loud battle of ideas which went on in his head, and the firework trains of processions of pictures all interweaving and whirling in and out with such a crash and a din that one could hardly see or hear one's self. Whereas when one lies down upon a club sofa, everything of this sort quiets itself down, and a universal truce of

ideas establishes itself; the delicious effect of the company all talking at once—the happily chosen and appropriate words contributed to the political-and-other-conversation-picnic, of which one distinguishes nothing but an *ultima*, perhaps, or sometimes only an *antepenultima*; this alone sings you into a light slumber. But when a more serious discussion arises, and some point is argued, disputed and discussed in all its bearings in a universal clamorous shout—your barometer becomes completely stationary, and you sleep the deep sleep of a flower which is rocked, but not awakened, by the storm."

One or two towns with which I am acquainted must, I am sure, remember a stranger who always used to go to sleep in their clubs, and must also recollect the beaming expression of countenance with which he would look about him when he got up and took his hat, as much as to say, "Many thanks for this refreshing rest."

However, I have little to do with Leibgeber's waking or with his sleeping here in Kuhschnappel; him I may treat with some indulgence, seeing that he is soon to be off again into the wide world. But it is anything but a matter of indifference that my young hero, just established here with his wife, and whose pranks I have undertaken to give some account of, as well as of the hits he gets in return, should go and conduct himself just as if his name was Leibgeber; which had long ceased to be the case, seeing that he had given formal notice to his guardian that he had changed it to Siebenkæs.

To mention but one prank—was it not a piece of true tomfoolery that, when the procession of poor scholars, singing for alms about the streets, were just beginning their usual begging hymn under the windows of the best religious families on the opposite side of the street, and just as they had struck their key-note and were going to start off with their chorus, Leibgeber, to begin with, made his boar-hound "Saufinder" (he couldn't live without a big dog) look out of window with a fashionable lady's night-cap on his head? And was it by any means a soberer proceeding on Siebenkæs's part, that he took lemons and bit into them before the eyes of the whole singing class, so that all their teeth begun to water in an instant? The result will answer these questions for itself. The singers, having Saufinder in his night-cap in full view, could no more bring their lips together into a singing position than a man can whistle and laugh at the same instant. At the same time all their vocal apparatus being completely submerged by the opening of their glands, every note they attempted to give out had to wade painfully through water. In short, was this entire ludicrous interruption of the whole company of street singers not the precise end aimed at by both the advocates?

But Siebenkæs has only recently come back from college, and being still half-full of the freedom of university life, may be excused a liberty or two. And indeed I consider the little exuberances of university youth to be like the adipose matter, which, according to Reaumur, Bonnet, and Cuvier, is stored up by the caterpillar for the nourishment of the future butterfly during its chrysalis state; the liberty of manhood has to be alimented by that of youth, and if a son of the muse has not room given him to develop in full freedom, he will never develop into anything but some office-holder creeping along on all fours.

Meanwhile the two friends spent the following days—not wholly in a disorderly manner—in the writing of marriage cards. With these, on which of course there was nothing but the words, "Mr. Firmian Stanislaus Siebenkæs, Poor's Advocate, and his wife, *née* Engelkraut; with compliments."—with these papers, and with the lady, they

were both to drive about the town on the Saturday, and Leibgeber had to get down at all the respectable houses and hand in a card, which is by no means otherwise than a laudable and befitting custom in towns where people observe the usages of good society. But the two brethren, Siebenkæs and Leibgeber, appeared to follow these usages of imperial and rural towns more from satirical motives than anything else, conforming to them pretty minutely, it is true, but clearly chiefly for the fun of the thing, each of them playing the part of first low comedian and of audience at the same time. It would be an insult to the borough of Kuhschnappel to suppose that, notwithstanding Siebenkæs's zealous readiness to join in all the processions of the little place, in and out of churches, to the town hall and the shooting-ground, it was wholly unobservant of the satisfaction which it afforded him rather to make fun of some properly ordered cortége, and mar the effect of it by his unsuitable dress and absurd behaviour, than to be an ornament to it. And the genuine eagerness with which he tried to get admitted as a member of the Kuhschnappel shooting-club was ascribed rather to his love of a joke than to his being the son of a keen sportsman. As for Leibgeber, he of course has the very devil in him as regards all such matters; but he is younger than Siebenkæs, and about to set out on his travels.

So they drove about the town on the Saturday—and where anybody in the shape of a grandee lived they stopped, left their passengers' tickets and drove on, without any misbehaviour. Many ladies and gentlemen, it is true, got the wrong sow by the ear, and confounded the card carrier with the young husband sitting in the carriage; but the card carrier maintained his gravity, knowing that fun has its own proper time. The cards (some of which were glazed) were delivered according to the directory, firstly to the members of the government, both of the greater and lesser council—to the seventy members of the greater, and the thirteen of the lesser council; consequently the judge, the treasurer, the two finance councillors, the Heimlicher (so to say, tribune of the people) and the remaining eight ordinary members—these constituting the said lesser council—each received his card. After which the carriage drove down lower, and provided the minor government officials in the various chambers and offices with *their* cards, such as the Offices of Woods, of the Game Commissioners, the Office of Reform (which latter was for the repression of luxury), and the Meat Tax Commission, which was presided over by a single master butcher, a very nice old man.

I am much afraid I have made a considerable slip, inasmuch as I have drawn up no tables relative to the constitution, &c., of this imperial borough of Kuhschnappel (which is properly a small imperial town, though it was once a large one) to lay before the learned and statistical world. However, I can't possibly pull up here in the full gallop of my chapter, but must wait till we all get to the end of it, when I can more conveniently open my statistical warehouse.

The wheel of fortune soon began to rattle, and throw up mud; for when Leibgeber took his eighth part of a placard of Siebenkæs's marriage to the house of his guardian, the Heimlicher von Blaise, a tall, meagre, barge-pole of a woman, wrapped up in wimples of calico, the Heimlicher's wife, received it indeed, and with warmth, but warmth of the sort with which we generally administer a cudgelling; moreover, she uttered the following words (calculated to give rise to reflection)—

"My husband is the Heimlicher of this town, and what is more, he's away from home. He has nothing to do with seven cheeses;[13] he is tutor and guardian to persons

[13] Siebenkæs means "seven cheeses."

belonging to the highest and noblest families. You had better be off as fast as you like; you've got hold of the wrong man here."

"I quite think we have, myself," said Leibgeber.

Siebenkæs, the ward, here tried to pacify his letter or paper carrier with the woman a little, by suggesting that, like every good dog, she was but barking at the strangers before fetching and carrying for them: and when his friend, more anxious than himself, said, "You're quite sure, are you not, that you took proper legal precautions against any venomous 'objections' which the guardian might make to paying up your money, on account of your changing your name?" he assured him, that before he had established himself as Siebenkæs, he had procured his guardian's opinion and approval in writing, which he would show him when they got home.

But when they did get home, Von Blaise's letter was nowhere to be found—it wasn't in any of the boxes, nor in any of the college note-books, nor even among the wastepaper—in fact, there was nothing of the kind.

"But what a donkey I am to bother about it!" cried Siebenkæs, "what do I require it for, at all?"

Here Leibgeber, who had been glancing at the Saturday newspapers, suddenly shoved them into his pocket, and said in a somewhat unwonted tone of voice, "Come out, old boy, and let's have a run in the fields." When they got there, he put into his hands the 'Schaffhausen News,' the 'Swabian Mercury,' the 'Stuttgart Times,' and the 'Erlangen Gazette,' and said, "These will enable you to form some idea of the sort of scoundrel you have for a guardian."

In each of these newspapers, the following notification appeared:—

"Whereas, Hoseas Heinrich Leibgeber, now in his 29th year, proceeded to the University of Leipzig in 1774, but since that date has not been heard of: now the said Hoseas Heinrich Leibgeber, is hereby, at the instance of his cousin, Herr Heimlicher von Blaise, edictally cited and summoned by himself or the lawful heirs of his body, within six months from the date of these presents (whereof two months are hereby constituted the first term, two months the second, and two months the third and peremptory term), to appear within the Inheritance Office of this borough, and, on satisfactory proof of identity, to receive over the sum of 1200 Rhenish gulden deposited in the hands of the said Heimlicher von Blaise as trustee and guardian; *which failing*, that, as directed by the decree of council of 24th July 1655 (which enacts, that any person who shall be for ten years absent from the realm, shall be taken *pro mortuo*), the above-named sum of 1200 Rhenish florins may be made over and paid to his said guardian and trustee, the aforesaid Heimlicher von Blaise. Dated at Kuhschnappel in Swabia, the 20th August, 1785.

"Inheritance Office of the free Imperial Borough of Kuhschnappel."

It is unnecessary to remind the legal reader that the decree of council referred to is not in accordance with the legal usage of Bohemia, where thirty-one years is the stipulated period, but with that which formerly prevailed in France, when ten years were sufficient. And when the advocate came to the end of the notice, and stared, motionless, at its concluding lines, his soul's brother took hold of his hand, and cried, "Alas! alas! it is I who am to blame for all this, for changing names with you."

"You?—oh, you? The devil alone, and nobody else. But I must find that letter," he said, and they made another search all over the house, in every corner where a letter

could be. After an hour of this Leibgeber hunted out one with a broken seal of the guardian, of which the thick paper, and the broad legal fold, without an envelope, told unmistakeably that it had been addressed neither by a lady, a merchant, nor courtier, but by the quill of a bird of quite a different tribe. However, there was nothing *in* this letter, except Siebenkæs's name in Siebenkæs's own writing—not another word, outside or inside. Quite natural; for the advocate had a bad habit of trying his hand and his pen on the backs of letters, and writing his own name and other people's as well, with flourishes about them.

The letter *had* once been written in the inside, but, to save an incredible waste of good paper, the Heimlicher von Blaise had written his concurrence in the exchange of the names with an ink which vanishes from the paper of itself, and leaves it, *in integrum*, white as it was before it was written on.

I may, perhaps, be doing a chance service to many persons of the better classes, who nowadays more than ever have occasion to write promissory notes and other business documents, if I here copy out for them the receipt for this ink which vanishes after it is dry; I take it from a reliable source. Let the man of rank scrape off the surface from a piece of fine black cloth, such as he wears at court—grind the scrapings finer still on a piece of marble—moisten this fine cloth dust repeatedly with water, then make his ink with this, and write his promissory note with it; he will find that, as soon as the moisture has evaporated, every letter of the promissory note has flown away with it in the form of dust; the white star will have shone out, as it were, through the blackness of the ink.

But I consider that I am doing an equal service to the holders and presenters of such promissory notes as to the drawers of them, inasmuch as, for the future, they will be careful not to be satisfied with a security of this description, till they have exposed it for some time to the sun.

Some time ago, I should have here been apt to confound this cloth ink with the *sympathetic* ink (likewise possessing the property of turning pale and disappearing after a time), which is commonly made use of in both the preliminary and final treaties entered into between royal persons; the latter however, has a *red* tint. A treaty of peace of three years' standing is no longer legible to a man in the prime of life, because the *red* ink—the *encaustum*, with which formerly no one but the Roman emperors might write—is too apt to turn *pale*, unless a sufficient number of human beings (from whom, as from the cochineal insect, this dye stuff is prepared) have been made use of in its manufacture; and this (from motives of sordid parsimony) is not always the case. So that the treaty has frequently to be engraved and etched into the territory afresh with good instruments—the so-called "instruments of peace"—at the point of the bayonet.

The two friends kept the happy young wife in ignorance of this first thunderclap of the storm which was threatening her married life. On the Sunday morning they went to make a friendly call on the Heimlicher during the church service; unfortunately he was at church, however. They postponed their entertaining visit till the afternoon; but then he himself was paying one to the chapel of the orphan asylum, the whole blooming body of the orphans, boys and girls, having previously made one to him, to enjoy the privilege of kissing his hand in his capacity of superintendent of the orphan asylum; for the inspectorship of that institution was, as he modestly but truly observed, entrusted to his unworthy hands. After the evening sermon, he had to perform a service of his own in his own house, in short, he was fenced off from the

two advocates by a triple row of spiritual altar rails. It was his admirable custom to permit the members of his household, not indeed to eat, but to pray at the same table with him. He thought it well to spend the Sunday as a day of labour in psalm-singing with them, because, by such devotional exercises, he best preserved them from sins of Sabbath breaking, such as working on *their own* account, at sewing, mending, &c. And, on the whole, he thought it well to make of the Sunday in this manner a day of preparation for the coming week, just as actors in places where Sunday representations are not allowed, have their rehearsals on that day.

However, I recommend people in delicate health not to go near or smell at this sort of beautiful sky-blue plants which grow in the Church's vineyard only to be looked at, as an English garden is adorned with the pretty aconite and its sky- or Jesuit's-blue *poisonous* flowers, which grow pyramidally to man's height.[14] People like Von Blaise, not only ascend Mount Sinai and the Golgotha, that, like goats, they may feed as they climb; but they occupy these sacred heights for the purpose of making attacks and incursions from them, just as good generals take possession of the hills, and particularly the *gallows-hills*. The Heimlicher mounts from earth to the heavens oftener than Blanchard does, and with similar motives, indeed, he can keep his soul on the wing in these elevated regions for half a day at a time, in which respect, however, he does not quite equal the King of Siam's dragon kites which the mandarins, by relieving each other at the task, manage to keep up in the sky for a couple of months at a time. He soars, not as the lark does, to make music, but as the noble falcon does, to swoop down upon something or other. If you see him praying on a Mount of Olives, be sure that he's going to build an oil mill on it; and if he weeps by a brook Kedron, depend upon it he's either going a-fishing in it, or else thinking of pitching somebody into it. He prays with the object of luring to him the *ignes-fatui* of sins; he kneels, but only as a front rank does, to deliver its fire at the foe before it; he opens his arms as with warm benevolent affection, to fold home one, a ward say, in their embrace, but only in the manner of the red-hot Moloch, that he may burn him to cinders; or he folds his arms piously together, but does it as the machines called "maidens" did, only to cut people to pieces.

At last the friends, in their anxiety, came to see that there are some people whom one can only manage to get access to when one comes as thieves do, unannounced so at 8 o'clock on the Sunday evening they walked, *sans façon*, into Von Blaise's house. Everything was still and empty; they went through an empty hall into an empty drawing-room, the half-open folding doors of which led into the household chapel. All they could see through the crevice was six chairs, an open hymn-book lying on its face on each of them, and a table with wax-cloth cover, on which were Miller's 'Heavenly Kiss of the Soul,' and Schlichthoher's 'Five-fold Dispositions for all Sundays and Feasts of the Church.' They pressed through the gap, and lo and behold! there was the Heimlicher all alone, continuing his devotions in his sleep, with his cap under his arm. His house- and church-servants had read to him till sleep had stiffened him to a petrifaction, or pillar of salt (an event which occurred every Sunday), for his eyes and his head were alike heavy with the edible, the potable, and the spiritual, refreshment of which he had partaken; or because he was like many who think it well to close their eyes during the sowing of the heavenly seed, just as

[14] Sky-blue is the colour of the order of the Jesuits, as also of the Indian Krisna, and of anger. The hypothesis of the natural philosopher Marat, that blue and red together make black, should be experimented upon, by mixing the cardinal's red with the Jesuit's blue. Ho himself, subsequently, during the French Revolution, produced from blue, red, and white the most beautiful ivory black, or the Indian ink with which Napoleon afterwards painted.

people do when their heads are being powdered, or because churches and private chapels are still like those ancient temples in which the communications of the oracles were received during sleep. And as soon as they saw his eyes closed, the servants would read more and more softly, to accustom him gradually to the complete cessation of the sound; and, by and by, the devout domestics would steal gently away, leaving him in his attitude of prayer till 10 o'clock; at that hour (when, moreover, Madame von Blaise generally came home from paying visits) the domestic sacristan and night watchman would rouse him from his sleep with a shrill "Amen," and he would put something on to his bald head again.

This evening matters fell out differently. Leibgeber rapped loudly on the table two or three times with the knuckle of his forefinger to wake the city's father out of his first sleep. When he opened his eyes and saw before him the two lean parodies and copies of one another, he took, in his beer- and sleep-heaviness of idea, a glass periwig from off a block, and put that on his head instead of his cap, which had fallen down. His ward addressed him politely, saying he wished to present to him his friend with whom he had made the exchange of names. He likewise called him his "kind cousin and guardian." Leibgeber, more angry and less self-contained, because he was younger, and because the wrong had not been done to *him*, fired into the Heimlicher's ears, from a position closer to him by three discourteous paces, the inquiries, "Which of us two is it that your worship has given out *pro mortuo*, that you may be able to cite him as a dead man? There are the ghosts of *two* of us here both together." Blaise turned with a lofty air from Leibgeber to Siebenkæs, and said, "If you have not changed your dress, sir, as well as your name, I believe *you* are the gentleman whom I have had the honour of talking with on several previous occasions. Or was it *you*, sir?" he said to Leibgeber, who shook like one possessed. "Well," he continued in a more pleasant tone, "I must confess to you, Mr. Siebenkæs, that I had always supposed, until now, that you were the person who left this for the university ten years ago, and whose little inheritance I then assumed the guardianship or curatorship of. What probably chiefly contributed to my mistake, if it be a mistake, was, I presume, the likeness which, *præter propter*, you certainly seem to bear to my missing ward; for in many details you undoubtedly differ from him; for instance, he had a mole beside his ear."

"The infernal mole," interrupted Leibgeber, "was obliterated by means of a toad, on my account entirely, because it was like an ass's ear, and he never thought that, when he lost his ear, he should lose a relative along with it."

"That may be," said the guardian coldly, "You must prove to me, Herr Advocate, that it was to YOU I had been thinking of paying over the inheritance to-day; for your announcement that you had exchanged your family name for that of an utter stranger I considered to be probably one of the jokes for which you are so celebrated. But I learned last week that you had been proclaimed in church and married in the name of Siebenkæs, and more to the same effect. I then discussed the question with Herr Grossweibel (the President of the Chamber of Inheritance), and with my son-in-law, Herr von Knärnschilder, and they assured me I should be acting contrary to my duty and safety if I let this property out of my hands. What would you do—they very properly said—what answer would you have to make if the real owner of the name were to appear and demand another settlement of the guardianship accounts? It would be too bad, truly, for a man, who, besides his manifold business of other kinds, undertook this troublesome guardian work, which the law does not require him to do, purely from affection for his relative, and from the love which he bears to all his

brethren of mankind[15]—it would be too bad, I say, for him to have to pay up this money a second time out of his own pocket. At the same time, Mr. Siebenkæs, as, in my capacity of a private individual, I am more disposed to admit the validity of your claim than you perhaps suppose, you being a lawyer, know quite as well as I that my individual conviction carries with it no legal weight whatever, and that I have to deal with this matter not as a man, but as a guardian—it would probably be the best course to let some third party less biassed in my favour, such as the Inheritance Office, decide the question. Let me have the satisfaction, Mr. Siebenkæs, as soon as it may be possible" (he ended more smilingly, and laying his hand on the other's shoulder) "to see that which I hope may prove the case, namely, that you are my long-missing cousin, Leibgeber, properly established by legal proof."

"Then," said Leibgeber, grimly calm, and with all kinds of scale-passages and fugatos coursing over the colour-piano of his face, "is the little bit of resemblance which Mr. Siebenkæs there has to—to *himself*, that is to say, to your worship's ward, to be taken as proving nothing; not even as much as an equal similarity in a case of *comparatio literarum* would prove?"

"Oh, of course," said Blasius, "something, certainly, but not everything; for there were several false Neros, and three or four sham Sebastians in Portugal; suppose, now, *you* should be my cousin yourself, Mr. Leibgeber!"

Leibgeber jumped up at once, and said in an altered and joyful voice, "So I am, my dearest guardian—it was all done to try you—I hope you will pardon my friend his share in the little mystification."

"All very well," answered Blasius, more inflatedly, "but your own changes of ground must show you the necessity for a proper legal investigation."

This was more than Siebenkæs could endure, he squeezed his friend by the hand, as much as to say, "Pray be patient," and inquired in a voice which an unwonted feeling of hatred rendered faint, "Did you never write to me when I was in Leipzig?"—"If you are my ward, I certainly did, many times; if you are not, you have got hold of my letters in some other way."

Then Siebenkæs asked, more faintly still, "Have you no recollection at all of a letter in which you assured me there was not the slightest risk involved in my proposed change of name, none whatever?"

"This is really quite ludicrous," answered Blaise, "in that case there could be no question about the matter!"

Here Leibgeber clasped the father of the city with his two fingers as if they had been iron rivets, grasped his shoulders as one does the pommel of a saddle at mounting, clamped him firmly into his chair, and thundered out, "You never wrote anything of the kind, did you? you smooth-tongued, grey-headed old scoundrel! Stop your grunting, or I'll throttle you! never wrote the letter, eh? keep quiet—if you lift a finger, my dog will tear your windpipe out. Answer me quietly you say you never received any letter on the subject, do you?"

[15] He styles mankind his brethren, as many monks, princes, and religious persons are given to do to each other, and perhaps he is right in so doing, seeing that he treats these brethren of his just as many eastern princes treat theirs, and, in fact, more kindly, beheading, blinding, and cutting them up in a spiritual sense only, not in corporeal.

"I had rather say nothing," whispered Blasius, "evidence given under coercion is valueless."

Here Siebenkæs drew his friend away from the Heimlicher, but Leibgeber said to the dog, "Mordax! hooy, Sau.," took the glass periwig from the head of the servant of the state, broke off the principal curls of it, and said to Siebenkæs (Saufinder lay ready to spring), "Screw him down yourself, if the dog is not to do it, that he may listen to me. I want to say one or two pretty things to him—don't let him say 'Pap!'—Herr Heimlicher von Blasius, I have not the slightest intention of making use of libellous or abusive language to you, or of spouting an improvised pasquinade; I merely tell you, that you are an old rascal, a robber of orphans, a varnished villain, and everything else of the kind—for instance, a Polish bear, whose footmarks are just like a human being's.[16] The epithets which I here make use of, such as scoundrel—Judas—gallows-bird" (at each word he struck the glass turban like a cymbal against his other hand), "skunk, leech, horse-leech—nominal definitions such as these are not abuse, and do not constitute libel, firstly because, according to 'L. § de injur.,' the grossest abuse may be uttered in jest, and I am in jest here—and we may always make use of abusive language in maintaining our own rights—see 'Leyser.'[17] Indeed, according to Quistorp's 'Penal Code,' we may accuse a person of the gravest crimes without *animus injurandi*, provided that he has not been already tried and punished for them. And has your honesty ever been put on its trial and punished, you cheating old grey-headed vagabond? I suppose you are like the Heimlicher in Freyburg[18]—rather a different sort of man to you, it's to be hoped—and have half-a-dozen years or so, during which no one can lay hold of you—but I've got hold of you to-day, hypocrite! Mordax!" The dog looked up at this word of command.

"Let him go, now," Siebenkæs begged, compassionating the prostrate sinner.

"In a moment; but don't you put me in a fury, please," said Leibgeber, letting fall the plucked wig, standing on it, and taking out his scissors and black paper, "I want to be quite calm while I clip out a likeness of the padded countenance of this portentous cotton-nightcap of a creature, because I shall take it away with me as a *gage d'amour*. I want to carry this *ecce homunculus* about with me half over the world, and say to everybody, 'Hit it, bang away at it well; blessed is he who doth not depart this life till he hath thrashed Heimlicher Blasius of Kuhschnappel; I would have done it myself if I had not been far too strong.'

"I shan't be able," he went on, turning to Siebenkæs, and finishing a good portrait, "to give that sneak and sharper there an account by word of mouth of my success, for a whole year to come; but by that time the one or two little touches of abuse which I have just lightly applied to him will be covered by the statute of limitations, and we shall be as good friends as ever again."

Here he unexpectedly requested Siebenkæs to stay by Saufinder—whom he had constituted into a corps of observation by a motion of his finger—as he was obliged to leave the room for a moment. On the last occasion of his being in Blaise's grand drawing-room (where he displayed his magnificence before the Kuhschnappel world, great and small), he had noticed the paper-hangings there, and an exceedingly ingenious stove, in the form of the goddess of justice, Themis, who does, indeed,

[16] The same robbing, strangling paw is masked in both under the likeness of the track of a man.
[17] 'Sp.' 547, N. Tr.
[18] The Heimlicher of Freyburg is inviolable for three years during his tenure of office, and for three years after it expires.

singe as frequently as she merely warms. And this time he had brought with him a camel's-hair pencil, and a bottle of an ink made from cobalt dissolved in aquafortis, with a little muriatic acid dropped into it. Unlike the black cloth ink, which is visible at first and disappears afterwards, the sympathetic ink here spoken of is invisible at first, and only comes out a green colour on the paper when it is warmed. Leibgeber now wrote with his camel's-hair pencil and this ink the following invisible notification on the paper which was closest to the stove, or Themis.

"The Goddess of Justice hereby protests in presence of this assembly against being thus set up in effigy, and warmed and cooled (if not absolutely hanged), at the pleasure of the Heimlicher von Blaise, who is long since condemned at her inner secret tribunal.

"Themis."

Leibgeber came away, leaving the silent seed of this Priestley's green composition behind him on the wall with the pleasing certainty that next winter, some evening when the drawing-room was nicely warmed by the goddess for a party, the whole dormant green crop would all of a sudden shoot lustily forth.

So he came back to the oratory again, finding Saufinder keeping up his appointed official contemplation, and his friend maintaining his observation of the dog. They then all took a most polite leave, and even begged the Heimlicher not to come into the street with them, as it mightn't be so easy to keep Mordax from a bite or so there.

When they got to the street Leibgeber said to his friend, "Don't pull such a long face about it—I shall keep flying backwards and forwards to you, of course. Come through the gate with me—I must get across the frontier of this country; let's run, and get on to royal territory before six minutes are over our heads."

When they had passed the gate, that is to say, the un-Palmyra-like ruins of it, the crystal reflecting grotto of the August night stood open and shining above the dark-green earth, and the ocean-calm of nature stayed the wild storm of the human heart. Night was drawing and closing her curtain (a sky full of silent suns, not a breath of breeze moving in it), up above the world and down beneath it; the reaped corn stood in the sheaves without a rustle. The cricket with his one constant song, and a poor old man gathering snails for the snail-pits, seemed to be the only things that dwelt in the far reaching darkness. The fires of anger had suddenly gone out in the two friends' hearts. Leibgeber said, in a voice pitched two octaves lower, "God be thanked! this writes a verse of peace round the storm bell within! the night seems to me to have muffled my alarum drum with her black robe, and softened it down to a funeral march. I am delighted to find myself growing a little sad after all that anger and shouting."

"If it only hadn't all been on my account, old Henry," said Siebenkæs, "your humorous fury at that barefaced old sinner."

"Though you are not so apt to shy your satire into people's faces as I am," said Leibgeber, "you would have been in a greater rage if you had been in my place. One can bear injustice to one's self—particularly when one has as good a temper as I have—but not to a friend. And unluckily you are the martyr to my name to-day, and eyewitness and blood-witness into the bargain. Besides, I should tell you that, as a general rule, when once I am ridden by the devil of anger—or rather when I have got on to *his* back—I always spur the brute nearly to death, till he falls down, so that I mayn't have to mount him again for the next three months. However, I have poured

you out a nice basin of black broth, and left you sitting with the spoon in your hand." Siebenkæs had been dreading for some time that he would say something about the 1200 gulden, those baptismal dues of his re-baptism, the discount of his name. He therefore said, as cheerfully and pleasantly as his heart, torn by this sudden, nocturnal parting, would let him, "My wife and I have plenty of supplies in our little bit of a fortress of Konigstein, and we can sow and reap there too. Heaven only grant that we may have many a hard nut to crack; they give a delicious flavour to the table-wine of our stale, flat, everyday life. I shall bring my action to-morrow."

They both concealed their emotion at the approach of the moment of parting under the cloak of comic speeches. These two counterparts came to a column which had been erected by the Princess of —— on the spot where, on her return from England, she had met her sister coming from the Alps; and as this joyful souvenir of a meeting had a quite opposite significance to-night, Leibgeber said, "Now, right about face—march! Your wife is getting anxious—it's past eleven o'clock. There, you see, we have reached your boundary mark, your frontier fortress, the gallows. I am off at once into Bayreuth and Saxony to cut my crop—other people's faces, to wit, and sometimes my own fool's face into the bargain. I shall most likely come and see you again, just for the fun of the thing, in a year and a day, when the verbal libels are pretty well out of date. By the by." he added, hastily, "promise me on your word of honour to do me one little favour."

Siebenkæs instantly did so. "Don't send my deposit after me[19]—a plaintiff has payments to make. So fare you well, dearest old man," he blurted huskily out, and after a hurried kiss, ran quickly down the little hill with an air of assumed unconcern. His friend, bewildered and forsaken, looked after the runner, without uttering a syllable. When he got to the bottom of the hillock, the runner stopped, bent his head low towards the ground, and—loosened his garters.

"Couldn't you have done that up here?" cried Siebenkæs, and went down to him, and said, "We'll go as far as the gallows hill together." The sand-bath and reverberating furnace of a noble anger made all their emotions warmer to-day, just as a hot climate gives strength to poisons and spices. As the *first* parting had caused their eyes to overflow, they had nothing more to keep in control but voice and language.

"Are you sure you feel quite well after being so much vexed?" said Siebenkæs. "If the death of domestic animals portends the death of the master of the house, as the superstition runs," said Leibgeber, "I shall live to all eternity, for my menagerie[20] of beasts is all alive and kicking." At last they stopped at the market house, beside the place of execution. "Just up to the top," said Siebenkæs, "no further."

When they came to the top of this boundary-hill of so many an unhappy life—and when Siebenkæs looked down upon the green spotted stone altar where so many an innocent sacrifice had been offered up, and thought, in that dark minute, of the heavy blood drops of agony, the burning tears which women who had killed their children[21] (and were themselves put to death by the state and their lovers) had let fall upon this their last and briefest rack of torture here in this field of blood—and as he gazed from this cloudbank of life out over the broad earth with the mists of night steaming up round its horizons and over all its streams—he took his friend's hand, and, looking to the free starry heaven, said, "The mists of our life on earth *must* be

[19] It consisted chiefly of curious coins, vicariat-dollars, &c.
[20] Plato likens our lower passions to animals kicking inside us.
[21] He happened to have the case of one to defend, just then.

resolved into stars, up there at last, as the mists of the milky way part into suns. Henry, don't you yet believe in the soul's immortality?"—"It will *not* do yet, I can *not*," Leibgeber replied. "Blasius, now, hardly deserves to live *once*, let alone twice or several times. I sometimes can't help feeling as if a little piece of the other world had been *painted on* to this, just to finish it off and make it complete, as I've sometimes seen subsidiary subjects introduced in fainter colours towards the edge of a picture, to make the principal subject stand out from the frame, and to give it unity of effect. But at this moment, human beings strike me as being like those crabs which priests used to fasten tapers to and set them crawling about churchyards, telling the people they were the souls of the departed. Just so do we, in a masquerade impersonation of immortal beings, crawl about over graves with our tapers of souls. Ten to one they go out at last."

His friend fell on his heart, and said with vivid conviction, "We do *not* go out! Farewell a thousand times. We shall meet where there is no parting. By my soul! we do *not* go out. Farewell, farewell."

And so they parted. Henry passed slowly and with drooping arms through the footpaths between the stubble-fields, raising neither hand nor eye, that he might give no sign of sorrow. But a deep grief fell on Siebenkæs, for men who rarely shed tears shed all the more when they do weep. So he went to his house and laid his weary melting heart to rest on his wife's untroubled breast (there was not even a dream stirring it). But far on into the forecourt of the world of dreams did the thought of the days in store for Lenette attend him—and of his friend's night journey under the stars, which he would be looking up at without any hope of ever being nearer to them; and it was chiefly for his friend that his tears flowed fast.

Oh ye two friends—thou who art out in the darkness there, and thou who art here at home! But wherefore should I be continually harping back upon the old emotion which you have once more awakened in me—the same which in old days used to penetrate and refresh me so when I read as a lad about the friendship of a Swift, an Arbuthnott and a Pope in their letters? Many another heart must have been fired and aroused as mine was at the contemplation of the touching, calm affection which the hearts of these men felt for one another; cold, sharp, and cutting to the outer world, in the inner land which was common to them they could work and beat for each other; like lofty palm trees, presenting long sharp spines towards the common world below them, but at their summits full of the precious palm-wine of strong friendship.

So, in their lesser degree, I think we may find something of a similar kind to like and to admire in our two friends, Leibgeber and Siebenkæs. We need not inquire very closely into the causes which brought about their friendship; for it is hate, not love, which needs to be explained and accounted for. The sources whence everything that is good wells forth from this universe upwards to God himself, are veiled by a night all thick with stars; but the stars are very far away.

These two men, while as yet in the fresh, green springtime of university life, at once saw straight through each other's breasts into each other's hearts, and they attracted each other with their opposite poles. What chiefly delighted Siebenkæs was Leibgeber's firmness and power, and even his capability of anger, as well as his flights and laughter over every kind of sham grandeur, sham fine feeling, sham scholarship. Like the condor, he laid the eggs (of his act or of his pregnant saying) in no nest, but on the bare rock, preferring to live without a name, and consequently always taking some other than his own. On which account the poor's advocate used

to tell him, ten times over, the two following anecdotes, just to enjoy his irritation at them.

The first was, that a German professor in Dorpat, who was delivering a eulogistic address on the subject of the reigning grand duke Alexander, suddenly stopped in the middle of it, and gazed for a long time in silence on a bust of that potentate, saying at length, “The speechless heart has spoken.”

The second was that Klopstock sent finely got-up copies of his ‘Messiah’ to schoolporters, with the request that the most deserving among them might scatter spring-flowers on the grave of his own old teacher, Stubel, while softly pronouncing his (Klopstock’s) name. To which, if Leibgeber had anything to adduce on the subject, Siebenkæs would go on to add that the poet had called up four new porters to give them three readings apiece from his ‘Messiah,’ rewarding each with a gold medal provided by a friend. After telling him this he would look to see Leibgeber’s foaming and stamping at a person’s thus worshipping himself as a species of reliquary full of old fingers and bones.

What Leibgeber, on the other hand,—more like the Morlacks, who, as Towinson and Forlis tell us, though they have but one word to express both revenge and sanctification (osveta), do yet have their friends betrothed to them with a blessing at the altar—chiefly delighted in and loved about his satirical foster-brother was the diamond brooch which in his case pinned together poetry, kindly temper, and a stoicism which scorned this world’s absurdities. And lastly, each of them daily enjoyed the gratification of knowing that the other understood him completely and wonderfully, whether he were in jest or in earnest. But it is not every friend who meets with another of this stamp.

Appendix To Chapter II

GOVERNMENT OF THE IMPERIAL MARKET BOROUGH OF KUHSCHNAPPEL.

I have omitted, all through two chapters, to state that the free imperial borough of Kuhschnappel (of which, it appears, there is a namesake in the Erzgebirge country) is the thirty-second of the Swabian towns which takes its seat on Swabia's town-bench of thirty-one towns. Swabia may look upon herself as being a hotbed and forcing-house of imperial towns, these colonies, or hostelries, of the goddess of freedom in Germany, whom persons of position worship as their household goddess; and according to whose "election of grace" it is that poor sinners are called to salvation. I must now, in this place, accede to the universally expressed desire for an accurate sketch map of the Kuhschnappel Government; though few readers, save people such as Nikolai, Schlæzer and the like, can be expected to form an idea of the difficulty I have experienced, and the sum I have had to expend in postage, before getting hold of information somewhat more accurate than that which is generally current on the subject of Kuhschnappel. Indeed, imperial towns, like Swiss towns, always plaster over and stop up the combs where their honey is stored, as though their constitutions were stolen silver plate with the owner's name still unobliterated—or as though the little bits of towns and territories were fortresses (which indeed they are as against their own inhabitants more than against their enemies), of which strangers are not allowed to take sketches.

The constitution of our noteworthy borough of Kuhschnappel seems to have been the original rough draft or sketch which Bern (a place at no great distance) has copied hers from, only with the pantograph on a larger scale. For Bern, like Kuhschnappel, has her Upper House, or supreme council, which decides upon peace and war, and has the power of life and death just as in Kuhschnappel, and consists of chief magistrates, treasurers, Venners, Heimlichers and counsellors, only that there are more of them in Bern than in Kuhschnappel. Further, Bern has her Lower House, consisting of presidents, deputies and pensioners, subsidiary to the Upper. The two Chambers of Appeal, those of Woods and Forests, Game Laws, and Reform, the Meat Tax and other commissions are clearly but large text copies of the Kuhschnappel outlines.

To speak the truth, however, I have drawn this comparison between these two places solely with the view of being comprehensible (perhaps at the same time agreeable) to the Swiss generally, and particularly to the people of Bern. For in reality, Kuhschnappel rejoices in a much more perfect and aristocratic constitution than Bern, such as was to be found in a measure in Ulm and Nürnberg, though the stormy weather of the revolution has rather kept them back than brought them forward. A short time since, Nürnberg and Ulm were as fortunate as Kuhschnappel is now, inasmuch as they were governed, not by the common, working classes, but by people of family only, so that no mere citizen could meddle with the matter in the least degree either in person or by deputy. Now, unfortunately, it appears to be the case in both towns that the cask of the state has had to be fresh tapped just about an inch or so above the thick dregs of the common herd, because what came from the tap *nearer the top* proved sour. However, it is impossible for me to go on until I have cleared out of the way a much too prevalent error respecting large towns.

The Behemoths and Condors among towns—Petersburg, London, Vienna—might, if they chose, establish universal equality of liberty and liberty of equality; very few statisticians have been struck by this idea, although it is so very clear. For a capital which it takes two hours and a quarter to go round is, as it were, an Ætna-crater of equivalent circumference for an entire country, and benefits the neighbourhood of it as the volcano does, not only by what it *ejects* (its eruptive matter), but by what it swallows up. It clears the country in the first place of villages, and next of country towns—which are primarily the outhouses and office-buildings of capital cities—inasmuch as it pushes itself outwards in all directions year by year, and gets grown over, fringed round, and walled about with the villages. London, we know, has converted the neighbouring villages into streets of itself; but in the lapse of centuries the long, constantly extending arms of all great towns must enfold not only the villages, but also the country towns, converting them into suburbs. Now, in this process, the roads, fields and meadows which lie between the giant city and the villages get covered over like a river-bed with a deposit of stone-paving; and consequently the operations of agriculture can no longer be carried on otherwise than in flower-pots in the windows. Where there is no agriculture, I cannot see what the agricultural population can become but unemployed idlers, such as no state allows within its boundaries; and, prevention being better than cure, the state will have to clear this agricultural population out of the way before it sinks into this condition of idling, either by means of letters inhibitory directed against the increase of population, or by extermination, or by ennobling them into soldiery and domestics. In a village which has undergone this process of being morticed into a town like a lump of rubble,—or converted into a stave of the great tun of Heidelberg in this manner—any country people that might be still to the fore, would be as ludicrous as useless; the coral cells of the villages must be cleared out before they attain the dignity of becoming reefs or atolls of a town.

When this is done, the hardest step towards equality has, no doubt, been taken; the people of the country towns, a class the most hostile of all classes, at heart, to equality—have next to be attacked and, if possible, exterminated by the great town; this, however, is more a matter of time than of good management. At the same time, what one or two residency-towns have accomplished in this direction, is a good beginning at all events. Could we attain to our ideal, however—could we live to see the day when the two classes who are the most formidable opponents of equality—the peasants, and the people of the smaller towns—should have disappeared; and when not only the agricultural races but the lower nobility, the small proprietors, should be extinct—ah! then the world would be in the blissful enjoyment of an equality of a nobler sort than that which obtained in France, where it was merely a *plebeian* one. There would be an absolute equality if pure nobility and collective humanity could rejoice in the possession of *one* patent of nobility, and of real authentic *ancestors*. In Paris, the revolution wrote (as people did in the most ancient times) without capital letters; but if my golden age came to pass, the writing would be as it was in somewhat *later* times than those just alluded to, *all* capital letters, not, as at present, with capitals sticking up like steeples among quantities of small letters. But though such a lofty style, such an ennoblement of humanity as this may be nothing but a beautiful dream, and though we must be content with the minor consolation of seeing, in towns, the middle classes restricted to a single street, as is now the case with the Jews; even that would be a clear gain to the intellectual portion of mankind in the eyes of anyone who considers what an accomplished, capable set of people the higher nobility are.

It is upon the smaller towns, however, that we can more confidently rely than upon the great residency-towns, for aid in bringing about the nobilisation of the collective human race, and this brings me back to Kuhschnappel. People really seem to forget that it is too much to expect that the four square versts or so which a residency-town occupies shall be able to dominate, swallow up, and convert into portions of itself, more than a thousand square miles of the surrounding country (just as the boa-constrictor swallows animals bigger than itself). London has not much above 600,000 inhabitants; what a miserably small force compared to the 5½ millions of all England, which that city has to contend with, and cut off the wings, and supplies of, alone and unassisted—to say nothing of Scotland and Ireland! This, however, does not apply to provincial towns; here the number of villages, villagers, and burghers which have to be coerced, starved, and put to rout, are in a fair proportion to the size of the town, the numbers of the aristocracy or governing classes, who have to execute the task, and work the smoothing plane which is to level the surface of humanity. Here there is little difficulty in *precipitating* the citizens (as if they were a kind of coarse dregs swimming in the clear fluid of nobility); and when this precipitation is not successfully accomplished, it is the aristocracy themselves who are to blame, in that they often show mercy in the wrong place, and look upon the Burgher-bank as a grassbank, the grass of which is, it is true, grown only to be sat upon and pressed down, but is kept always watered, in order that it may not wither from being so constantly sat upon. If there were to be nothing left but the noblest classes, the citizenic cinnamon-trees would be completely barked, by means of taxes and levyings of contributions—(which none but plebeian authors term “flaying” and “pulling the hide over the ears”),—and, the bark being off, the trees of course wither and die. At the same time, this process of aristocratization costs men. But in my opinion it would be cheaply purchased by the few thousands of people it would cost, seeing that the Americans, the Swiss, and the Dutch paid (so to speak) whole millions of men “cash down,” on the battlefield, as the price of a freedom of a much more restricted kind. The fault which is sometimes found with modern battle pictures, namely that they are overcrowded with people, can rarely be found with modern countries. We should rather notice the clever manner in which many German states have, by *energetic* treatment, *determined* their population, as morbid matter, in a *downward* direction (as good physicians are wont to do), namely, down to the United States of America, which are situated straight *below* them.

Kuhschnappel (to return to our subject) has the pull over hundreds of other towns. I admit, as Nicolai’s assertion, that of the 60,000 which Nürnberg contained there are but 30,000 left, and that is something; at the same time it takes fifty burghers, and more, to be equivalent to one aristocrat, which is much. Now I am in a position to show at any moment by reference to registers of deaths and baptisms, that the borough of Kuhschnappel contains almost as many aristocrats as burghers, which is all the more wonderful when we reflect that the former, on account of their appetites, find it a harder matter to live than the latter. What modern town, I ask, can point to so many free inhabitants? Were there not even in free Athens and Rome—in the West Indies there were of course—more slaves than free men, for which reason the latter did not dare to make the former wear any distinctive dress? And are there not in all towns more tenants than noble landlords, although the latter *ought*, one would think, to be in the majority, since peasants and burghers grow only by nature, while aristocrats are raised, both by nature, and by art (in the shape of princely and imperial chanceries). If this appendix were not a digression (and digressions are generally expected to be brief) I should proceed to show, at some length, that in

several respects Kuhschnappel, if she does not surpass, is at least quite on a par with, many of the towns of Switzerland; for instance, in a good method of sharpening and lengthening the sword of justice, and, on the whole, in her manner of wielding a good, spiked, knotty mace—in the tax she levies on (ecclesiastical) corn, not that imported from abroad, but that of home growth, to exclude *thought* and other (in an ecclesiastical sense) rubbish of that sort—and even in her "green market," or trade in young men. As regards the latter, the reason why the trade with France for young Kuhschnappelers to serve as porters and defenders of the Crown has hitherto been so flat is, that the Swiss have so terribly overdone the market with fine young fellows who go and stand in front of all the doors and (in war time) in front of all the cannons. Of course, were it not for this, there would be more doors than one with a Kuhschnappeler standing and saying, "Nobody at home." (Indeed, here in my second edition, I can assert that Kuhschnappel continues to maintain its title of *imperial market* town, like a secondary electoral dignity, and keeps up its old protective laws against the import of ideas and the export of information, and its blood tithe; or young men tithe to France, just as Switzerland does, which is like the keeper of the castle of the Wartburg, who keeps constantly re-blackening the indelible mark of the ink which Luther threw at the devil.)

Chapter III

LENETTE'S HONEYMOON—BOOK BREWING—SCHULRATH STIEFEL—MR. EVERARD—A DAY BEFORE THE FAIR—THE RED COW—ST. MICHAEL'S FAIR—THE BEGGARS' OPERA—DIABOLICAL TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS, OR THE MANNIKIN OF FASHION—AUTUMN JOYS—A NEW LABYRINTH.

The world could not make a greater mistake than to suppose that our common hero would be to be seen on the Monday sitting in a mourning coach, in a mourning cloak, crape hat-band and scarf, and black shoe-buckles, figuring as chief mourner at the sham funeral of his happiness and his capital.

Heavens! how *can* the world make such an exceedingly bad shot as that? The advocate was not even in *quarter* mourning, let alone half; he was in as good spirits as if he had this third chapter before him, and were just beginning it, as I am.

The reason was, that he had drawn up an able plaint against his guardian, Blaise (enlivening it with sundry satirical touches, which nobody but himself understood), and laid it before the Inheritance Office. When we are in a difficulty, it is always so much gained if we can but *do something or other*. Let fortune bluster in our faces with ever so harsh and frosty an autumn wind—as long as it does not break the fore joint of our wing (as in the case of the swans), our very fluttering, though it may not transport us into a warmer climate, will at all events have the effect of warming us a little. From motives of kindness, Siebenkæs kept his wife in ignorance of the delay in the settling of his heritage accounts, as well as of the old story of the change of names; he thought there was very little likelihood of a struggling advocate's wife ever having an opportunity of looking over a patrician's shoulder into his family hand at cards.

And, indeed, what could a man who had made a sudden plunge from out his hermit's holy-week of single blessedness, into the full honeymoon of double blessedness wish for besides? Not until now had he been able to hold his Lenette in both his arms rightly—hitherto his friend, always fluttering backwards and forwards in life, had been held fast with his *left* arm; but now, she was able to stretch herself out far more comfortably in the chambers of his heart. And the bashful wife did this as much as she dared. She confessed to him, albeit timidly, that she was almost glad not to have that boisterous Saufinder lying under the table and glaring out in that terrible way of his. Whether she experienced a similar relief at the absence of his wild master, she could not be brought to say. To the advocate she felt a good deal like a daughter, and her great tall father could never have enough of her quaint little ways. That, when he went out, she used to look after him as long as he was in sight, was nothing in comparison to the way in which she used to run out after him with a brush, when she noticed from the window that there was such a quantity of street paving sticking to his coat-tails that nothing would do but she must have him back again into the house, and brush his back as clean as if the Kuhschnappel municipality would charge him paving-tax if any of the mud were found on him. He would take hold of the brush and stop it, and kiss her, and say, "There's a good deal *inside* as well; but nobody sees it there; when I come back we'll set to work and scrub some of *that* away."

Her maidenly obedience to his every wish and hint, her daughterly observance and fulfilment of them, were more than he looked for or required, indeed; but not too great for the love he bestowed in return. "Senate clerk's daughter," he said, "you

mustn't be *too* obedient to me; remember I'm not your father, a senate clerk, but a poor's advocate who has married you and signs himself Siebenkæs, to the best of his belief."

"My poor dear father," she answered, "used often to compose and write down things too at home, himself, with his own hand, and then fair-copy them beautifully afterwards." But he enjoyed these crooked answers which she used to make. And though, from sheer veneration of him, she never understood a single one of the jokes which he was always making about himself (for she gainsaid him when he satirically depreciated himself, and agreed with him completely if he ironically lauded himself), yet these mental provincialisms of hers pleased him not a little. She would use such words as "fleuch" for "fliehe," "reuch" and "kreuch" for "riehe" and "kriehe;" religious antiquities out of Luther's Bible, which were valuable and enjoyable contributions to her stock of idiosyncracies, and to the happiness of his honeymoon. One day when he took a particularly pretty cap which she had tried on with much satisfaction to each of her three cap-blocks, one after another (she would often gently kiss these cap-blocks), and putting it on her own little head before the looking-glass, said, "See how it looks on your *own* head; perhaps that's as good a block as the others," she laughed with immense delight, and said, "Now, you are always flattering one!"

Believe me, this naive failure of hers to see his joke so touched him that he made a secret vow never to make another of the kind, except in private to himself. But there was a greater honeymoon pleasure still. This was that, when there came a fast day, Lenette would on no account allow him to kiss her, when she came into the room (ready for church), her white and red bloom of youth shining out with threefold beauty from under her black lace head-dress, and the dark leafage of her dress.

"Worldly thoughts of that kind," she said, "weren't at all proper before service, when people had on their fast-day things; people must wait!"

"By heaven!" said Siebenkæs to himself, "may I stick a soup spoon five inches long and three broad through my lower lip, like a North American squaw, and go about with it there, if ever I begin spooning and kissing the pious soul again, when she has a black dress on, and the bells are ringing." And though he wasn't much of a churchgoer himself, he kept his word. See how we men behave in matrimonial life, young ladies!

From all which it will readily appear how perfectly happy the advocate was during his honeymoon, when Lenette, in the most delightful manner, did all those things for him which he used previously to have to do for himself in a most miserable fashion and against the grain, making by unwearied sweepings and brushings his dithyrambic chartreuse as clean and level and smooth as a billiard-table. Whole honey-trees full of cakes did she plant during the honeymoon; humming round him of a morning like a busy bee, carrying wax into her little hive (while he was going quietly on with his law-papers, building away at his juridical wasp's nest), forming her cells, cleaning them out, ejecting foreign bodies, and mending chinks; he now and then looking out of his wasp's nest at the pretty little figure in the tidiest of household dresses, at sight of which he would take his pen in his mouth, hold his hand out to her across the ink-bottle, and say, "Only wait till the afternoon comes and you're sitting sewing—then, as I walk up and down, I shall pay you with kisses to your heart's content." But that none of my fair readers may be unhappy about the souring of the honey of this moon which the conduct of that disinheriting blackguard Blaise might bring about, let me just ask one question? Hadn't Siebenkæs a whole

silver mine and a coining mill, in the shape of seven law suits all going on, full of veins of rich ore? And hadn't Leibgeber sent him a military treasury chest on four wheels of fortune, containing two spectacle dollars of Julius Duke of Brunswig, a Russian triple-dollar of 1679, a tail or queue ducat—a gnat or wasp dollar—five vicariat ducats, and a heap of Ephraimites? For he might melt down and volatilise this collection of coins without a moment's hesitation, inasmuch as his friend had only pocketed them by way of a jest on the people who pay a hundred dollars for one. They two had all things corporeal and mental in common to an extent comprehensible by few. They had arrived at that point where there is no distinction visible between the giver and the receiver of a benefit, and they stepped across the chasms of life bound together, as the crystal-seekers in the Alps tie themselves to each other to prevent their falling into the ice clefts.

One Lady Day, towards evening, however, he hit upon an idea which will quite reassure all fair readers of his history who may be in a state of anxiety about him, and which made *him* happier than the receipt of the biggest basket of bread with little baskets of fruit in it would have done—or a hamper of wine. He had felt sure all along that he *would* hit upon an idea. Whenever he was in a difficulty of any kind, he always used to say, "Now, I wonder what I shall hit upon *this* time; for I *shall* hit upon something or other as sure as there are four chambers in my brain." The delightful idea in question was, that he should do what I am doing at this moment—write a book; only his was to be a satirical one.[22] A torrent of blood rushed through the opened sluices of his heart, right in amongst the wheels and mill-machinery of his ideas, and the whole of the mental mechanism rattled, whirred, and jingled in a moment—a peck or two of material for the book was ground on the spot.

I know of no greater mental tumult—hardly of any sweeter—which can arise in a young man's being, than that which he experiences when he is walking up and down his room, and forming the daring resolution that he will take a book of blank paper and make it into a manuscript; indeed it is a point which might be argued whether Winckelmann, or Hannibal the great general, strode up and down *their* rooms at a greater pace when they respectively formed the (equally daring) resolution that they would go to Rome. Siebenkæs, having made up his mind to write a 'Selection from the Devil's Papers,' was forced to run out of the house, and three times round the market-place, just to fix his fluttering, rushing ideas into their proper grooves again by the process of tiring his legs. He came back wearied by the glow within him—looked to see if there was enough white paper in the house for his manuscript—and running up to his Lenette, who was tranquilly working away at a cap, gave her a kiss before she could well take the needle out of her mouth—last thorn upon the rose-tree! During the kiss she quietly gave a finishing stitch to the border of the cap (squinting down at it the best way she could without moving her head).

"Rejoice with me!" he cried, "come and dance about with me! to-morrow I'm going to begin a work, a book! Roast the calf's head to-night, though it be a breach of our ten commandments." For he and she, on the Wednesday before, had formed themselves into a committee on food regulations, and, of the Thirty-nine articles of domestic economy, which had then been passed and subscribed to, one was that, Brahminlike, they were to do without meat at supper.

[22] The book was published in 1789, by Beckmann of Gera, and was entitled, 'Selections from the Devil's Papers.' I shall venture to express my opinion on these satires further on.

But he had the greatest difficulty in getting her to understand how it was that he made out that he would be able to procure her another calf's head with a single sheet of the 'Selections from the Devil's Papers,' and that he was perfectly justified in issuing a dispensation from that evening's fast; for like the common herd of mankind, or like the printers, Lenette thought that a written book was paid for at the same rate as a printed one, and that the compositor got rather more than the author. She had never in her life had the slightest idea of the enormous sums which authors are paid nowadays; she was like Racine's wife, who did not know what a line of poetry or a tragedy was, although she kept house upon them. For my part, however, I should never lead to the altar, or into my home as my wife, any woman who wasn't capable of at least completing any sentence which death should knock me over with his hour-glass in the middle of,—or who wouldn't be unspeakably delighted when I read to her learned Göttingen gazettes, or universal German magazines, in which I was bepraised, more than I deserved perhaps.

The rapture of authorship had set all Siebenkæs's blood-globules into such a flow, and all his ideas into such a whirlwind this whole evening that, in the condition of vividness of fueling and fancy in which he was (a condition which in him often assumed the appearance of temper), he would instantly have flown out and exploded like so much fulminating gold at everything of a slow moving kind which he came across—such as the servant girl's heavy dawdling step, or the species of dropsy with which her utterance was afflicted;—but that he at once laid hold on a precious sedative powder for the over-excitement caused by happiness, and took a dose of it. It is easier to communicate an impetus and a rapid flow to the slow-gliding blood of a heavy, sorrowful heart, than to moderate and restrain the billowy, surging, foaming current which rushes through the veins in happiness; but he could always calm himself, even in the wildest joy, by the thought of the inexhaustible Hand which bestowed it, and that gentle tenderness of heart wherewith our eyes are drooped to earth as we remember the invisible, eternal Benefactor of all hearts. At such a time the heart, softened by thankfulness and by joyful tears, will speak its gratitude by at least being kindlier towards all mankind, if in no other way. That fierce, untamed delight, which is what Nemesis avenges, can best be kept within due bounds by this sense of gratitude; and those who have died of joy would either *not* have died at all, or would have died of a *better* and lovelier joy, if their hearts had first been softened by a grateful heavenward gaze.

His first and best thanksgiving for the new, smooth, beautiful banks, between which his life-stream had now been led, took the form of a zealous and careful drawing up of a defence which he had to prepare in the case of a girl charged with child-murder, to save her from torture on the rack. The state-physician of the borough had condemned her to the "trial by the lungs," a neither more nor less suitable punishment than the "trial by water" (which used to be inflicted on witches).

Calm spring-days of matrimony, peaceful and undisturbed, laid down their carpet of flowers for the feet of these two to tread upon. Only there sometimes appeared under the window, when Lenette was stretching herself and her white arm out of a morning, and slowly accomplishing the fastening back of the outside shutters, a gentleman in flesh-coloured silk.

"I really feel quite ashamed to stretch," she said; "there's a gentleman always standing in the street, and he takes off his hat, and notes one down just as if he were the meat appraiser."

The Schulrath Stiefel kept, on the school Saturday holidays, the solemn promise he had made on the wedding-day to come and see them often, and at all events to be sure and come on the Saturdays. I think I shall call him Peltzstiefel (Furboots) as a pleasing variety for the ear—seeing that the whole town gave him that name on account of the gray miniver, faced with hareskin, which he wore on his legs by way of a portable wood-economising stove. Well, Peltzstiefel, the moment he came in at the door, fastened joy-flowers together into a nosegay, and stuck them into the advocate's button-bole, by appointing him on the spot his collaborateur on the 'Kuhschnappel Indicator, Heavenly Messenger, and School Programme Review'—a work which ought to be better known, so that the works recommended by it might be so too. This newspaper engagement of Siebenkæs is a great pleasure to me; it will at any rate bring my hero in sixpence or so towards a supper now and then. The Schulrath, who was editor of this paper, had a high sense of the power and responsibility of his post; but Siebenkæs had now risen to the dignity of an author—the only being who in his eyes was superior even to a reviewer—for Lenette had told him on the way to church that her husband was going to have a great thick book printed. The Schulrath considered the 'Salzburg Literary Gazette' of the period the apocryphal, and the 'Jena Literary Gazette' the canonical scriptures: the single voice of one reviewer was, for *his* ears, multiplied by the echo in the critical judgment hall into a thousand voices. His deluded imagination multiplied the head of one single reviewer into several Lernæan heads, as it was believed of old that the devil used to surround the heads of sinners with delusive *false* heads, that the executioner might miss his stroke at them.

The fact that a reviewer writes anonymously gives to a single individual's opinions the weight and authority they would possess, if arrived at by a whole council; but then if his name were put at the end, for instance, "X.Y.Z., Student of Divinity," instead of "New Universal German Library," it would weaken the effect of the divinity student's learned laying down of the law to too great an extent. The Schulrath paid court to my hero on account of his satirical turn; for he himself, a very lamb in common life, transformed himself into a wehrwolf in a review article; which is frequently the case with good-tempered men when they write, particularly on *humaniora* and such like subjects. As indeed, peaceful shepherd races (according to Gibbon) are fond of making war, and of beginning it, or just as the Idyllic painter, Gessner, was himself a biting caricaturist.

And our hero for his part afforded Stiefel a great pleasure this evening, as well as holding out to him the prospect of many more such, when he took from Leibgeber's collection of coins a gnat or wasp dollar, and gave it to him, not as a douceur for his appointment to the critical wasp's nest, but that he might turn it into small change. The Schulrath who, being himself the zealous "Silberdiener" (master of the plate and jewels) of a dollar-cabinet of his own, would have been delighted if money had existed solely for the sake of cabinets—(meaning, however, numismatic, not political, cabinets)—sparkled and blushed delighted over the dollar, and declared to the advocate (who only wanted the absolute value of it, not the coin-fancier's price) that he considered this a piece of true friendship. "No," answered Siebenkæs, "the only piece of true friendship about the matter is Leibgeber giving *me* the dollar." "But I'll give you certainly three dollars for it, if you like to ask it," said Stiefel. Lenette, delighted at Stiefel's delight, and at his kindly feeling, and secretly giving her husband a push as an admonition not to give way, here struck in with an amount of determination which astonishes me, "But my husband's not going to do anything of the kind, I assure you; a dollar's a dollar." "But," said Siebenkæs, "I ought rather to

ask you only a *third* of the price, if I'm going to hand over my coins to you one at a time in this way." Ye dear souls! If people's "yeses" in this world were only always such as your "buts."

Stiefel, confirmed bachelor though he was, wasn't going to let himself be found wanting, on such a delightful occasion as this, at all events, in proper politeness towards the fair sex, least of all towards a woman whom he had begun to be so fond of, even when he was bringing her home to be married, and whom he liked twice as much now that she was the wife of such a dear friend, and was such a dear friend herself too. He therefore adroitly led her to join in the conversation (which had previously been too deep and scholarly for her) by using the three cap-blocks as stepping-stones over to the journal of fashions; only he slid back again sooner than he might have done to a more ancient journal of fashions, that of Rubenius on the 'Costume of the ancient Greeks and Romans.' He said he should be happy to lend her his sermons every Sunday, as advocates don't deal in theology much. And when she was looking on the floor at her feet for the snuffers which had fallen, he held the candle down that she might see.

The next Sunday was an important day for the house (or rather rooms) of Siebenkæs, for it introduced thereto a grander character than any who have appeared hitherto, namely the Venner (Finance Councillor)—Mr. Everard Rosa von Meyern, a young member of the aristocracy, who went daily in and out at Heimlicher von Blaise's to "learn the routine of official business;" he was also engaged to be married to a poor niece of the Heimlicher's, who was being brought up and educated for his heart in another part of Germany.

Thus the Venner was a character of consequence in the borough of Kuhschnappel as well as in our 'Thorn-piece,' and this in every political point of view. In a corporeal point of view he was much less so. His body was stuck through his flowered garments much like a piece of stick through a village nosegay; under the shining wing-covers of his waistcoat (in itself a perfect animal-picture)[23] there pulsated a thorax, perpendicular, if not absolutely concave, and his legs had, all told, about the same amount of calf as those wooden ones which stocking-makers put into their windows as an advertisement.

The Venner gave the advocate to understand, in a cold and politely rude manner, that he had merely come to relieve him from the task of defending the case of child-murder, as he had so much to attend to besides. But Siebenkæs saw through this pretence with great ease. It was a well-known circumstance that the girl accused of this crime had adopted as the father of her child (now flown, away above this earth) a certain commercial traveller, whose name neither she nor the documents connected with her case could mention; but that the real father—who, like a young author, was bashful about putting his name to his *pièce fugitive*—was no other than the emaciated Venner, Everard Rosa von Meyern himself. There are certain things which a whole town will determine and make up its mind to ignore; and one of these was Rosa's authorship. Heimlicher von Blaise knew that Siebenkæs was aware of it, however, and feared that he might, out of revenge for the affair of the inheritance, purposely make a poor defence of the girl, that the shame and disgrace of her end might fall upon his relative, Meyern's shoulders. What a terrible, mean suspicion!

And yet the purest minds are sometimes driven to entertain such suspicions. Fortunately Siebenkæs had already got the poor mother's lightning-conductor all

[23] The fashionable waistcoats of those days had animals and flowers upon them.

ready forged and set up. When he showed it to this false bridegroom of the supposed child-murderess, the latter immediately declared that she could not have found an abler guardian saint among all the advocates in the town; to which author and reader can both add “nor one who should be actuated by worthier motives,” as we know he did it as a thank-offering to Heaven for the first idea of the ‘Devil’s Papers.’

At this juncture, the advocate’s wife came suddenly back from the adjoining bookbinder’s room, where she had been paying a flying visit. The Venner sprang to meet her at the threshold with a degree of politeness which couldn’t have been carried further, inasmuch as she had to open the door before he could reach her. He took her hand, which, in her respect and awe of him, she half permitted, and kissed it stooping, but twisted his eyes up to her face, and said:

“Meddem! I have had this beautiful hand in mine for several days.”

It now appeared, from what he said, that he was the identical flesh-coloured gentleman who had stolen her hand with his drawing-pen when she had had it out of the window; because he had been anxious to get a pretty Dolce’s hand for a three-quarter portrait of the young lady he was engaged to, and hadn’t known what to do; her *head* he was doing from memory. He then took off his gloves, in which alone he had dared as yet to touch her (as many of the early Christians used only to touch the Eucharist in gloves from reverence therefor), displaying the fires of his rings and the snow of his skin. To preserve the whiteness of the latter from the sun, he hardly ever took his gloves off, except in winter when the sun has scarcely power to burn.

The Kuhschnappel aristocracy, particularly its younger members, give a willing obedience to the commandment which Christ gave to His apostles, to “greet no man by the way,” and the Venner observed the required degree of incivility towards the husband, though not by any means to the wife, towards whom his condescension was infinite. An inborn characteristic of Siebenkæs’s satirical disposition was a fault which he had of being too polite and kindly with the lower classes, and too forward and aggressive with the upper. He had not as yet sufficient knowledge of the world to enable him to determine the precise angle at which his back should bend before the various great ones of the place, wherefore he preferred to go about bolt upright, though he did so against the promptings of his kind heart. An additional cause was, that the profession to which he belonged being of a belligerent nature, has a tendency to embolden those who belong to it; an advocate has the advantage of never requiring to employ one himself, and consequently he is often inclined to treat even the grandest folks with some amount of coolness, unless they happen to be judges or clients, at the disposal of both of which classes of society his best services are at all times ready to be placed. Notwithstanding which, it generally happened that, in Siebenkæs’s kindly feeling to all mankind, his moveable bridge got shoved down so low under his tightened strings that the notes given out by them became quite low and soft. On the present occasion, however, it was much more difficult to be polite to the Venner (whose designs as regarded Lenette he was compelled to see) than to be rude to him.

Moreover, he had an inborn detestation for dressy men although—just, the contrary feeling for dressy women—so that he would often sit and stare for a long time at the little Fugel-mannikins of dress in the fashion journals, just to get properly angry at them; and he would assure the Kuhschnappelers that there was nobody whom he should so delight in playing practical jokes upon as on such a mannikin—yea, in insulting him, or even doing him an injury (to the extent of a good cudgelling). Also it

had always been a source of delight to him that Socrates and Cato walked barefoot about in the market-place; going *bareheaded*, on the other hand (*chapeau bas*), he did not like half so much.

But, ere he could utter himself otherwise than by making faces, the wooden-head of a Venner stroked his sprouting beard, and in a distant manner graciously offered himself to the advocate in the capacity of cardinal protector or mediator in the Blaise inheritance business; this he did, of course, partly to blind the advocate's eyes, and partly to impress upon him how immeasurably inferior was his station. The latter, however, shuddering at the idea of taking a gnome of this kind for paraclete and household angel, said to him (but in Latin)—

"In the first place I must *insist* that my wife shall not hear a syllable about that insignificant potato quarrel. And moreover, in any legal question I scorn and despise anybody's assistance but a legal friend's, and in this instance *I* am my own legal friend. I fill an official position here in Kuhschnappel; it is true, the official position by no means fills *me*." The latter play upon words he expressed by means of a Latin one, which displayed such an unusual amount of linguistic ability, that I should almost like to quote it here. The Venner, however, who could neither construe the pun nor the rest of the speech with the ease with which we have read it here, answered at once (so as to escape without exposing his ignorance) in the same language, "Imo, immo," which he meant for yes. Firmian then went on, in German, saying, "Guardian and ward, intimate as their connection should be, in this case came into contact to an extent almost too great to be pleasant; although, no doubt, there *have* been cases before where one cousin has cozened another:[24] however, the very members of ecclesiastical councils have come to fisticuffs before now, *e. g*. at Ephesus in the fifteenth century. Indeed, the Abbot Barsumas and Dioscurus, Bishop of Alexandria, men of position, pummelled the good Flavian on that very occasion till he was as dead as a herring.[25] And this was on a Sunday too, a day on which, in these absurd old times, a sacred truce was put to quarrels and differences of every description; though now, Sundays and feast-days are the very days when the peace is broken; the public-house bells and the tinkling of the glasses ring the truce *out*, and people pummel each other, so that the law gets *her* finger into the pie. In old days, people multiplied the number of saints' days for the sake of stopping fights, but the fact is that everybody connected with the legal profession, Herr von Meyern (who *must* have *something* to live upon), ought to petition that a peaceable working-day or two might be abolished now and then, so that the number of rows might be increased, and with them the fines and the fees in like ratio. Yet who thinks of such a thing, Venner?"

He was quite safe in spouting the greater part of this before Lenette; she had long been accustomed to understanding only a half, a fourth, or an eighth part of what he said; as for the *whole* Venner, she gave herself no concern about him. When Meyern had taken his departure with frigid politeness, Siebenkæs, with the view of helping to advance him in his wife's good opinion, extolled his whole and undivided love for the entire female sex (though engaged to be married), and more particularly his attachment to that preliminary bride of his, who was now in the condemned cell of

[24] For the next six pages or so the original literally *bristles* with untranslatable puns and plays upon words.—Translator.
[25] Mosheim's 'Ecclesiastical History.'

the prison; this, however, rather seemed to have the effect of *lowering* him in her good opinion.

“Thou good, kind soul, may you always be as faithful to yourself and to me!” said he, taking her to his heart. But she didn’t *know* that she had been faithful, and said, “to whom should I be *un*faithful?”

From this day onwards to Michaelmas Day, which was the day of the borough fair, fortune seems to have led our *pathway*, I mean the reader’s and mine, through no very special flower-beds to speak of, but merely along the smooth green turf of an English lawn, one would suppose on purpose that the fair on Michaelmas Day may suddenly arise upon our view as some shining, dazzling town starts up out of a valley. Very little did occur until then; at least, my pen, which only considers itself bound to record incidents of some importance, is not very willing to be troubled to mention that the Venner Meyern dropped in pretty often at the bookbinder’s (who lived under the same roof with the Siebenkæses)—he merely came to see whether the ‘Liaisons Dangereuses’ were bound yet.

But that Michaelmas! Truly the world shall remember it. And in fact the very eve of it was a time of such a splendid and exquisite quality that we may venture to give the world some account of it.

Let the world *read* the account of this eve of preparation at all events, and then give its vote.

On this eve of the fair all Kuhschnappel (as all other places are at such a time) was turned into a workhouse and house of industry for women; you couldn’t have found a woman in the whole town either sitting down, or at peace, or properly dressed. Girls the most given to reading opened no books but needle-books to take needles out, and the only leaves they turned over were paste ones to be put on pies. Scarcely a woman took any dinner; the Michaelmas cakes and the coming enjoyment of them were the sole mainspring of the feminine machinery.

On these occasions women may be said to hold their exhibitions of pictures, the cakes being the altar-pieces. Everyone nibbles at and minutely inspects these baked escutcheons of her neighbour’s nobility; and each has, as it were, her cake attached to her, as a medal is, or the lead tickets on bales of cloth, to indicate her value. They scarcely eat or drink anything, it is true, thick coffee being their consecrated sacrament wine, and thin transparent pastry their wafers; only the latter (in their friend’s and hostess’s houses) tastes best, and is eaten almost with fondness when it has turned out hard and stony and shot and dagger proof—or is burnt to a cinder—or, in short, is wretched from some cause or other; they cheerfully acknowledge all the failures of their dearest friends, and try to comfort them by taking them to their own houses and treating them to something of a *very different* kind.

As for our Lenette, she, my dear lady reader, has always been a baker of such a sort that male connoisseurs have preferred her crust, and female connoisseurs her crum, both classes maintaining that no one but she (and yourself, dearest) could bake anything like either. The kitchen fire was this salamander’s second element, for the first and native element of this dear nixie was water. To be scouring with sand, and squattering and splattering in it, in a great establishment like Siebenkæs’s (who had devoted all Leibgeber’s Ephraimites to the keeping of this feast), was quite her vocation. No kiss could be applied to her glowing face on such a day—and indeed she had her hands pretty full, for at ten o’clock the butcher came bringing more work with him.

The world will be glad (I'm perfectly certain in my own mind) if I just give them a very short account of this business—*who* could have done it better, for that matter? The facts of it were these: at the beginning of summer the four fellow lodgers had clubbed together and bought a cow in poor condition which they had then put up to fatten. The bookbinder, the cobbler, the poor's advocate and the hairdresser—between whom and his tenants there was this distinction, that they owed *their* rent to *him*, whereas he owed *his* to his creditors—caused to be prepaid and drawn up by a skilful hand (which was attached to the arm of Siebenkæs) an authentic instrument (here KOLBE the word-purist will snarl at poor innocent me in his usual manner for employing foreign words in a document based on the Roman law) relative to the life and death of the cow; in which instrument the four contracting parties aforesaid—who all stood attentively round the document, he who was sitting and drawing it excepted—bound and engaged themselves in manner following, that is to say, that—

1stly. Each of the four parties interested, as aforesaid, in the said cow might and should have the privilege of milking her alternately.

2ndly. That this Cooking or Fattening Society might and should defray from a common treasury chest the price of said cow, the cost of the carriage of implements and provisions, and maintenance generally of the same; and

3rdly. That the allied powers as aforesaid should not only on the day before Michaelmas, the 28th September, 1785, slaughter the said cow, but further that each quarter of the same should then and there be further divided into four quarters, conformably to the lex agraria, for partition among the said parties to the said contract.

Siebenkæs prepared four certified copies of this treaty, one for each; he never wrote anything with graver pleasure. All that now remained to be performed of the contract by the house association of our four evangelists, who had collectively adopted as their armorial crest or emblematic animal, one single joint-stock beast, namely, the female of that of Saint Luke—was the third article of it.

However, I know the learned classes are panting for my fair, so I shall only dash down a hurried sketch of my Man-and-Animal piece (Kolbe of course goes on taking me to task).

That Septembriseur, the butcher, did his part of the business well, though it was at the close of Fructidor—the four messmates looking on throughout the operation, as also did old Sabine, who did a good deal, and got something for it. The quadruple alliance regaled itself on the slain animal at a general picnic, to which each contributed something in order that the butcher might be included gratis; and it is undeniable that one member of the league, whom I shall name hereafter, attended this picnic in a frame of mind and in a costume barely serious enough for the occasion. The slaughter confederation then set to working its division sum, according to the number of its members, and the golden calf round which their dance was executed was cut, up with the appropriate heraldic cuts. Then the whole thing was over. I think I can say nothing more laudatory of the manner in which the whole process of zootomic division was carried out than what Siebenkæs, an interested party, said himself, viz., "It's to be wished that the twelve tribes of Israel, as well as, in later times, the Roman empire, had been divided into as many and as fair divisions as our cow and Poland have been."

I shall be doing ample justice to the cow's embonpoint if I merely mention that Fecht the cobbler uttered a panegyric which commenced with the most lively and vigorous

oaths, and the statement that she was an (adjective) bag of skin and bones, and ended with an assurance, uttered in mild and pious accents that Heaven had indeed favoured the poor beast, and "blessed us unworthy sinners above measure." A frolicsome cult by nature, he had had the heavy coach-harness of pietism put on to him, and was consequently obliged to keep softening down the "strong language" which came naturally to him into the pious sighs appropriate to his "converted state." And it was to the frame of mind and the costume of this very FECHT that I made allusion above as being barely suitable to the occasion, for I'm sorry to say he had no breeches on him the whole day of this great slaughter, but ran up and down the slaughter-house in a white frieze frock of his wife's, having a strange general effect of looking something like his own better half. However, the members of the association didn't take any offence; he couldn't help it, because while he was going about got up in this Amazon's *demi-negligée*, and presenting this hermaphrodite appearance, his own black-leather leg-cases were in the dye pot, being prepared for a reissue.

The poor's advocate had begged Lenette (about a quarter past four in the afternoon) not to go on working herself to death, and never to mind bothering about any supper, as he was going to be miserly for once, save himself a supper tonight, and sup upon eighteen penn'orth of pastry: but the busy soul kept running about brushing and sweeping, and by six o'clock they were both lying resting in the leather arms of—a big easy chair (for he had no flesh and she no bones), and looking around them with that expression of tranquil happiness which you may see in children while eating, at the room in its state of mathematical order, at the way in which everything in it was shining, at the pastry new-moon-crescents in their hands, and at the liquid burnished gold (or rather foilgold[26]) of the setting sun creeping up and up upon the gleaming tin dishes. There they rested and reposed like cradled children, with the screeching, clattering, twelve herculean labours of the rest of the people of the house going on all round them; and the clearness of the sky and the newly cleaned windows added a full half-hour to the length of the day; the bell-hammer, or tuning-hammer of the curfew bell gently let down the pitch of their melodious wishes till they lapsed into dreams.

At ten o'clock they woke up and went to bed…!

I quite enjoy this little starry night picture myself; though my head has reflected it all glimmery and out of focus, as the gilt hemisphere of my watch does the evening sun when I hold it up to it. Evening is the time when we weary, hunted men long to be at rest; it is for the evening of the day, for the evening of the year (autumn), and for the evening of life, that we lay up our hard-earned harvests, and with such eager hopes! But hast thou never seen in fields, when the crops were gathered, an image and emblem of thyself—I mean the autumn daisy, the flower of harvest; she delays her blossom till the summer is past and gone, the winter snows cover her before her fruit appears, and it is not till the—coming spring that that fruit is ripe!

But see how the roaring, dashing surges of the fair-day morning come beating upon our hero's bedposts! He comes into the white, shining room, which Lenette had stolen out of bed like a thief before midnight to wash while he was in his first sleep, and had sanded all over like an Arabia; in which manner she had her own way while he had his. On a fair-day morning I recommend everybody to open the window and lean out, as Siebenkæs did, to watch the rapid erection and hiring of the wooden booths in the market-place, and the falling of the first drops of the coming deluge of

[26] Gold in leaves, of two colours, used by bookbinders.

people, only let the reader observe that it wasn't by my advice that my hero, in the very arrogance of his wealth (for there were samples of every kind of pastry which the house contained on a table behind him), called down to many of the little green aristocratic caterpillars whom he saw moving along in the street with even greater arrogance than his own, and whose natural history he felt inclined to learn by a look at their faces.

"I say, sir, will you just be good enough to look at that house, that one there—do you notice anything particular?"

If the caterpillar lifted up its physiognomy, he could peruse and study it at his ease,—which was of course his object.

"You don't notice anything particular?" he would ask.

When the insect shook its head, he concurred with it, and did the same up at the window, saying:

"No, of course not! I've been looking at it for the last twelve months myself, and can't see anything particular about it; but I didn't choose to believe my own eyes."

Giddypated Firmian! Your seething foam of pleasure may soon drop down and disappear—as it did that Saturday when the cards were left. As yet, however, his little drop of must which he has squeezed out of the forenoon hours was foaming and sparkling briskly. The landlord moved at a gallop, casting (with his powder-sowing machine) seed into a fruitful soil. The bookbinder conveyed his goods (consisting partly of empty manuscript books, partly of still emptier song books, partly of "novelties," in almanacs) to the fair by land-carriage in a wheelbarrow, which he had to make two journeys with in going, but only one in returning in the evening, because then he had got rid of his almanacs to purchasers and to sellers (almanacs are the greatest of all novelties, or pieces of news—for there is nothing in all the long course of time so new as the new year). Old Sabel had set up her East India house, her fruit garner, and her cabinet of tin rings at the town gate; she wouldn't have let that warehouse of hers go to her own brother at a lower figure than half-a-sovereign. The cobbler put a stitch in no shoe on this St. Michael's Day except his wife's.

Suck away, my hero, at your nice bit of raffinade sugar of life, and empty your forenoon sweetstuff spoon, not troubling your head about the devil and his grandmother, although the pair of them should be thinking (after the nature of them) about getting a bitter potion, even a poison cup, made ready and handing it to you.

But his greatest enjoyment is still to come, to wit, the numberless beggar people. I will describe this enjoyment, and so distribute it.

A fair is the high mass which the beggars of all ranks and classes attend; when it is still a day or two off, all the footsoles that have nothing to walk upon but compassionate hearts, are converging towards the spot like so many radii, but on the morning of the fair-day itself the whole annual congress of beggardom and the column of cripples are fairly on the march. Anyone who has seen *Fürth*, or been in Elwangen during P. Gassner's government, may cut these few leaves out of his copy; but no one else has any idea of it till I proceed and lead him in at the town-gate of Kuhschnappel.

The street choral service and the vocal serenades now commence. The blind sing like blinded singing-birds—better, but louder; the lame walk; the poor preach the gospel themselves; the deaf and dumb make a terrible noise, and ring in the feast with little

bells—everybody sings his own tune in the middle of everybody else's—a paternoster is clattering at the door of every house, and in the rooms inside nobody can hear himself swear. Whole cabinets of small coppers are lavished on one hand, pocketed on the other. The one-legged soldiery spice their ejaculatory prayers with curses, and blaspheme horribly, because people don't give them enough—in brief, the borough which had made up its mind for a day's enjoyment, is invaded and almost taken by storm by the rabble of beggars.

And now the maimed and the diseased begin to appear. Whoever has a wooden jury-leg under him, sets it and his long third leg and fellow-labourer the crutch, in motion towards Kuhschnappel, and drives and plants his sharp-pointed timber toe into moist earth there in the vicinity of the town-gate, in hopes of its thriving and bearing fruit. Whosoever has no arms or hands left, stretches both out for an alms. Those to whom Heaven has entrusted the beggars' talent, disease, above all paralysis, the beggars' *vapeurs*—trades with his talent, and the body appertaining to it, levying contributions with it on the whole and the sound. People who might stand as frontispieces to works on surgery and medicine, quite as appropriately as at city gates, take up their position near the latter and announce what they lack, which is, first and foremost, other people's cash. There are plenty of legs, noses, and arms in Kuhschnappel, but a great many more people. There is one most extraordinary fellow—(to be admired at a distance, though impossible to be equalled—looked upon with envy, though indeed only by such blotting-paper souls as can never see supreme excellence without longing to possess it); there's only half of him there, because the other half's in his grave already, everything you could call legs having been shot clean away; and these shots have placed him in a position at once to arrogate and assume to himself the primacy and generalship-in-chief of the cripples, and be drawn about on a triumphal car as a kind of demigod, whose soul, in place of a corporeal garment, has on merely a sort of cape and short doublet. "A soldier," said Siebenkæs, "who is still afflicted with one leg, and who on that ground expostulates with fate, inquiring of her, 'Why am *I* not shot to pieces like that cripple, so that I might make as much in the day as he does?' seems to forget that on the other side of the question there are thousands of other warriors besides himself who haven't even *one* wooden leg (let alone more), but are totally unprovided with even *that* fire- and begging-certificate; moreover, that however many of his limbs he might have been relieved of by bullets, he might still keep on asking, 'Why not more?'"

Siebenkæs was merry over the poor because they are merry over themselves; and he never would kick up a politico-economical row about their occasionally tippling and guzzling a little too much,—when, for instance, a whole lazarette-wagon, or ambulance-load of them, halting at some shepherd's hut, they get down, and go in, and their plasters, their martyrs' crowns, their spiked girdles and hair-shirts come off, leaving nothing but a brisk human being who has left off sighing just for a minute; or—since what everybody works for is, not merely to live, but to live a little better now and then—when the beggar too has something a little better than his everyday fare, and when the cripple pulls the goddess of joy into his boarded dancing-barn to dance with him as his partner, and her hot mask falls off in the waltz (as for *our* ball-rooms, it never falls off in them).

About 11 o'clock, the devil, as I have half hinted already, dropped a handful of blue-bottle flies into Firmian's wedding soup—to wit, Herr Rosa von Meyern, who graciously intimated his aristocratic intention of coming to call that afternoon, "because there was such a good view of the market-place." People of impecunious

gentility, who can't issue orders in any houses but their own, construct *in* their own, with much ease, loopholes whence they can fire upon the enemy who makes his attack from—within. The advocate had a piece of rudeness towards the Venner to put into either scale of his balance of justice, so as to determine which was the least of the two. The one was, to let him be told he might stay where he was; the other, to let him in, and then behave just as though the noodle were up in the moon. Siebenkæs chose the latter as the smaller.

Women, good souls, have always to carry and hold up the Jacob's ladder by which the male sex mount into the blue æther and into the evening-red; this call of the Venner came as an extra freight loaded on to Lenette's two burden-poles of arms. The laving of all moveable property, and the aspersion of all immoveable, recommenced. Meyern, the false lover of the poor child-murderess, Lenette detested with all her heart; at the same time, all her polishing machinery was at once set agoing on the room, indeed, I think women dress themselves more and with greater pains for their lady-enemies than for their lady-friends.

The advocate went up and down, all behung with long chains of ratiocination, like a ghost, and would fain have succeeded in imbuing her with the idea that she shouldn't give herself the slightest bother of any kind about the nincompoop. "It was no good," she said, "what would he think of me?" It was not until having eliminated from the room as a piece of crudity his old ink-bottle, into which he had only that minute put ink-powder to dissolve and make ink for the 'Selection from the Devil's Papers,' she was about to lay hands on that holy ark, his writing-table—that the head of the house ramped up—on his hind legs, pointing with his fore paw to the line of demarcation.

Rosa appeared! Nobody who had just a little soft place in his heart could really have cursed this youngster, or beaten him into a jelly; one rather got to feel a kind of a liking for him, between his pranks. He had white hair on his head and on his chin, and was soft all over; and had stuff like milk instead of blood in his veins, like the insects, just as poisonous plants have generally white milky juice. He was of a very forgiving nature, especially towards women, and often shed more tears himself in an evening at the theatre than he had caused many whom he had ruined to let fall. His heart was really not made of stone, or lapis infernalis, and if he prayed for a certain time, he grew pious during the process and sought out the most time-honoured of religious formularies to give in his adhesion to them then and there. Thunder was to him a watchman's rattle, arousing him from the sleep of sin. He loved to take the needy by the hand, especially if the hand was pretty. All things considered, he may perhaps get to heaven sooner or later; for, like many debtors in the upper circles of society, he doesn't pay his play-debts, and he also has in his heart an inborn duel-prohibition against shooting and hacking. As yet he is not a man of his word; and if he were poorer, he would steal without a moment's hesitation. Like a lap-dog, he lies down wagging his tail at the feet of people of any importance, but tugs women by the skirts, or shows his teeth and snarls at them.

Pliant water-weeds of this sort fall away from the very slightest satiric touch, and you can't manage to hit them with one, richly as they deserve it, because its effect is only proportionate to the resistance it meets with. Siebenkæs would have been better pleased had Von Meyern only been a little rougher and coarser, for it is just these yielding, pitiful, sapless, powerless sort of creatures that filch away good fortune, hard cash, feminine honour, good appointments and fair names, and are exactly like the ratsbane or arsenic, which, when it is good and pure, must be quite white, shining and transparent.

Rosa appeared, I have said, but oh! lovely to behold beyond expression! His handkerchief was a great Molucca of perfume; his two side locks were two small ones. On his waistcoat he had a complete animal kingdom painted (as the fashion of the day was), or Zimmermann's Zoological Atlas. His little breeches and his little coat, and every thing about him salted the women of the house into Lottish salt-pillars, merely in passing them by on his way upstairs, I must, say, though, that what dazzle me personally, are the rings which emboss six of his fingers,—there were profile portraits, landscapes, stones, even beetle-wing covers all employed in this gold-shoeing of his fingers.

We may quite properly apply to the human hand the expression "it was shod with rings like a horse's hoof," it has been long applied to the horse's hoof itself, and Daubenton has proved, by dissections, that the latter contains all the different parts of the human hand. The use of these hand or finger manacles is quite proper and permissible; indeed rings are indispensable to the fingers of those who ought by rights to have them in their noses. According to the received opinion, these metal spavins, or excrescences of the fingers, were only invented to make pretty hands ugly, as a kind of chain and nose-rings to keep vanity in check; so that fists which are ugly by nature can easily dispense with these disfigurements. I should like to know whether there is anything in another idea of mine bearing on this subject. It is this. Pascal used to wear a great iron ring with sharp spines on it round his naked body, that he might always be ready to punish himself for any vain thought which might occur to him by giving this ring a slight pressure; now is it not perhaps the case that these smaller and prettier rings in a similar way chastise any vain thoughts which may occur, by slightly, but frequently hurting? They *seem* at least to be worn with some such object, for it is exactly the people who suffer most from vanity who wear the greatest quantities of them, and move about their beringed hands the most.

Unwished-for visits often pass off better than others; on this occasion everyone got on pretty comfortably. Siebenkæs of course was in his own house—and behaved himself accordingly. He and the Venner looked out of the window at the people in the market-place. Lenette, in accordance with her upbringing, and the manners and customs of the middle classes of small towns, didn't venture to be otherwise than silent, or at the most to take an exceedingly subordinate, obligato, accompanying part in the concert of a conversation between men; she fetched and carried in and out, and, in fact, sat most of the time down stairs with the other women. It was in vain that the courteous, gallant Rosa Everard, tried upon her his wonted wizard spells to root women to a given spot. To her husband he complained that there was little real refinement in Kuhschnappel, and not one single amateur theatre where one could act, as there was in Ulm. He had to order his new books and latest fashions from abroad.

Siebenkæs in return expressed to him merely his enjoyment over the—beggars in the market-place. He made him notice the little boys blowing red wooden trumpets, loud enough to burst the drum of the ear, if not to overthrow the walls of Jericho. But he added, with proper thoughtfulness, that he shouldn't omit to notice those other poor devils who were collecting the waste bits of split wood in their caps for fuel. He asked him if, like other members of the chamber, he disapproved of lotteries and lotto, and whether he thought it was very bad for the Kuhschnappel common people's morals that they should be crowding about an old cask turned upside down, with an index fixed to the bottom of it which revolved round a dial formed of gingerbread and nuts, and where the shareholders, for a small stake, carried off from the banker of the

establishment, a greedy old harridan of a woman, a nut or a ginger cake. Siebenkæs took pleasure in the little, because in his eyes it was a satirical, caricaturing diminishing mirror of everything in the shape of burgherly pomposity. The Venner saw no entertainment whatever in double-meaning allusions of the kind; but indeed the advocate never dreamt of amusing anybody but himself with them. “I may surely speak out whatever I like to myself,” he once said; “what is it to me if people choose to listen behind my back, or before my face either?”

At length he went down among the people in the market-place, not without the full concurrence of the Venner, who expected at last to be able to have some rational conversation with the wife. Now that Firmian was gone, Everard begun to feel in his element, swimming in his own native pike-pond as it were. As an introductory move he constructed for Lenette a model of her native town; he knew a good many streets and people in Augspurg, and had often ridden through the Fuggery, and it seemed only yesterday, he said, that he saw her there working at a lady’s hat, beside a nice old lady, her mother he should think. He took her right hand in his (in an incidental manner), she allowing him to do so out of gratefulness for calling up such pleasant memories; he pressed it—then suddenly let it go to see if she mightn’t just have returned the pressure the least bit in the world, in the confusion of fingers as it were—or should try to *recover* the lost pressure. But he might as well have pressed Götz von Berlichingen’s iron hand with his thievish thumb as her warm one. He next came upon the subject of her millinery work, and talked about cap and bonnet fashions like a man who knew what he was talking about; whereas when Siebenkæs mixed himself up with these questions, he displayed no real knowledge of the subject at all. He promised her two consignments, of patterns from Ulm, and of customers from Kuhschnappel. “I know several ladies who *must* do what I ask them,” he said, and showed her the list of his engagements for the coming winter balls in his pocket-book; “I shan’t dance with them if they don’t give you an order.” “I hope it won’t come to that,” said Lenette (with many meanings). Finally, he was obliged to ask her to let him see her at work for a little, his object here being to weaken the enemy by effecting a diversion of her forces—her eyes being occupied with her needle, she could only have her ears at liberty to observe him with. She blushed as she took two bodkins and stuck one of them into the round red little pincushion of—her mouth; this was more than he could really allow, it was so very dangerous—it formed a hedge against himself—and she might swallow either the stiletto in question, or at all events some of the poisonous verdigris off it. So he drew this lethal weapon with his own hand out of its sheath in her lips, scratching the cherry mouth a little, or not at all—as he loudly lamented—in the process, however. A venner of the right sort considers himself liable in a case of this kind for the fees and expenses consequent upon the accident; Everard, in his liberality, took out his English patent pomade, smeared some on to her left forefinger, and applied the salve to the invisible wound with the finger as a spatula—in doing which he was obliged to take hold of her whole hand as the *handle* of the spatula, and frequently squeeze it unconsciously. He stuck the unfortunate stiletto itself into his shirt front, giving her his own breastpin instead, and exposing his own tender white breast to—the cold. I particularly beg persons who have had experience in this description of service to give their opinion with firm impartiality on my hero’s conduct, and, sitting in court martial on him, to point out such of his movements and dispositions as they may consider to have been ill-advised.

Now that she was wounded, poor thing, he wouldn’t let her go on working, but only show him her finished productions. He ordered a copy of one of them for Madame

von Blaise. He begged her to put it on and let him see it on her—and he set it himself just as Madame von Blaise would wear it. By heaven! it was better even than he had thought; he swore it would suit Madame von Blaise quite as well, as she was just the same height as Lenette. This was all stuff and nonsense, really the one was taller by quite half a nose than the other. Lenette said so herself, she had seen Madame von Blaise at church. Rosa stuck to his own opinion, and swore by his soul and salvation (for in cases of the kind he was given to profane language), and by the sacrament, that he had measured himself with her a hundred times, and that she was half-an-inch taller than himself. "By heaven!" he said, suddenly jumping up, "of course I carry her measure about with me, like her tailor; all that need be done is that *you* and *I* measure ourselves together."

I shall not here withhold from little girls a golden rule of war made by myself, "Don't argue long with a man, whatever it may be about—warmth is always warmth, even if it only be warmth of argument—one forgets one's self, and ultimately takes to proving by syllogistic figures, and this is just what the enemy wants—he converts these figures into poetical figures—ultimately even into plastic figures."

Lenette, a little giddy with the rapid whirl of events, good naturedly stood up to serve as recruit measure for her recruit Rosa; he leant his back to hers. "This won't do," he said, "I can't see," and unlocked his fingers which had been intertwined together, backwards, over the region of her heart. He turned quickly round, stood before her, and embraced her gently, so as to determine, by comparing the levels of their eyes, whether their brows were an exact height or not. His were glaring quite an inch higher up than hers; he clasped her closely and said, turning red, "you see you were right; but my mistake was that I added your beauty to your height," and in this proximity he pressed his mouth, red as sealing-wax, upon her lips, very founts and sources of truth as they were.

She was ashamed, annoyed and embarrassed, angry, and ready to cry, but had not the courage to let her indignation break out upon a gentleman of quality. She didn't speak another word then. He set her and himself at the window, and said he would read her some songs, of rather a different kind, he hoped, to those which were being hawked down in the street. For he was one of the greatest poets in Kuhschnappel, although as yet it was not so much that his verses had made him known, as that he had made his verses known. His poems, like so many others nowadays, were like the muses themselves, children of memory. Every old Frankish town has at least its one fashionable fop, a person who *fait les honneurs*; and every town, however old, prosaic, imperial-judicature-endowed, possesses its genius, its poet, and sentimentalist; often both these offices are filled by the same individual—as was the case in Kuhschnappel. The greater and likewise the lesser house of assembly looked upon Rosa as a mighty genius, smitten with the genius-epidemic-fever. This disease is something like elephantiasis, of which Troil in his travels in Iceland gives such an accurate description in twenty-four letters, and the principal features of which are that the patient is exactly like an elephant as to hair, cracks, colour, and lumps of the skin, but has not the *power* of the elephant, and lives in a *cold* climate.

Everard took a touching elegy out of one of his pockets, the left one, in which (I mean in the elegy) a noble gentleman, lovesick, sang himself to death; and he told her he should like to read it to her, if his feelings would let him get through it without breaking down. However, the poem shortly drew more than one tear and emotion from its owner, and he, to his honour, was constrained to furnish a fresh proof of the fact that however manly and cold he and poets of his stamp can be to the heaviest

sorrows of humanity, they really cannot quite contain themselves at the woes of love, but are compelled to weep at them. Meanwhile Rosa, who, like swindlers at play, always kept one eye upon a reflecting surface of some sort—water, window panes, or polished steel for instance, so as to catch a passing glimpse of the female countenance from time to time—saw by means of a little mirror in one of the rings of his left hand, in which hand he was holding the elegy, just a trace or two in Lenette's eyes of the tragic dew left there by his poem. So he pulled out of his second pocket a ballad (it is, no doubt, printed long ago) in which an innocent child murderess, with a tearful adieu to her lover, throws herself upon a sword. This ballad (very unlike his other poetical children) had real poetic merit, for luckily (for the poem at least) he was a lover of that kind himself, so that he could speak *from* the heart *to* the heart. It is not easy to portray the emotion and the melting pitying tears on Lenette's face; all her heart rose to her tear-dimmed eyes.

It was an experience utterly new to her to be thus agitated by a combination of truth and fiction.

The Venner threw the ballad into the fire, and himself into Lenette's arms, and cried—

"Oh! you sympathising, noble, holy creature!"

I cannot paint the amazement with which, completely unprepared for and incomprehensive of this transition from crying to kissing, she shoved him away. This made little impression on him; he was on his high horse and said he must have some souvenir of this "sacred entrancing moment"—only a little lock of her hair. Her humble station, his high-flown language, and the fact that she was perfectly unable to form the slightest idea what use her hair would be to him, even supposing she gave enough to stuff a pillow—all this put into her head the foolish idea that he wanted it to perform some magical rite with, such as putting her under a love spell, or something of the sort.

He might have stabbed himself there and then before her, hewn himself in pieces, impaled himself alive, she wouldn't have interfered; she might indeed have shed her *blood* to save him, but not a single *hair* of her head.

He had still one resource *in petto*—he had really never met with such a case as this before; he lifted up his hand and vowed that he would get Herr von Blaise to recognise her husband as his nephew, and pay over his inheritance—and that with the greatest ease, because he would threaten to jilt his niece unless he did it—if she would just take the scissors and cut off a *little* hair memorial, no bigger even than the fourth part of a moustache.

She knew nothing about the business of the inheritance, and he was consequently obliged, to the great detriment of his enthusiastic state, to give a prosaic, detailed account of the *species facti* of the whole of that law suit. By great good fortune he had still in his pocket the number of the 'Gazette' in which the inheritance chamber's inquiry as to the advocate's existence appeared in print, and he was able to put it into her hands. And now this plundered wife began to cry bitterly, not for the loss of the money, but because her husband had told her nothing about it all this time, and still more because she couldn't quite make out what her own name really was, or whether she was married to a Siebenkæs or to a Leibgeber. Her tears flowed faster and faster, and in her passion of grief she would have let the deceiver before her have all the pretty hair on her head, had not an accidental circumstance burst the whole chain of events, just as he was kneeling and imploring her for one little lock.

But we must first look after her husband a little, and see how he is getting on, and whither he bends his steps. At first among the market stalls; for the many-throated roaring, and the Olla Podrida of cheap pleasures, and the displayed pattern cards of all the rags out of, and upon, which we human clothes moths construct our covering cases and our abodes—all these caused his mind to sink deep into a sea of humoristic-melancholy reflections concerning this mosaic picture of a life of ours, made up as it is of so many little bits, many-tinted moments, motes, atoms, drops, dust, vapours. He laughed, and listened, with an emotion incomprehensible by many of my readers, to a ballad singer, bawling, with his rhapsodist's staff in his right hand pointed at a big, staring picture of a horrible murder, and his left full of smaller, printed pictures, for sale, in which the misdeed and the perpetrator of it were displayed to the German public in no brighter colours than those of poetry. Siebenkæs bought two copies, and put them in his pocket, to read in the evening.

This tragic murder picture evoked in the background of his fancy that of the poor girl he had defended, and the gallows, on to which fell those burning tears which had flowed from his wounded heart—that heart which nobody on earth, save one, understood—when last it had been lacerated. He left the noisy market-place, and sought all-peaceful nature, and that isolatorium, destined alike for friendship and for guilt, the gallows. When we pass from the stormy uproar of a fair into the still expanse of wide creation, entering into the dim aisles of nature's hushed cathedral, the strange sudden calm, is to the soul as the caressing touch of some beloved hand.

With a sad heart he climbed up to the well-known spot, whose ugly name I shall omit, and from these ruins he gazed around upon creation, as if he were the last of living beings. Neither in the blue sky, nor upon the wide earth, was there voice or sound; nothing but one forlorn cricket, chirping in monosyllables, among the bare furrows, where the harvest had been cleared away. The troops of birds flocking together with discordant cries flew to the green nets spread upon the ground—and not to meet the green spring far away. Above the meadows, where all the flowers were withered and dead, above the fields, where the corn ears waved no more, floated dim phantom forms, all pale and wan, faint pictures of the past. Over the grand eternal woods and hills a biting mist was draped in clinging folds, as if all nature, trembling into dust, must vanish in its wreaths. But one bright thought pierced these dark fogs of nature and the soul, turning them to a white gleaming mist, a dew all glittering with rainbow colours, and gently lighting upon flowers. He turned his face to the north-east, to the hills which lay between him and his other heart, and up from behind them rose, like an early moon in harvest, a pale image of his friend. The spring, when he should go to him and see him once more, was at work already preparing for him a fair broad pathway thither, all rich with grass and flowers. Ah! how we play with the world about us, so quickly dressing it all with the webs which our own spirits spin.

The cloudless sky seemed sinking closer to the dusky earth, bright with a softer blue. And though a whole long winter lay between, the music of the coming spring already came, faint and distant, to his ear; it was there in the evening chime of the cattle bells down in the meadows, in the birds' wild wood notes in the groves, and in the free streams flowing fast away amid the flowery tapestries that were yet to be.

A palpitating chrysalis was hanging near him still in her half-shrivelled caterpillar's case, sleeping away the time till the flower cups all should open; phantasy, that eye of the soul, saw beyond and over the sheaves of autumn the glories of a night in June; every autumn-tinted tree seemed blooming once again; their bright coloured crests,

like magnified tulips, painted the autumn mist with rainbow dyes; light breezes of early May seemed chasing each other through the fresh, fluttering leaves; they breathed upon our friend, and buoyed him up, and rose with him on high, and held him up above the harvest and above the hills, till he could see beyond these hills and lands—and lo! the springs of all his life to come, lying as yet enfolded in the bud, lay spread before his sight like gardens side by side—and there, in every spring time, stood his friend.

He left the place, but wandered a long while about the meadows, where at this time of year there was no need to hunt carefully for footpaths—chiefly that his eyes might not betray where his thoughts had been to all the market people who were to be met. It was of little use—for in certain moods the torn and wounded heart, like injured trees, bleeds on and on, and at the slightest touch.

He shunned eye-witnesses, such as Rosa above all, for this reason, that he was (I am sorry to have to say it) in just one of those moods when, whether from modesty or from vividness of feeling, he was most disposed to mask his emotion under the semblance of temper. At last a weapon of victory came to his hand, the thought that he had to apologize and make amends to his guest for so long and so uncourteous an absence.

When he got home what a strange state of matters! The old guest gone—another there in his place—and near the latter his wife in tears. When he came into the room, Lenette went to one of the windows, and a fresh torrent of tears fell down. “Madame Siebenkæs,” said the Schulrath, continuing his address to her, and keeping hold of her hand, “submit yourself to the will of God, I beseech you; nothing has happened but what can be put to rights without difficulty. I am willing to concede you a sorrow of the heart—but it must be a restrained and a subdued one.”

Lenette looked out of the window, not at her husband.

The Schulrath related, in the first place, all that I have already given my account of (Firmian, listening to him and looking at him, took the glowing hand of Lenette, whose face was still averted), and then continued—

“When I came in, merciful Heavens, there was his lordship on his knees before Madame Siebenkæs, with carnal tears, and—I am constrained to have the gravest suspicions—a design upon her precious honour! However, I raised him up, without the least ceremony, and I said to him, with the boldness of St. Paul himself—for which I am ready to answer before God and man—‘Your Lordship, are these the doctrines which I inculcated into your Lordship when I was your private tutor; is it Christian conduct to go down upon your knees in such a manner? Fie, for shame, Herr von Meyern. Fie, for shame, Herr von Meyern!’”

Here the Schulrath got into a terrible heat again, and strode up and down the room with his hands in the pockets of his plush coat.

Firmian said, “It’s a simple matter to set up a scarecrow and plant a hedge to keep off a hare like *him*; but what ails *you*, love,” he said, “and what are you crying so bitterly about?”

She cried more bitterly than ever; when the Schulrath planted his hands on his sides, and said to her in much wrath, “Very well, Madame Siebenkæs, this is the way of it, is it? This is all the impression my good counsel and comforting words have made upon your mind, is it? I never should have believed it of you!

“It was all for nothing then (as I am constrained to conclude) that, when I had the honour of bringing you here from Augspurg in my carriage, I described to you with all the eloquence at my command, the blessedness of the married state, before you had had an opportunity of learning it by experience; it seems I might just as well have spoken to the winds of heaven. Can it really be the case that all that I said to you in the carriage simply went in at one ear and out at the other? when I told you how happy a wife was in and through her husband, how she often could hardly help crying for joy at possessing him—how these two had but one heart and one flesh, and shared everything between them, joy and sorrow, every morsel of food, every wish and desire, ay and the very smallest secrets. Well, well, Madame Siebenkæs, I see the Schulrath may keep his breath to cool his porridge.”

Upon this she twice wiped and dried her eyes hurriedly, constrained herself to look at him very kindly indeed, and with a forced appearance of being quite pleased again, and said with a deep sigh, but softly and not in a tone of pain, “Oh dear me!”

The Schulrath touched her hand as it hung down with his finger tips in a priestly manner, and said—

“But may the Lord be your physician and helper in all your necessities” (he could hardly say more, for his tears were coming), “Amen,—which is, being interpreted, ‘Yea, verily, so mote it be.’” Here he embraced and kissed the husband, and this with much warmth, saying, “Send for me, if your wife can obtain no consolation—and may God give you both strength. O, by the by—the very thing I came here about—the review of the Easter programme must be ready by Wednesday—and I am in your debt for the eight lines or more you did about that piece of rubbish the other day, which you gave such a capital dressing to.”

When he had gone, however, Lenette didn’t seem so thoroughly consoled as might have been expected: she leant at the window sunk in deep, hopeless, amazement and reflection. It was in vain that Firmian pointed out that of course he wasn’t going to change his and her present name any more, and that her honour, marriage, and love didn’t depend upon a wretched name or so up or down, but upon himself and his heart. She restrained her tears, but she continued to be troubled and silent the whole of the evening.

Now let no one call our good Firmian over jealous or suspicious when, having just got well rid of one wretched sacrilegious robber of marriage honour, the Venner, the idea of a volcanic eruption which might throw stones and ashes all over a great tract of his life suddenly occurs to him; what if his friend Stiefel should be really (as it almost seems) falling in love with his wife, in all innocence, himself. His whole behaviour from the very beginning—his attentions on the wedding-day, his constant visits, and even his exasperation with the Venner that very day, and his warm feeling and sympathy on the occasion altogether, all these were the separate parts of a pretty coherent whole, and seemed to indicate a deep and growing affection, thoroughly honourable, no doubt, and unperceived by himself. Whether or not a spark of it had jumped off into Lenette’s heart, and was smouldering there, it was impossible as yet to determine; but true and good as he knew his wife and his friend to be, his hopes and his fears could not but be pretty equally balanced.

Dear hero! Do continue to be one! Destiny, as I see more and more clearly as time goes on, seems to have made up her mind gradually to join the separate pieces of a drill machine together with which to pierce through the diamond of thy stoicism; or else by slow degrees to build and fashion English scraping and singeing machines

(made out of poverty, household worries, law suits, and jealousy) to scrape and singe away from thee every rough and ill-placed fibre, as if you were a web of finest English cloth. If this should be so, do but come out of the mill as splendid a piece of English stuff as was ever brought to the Leipzig cloth and book fair, and you will be glorious indeed.

Chapter IV

A MATRIMONIAL PARTIE À LA GUERRE—LETTER TO THAT HAIR COLLECTOR, THE VENNER—SELF-DECEPTIONS—ADAM'S MARRIAGE SERMON—SHADOWING AND OVER-SHADOWING.

There is nothing which I observe and note down with more scrupulous and copious accuracy than two equinoctial periods, the matrimonial equinox when, after the honeymoon, the sun enters the constellation Libra (or the balance), and the meteorologic vernal equinox; because, by observing the weather which prevails at these two periods, I am enabled to prognosticate with surprising accuracy the nature of that which will characterise the succeeding season. I consider the first storm of the spring to be always the most important, and similarly, the first matrimonial storm; the others all come from the same quarter.

When the Schulrath was gone, the poor's advocate took his sulky house-goddess into his arms, and plied her with every conceivable method of proof; with proofs derived from immemorial hearsay, partial proofs, evidential proof, proof on oath, and by logical deduction—every kind of proof wherewith one can harden one's own heart, or soften another's.

But the whole of the evidence he adduced was useless. He might just as well have been embracing the cold hard angel at the baptismal font in the principal church, his own angel remained quite as cold and silent. Furboots had been the tourniquet which stopped the hemorrhage of Lenette's open, streaming artery; but his departure had taken the German tinder stopping from her eyes and now they streamed unstanched.

Siebenkæs went often to the window, and up and down in the room, that she might not see that he was following her example, and that her sorrow, little reasonable as it was, infected him by sympathy. We can more easily bear, and forgive pain of our own causing than of another's. All the following day there was an unendurable silence in the house. This was the very first of the beds of the matrimonial nursery-garden in which a seed of the apple of discord had been planted, and as yet not the faintest rustle of its sap was audible. It is not in the first domestic squabble, not till the fourth, tenth, ten-thousandth, that a woman can keep perfect silence with her tongue, yet make a tremendous noise with her body, and turn every chair which she shoves about, and every reel of cotton which she lets fall, into a language-machine and fountain of speech, and play her *instrumental* music all the louder, because her *vocal* parts are counting their rests. Lenette Wendeline moved everything and said everything, as softly as if her liege lord had the gout and was lying with cramped foot pressed in agony against the trembling bottom board of his bed.

When the third day of this came on, he was vexed and annoyed—and he had reason. I beg to say that, for my own part, I should be quite prepared to quarrel with my own wife, if I had one—ay, and to do it with a will—and that to some purpose, and to bandy words with her, as well as letters (though I should prefer the former). But there's one thing which would kill me outright, and that would be her keeping up a long, dreary, tearful sulking, a thing which, like the sirocco wind, ends by blowing out all a man's lights, thoughts, and joys, and at length his life itself. Just as we all of us, rather *like* a violent thunderstorm in summer, and think it refreshing rather than otherwise in itself—and yet consider it a cursed nuisance on the whole, because it's sure to be followed by some days of dreary wet weather. Siebenkæs was all the more

vexed on this occasion, because he was a man who scarcely ever was vexed. As other jurists have reckoned themselves among men exempt from torture, so Siebenkæs had long ago fortified *himself* against grief and care, those torture racks of the soul (by the help of Epictetus), as effectually as he had the infanticide against bodily torture.

The Jews hold that when Messiah comes, hell will be joined on to paradise, so as to make a bigger dancing saloon. And all the year long, Siebenkæs occupied himself in building and adding on his torture chambers and schools of suffering to the entertainment halls of his bagatelle, so as to have more room to perform his ballets.

He often said a medal should be struck for any citizen who should be three hundred and sixty-five days, five hours, forty-eight minutes and fifty-five seconds, without either growling or snarling.

He wouldn't have got that medal himself in the year 1785. On the third day, the Saturday, he was so wild at his wife's speechlessness, that he was wilder still with that kill-joy of an Everard. For, of course, that minnesinger, might come in again at any moment, bringing in his company the goddess of discord (who, as directrix and ambassadress, performs such important poetical functions in Voltaire's Henriade), and introducing her into the homely "Volkslied" of an advocate, by way of a *dea ex machina* to unloose the matrimonial knot, and tie a fresh one with the Venner. Siebenkæs accordingly wrote him the following academic-controversial document.

"May it please your Lordship,

"I take the liberty to lay before your Lordship in this little memorial my humble petition,

"That you will be pleased to stay at home, and spare me the honour of your visits.

"Should your Lordship find it necessary to become possessed of a certain quantity of my wife's hair—the undersigned hereby undertakes to cut and deliver the same himself. In the event of your Lordship's being minded to exercise a *jus compascui*, or right of free common and pasturage in my premises, and appearing therein in person, I shall embrace with much pleasure the opportunity then afforded me of plucking as many of your Lordship's own hairs as may be requisite to constitute a souvenir out of your Lordship's head, by the roots, like monthly radishes, with my own hands. While I was in Nürnberg, I used often to go and dine in the neighbouring villages (against the will of the authorities) with a fine old Prugel Knecht,[27] *i. e.* with a private tutor, who had towzed out and excerpted from the heads of three little slips of nobility, while he was giving them their lessons, enough silky hair to make him a handsome mouse-coloured bag-wig, which the man most probably wears to this day. His motive in thus applying himself to the production of silk, or rather, his reason for divesting these little heads of their exterior foliage, was, that his own beams might the more effectually ripen the fruit within, as, for similar reasons, it is usual to remove leaves from the vines in August.

"I have the honour to remain, &c."

I shall be very sorry if I cannot manage to get the reader to understand that the advocate wrote this biting letter without the slightest bitterness of feeling. He had read the brilliant satirical writings of the three merry wise men of London, Butler,

[27] According to Klüber's notes to Delacurne de Sainte Palaye on Chivalry, this was the title of the official who superintended the tourney, or gymnastic practices and exercises. There are at the present day certain private tutors in aristocratic families who are feeble imitations of him.

Swift, and Sterne—those three bodies of the satirical giant, Geryon, or three furies (Parcæ) of the foolish—to such an extent that, as their disciple and follower, he never thought whether it was a biting letter or not. In his admiration of the artistic beauties of his composition, he lost sight of its meaning; and indeed, if a stinging speech were made to himself, he would think nothing of the length of its prickles in comparison with its form and shape. I need merely instance his 'Selection from the Devil's Papers;' the satirical poison bubbles and venomous prickles so frequent in that work came from his pen and ink—*i. e.* his head only, not from his heart.

I take the opportunity of begging the reader always to infuse the very soul of gentleness and kindness into every word and tone he utters (because it is our words more than our deeds which make people angry), and, more particularly still, into every page he writes. For, truly, even if your correspondents have forgiven you an epistolary *pereat* long ago, yet the old leaven of ill-will ferments anew, if the sorrel-leaf of a letter containing it chances to come to hand again. We may, of course, on the other hand, reckon upon a similar immortality for a piece of epistolary kindness. Truly, though a long, cutting December wind had made my heart stiff and immoveable to everything in the shape of kindly feeling for one who, once on a time, used to write me absolute Epistles of St. John, tender pastorals of letters, what would it matter, if I should but chance to turn up these old letters in my letter-treasury of bundles and packets of letters?

The sight of the beloved handwriting, the welcome seal, the kind, endearing words, and the pieces of paper where so many a pleasure found space to sport and play, would cast the sunshine of the old affection upon the frozen heart once more; it would reopen at the memory of the dear old time, as some flower that has closed reopens when a sunbeam lights upon it, and its only thought—ay, were it but the day before yesterday that it had conceived itself mortally offended—would be, "Ah! I was too hard upon him (or her) after all." Many of the saints in the first century used to drive devils out of the possessed, in a somewhat similar way, merely by means of letters.

Furboots came, as if he had been sent for, on the Saturday evening, like a Jewish Sabbath. I have often seen a guest serve as cement or hefting powder to two better halves in a state of fracture, because shame and necessity compelled them to speak and behave kindly to each other, at all events while the guest was there. Every husband should be provided with two or three visitors of this sort, to come in when he's suffering from an attack of wife-possessed-too-long-with-the-devil-of-dumbness; as long as the people are there, at all events, she must speak, and take the iron thief-apple of silence—which grows on the same stalk as the apple of discord—out of her mouth.

The Schulrath stood up before Lenette Wendeline as if she were one of his school girls, and asked her if she had borne this first cross of her married life patiently, and like a worthy sister in suffering of the patriarch Job. She drooped her big eyes, wound a thread the length of a finger into a white snowball, and breathed deeper. Her husband answered for her: "I was her brother in affliction, and bore the cross-bar of the burden—I without a murmur, she without a murmur. In the twelfth century, the heap of ashes on which Job endured his sufferings used still to be shown. Our two chairs are our heaps of ashes; there they are still to be seen!"

"Good woman!" said Stiefel, in the softest pianissimo of his pedal reed-stop of a masculine voice, and laid his snow-white hand on the soft, raven hair upon her

forehead. Siebenkæs heard a multiplying sympathetic echo of these words in his heart, and laid his arm on Lenette's shoulders, who was blushing with pleasure at the honour conferred upon her by this kindness of the man in office. Her husband softly pressed her left side to his right, and said:—

"She is good, indeed; she is gentle, and quiet, and patient, and only too industrious. If the whole tag, rag and bobtail of Hell's army, in the shape of the Venner, had only not advanced upon our little summer-house of happiness, to knock its roof off, we should have lived happy in it for many a day, Mr. Stiefel, far into the winter of our lives. For my Lenette is good, and *too* good for me and for many another man." Here Stiefel, in his emotion, surrounded that hand of hers which had the skein of thread in it, at the seat of the pulse with his fine fingers—the empty hand being in her husband's possession—and the Wound Water of our pain, the great drops of which trickled from her drooped eyes down her cheeks, where her imprisoned hands could not wipe them away, made the two male hearts very tender. And besides, her husband could never praise any one long without his eyes overflowing. He went on, faster, "Yes, she might have been very comfortable and well-off with me, but that my mother's money is kept back from me in this terrible way. But, even for all that, I should have made her happy without the money, and she me—we never had a word, never a single unhappy moment—now had we, Lenette? nothing but peace and love, till the Venner came. He has taken a good deal from *us*!"

The Schulrath raised his clenched fist in wrath, and exclaimed, sawing the air with it, "You child of hell! you robber-captain and filibuster! You silken Catiline and mischief-maker! Does it ever strike you that you'll have to answer for this and your other pranks one day? Mr. Siebenkæs, this, at all events, I *do* expect of you, that if ever he comes here again asking for hair, you will turn him out by the hair of his own head, or hit this fur-maggot (as you call him yourself) across the shoulders with a boot-jack, and squeeze his hand with a pair of pincers—in fact, the long and the short of it is, *I will not* have him come here any more."

And here Siebenkæs, to cool down his own emotions and other people's, mentioned the fact of his having already taken steps in the matter, and served the necessary letter of inhibition upon the Venner. Stiefel clucked his tongue in a joyful manner, and nodded his head approvingly. He considered any person high in office to be a vicegerent of Christ on earth, a count to be a demigod, and an emperor as a whole one;—but a single one of the deadly sins committed by any of them all would at once cost them the whole of his deferential good will,—and a slip in Latin grammar, though committed by a head crowned with gold, he would at once have done battle with in a whole Latin Easter programme. Men of "the world have straight bodies and crooked souls; scholars often have neither the one nor the other. The last of Lenette's clouds cleared away when she heard that a paper escarpment and *cheval de frise* against the Venner had been constructed at her door. "Then he will trouble me no more! Thanks be to Heaven! He goes about lying and deceiving everyone he comes across."[28]

"We don't employ these words, Madame Siebenkæs, if we care to speak grammatically," said Stiefel; "irregular verbs such as '*kriechen*, *trügen*, *lügen*,' though they are *verba anomala*, and as such have '*kroch*, *log*, *trog*,' and so on in the

[28] In this last speech Lenette makes use of several of the obsolete forms of verbs referred to in a previous chapter as "religious antiquities out of Luther's Bible." I cannot give English equivalents. Of course what follows would be unintelligibly without this explanation.—Translator.

imperfect tense, are still always inflected quite regularly in the present by the best German grammarians—although the poets permit themselves a poetical license in such cases, as, I am sorry to say, they do in most others—and therefore we say, if we care to be grammatically correct, '*lügt*, *trügt*, *kriecht*,' &c., at the present day, that is."

"Don't find fault with my dear Augspurger's Lutheran inflections," said Siebenkæs; "there's something touching to me about these irregular verbs of hers; they are the Schmalkaldian article of the Augspurg confession." Here she drew her husband's ear softly down to her lips and said, "What would you like me to get for supper? Tell the gentleman that you know I mean no offence, whatever words I use. And I wish you would ask his reverence, Firmian dear, when I'm out of the room, whether our marriage is really all right according to the Bible." He asked this question on the spot. Stiefel answered it deliberately as follows:—"We have only to look at the case of Leah, who was conducted to Jacob's tent under the pseudonym of Rachel on her marriage night, and whose marriage the Bible holds to be perfectly valid. Is it names or bodies that exchange rings? And can a name fulfil the marriage vow?"

Lenette answered these questions, and spoke her thanks for this consistorial decision by a bashful glance of restored content and a beaming face upturned towards him. She went to the kitchen, but kept constantly coming back and snuffing the candle, which was on the table at which the two gentlemen sat talking; and probably nobody, except the advocate and I, will consider this to be any indication of a more than ordinary liking for Stiefel. The latter always took the snuffers from her, saying "it was *his* duty." Siebenkæs clearly perceived that both the apples of his eyes revolved, satellite-fashion, round his own planet, Lenette; but he did not grudge the Latin knight his little glimpse of an age of chivalry thus sweetened by a Dulcinea; like most men, he could far sooner pardon the rival lover than the unfaithful fair; women, on the other hand, hate the rival more than the unfaithful lover. Moreover, he knew perfectly that Stiefel had not the least idea himself whom or what he cared for or sighed for, and that he was a far better hand at reviewing schoolmen and authors than himself. For instance, his own anger he called professional zeal; his pride, the dignity due to his office; his passions, sins of weakness; and on this occasion love appeared to him disguised as mere philanthropy. The arch of Lenette's troth was firmly finished off in the keystone of religion, and the Venner's assault upon it had not shaken this sacred masonry in the slightest degree.

At this juncture the postman stumped up stairs with a new constellation which he set in their serene family sky, namely, the following letter from Leibgeber.

"Bayreuth, 21 Sept., 1785.

"My dear Brother, Cousin, and Uncle,
Father and Son!

"For the two auricles and the two ventricles of thy heart constitute my entire genealogical tree:—as Adam, when he went for a walk, carried about with him the whole of his blood relations that were to be, and his long line of descendants—which is not wholly unreeled and wound up even at this day—till he became a father, and his wife bare a child. I wish to goodness I had been the first Adam! Siebenkæs, I do adjure you, let me, let me, follow up this idea which has struck me and taken hold of me with such power; let me not write a word in this letter that does not add a touch to the three-quarter-length portrait which I shall draw of myself as the first father of mankind!

“Men of learning are much mistaken who suppose my reason for wishing I were Adam to be, that Puffendorf and many other writers very properly award me the whole of this earth as a kind of European colony in the India of the universe, as my *patrimonium Petri*, *Pauli*, *Judæ* and the rest of the Apostles; inasmuch as I, being the sole Adam and man, and consequently the first and last of universal monarchs (although as yet without any subjects), might of course lay claim to the entire earth. It might occur to the pope, indeed (he being holy father, though not our first father), to make a similar claim, or rather it did occur to him some centuries ago, when he constituted himself the guardian and the heir of all the countries of the earth, and indeed made bold to set two other crowns on the top of his earthly one, a crown of heaven and a crown of hell.

“How small a thing it is that I desire! All that I wish I had been the old Adam (in fact, the oldest Adam) for, is merely that I might have strolled up and down with Eve among the espaliers of Eden on our marriage night, in our aprons and beasts’ skins, and delivered an address in Hebrew to the mother of all living.

“Before commencing my address I beg to observe that, while I was yet unfallen, it fortunately occurred to me to note down the more important heads of my universal knowledge. For I had, in my condition of innocence, a perfect and intuitive knowledge of all the sciences, of history, both universal and literary, the various criminal and other codes of law, all the dead languages as well as the living, and was a kind of live Pindus and Pegasus, a portable Lodge of Light and learned society, a pocket university, and miniature golden *Siècle de Louis XIV*. Considering what my mental powers were at that juncture it is a miracle (and what’s more, a very lucky job) that in my leisure moments I put down the cream of my universal knowledge on paper, because when I subsequently fell, and became simple and ignorant, I had these excerpts, or *Catalogues raisonnés*, of my former wisdom by me, so that I could refer to them.

“‘Virgin!’ (it was thus that the sermon delivered outside Paradise commenced) ‘it is true we are the first of parents, and are minded to originate all the subsequent parents; though all that you think about is sticking your spoon into a forbidden apple. However, I, being a man and protoplast, reflect and ponder, and as we walk to and fro, I shall undertake the office of preacher of the sermon on this, the occasion of our entering into the bonds of wedlock (not having as yet, unfortunately, begotten anybody else to do it), and, in a brief wedding exhortation, direct your attention to the doubts affecting and the reasons deciding, the protoplasts, or the first parents and first of wedded couples (that is to say, you and me), in the act of reflecting and considering, and how—

“‘In the first place, they consider the reasons why they should not people the earth, but emigrate this very day, the one into the old world, the other into the new; and

“‘In the second place, the reasons why they should do nothing of the kind, but marry.

“‘After which a short elench, or *usus epanorthoticus*, will be adduced, and will conclude the lecture and the night.’

IN THE FIRST PLACE

“‘My dearly beloved!

“‘Here, in my sheepskin, as I appear before you, grave, thoughtful, and wise, it is nevertheless the fact that I am full to the very brim of—not so much follies as *fools*, with a good many wise men stuck in here and there between them by way of

parentheses. I am of short stature, it is true, and the ocean[29] came a good deal above my ancles, and besprinkled my new beasts' skin; and yet, as I walk up and down here, I am girt about with a seed cloth, containing the seeds of all nations, and carrying the repertory of the whole human race, an entire world in miniature and *orbis pictus*, round my middle like a pedlar's stock in trade. For Bonnet, who is in me among the rest, will sit down at his desk (when he comes out), and prove that they are all one inside the other, like a nest of boxes or a set of parentheses, that the father contains the son, that the grandfather contains them both, the great-grandfather consequently the grandfather and all the contents of him, the great-great-grandfather the great-grandfather and the contents of his contents and all his episodes, all sitting waiting one inside the other. Are there not then here embodied in thy bridegroom—this is a point, dear bride, which cannot be made *too* intelligible to you—all religious sects, excepting the Preadamites, but including the Adamites,[30] and all giants, the great Christopher himself among them every individual of every nation of all the earth—all the shiploads of negroes destined for America, and the packets marked with red containing the soldiers promised by England to Anspach and Bayreuth? Eve, am I not, as I stand here before you, a whole Jews'-quarter—a Louvre of all the crowned heads of the earth—since I can bring them all into existence if I please, and if I am not induced by this first head of my discourse to refrain from doing so? You will admire me, and yet laugh at me at the same time if you but look at me well, lay your hand on my shoulder, and say to yourself: "Now, in this man and protoplast are contained all mankind, all the learned faculties, all schools of philosophy, and of sewing and spinning, cheek by jowl in peace and harmony, the highest and noblest royal families and princely houses (though not yet sorted out from among the common ship's company), all free imperial orders of knighthood, packed higgledy-piggledy with their vassals, cottiers, and tenants, it is true—monasteries and nunneries next door to each other—barracks and members of Parliament, to say nothing of cathedral chapters, with all their provosts, deans, priors, sub-priors, and canons! What a man! What an Anak!" you will add. You are right, dear, I am indeed—the very nest dollar of the human coin-cabinet, the universal court of assembly of all judicatures, with all the members of all assemblies, not one out of its place, the walking *corpus juris* of all civil, canon, criminal, feudal, and municipal law. Haven't I Meusel's 'Learned Germany' and Jöcher's 'Scholastic Lexicon' within me all complete, and Jöcher and Meusel themselves, to say nothing of their supplementary volumes? I wish I could just let you see Cain—who, if head second of this discourse should determine me, would be our first offshoot and sucker, our Prince of Wales, Calabria, Asturias and the Brazils. You would see, if he were transparent—as I believe him to be—how he contains all the rest, one inside the other, like beer glasses—all œcumenical councils, inquisitions, and propaganda, and the devil and his grandmother. But, loveliest, thou didst not write down any of thy *scientia media* before thy fall, as I did, and consequently thou starest into the future as blind as a bat. I, however, who see into it quite clearly, am enabled by my chrestomathy to perceive that, where other men beget perhaps some ten fools, I shall beget whole millions of tens, and units into the bargain, seeing that the Bohemians, Parisians, Viennese, Leipzigers, Bayreuthers, Hofians, Dublinese, Kuhschnappelers (and their wives and daughters over and above) have all got to come into existence through me, and that in every million of them there will always be at least five hundred who

[29] The French academician, N. Beurion, made out that Adam was 123 feet 9 inches high, and Eve 118 feet 9-3/4 inches. The rest is related by the Rabbin, that Adam went through the ocean after his fall.
[30] The members of this celebrated sect went to church without any clothes on them.

neither have, nor will listen to, reason. Duenna, as yet you know little of the human race, but two in fact, for the serpent is not one; but I know what sort of race I am going to produce, and that in opening my *limbus infantum*, I open at the same time a Bedlam. By heaven, I weep and lament when I merely peep in between the leaves of the centuries in their long course, and see nothing there but gouts of gore, and a congeries of idiots—when I think of the trouble and pain to be undergone before a century shall learn to write a legible hand, a hand even as good as a minister's or an elephant's trunk—before poor humanity gets through its dame's school, and private tutors, and French governesses, so as to be fit for Latin grammar schools, public schools, Jesuit seminaries, and next for fencing classes, dancing classes, dogmatic and clinical courses. By old Harry, I feel hot. Nobody will think of you as the brood-hen of the coming flock of starlings, as the spawning codfish in whom Leuwenhack will count 9½ millions of eggs; not you, my little Eve, but your husband, will get all the blame, who should have known better, and rather begotten nothing than such a rabble of thieves and robbers, crowned emperors on the Roman throne, and vicegerents on the Roman chair, the former of whom will call themselves after Antoninus and Cæsar, the latter after Christus and Petrus, and among whom there are men whose thrones shall be Lüneburg torture chairs for the human race, if not the converse of a Place de Grève, where the masses shall be put to death, and the single individual feted and amused.[31] And I shall be taken to task on account of Borgia, Pizarro, St. Dominic, and Potemkin. Even supposing I should manage to evade being blamed for black exceptions such as these, I should be obliged to admit that my descendants really cannot get through the space of half-an-hour without either thinking or doing something foolish, that the war of giants, waged in them by their passions, is never broken by a peace, seldom even by a truce; that the greatest of all man's faults is that he has such a number of little ones; that his conscience serves for scarcely anything but *hating his neighbours and being morbidly sensitive to their transgressions*; that he never leaves off evil ways till he is on his deathbed; that, he learns and loves the language of virtue, but is at enmity with the virtuous—just as the English employ French language teachers, though they detest the French themselves. Eve, Eve, we shall have little to congratulate ourselves upon if we marry; Adam means in the original "red earth," and truly my cheeks will consist entirely thereof, and will blush scarlet at the mere thought of the indescribable and unparalleled conceit and vanity of our great-grandchildren, increasing as the centuries go on. Nobody will tweak *himself* by the nose—unless perhaps when he is shaving. Critics will set themselves up above authors, authors above critics—Heimlicher von Blaise will give his hand to be kissed by orphans; ladies theirs to be kissed by all and sundry; mighty ones the embroidered hems of their garments. Eve, I had only got as far on with my prophetic extracts from the world's history as the sixth century, when you bit the apple under the tree, and I, like a fool, did as you did, and everything slipped out of my head: God only knows what sort of a set the fools and foolesses of the subsequent centuries may turn out to be. Virgin, wilt thou now put into action thy *Sternocleidomastoideum*, as Sömmering styles the muscle which

[31] It seems almost to indicate a crossing of the breeds between the grave tiger and the playful ape, that the Place de Grève in Paris is the place where malefactors are executed, and where the populace assemble for fêtes—that on the selfsame spot horses tear a regicide to pieces and citizens celebrate the accession of a new king; the fire wheels of the fireworks and of the people who are broken on the wheel whirling at the selfsame time and place. Frightful contrasts! we may not adduce others lest we should get to imitating those whom we have here found fault with.

nods the head, and so express your “yes” when I put to you the question, “Wilt thou have the marriage-preacher to thy wedded husband?”

“‘You will no doubt reply, let us first hear the second head of the discourse, in which the subject is considered from another point of view. And indeed, dearly beloved, we had almost forgotten that we must proceed to the

SECOND PLACE,

and consider the reasons which may persuade first parents to become such, and to marry, and serve Destiny in the capacity of sewing and spinning machines of linseed, hemp, flax, and tow, to be wound by her in endless networks and coils around the earthly sphere. My strongest reason, and, I trust, yours also, is the thought of the Day of Judgment. For, in the event of our becoming the *entrepreneurs* of the human race, I shall see all my descendants, when they ascend from the calcined earth like vapour, at the last day, into the nearest planet, and fall into order for the last review; and among this harvest of children and grandchildren, I shall hit upon a few sensible people with whom one may be able to exchange a rational word or two—men whose whole lives were passed, as well as lost, amid thunder and lightning (as according to the Romans those whom the gods loved were killed by lightning), and who never closed their eyes or their ears, however wild the storm. I see the four heathen evangelists among them too, Socrates, Cato, Epictetus, and Antoninus, men who went through the world, using their voices like fire-engine pipes, two hundred feet long, to save people from being burnt out of house and home by the fire of their own passions, sluicing them all over with pure, cold, Alp-water. And there can be no doubt after all, that I may really be the arch-papa, and you the arch-mamma, of some very great and celebrated people, that’s to say, if we choose. I tell you, Eve, that I have it here in black and white among my excerpts and collectanea that I shall be the forefather, ancestor, and Bethlehem of an Aristotle, Plato, Shakespeare, Newton, Rousseau, Goethe, Kant, Leibnitz, people, take them for all in all, who are as able thinkers as their protoplast himself, if not abler. Eve, thou active and important member of the fruit-bearing jointstock company, or productive class of the state (consisting of thyself and this marriage-preacher), I assure you I expect to pass a few hours of exquisite enjoyment when on that neighbouring star I survey in a cursory manner that classic concourse newly risen from the dead, and at length kneel down, and cry, “Good morning, my children! Such of you as are Jews were wont to utter an ejaculatory prayer when ye met a wise man; but what such utterance would suffice for me, now that I behold all the wise and all the faculties at once, all of them my own blood relations too, who amid the wolfish hunger of their desires have stedfastly refrained from forbidden apples, pears, and pine apples, and, deep as their thirst for wisdom might be, committed no orchard-robbery on the tree of knowledge, though their first parents seized upon the forbidden fruit, although they had never known what hunger was, and upon the tree of knowledge, although they possessed all knowledge, except knowledge of the serpent nature.” And then I shall arise from the ground, pass into the angelic crowd, fall on the bosom of some distinguished descendant, and, throwing my arms around him, say, “Thou, true, good, contented-minded, gentle son! If I could just have shown *thee* only, sitting in thy brood-cell, to my Eve, the queen-bee of this great swarm here present, at the time when I was delivering the second head of my marriage sermon, I’m sure she would have listened to reason, and given a favourable answer.’”

“And thou, Siebenkæs, art that same, true, good son, and thou restest ever on the warm, heaving breast of

"Thy Friend.

"*Postscript and Clausula Salutaris.*

"Please to forgive me this merry private ball and witches' dance upon cheap and nasty letter-paper, notwithstanding that you are unfortunately an infinitesimal fractional part of the German race, and as such, can't be expected either to stand, or to understand, such a dance of ideas. This is why I never print anything for the unwieldy German intellect; entire sheets which I have spawned full of playful idea-fishes of this sort I consign at once to regions where such productions do not usually arrive till they attain the evening of their days, having previously exercised the right of transit through the booksellers' shops. I was eight days in Hof, and am at present living a retired life at Bayreuth; in both of these towns I have made faces, that is, other people's profiles; but most of the heads which sat or stood to my scissors opined that all was not quite right in mine. Tell me the real truth of the matter; it's not altogether a matter of indifference to me, because if I should turn out not to be quite 'all there,' I should be incapable of devising my property by will, or of exercising various civil functions.

"In conclusion, I send a thousand kind remembrances and kisses to your dear, good Lenette, and my compliments to Herr Schulrath Stiefel, and will you please ask him if he is any relation to Magister Stiefel, the rector of Holzdorf and Lochau (in Wittemberg), who prophesied (incorrectly, as I consider) that the end of the world would take place on the 1st January, 1533, at 8 o'clock in the morning, and lived to die in his own bed after all. I also send, for you and the 'Advertiser,' a couple of programmes of Professor Lang's of this place, relative to the General Superintendent of Bayreuth, and one of Dr. Frank's of Pavia. There is a very charming young lady, exceedingly clever and intellectual, living here at the Sun Hotel (she is in the front rooms, and I in the back). She has been very much pleased with me and my face, I am happy to tell you, seeing how exactly you and I are alike, the only difference between us being my lame foot. So that the things I pride myself upon in ladies' society are my likeness to you and my weaknesses. Unless I have been misinformed, this lady is a poor niece of your old uncle's with the broken glass wig, and is being brought up at his expense, and destined for a marriage with some Kuhschnappeler of the upper ten thousand. Perhaps she may soon be forwarded to you, entered in the way-bill as bridegroom's effects.

"The above is my oldest news, but my newest news, namely your own self, I shall not expect to arrive here at Bayreuth till I and the spring get back to it together (for the day after to-morrow I am off to meet it in Italy), and we, I and the spring, together beautify the world to such a degree that you will certainly enjoy a happy time of it in Bayreuth, the houses and the hills of that place being so particularly charming. And so, fare thee somewhat well."

They all felt certain that the Kuhschnappeler of rank for whom the Heimlicher's niece was being brought up could be none other than the Venner Rosa, whose little burnt-down stump of a heart—what was left of it after being hitherto made use of to set fire to the bosoms of female humanity in general (as the lamp in a smoking-room serves to kindle the pipes of the collective frequenters thereof)—would be the marriage torch to light her to her new home.

As there were three heavens in this letter—one for each of the party—kind remembrances for Lenette, the programmes for Peltzstiefel, the letter itself for Siebenkæs—I shouldn't have been astonished if the terzetto of them had danced for

joy. The Schulrath, intoxicated with delight—for the glad blood rose to his sober head—opened the papers sent him upon the square patterned supper-cloth (which was laid already), and hungrily began to devour his three printed "relishes before supper," and literary petits soupers, upon the tin plate without even saying grace, until an invitation to stay and have some supper reminded him that he must be off. But before leaving, he petitioned that, by way of fee for having acted as middleman and court of arbitration between them, or as an alkali to promote the blending of his oil with her water—he might have a new profile of Lenette. The old one cut out by Leibgeber (which the letter brought to his recollection), and which, as we may remember, Leibgeber let him have, happened to have been put into the pocket of his dressing-gown and sent to the wash with it (being of much the same colour, moreover). "It shall be put on the stocks to-night," said Siebenkæs.

When the Schulrath was going, as he could see that the ring upon Lenette's finger didn't squeeze it so uncomfortably as it had done (and gave *himself* credit for having been the means of filing it smoother and padding it softer), he shook her hand with much warmth, and said—

"I shall always be delighted to come whenever there's the slightest thing the matter with you two charming people."

Lenette answered, "Oh yes, do come very often."

And Siebenkæs added, "The oftener the better."

And yet, when he had gone, the ring seemed to be not quite so comfortable again, and medical students who may be working at psychology may be a little surprised that during supper the advocate said very little to his wife, and she very little to him. The reason was that he had Leibgeber's letter lying by his plate in the place where the bread normally is, and the image of his beloved friend shone bright before his mental vision from Bayreuth all athwart the far misty darkness between—their first happy meeting to come floated magically before him. Hope shot down a pure clearing ray into the dark mephitic cave where he was panting and toiling now—and the coming spring stood like some cathedral tower all hung with lamps lofty and bright in the distance, beaming through the dark night sky.

At length he "came to himself," *i. e.* to his wife; the strong image of Leibgeber had buoyed him up from the sharp stones which strewed the present; the dear old friend, who had clipped out the bride's profile up in the choir on the wedding-day, and been with them in the early weeks of their honeymoon, seemed to fling a chain of flower-wreaths about him and draw him closer to the silent form by his side. "Well darling, and how are you getting on?" he said, awaking from his reverie and taking her hand, now that all was peace again between them. She had, however, the feminine peculiarity or foible, habit at all events, of being much quicker to show that she was vexed than that her anger was over; of, at all events, being slow to show the latter; and of commencing a reconsideration of all the matters in dispute at the very moment that amends have been made and accepted, and pardon begged and granted. There are very few married women indeed who will put their hand into their husbands', and say "There, I'm good again," without a very considerable hesitation and delay; unmarried women are much more ready to do it. Wendeline *did* hold hers out, but did it too coldly, and drew it away again in a great hurry, to take up the table-cloth, which she asked him to help her to smooth and fold up. He did this smilingly—she gravely giving her whole attention to the process of folding the long white parallelogram into exact squares—and at length, when the last and thickest square

was arrived at, he held it fast there—she pulled, trying to look very serious—he looked at her very fondly and tenderly—she couldn't help smiling at this and then he took the tablecloth from her, pressed it and himself with it to her heart, and said, in her arms, "Little thief! how can you be so naughty to your old ragamuffin of a Siebenkæs, or whatever his name may be?" And now the rainbow of a brighter future appeared shining above the fast ebbing flood which had risen as high as their hearts so lately—But, my dears, rainbows now-a-days very often mean just the reverse of what the first was said to signify.

The prize he awarded to his queen of the rose-feast of the heart was to ask her to let him take a profile of her pretty face, that Peltzstiefel might find a joy and a present waiting for him on the morrow. I think I shall just trace an outline of his outline-tracing for people of taste in this place; but I must stipulate that nobody is to expect a pen to be a painter's brush—or a painter's brush to be an engraver's style—or an engraver's style a flower anther, generating generation upon generation of lilies and roses.

The advocate borrowed a drawing-board, viz. the façade of a new pigeon-house, from Fecht the cobbler. Lenette's shoulder fitted into the oval portal of it as a clasp-knife does into its handle; a sheet of white paper was tacked on to the board—her pretty, soft head was pressed on the stiff paper—he applied, with much care and self restraint, his pencil at the upper part of the brow, difficult as it was to catch the shadow in such immediate proximity to the reality—and went slowly down the beautiful, flowery declivity all roses and lilies. But little or nothing came of it; the *back* part of the head was pretty good. His eyes would keep turning away from his work to the sitter, so that he drew as vilely as a box-painter.

"Wendeline, your head isn't still a moment," he said. And indeed her face, an well as her brain-fibres, shook by reason of the heightened beat of her pulse and the quickening of her breathing; while, on the other hand, his pencil stumbled when it came to the delicate *basso relievo* of her little nose, fell into the cleft at her lips, and stranded on the shoal of her chin. He kissed those lips which he couldn't draw, and which she always had either too much open or too tightly closed, and brought a shaving-glass and said, "See, haven't you got more faces than Janus, or any Indian god? The Schulrath will think you were making faces, and I copying them. Look, here's where you moved, and I sprung after you like a chamois; the effect of the jump is, that the upper part of the face sticks out before the lower like a half mask. Just think how the Schulrath will stare in the morning."

"Try once more, dear; I'll do just as you tell me; I should like it to be very nice," Lenette said, blushing; and stiffened her neck, and steadied her soft cheek against the drawing-board. And as her husband gently glided his drawing ovipositor over her brow like a segment of some white hemisphere—instead of breathing, he found she was *holding* her breath this time till she shook again, and till the colour came to her face.

And here jealousy, like some exploding fire-ship, sent hard fragments of the wreck of his shattered happiness crashing on a sudden against his heart.

"Ah!" (he thought) "can it be that she does really love him?" (*i. e.* the Schulrath).

His pencil stood still in the obtuse angle between her nose and her chin as if under a spell; he heard her let go her pent-up breath; his pencil made black zigzags at the edge of the paper, and as he stopped at the closed lips, which nothing warmer than his own, and her morning prayers, had ever touched, and thought "Must *this* come

upon me too? must *this* joy be taken from me like all the rest? And am I drawing up my bill of divorce and Uriah-letter here with my own very hands?" He could do no more at it. He took the drawing-board quickly from her shoulder—fell upon her closed lips—kissed away the pent-up sigh—pressed the life out of his jealousy between his heart and hers, and said—

"I can't do it till to-morrow, Lenette! Don't be vexed, darling! Tell me, are you quite as you used to be in Augspurg? Don't you understand me? Have you not the slightest idea what I am driving at?"

She answered quite innocently, "Now you will be annoyed, Firmian, I know, but I really have *not* the slightest idea."

Then the Goddess of Peace took from the God of Sleep his poppy garland, and twined it into her own olive wreath and led the wedded pair, garlanded and reconciled, hand in hand into the glittering, gleaming, icefields of the land of dreams—the magic shadowy background of the noisy jarring, shifting day—our camera obscura full of moving miniature pictures of a world all dwarfed, in which man, like the Creator, dwells alone with his own creations.

End Of The Preface And Of The First Book

The reader will remember that, at the beginning of the preface, I stated that I succeeded in putting the old merchant into a sweet sleep, and in providing his daughter with a gladsome feast of tabernacles, in the shape of the young unopened buds of this, my little cottage-garden here. But the foul fiend knows how to breeze up a sudden rain squall, and let it splattering down upon all our loveliest fireworks. I was only performing a duty in converting myself into a small, pocket circulating library for a poor lonely thing of a girl, whose father gave her no chance of a word or two of rational conversation except with her parrot, and with the family lawyer aforesaid.

The cage of the former was placed near her inkstand and waste-book; and he acquired from his mistress as much in the shape of German-Italian as a bookkeeper finds necessary for carrying on his foreign correspondence. And a parrot being always incited to talkativeness by a looking-glass in his cage, he and his language-mistress were enabled to look at themselves in it together. The latter (the family lawyer) I myself was. But the Captain—for fear of seductive princess-kidnappers and pirates such as me, and because her mother was dead, and because she was useful in the business—would let her speak to no man whomsoever, except in the presence of a third party (viz., himself). So that it was very seldom any man came to the house, except me; whereas, a father generally decoys whole museums of insects into his house by means of a blooming daughter, just as a cherry-tree in blossom near a window fills a room with wasps and bees. It wasn't exactly everybody who, when he wanted to speak a rational word with her (*i. e.* one her father shouldn't hear), could manage to draw the flute stop of his organ, and then play away for an hour to this Argus till he should close his hundred green eyes, so that two blue ones might be looked into. I *did* manage it, indeed; but the world shall hear what sort of a psalm of thanksgiving and vote of thanks I was treated to for my pains.

The old man—who had grown suspicious on account of the length of time I had remained the evening before—had this evening only *pretended* to be asleep, that he might see what I was going to be at. The rapidity with which he went asleep (the reader no doubt remembers it at the beginning of the book) ought to have struck me more than it did. I ought to have reckoned on a contrary state of matters myself, and been ready with more prefaces in addition to this present one, to serve as sleeping powders.

The rascally eavesdropper lay in wait till I had made my report on the two Flower-pieces and the four first chapters of this book. At the end of the fourth he bounced up as a mole-trap does when one walks on it, and addressed me from behind with the following harangue of congratulation—"Has the devil got you by the coat-tails? You must come here from Berlin, must you, and stuff my daughter's head with all sorts of atheistical, nonsensical, romantic balderdash and nonsense, till she'll be of no more use in a shop than——"

"Just listen to one word, Herr Pigtail!" said I quite quietly, taking him into the next room, where there was neither fire nor light; "just listen to one single, *half*-word!"

I put my hands upon his shoulders, and said, "Herr Pigtail—for in Charles the Great's time every officer was so styled, because in those days the soldiers wore tails, as the women do now—Herr Pigtail, I'm not going to have a tussle with you to-night, when

the old year's going out and the new year's coming in. I assure you solemnly that I am the son of the ——,[32] and that I shall never see you more, though you shall have all the Vienna letters just the same. But I implore you, for God's sake, to allow your daughter to read. Now-a-days every tradesman reads—one of whom will be her husband—and every tradesman's wife. Yet for all this reading, there's still plenty of spinning and cooking going on; there are shirts in plenty, and fat people in abundance. And as for *corrupting* her—why! that's just what a man who reads will find it most difficult to accomplish in the case of a woman who reads, and most easy in the case of one who hardly knows her A B C. Let me entreat you, Captain."

"If you would but just mind your own affairs! What's the girl to *you*?" was his reply. It was a true harbour of refuge for me that, on neither of these two evenings, the Christmas Eve or the New Year's, had I, in the enthusiasm of narration, so much as touched anything of the daughter's but about a groschen's worth of hair (and that not her own), which got among my fingers somehow or other, I hardly know how.

It would have been little to have seized her hands, in the fervour of my biographical enthusiasm it would have been nothing at all; but, as I have said, I hadn't done it. I had said to myself, "Enjoy a pretty face as you would a picture, and a female voice as you would a nightingale's, and don't touch the picture or throttle the bird. What! must every tulip be out up for salad, and all altar-cloths made into camisoles?"

Of all truths, the one which we bring ourselves to credit last of all is that there are certain men whom no amount of truth will convince. That Herr Pigtail was one of these presently occurred to me, not so soon as it ought to have done, and I determined that the only sermon I should preach, to him would be of the jocular and middle-age-Easter kind.[33] "Not so loud, Herr Pigtail, or mademoiselle will hear every syllable; you have pinned her, poor butterfly, into your letter book; but at the great day of judgment I shall accuse you of not having given her my works to read. I do wish you had only gone on pretending to be asleep long enough to allow me to tell her the other books of the history of Kuhschnappel, where Siebenkæs's troubles occur, and his death, and his marriage. But, mademoiselle, I shall tell my publisher in Berlin to send you the remaining books of the story the moment they are in print, fresh out of the press, still all damp, like a morning newspaper. And now, adieu, Herr Pigtail; may Heaven grant you a new heart with the new year, and your dear daughter a second heart inside her own."

The elemental conflict of his and my dissimilar components raged louder and louder: but I say no more about it—every additional word would have the appearance of an act of vindictiveness. This, however, I may at all events say: happy is every daughter who may read my works while her father is awake (very few such daughters, however, recognise this truth). Unhappy is every dependent of an Oehrmann, because he will be starved, as a greyhound is, that he may be the more nimble at running (I do not mean on the piano with his fingers), as the dancers' children get nothing to eat that they may spring the better! And fortunate are all needy persons who have nothing to do with him; because Jacob Oehrmann gives to everyone just as much moral, as he possesses mercantile, credit, to which recruit-measure of worth he has been habituated by his fellow-tradesmen, who measure each other with yard-measures of metal. The only people who find favour in his sight are those who are

[32] This is an allusion to 'Hesperus.'
[33] Jocular discourses were delivered on Easter Sunday in the middle-ages, and went by the name of "Christian Easter-Merriment."

complete paupers, and this because they serve as pedestals for his charity; for the alms which he distributes in the name of the town and out of its exchequer, he looks upon as his own. Peace be with him! At that time I had not taken a part myself in celebrating the peace-festival of the soul which I have described in the Fruit-piece of this book, and I had read but little of what I have there written concerning the year of Jubilee which ought to last as long as the Long Parliament in our hearts with respect to all our moral debtors; for if I had I should not even have contradicted Herr Pigtail.

I vexed him, I am sorry to say, once more by my parting speech to his daughter (for I wished him and her my wishes both together and at once, so that it might not appear which was for which).

"Herr Pigtail, and mademoiselle, I bid you a long farewell. No more shall I be able, in elysian evenings, to relate to you any of my biographies (shorn of the digressions); and the feast days and the holidays, as well as the eves thereof, will come and will go, but he who has caused you such vivid emotions will come no more. May fate send thee books instead of bookmakers, sometimes stir thy dull heart with a poetic throb, heave thy still breast with tender sighs prophetic of the future—bring to thy eyes some gentle tear drops, such as an andante causes to flow, and lead thee on through the hot, toilsome summer days, not to an after summer, but to a flowery tuneful spring. And so, good night."

It goes to my heart to part with people; even were it my sworn hereditary foe: one is going to see him no more. Pauline was anything but my sworn hereditary foe. Out in the streets there were more new year well-wishers going their rounds, the watchmen, who were giving utterance to their good wishes in wind instrumental music and miserable verse. Stiff, old-fashioned, rude verses always touch me more—particularly in an appropriate mouth—than your sapless, new poems, all tricked out with artificial flowers and ice-plants; poetry altogether wretched is better than the mediocre. I decided upon going through the town gate; my heart was filled with emotions of very different kinds—for you see it was only eleven o'clock and the cold night was full of stars. And it was the last night of the year, and I didn't want to pass from the old year to the new in sleep, though that is how I would pass from this life to the next. I resolved to take that flushed, throbbing heart of mine out of the streets, and to a quieter company.

Place a man in some waste Sahara desert stretching further than the eye can reach, and afterwards pen him up into the narrowest of corners, he will be struck, in both cases, by the same vivid consciousness of his own individuality—the widest spaces and the narrowest have the same powerful effect in quickening our perception of our own Ego and of its relationship. There is nothing, on the whole, oftener forgotten than that which is what forgets—namely, the forgetter's *self*. Not only do the mechanical employments of labour and trade always draw men out of themselves, but the mental effort of study and investigation, also, renders scholars and philosophers just as deaf and blind to their own Ego, and its position with respect to other entities—deafer and blinder even. Nothing is more difficult than to convert an object of contemplation (which we always *move away* to a certain distance from ourselves, and from the mind's eye, so as to bring the latter to bear on it properly) into an object of sensation, and to feel that the object is the eye itself. I have often read whole books on the subject of the Ego, and of printing, right through, until at last I saw, to my astonishment, that the Ego and the printed letters were before—me so to speak under my nose.

Let the reader say truly: has he not even at this moment, while I have been talking, been forgetting that there are letters before him, ay, and his own Ego into the bargain?

But out where I was, under the twinkling heavens, and on a snow-covered height, round about which there gleamed a white, frozen plain, my Ego burst away from its relationships (while in connection with them it was no more than an attribute, a quality), and it became a personage—a separate entity. And then I could look upon myself. All marked points of time—stanzas as it were, or music phrases, of existence—new years' days for example, and birthdays, lift man high out of and up above the waves which are round him; he clears the water from his eyes, and looks about him, and says—"How the current has been carrying me along, drowning my hearing, and blinding my sight! Those are the waves, down there, onward, which have been bearing me along, and these, now coming toward me, when I dip down among them, will whirl me away!"

Without this clear, distinct consciousness of one's Ego, there can be no freedom, and no calm equanimity amid the crowding elbowing tumult of the world.

I shall go on with my story. I stood upon an iceberg, but my soul was all aglow—the cloven moon shone brightly down, and the shadows of the pine-trees about me lay, like dismembered limbs of the night, black upon the lily ground of snow. Away, some distance from me, a man seemed to be kneeling motionless on the ground.

And now 12 o'clock struck, and 1794, year of war and tumult, fell, with all its rivers of blood, into the ocean of eternity; the booming after-tone of the bell seemed to say to me, "Now has Destiny, with the twelfth stroke of her hammer, knocked down the old year to you, poor perishing mortals, at her auction of minutes."

The kneeling man now stood up and went quickly away. I could long see him and his shadow disappearing in the moonlight.

I left my height, the boundary hill between two years, and went down to where the man had been kneeling. I found a crucifix and a black leather prayer-book in duodecimo, all thumbed yellow, except one leaf at the beginning on which was the name of the owner, whose knees had worn deep traces in the ice. I knew him well, he was a cottager whose two sons had had to go to the war. On looking more closely, I found he had drawn a circle in the snow, to keep off evil spirits.

I saw it all; the simple, weak-minded creature, whose soul was darkened by a perpetual annular eclipse, had gone there on this solemn night to hearken to the hollow distant muttering thunder of the coming storm, and laid his prostrate soul, as it were, upon the earth to hear the distant march of the approaching foe. "Shallow, timid soul," thought I, "why should the dead that are to be come floating athwart the face of the clear, still night—thy sleeping sons among them, memberless? Why strive already to see the darting flames of conflagrations yet to come, and to hear the dismal turmoil, the bitter wail, of a woe as yet unborn? The coffins of the coming year have, as in times of pestilence, no inscriptions yet—why should the names appear upon them? Oh! thy Solomon's ring has been no protection against the destroying angel who dwells within our breasts. And that vague, ugly giant-cloud, behind which are death and the future, will prove, on approach, to *be* death and the future itself."

In hours like these we are all ready to lay our hats and swords on to the bier—ay, and ourselves as well—our old wounds burn anew, and our hearts, not being truly healed, a little thing breaks them again, like arms imperfectly set. But the cruel, piercing

lightning flash of some great minute, the reflection of which stretches gleaming athwart the whole river of our life, is necessary to us to make us blind to the *ignes fatui* and glowworms which meet us, to guide us, every hour: and frivolous, giddy man needs some powerful shock to counteract his tendency to continual petty naggling. Therefore, to us little crustaceans sticking with our suckers upon the ship of this earth, every new year's night is, like night in the old mythologies, a mother of many gods in us—and in such a night there begins for us a better normal year than that which began in 1624. And I felt as if I should kneel, humble and penitent, on the spot where the poor childless father had knelt.

But now a brisker air brought to my ears a burst of gladsome music; it came like the breath of flowers across the frozen plain, horns and trumpets on the church tower, sending their cheering harmonies over the sleeping earth, ushering, with glad vigorous tones, the first hour of the new year in to a world of anxious, doubting men. And I too grew glad and strong; I raised my glance from the white shroud of the coming spring, and gazed at the moon; and on these spots on her face (these spots which grow green as you approach) I saw our earthly spring reposing upon flowers, and already moving his young wings, soon to take his flight with other birds of passage, and, bright with glittering plumes, and hailed by skylarks' anthems, come and alight upon our shores.

The distant new year's music flowed around me still I felt much happier, and far more tender; I saw the *coming* sorrows in the new born year, but they wore such lovely masks that they were more like sorrows that are *past*, or like the music around me—just as the rain which falls through the great caverns in the Derbyshire hills sounds in the distance like music.

But when I looked around me, and saw the white earth shining like a white sun, and the silent deep blue sphere all round, like a household circle of one great family—and as the music, like lovelier sighs, accompanied my thoughts—as I fixed my gaze, with grateful heart, upon the starry sky where all these thousands of stedfast witnesses of the beautiful moments (moments faded, out of bloom, indeed, now—but the great Beneficence spreads their *seed* for evermore)—when I thought of the men asleep all around me, and wished that they might all be happier when they opened their eyes in the morning—and when I thought of those awake UNDER me, whose slumbering souls stood in need of such a wish,—my heart, oppressed by the music, and by the night, grew heavy and grew full, and the blue sky, the glittering moon, and the sparkling snow-height all melted into one great floating shimmer.

And in the shimmer, and amid the music, I heard voices of my friends, and dear fellow-creatures, tenderly and anxiously wishing their new year's wishes. They touched my heart so deeply, that I could but barely *think* my own—

"Oh! may you all be happy *all* the years of your lives."

END OF BOOK I.

Preface To The Second, Third, And Fourth Books

It has often been a source of much annoyance to me that to every preface I write I am obliged to append a book—like the endorsement on a bill of exchange—or an appendix to letters A to Z. Many a man who dabbles in authorship by way of amusement has his books sent to him all ready written and complete, straight from the cradle; so that all he has to do is to attach his gold frontlets of prefaces to their foreheads—which is nothing but painting the *corona* about the sun. As yet, however, not a single author has applied to me for a preamble to a book, although for several years I have had a considerable number of prefaces by me (all ready beforehand, and going at great bargains), in which I extol to the best of my ability works which have not as yet come in to being. In fact, I have now a perfect museum of these prize medals and commemoration medals of other people's cleverness at the service of anyone who may stand in need of them; they are all made by the very finest of mint-machinery, and my collection of them is increasing day by day; so that I shall be obliged to sell it off wholesale before very long (I don't see what else I can do), and bring out a book—consisting of nothing but pre-existent prefaces.

They will still be obtainable singly, however, until the Easter fair, and authors who make early application can have the entire fascicle of preludes forwarded to them, so that they can pick out for themselves whichever preface seems to them the most laudatory of a book. After the Easter fair however, when the Book of Prefaces above mentioned comes out (and it will be interleaved with the fair catalogue), the literary world will only be beglorified in *corpore*, in *coro*, and I shall be (so to speak) making a present of a patent of nobility to the republic of letters in the lump,—as the Empress Queen did in 1775 to the whole mercantile community of Vienna; although I have before my eyes (in the shape of the poor reviewers who work themselves well nigh to death, hammering and building away at the temple of fame, and at triumphal arches) the melancholy proof that though a man were to extol the republic of letters even in six volumes folio, he would get less for it than Sannazaro did for belauding the republic of Venice in as many lines—for each line in the latter case brought the poet in a matter of a hundred five-dollar pieces.

I propose to interstratify one of the prefaces in question in this place by way of a specimen and experiment, making as if its celebrated author had written it to order for this book (which is the actual truth, moreover). There is no difficulty in my splitting myself up into two characters, the flower painter and the preface maker. But,—as one cannot *quite* lose sight of feelings of becoming modesty—I carefully pick out the most miserable specimen of the lot, one in which laudation occurs but to a very moderate extent, one which places the author of the book attached to it upon a funeral car, rather than upon a triumphal one, with nothing whatever to draw it along moreover; whereas the other prefaces harness posterity to them, and the reading public are, by *them*, yoked on to the heavenly chariot, the Elijah's chariot, of Immortality, in which they draw the author along.

In conclusion, then, I have only to observe that the celebrated author of ‘Hesperus’ has been kind enough to look through my Flower-pieces, and contribute to them the following preface, which will be found well worthy of perusal.

Preface, By The Author Of 'Hesperus'

The following remarks may be thrown into the form of a series of postulates, which are, at the same time, so many similes.

Many authors (Young is an instance) set fire to their nerve-spirit, which, like burning spirit of another kind (brandy), tinges every person who stands round the inkbottle where it is flaring with a sham DEADLY pallor. But, unfortunately, each looks only at the others, none looks into the mirror. The effect of the proximity of this universal mortality all about, upon people and authors, is that each is impressed with a livelier sense of the exceptional nature of his own *im*mortality; and this is remarkably comforting to us all.

The consequence is, as it seems to me, very plain. Poets, living in fifth, or fiftieth floors, may make poems, but not marriages; neither may they keep, nor establish, houses. Canaries' breeding cages have to be more roomy than their singing cages.

If this be so, then, what does the author's pen do? Like a child's, it traces in ink the characters which nature has faintly marked in the reader with pencil.

The author's strings only vibrate in unison with the reader's octaves, fifths, fourths, and thirds—not with his seconds or sevenths. Unsympathetic readers do not become sympathetic ones; it is only the cognate, or congruent, sort which rise to the author's level or pass beyond it.

And with this stands or falls my fourth postulate. The iron shoe of Pegasus is the armature of the magnet of truth, increasing its power of attraction; yet we are hungry birds, and fly at the poet's grapes as though they were real ones, thinking the *boy* a painted one, when we really ought to be frightened at *him*.

The transition from this to the fifth postulate is a self-evident matter. Man has such a high opinion of everything in the shape of antiquity, that he prolongs it, and keeps it alive, and lives according to it, though it be but the cover and the mask of the very poison which will destroy itself. There are two proofs of this proposition which I leave aside, of set purpose; the first is, Religion, which is all gnawed to worm dust; the second, Freedom, which is quite as much crumbled to powder as the other. In my capacity of a member of the Lutheran Church, I merely glance at the subject of relics (in support of the proposition)—relics, in the case of which, as Vasquez the Jesuit informs us, if they chance to be entirely eaten up of worms, we must continue to worship what remains—that is to say, the worms which have eaten them. Wherefore, meddle not with that nest of worms, the time in which thou livest, or it will eat thee up; a million of worms are quite equal to one dragon.

This must be admitted and assumed, at least if my sixth postulate is to have any sense in it which is,—that no man is wholly indifferent to, and unaffected by, *every* kind of truth; indeed even if it be only to poetical *reflections* (illusions) that he swears allegiance—inasmuch as he does even *that* he thereby does homage to truth; for in all poetry it is but the part which is *true* which goes to the heart (or head), just as in our passions and emotions nothing but the Moral produces effect. A reflection which should be nothing whatever *but* a reflection would necessarily, for that very reason, not *be* a reflection. Every *semblance* (meaning every thing which we *see*, or

suppose we *see*) presupposes the existence of *light* somewhere, and *is* itself light, only in an enfeebled or reflected condition. Only, most people in our, not so much *enlightened* as *enlightening* times, are like nocturnal insects who avoid, or are pained by, the light of day, but, in the night, fly to every *nocturnal* light, every phosphorescent surface.

The graves of the best men are like those of the Moravians, level and flat, and this earthly sphere of ours is a Westminster Abbey of such levellings and flattenings—ah! what innumerable drops of tears as well as blood (which are what the three grand trees of this world—the trees of Life, of Knowledge, and Liberty—are watered with) have been shed, but never counted. History, in painting the human race, does not follow the example of that painter who, making a portrait of a one-eyed king, drew only his seeing profile; what history paints is the blind side, and it needs some grand calamity to bring great men to light—as comets are seen during total eclipses of the sun. Not upon the battle-field only—upon the holy ground of virtue also, and upon the classic soil of truth—the pedestal whereon history raises on high some *single* hero whose name rings in all men's ears has to be composed and built up of thousands of *other* heroes who have fought and fallen, nameless and unknown. The noblest deeds of heroism are done within four walls, not before the public gaze,—and as history keeps record only of the *men* sacrificed, and, on the whole, writes only in spilt blood, doubtless our annals are grander and more beautiful in the eyes of the all-pervading spirit of the universe than in those of the history-writer; the great scenes of history are estimated according to the numbers of angels or devils on the stage, the *men* not being taken into account.

These are the grounds on which I rely when I assert with a good deal of boldness that when we inhale the perfume of the full-blown blossoms of joy with too deep and strong an inhalation, without having first given them a good shake, we run the risk of snuffing up some tormenting insect (before we know what we are about) through the ethmoid into the brain;[34] and *who*—tell me if you can—is to get it out again? Whereas little or nothing of a risky sort can be snuffed up out of *Flower-pieces*, and their painted calices, since painted worms remain where they are.

This, then, is what *I* have to postulate by means of similes. What the *public* postulates, or demands, is my opinion of these Flower-pieces. The author is a promising youth of five years of age;[35] he and I have been friends since childhood, and, I think, can assert that we have but one soul between us, as Aristotle says should be the case with friends. He gets me to read over everything he thinks of publishing, and to give him my opinion and advice. And, as I returned these Flower-pieces to him with the warmest (and, at the same time, sincerest) expression of my approval, he has requested me to make my verdict somewhat more widely known, believing as he does (rather too flatteringly perhaps) that it may carry a certain amount of weight with it, more especially as it is an impartial verdict, and, as such, one which can be placed in the hands of the critics as a species of ruler wherewith to draw the lines upon which *their* verdicts may be written.

In this, however, he goes a little too far. All I can say is that the work is written quite as if I had done it myself. There is no greater amount of dynamic ornamentation in it

[34] In the 3rd part of the Lichtenberg Philosophical Magazine,' the case is mentioned of a woman, who, while smelling at a flower, inhaled a worm into her brain, which tormented her with delirium, headache, &c., till it came out at her nose again, still alive.

[35] Voltaire proves that a person who is 23 years old, has only lived 3½ years in the proper sense of the word.

than is usual in books, and, happy as the author would have been to have thundered, stormed, and poured in it, there was of course no room in a parish advocate's lodgings for Rhine cataracts, thunderstorms, tropical hurricanes (of tropes) or waterspouts, and he has had to reserve his more terrific tornadoes for a future work. I have his permission to mention the name of this future work; it is the 'Titan.' In this work he means to be an absolute Hecla, and shatter the ice of his country (and himself into the bargain) to pieces; like the volcanoes in Iceland, he will spout up a column of boiling water four feet in diameter to a height of eighty-nine or ninety feet in the air, and that at such a temperature that when this wet fire pillar falls down again and flows into the book shops, it will still be warm enough to boil eggs hard or their mother soft. "Then" (he always says—very sadly however—because he sees what a hard matter it is to distinguish between full half of our battling and harrying here below and a Jack Pudding farce and piece of utter buffoonery and nonsense,—also, that the cradle of this life *rocks* us, and *stills* us indeed, but carries us not a step on our way)—"then may the *Arbor Toxicaria Macassariensis*[36] of the Ideal, beneath which I have lost a little hair already, go on poisoning me, and dispatch me to the Land of the Ideal. At all events, I have knelt down and prayed under the solemnising soul-elevating sighing roar of its death-dealing branches. And why should there be a hut made ready for the traveller beside the eternal well of truth, marked with the title 'Travellers' REST,' if no one ever enters it?" He wants, by way of broad "flies" for his life stage on earth, merely a regular, downright, *rainy year* or two (two will suffice); for a broad, bright, open sky overpowers us, and weakens the hand's pen power by making the eyes over full. And here the book-maker differs markedly from his provision-contractor, the papermaker, who shuts *his* mill up precisely when the weather is *wet*.

I should also be glad if readers would have the goodness to go once more through the few chapters composing the first book—that they may see what they really lack; and indeed a book which is not worth reading twice is not worth reading once.

In conclusion, I (albeit the most inconsiderable clubbist and vote-possessor of all the public) would fain incite the author to the production of other seedlings, suckers, and infantas of the same stamp, trusting that the reading world may form its opinion on his work with the same careful favour and indulgent approval as I have formed mine.

Jean Paul Fr. Richter.

Hof in Voigtland,
June 5th, 1796.

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Thus far my friend's preface. Utterly absurd as it is, my own preface, you see, has got to be concluded too, and at the end of it I can but sign myself as my aforesaid man Friday and namesake does, videlicet,

Jean Paul Fr. Richter.

Hof in Voigtland,
June 5th, 1796.

[36] The poisonous Boa Upas, beneath which one loses one's hair in a few minutes.

Book II

Chapter V

THE BROOM AND THE BESOM AS PASSION IMPLEMENTS—THE IMPORTANCE OF A BOOKWRITER—DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS ON THE SUBJECT OF CANDLE SNUFFING—THE PEWTER CUPBOARD—DOMESTIC HARDSHIPS AND ENJOYMENTS.

Catholics hold that there were fifteen mysteries in the life of Christ—five of Joy, five of Woe, five of Glory. I have carefully accompanied our hero through the five joyful mysteries of which the Linden honey-month of his marriage has had to tell. I now come with him to the five mysteries of Woe with which the series of the mysteries of most marriages is—concluded. I trust, however, that his may yet be found to contain the five of Glory also.

In my first edition, I began this book of my hero's story in an unconcerned manner, with the above sentence just as if it were literally correct. A second, and carefully revised edition, however, renders it incumbent upon me to add, as an emendation, that the fifteen mysteries in question do not come one after another, like steps of stairs, or ancestors in a pedigree, but are shuffled up together like good and bad cards in a hand. Yet, in spite of this shuffling, the joy outbalances the sorrow, at any rate in its duration, as has been the case, indeed, with this terrestrial globe, our planet itself, which has survived several last days, and as a consequence still more springs, that is to say, re-creations on a smaller scale. I mention all this to save a number of poor devils of readers from the dreadful thought that they have got to wade through a whole "Book II." full of tears, partly to be read about, partly to be shed out of compassion. I am not one of those authors who, like very rattlesnakes, can sit and gaze upon thousands of charmed people running up and down, a prey to every kind of agitation, suspense, and anxiety, till his time comes to spring upon them and swallow them up.

When Siebenkæs awoke in the morning, he at once packed the devil of jealousy, the marriage devil, off to the place where all other devils dwell. For a calming sleep lowers the pulse of the soul's fever—the grains thereof are fever-bark for the cold fever of hate, and also for the hot fever of love. Indeed he put down the tracing board, and with a pantograph made a correct, reduced copy of his yesterday's free translation of the Engelkrautian countenance, and blackened it nicely. When it was done, he said to his wife, for very love of her, "We'll send him the profile this morning, at once. It may be a good long while before he comes to fetch it." "Oh yes! he won't be here till Wednesday, and by that time he'll have forgotten all about it." "But I could bring him here sooner than that," Siebenkæs answered; "I need only send him the Russian Trinity dollar of 1679 to get changed for me; he won't *send* me a farthing of the money he'll bring it himself as he always has done all through Leibgeber's collection." "Or you might send him the dollar and the picture both," said Lenette, "he would like it better." "Which would he like better?" he asked. She didn't see exactly what answer to make to this ridiculous question (whether she meant the stamped face or the pictured one) sprung upon her like a mine in this sort of way, and got out of her difficulty by saying, "Well, *the things*, of course." He spared her any further catechising.

The Schulrath, however, sent nothing but an answer to the effect that he was beside himself with delight at the charming presents, and would come to express his thanks

in person, and to settle up with the advocate, by the end of the following week at latest. The little dash of bitter flavour which was perceptible to the taste in this unexpected answer of the too happy Schulrath, was by no means sweetened away by the arrival at this moment of the messenger of the Inheritance Office, with Heimlicher von Blaise's first proceedings in the matter of the plaint lodged against him, consisting of a petition for three weeks' grace within which to lodge answers, a delay which the Court had readily accorded. Siebenkæs, as his own poor's advocate, lived in the sure and certain hope that the promised land of inheritance, flowing with milk and honey, would be reached by his children, though *he* would in all probability have long ere that time perched in the wilderness of the law; for justice is given to recompensing the children, and the children's children, for the uprightness of the fathers, and for the goodness of their cause. It was more or less in convenient, at the same time, to have nothing to live upon during one's own lifetime. The Russian Trinity dollar—for which the Schulrath hadn't even paid as yet—couldn't be lived upon, and there were but one or two queue ducats remaining of the treasury chest provided by Leibgeber, for the carrying on of operations against the Heimlicher. This gold coin and those few silver ones were (although I have said nothing about it till now) the entire money contents remaining in the Leibgeberian saviour's scrip, and indeed none but a true disciple and follower of the Saviour could be expected to hold out upon them. My silence on this matter of the emptying of the coin cabinet may perhaps be accepted in evidence of the fact that I try as much as I can to avoid mentioning anything calculated to give my readers pain.

"Oh! I shall get on somehow or other," said Siebenkæs quite gleefully, as he set to work harder than ever at his writing, with the view of getting a considerable haul of money into the house, at the earliest moment possible, in the shape of payment for his 'Selection from the Devil's Papers.'

But there was a fresh purgatorial fire now being stoked and blown, till it blazed hotter and hotter about him. I have refrained from saying anything about the fire in question till now, though he has been sitting roasting at it since the day before yesterday, Lenette being the cook, and his writing table the larkspit.

During the few days when the wordless quarrel was going on, he had got into a habit of listening with the closest attention to what Lenette was doing, as he sat writing away at his 'Selection from the Devil's Papers'; and this sent his ideas all astray. The softest step, the very slightest shake of anything affected him just as if he had had hydrophobia, or the gout, and put one or two fine young ideas to death, as a louder noise kills young canaries, or silkworms.

He controlled himself very well at first. He pointed out to himself that his wife really could *not* help moving about, and that as long as she hadn't a spiritual or glorified body and furniture to deal with, she couldn't possibly go about as silently as a sunbeam, or as her invisible good and evil angels behind her. But while he was listening to this *cours de morale*, this *collegium pietatis* of his own, he lost the run of his satirical conceits and contexts, and his language was deprived of a good deal of its sparkle.

But the morning after the silhouette evening, when their hearts had shaken hands and renewed the old royal alliance of Love, he could go much more openly to work, and so, as soon as he had blackened the profile, and had only his own original creations to go on blackening—*i. e.* when he was going to begin working in his own charcoal burning hut, he said to his wife, as a preliminary—

"If you can help it, Lenette, don't make very much noise to-day. I really can hardly get on with my writing, if you do—you know it's for publication."

She said "I'm sure you can't hear me—I go about so very quietly."

Although a man may be long past the years of his youthful follies, yet in every year of his life there crop up a few weeks and days in which he has fresh follies to commit. It was truly in a moment of one of these days that Siebenkæs made the request above mentioned; for he had now laid upon himself the necessity of lying in wait and watching to see what Lenette would do in consequence of it. She skimmed over the floor, and athwart the various webs of her household labours, with the tread of a spider. Like her sex in general, she had disputed his little point, merely for the sake of disputing it, not of doing what she was asked not to do. Siebenkæs had to keep his ears very much on the alert to hear what little noise she did make, either with her hands or her feet—but he was successful, and did hear the greater part of it. Unless when we are asleep we are more attentive to a slight noise than to a loud one; and our author listened to her wherever she went, his ear and his attention going about fixed to her like a pedometer wherever she moved. In short he had to break off in the middle of the satire, called "The Nobleman with the Ague," and jump up and cry to her (as she went creeping about), "For one whole hour have I been listening and watching that dreadful tripping about on tiptoe. I had much rather you would stamp about in a pair of the iron-soled sandals people used to wear for beating time in.[37] Please go about as you usually do, darling."

She complied, and went about *almost* as she usually did. He would have very much liked to have prohibited the intermediate style of walking, as he had the light and the heavy; but a husband doesn't care to contradict himself twice in one morning; once is enough. In the evening he asked her if she would mind going about the house in her stockings when he was at work at his writing. She would find it nice and cool for the feet. "In fact," he added, "as I'm working all the forenoon literally for our bread, it would be well if you would do nothing that isn't absolutely necessary while I am at my literary work."

Next morning he sat in judgment (mentally) upon everything that went on behind his back, and challenged it to see if it could produce the free-pass of necessity—going on with his writing all the time, but doing it worse than usual. This scribbling martyr endured a great many things with as much patience as he could muster, but when Wendeline took to whisking the straw under the green painted marriage TORUS with a long broom, the cross grew too heavy for his shoulder. It happened, moreover, that he had been reading two days before in an old Ephemeris of scientific inquirers, that a clergyman, of the name of Johann Pechmann, couldn't bear the sound of a besom—that it nearly took his breath away, and that he once took to his heels and bolted when a crossing sweeper accidentally ran against him. The effect of his having read this was, that he was involuntarily more observant and intolerant of a cognate discomfort. He called out to the domestic sweeper in the next room, from his chair where he sat—

"Lenette, do *not* go on scrubbing and switching about with that besom of yours, it drives away the whole of my best ideas out of my head. There was an old clergyman once of the name of Pechmann, who would rather have been condemned to sweep a crossing in Vienna himself, than to listen to another sweeping it—he would rather have been flogged with a birch-broom, than have heard the infernal sound of it

[37] The musicians among the ancients wore them. Bartholin de Tib. Vet. iii. 4.

swishing and whishing. How is a man to get a coherent idea, fit to go to the printer and publisher, into his head with all this sweeping and scrubbing going on?"

Lenette did what every good wife, and her lap dog, would have done; she left off the noise by degrees. At last she laid down the besom, and merely whisked three straws and a little feather fluff gently with the hair-broom, from under the bed, not making as much noise even as he did with his writing. However the editor of the 'Devil's Papers' managed to hear it, in a manner beyond his fondest hopes. He rose up, went to the bedroom door and called in at the room, "My darling, it's every bit as hellish a torment to me if I can hear it *at all*. You may fan those miserable sweepings with a peacock's feather, or a holy-water asperger, or you may puff them away with a pair of bellows, but I and my poor book must suffer and pay the piper all the same."

"I'm quite done now, at all events," she said.

He set to work again, and gaily took up the threads of his fourth satire, "Concerning the five Monsters and their receptacles, whereon I at first intended to subsist."

Meanwhile Lenette gently closed the door, so that he was driven to the conclusion that there was something or other going on to annoy him again in his Gehenna and place of penitence. He laid down his pen and cried—

"Lenette, I can't hear very distinctly what it is—but you're up to something or other in there that I can *not* stand. For God's dear sake, stop it at once, do put a period to my martyrdom and sorrows of Werther, for this one day—come here, let me see you."

She answered, all out of breath with hard work—

"I'm not doing anything."

He got up and opened the door of his chamber of torture. There was his wife rubbing away with a piece of grey flannel, polishing up the green rails of the bed. The author of this history once lay sick of smallpox in a bed of this kind, and knows them well. But the reader may not be aware that a green slumber cage of this kind is a good deal like a magnified canaries' breeding cage with its latticed folding doors or portcullises, and that this trellis and hothouse for dreams is, though less handsome in appearance, much better for health than our heavy bastille towers all hung about with curtains which keep away every breath of fresh air. The advocate swallowed about half a pint of bedroom air, and said, in measured accents—

"You're at your brushing and sweeping again, are you? although you know quite well that I'm sitting there working like a slave for you and myself too, and that I've been writing away for the last hour with scarcely an idea in my head. Oh! my heavenly better half! out with all your cartridges at one shot, for God's sake, and don't finish me off altogether with that rag of yours."

Lenette, full of astonishment said, "It's simply impossible, old man. that you can hear me in the next room"—and polished away harder than ever. He took her hand, somewhat hastily, though not roughly, and said in a louder tone, "Come, get up!—It's exactly that which I complain of, that I *can't* hear you in the next room; I'm obliged to rack my brains to guess what you're at—and the only ideas left in my head are connected with brushing and scrubbing, so that all the brilliant notions which I might otherwise be putting down on paper are driven away. My darling child, nobody could possibly sit and work away here more composedly and contentedly than I, if it were only grape-shot and canister, howitzer shells, and hundred-pounders that you

were banging away with at my back out of these embrasures of yours. What it is that I really can *not* stand, is a *quiet* noise."

All this talk having put him a little out of temper, he fetched her out of the room, rag and all, saying—

"It does seem a little hard that, while I'm labouring away here with all my might, working myself almost to death, to provide a little entertainment for the reading public, a regular bear-baiting pit should be started in my own room, and that an author's very bed should be turned into a siege-trench, and arrows and fire-balls sent about his ears out of it. There, I shan't be writing while we're at dinner, I'll talk the thing out at full length with you then."

At noon, then,[38] as he was about to enter on the subject of the morning's tourney, he had first to hold a prayer-tourney. I mean this: "prayers" do not, in Nürnberg and Kuhschnappel, mean a certain hereditary office and service of mass in a court chapel, but—the ringing of the twelve o'clock bell. Now the dining-table of our couple stood against the wall, and was not put in the middle of the floor except for meals. Well, Siebenkæs never succeeded above twice during his married life in having this table brought forward BEFORE the soup came in (for if a woman ONCE forgets a thing, she goes on forgetting it a thousand times running[39]), though he preached his lungs as dry as a fox's (which are used for curing ours); both soup and table were always moved together, after the soup came in, without the spilling of a greater quantity of the latter than one might have used in swallowing a pill.

To-day this was the case as usual. Siebenkæs slowly chewed the pill which he swallowed with the soup. The delay in moving the table he observed anxiously (as if it had been a delay in the arrival of an equinox), with a long face and slow breathing, and when the soup-libation was duly poured as usual, he broke out as follows, in a calm tone of voice, however—

"The fact is, Lenette, we are on board a good ship. At sea, you know, people spill their soup because their vessel rolls and pitches—and ours is spilt for a similar reason. See here, the dinner-table and the morning besom are both in a tale together; they are two conspirators who will blow out your husband's candle—to use a strong expression—before they have done."

This, the exordium of his sermon, was followed by way of hymn, by the arrival of the town fool of Kuhschnappel, who brought in a great sheet of paper containing an invitation to the shooting match on St. Andrew's Day, the 30th of November. Every one of us must, I am sure, have gathered from what has already been said that the only money left in the house was the queue-ducat. At the same time, Siebenkæs couldn't leave the shooting-club, without thereby granting to himself a certificate of poverty, a *testimonium paupertatis*, in the face of the whole town. And really a shooting-ticket for this match was almost as good as mining shares or East India stock to a man who was as good a shot as Siebenkæs. It would also give him an opportunity of doing that public honour to his wife which she, as a senate clerk's daughter from Augspurg, had a right to expect. Unfortunately, however, the grave

[38] The common German dinner-time then.—Translator.

[39] So do men forget it, though in a lesser degree. Suppose a man who does ninety things every day, accurately remembering them, should once or twice forget a ninety-first thing, he'll go on forgetting that afterwards, though he remembers all the rest. There's no remedy for this unless some person happens to come in, or something chances to occur just at the instant of forgetting, and recalls the ninety-first thing to his mind. If he once forgets to forget, he won't forget any more.

man of folly couldn't be got to give change for the curious queue-ducat, particularly as Siebenkæs aroused his suspicions with respect to it himself, by saying. "This is a very good tail or queue-ducat, I assure you. I don't wear a tail myself," he added, "but that's no reason why a ducat shouldn't, if the King of Prussia chooses to immortalise his own by having it stamped upon it. Wife, would you get our landlord, the hairdresser, to come up; nobody can know better than he whether it's a queue-ducat or not, seeing he has queues (not upon ducats) in his hands every day." The pickle-herring of Kuhschnappel didn't vouchsafe the ghost of a smile at this. The hairdresser came, and declared it to be a queue, and civilly took it away himself to get it changed. Hairdressers can run; in five minutes he brought the change for the ducat.

When the melancholy buffoon had pocketed his portion of it, Lenette's face was all over double interjections and marks of interrogation; wherefore Siebenkæs resumed his midday sermon. "The principal prizes," he said, "are pewter dishes and sums of money for hitting the bird, and mostly provisions for the other marks we shoot at. I suspect that you and I shall dine on St. Andrew's Day upon a nice piece of roast meat in a new dish, both of which I shall have shot into your kitchen, if I only take a little pains. And at all events don't worry yourself, darling, because our money's nearly all gone. Take refuge behind me. I am your sandbag, your gabion, your shelter trench, and with my rifle, more certainly still with my pen, I feel pretty sure I shall keep the devil of poverty at his distance, till my precious guardian hands over my mother's property. Only for God's sake don't let *your* work interrupt *mine*. Your rag and your besom have cost me at least sixteen currency dollars this morning. For supposing I get eight imperial dollars a printed sheet for my Devilish Papers (counting the imperial dollar at ninety kreuzer)—and I ought, to get more—I should have earned forty-eight currency dollars this morning if I had written a (printed) sheet and a half. But you see I had to stop in the middle of it and expend a great many words upon you, for none of which I get a single kreuzer. You should look upon me as a fat old spider stowed away in a box to shrivel up in time into a precious gold nugget or jewel. Whenever I take a dip of ink I draw a thread of gold out of the ink bottle, as I've often told you, and (as the proverb says) the morning hours have gold in their mouths (Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund). Go on with your dinner, and listen. I'll just take this opportunity of explaining to you the principal points in which the preciousness of an author consists, and so give you the key to a good many things. In Swabia, in Saxony, and Pomerania, there are towns in which there are people who appraise authors as our master butcher here does beef. They are usually known by the name of tasters or rulers of taste, because they try the flavour of every book as it comes out, and then tell the people whether they'll like it or not. We authors in our irritation often call these people critics, but they might bring an action against us for libel for so doing. Now as these directors of taste seldom write books themselves, they have all the more time to read and find fault with other people's. Yet it does sometimes happen that some of them have written bad books themselves, and consequently know a bad book in a moment when they come across one. Many become patron saints of authors and of their books for the same reason that St. John Nepomuck became the patron saint of bridges and those who cross them; because he was once thrown off one into the water. Now these scribblings of mine will be sent to these gentlemen as soon as they are in print (as your hymn-book is). And they'll peer all through my productions to see whether or not I've written them quite legibly and distinctly (not too large or too small), whether I've put any wrong letters, a little e for a big, or an f instead of a ph, whether the hyphen-strokes are too long or too short,

and all that sort of thing: indeed they often even give opinions about the thoughts in the book (which they have nothing to do with). Now you see, if you go on scrubbing and swishing about with besoms behind me, I shall keep writing all sorts of stuff and nonsense, and it'll all be printed. Of course that's a terrible thing to happen to a man, for these tasters tear great frightful holes and wounds in the paper however fine it is, with nails as long as fingers (buttonmakers' nails are shorter, but not circumcisers' among the Jews), before they give it a name to carry about with it, as the circumcisers do to the Jew boys. And after this, they circulate a slip of unsized paper, in which they find fault with me, and give me a bad name, all over the empire, in Saxony and Pomerania, and tell all Swabia in so many plain words that I'm an ass. May the devil confound their impertinence! This is the sort of birching, you see, that besom of yours will be getting me in for. Whereas, if I write beautifully and legibly, and with proper attention and ability—and every sheet of my Devilish Papers is so written—if I carefully weigh and consider every word and every page before I write it, if I am playful in one place, instructive in another, pleasing in all,—in that case I am bound to tell you, Lenette, that the tasters are people who are quite capable of appreciating work of that sort, and would think nothing of sitting down and circulating papers in which the least they would say of me would be that I had certainly brought something away from college in my head, and had a little to show for my studies. In short, they would say, they hadn't expected it of me, and there was really something *in me*. Now a panegyric of this kind upon a husband is reflected, of course, upon his wife, and when the Augspurg people are all asking 'Where does he live, this Siebenkæs whom everybody's talking of?' there are sure to be lots of folks in the Fuggery to answer, 'Oh! he lives in Kuhschnappel, his wife was a daughter of Engelkraut, the senate clerk, and a very good wife she is to him.'"

"You've told me all that about bookmaking hundreds of times," she answered. "And it's just what the bookbinder says too; and I am sure *he* has all the best books through his hands, binding them."

This allusion to his repetitions of himself, though not meant ill-temperedly, he didn't very much relish. In fact, the habit had hitherto been, as it were, incubating unperceived in him, as a fever does in its early stage. Husbands, even those who are sage and of few words, talk to their wives with the same boundless liberty and unrestraint as they do to their own selves; and a man repeats himself *to* himself immeasurably oftener than to anybody else, and that without so much as observing that he does it, let alone taking any count of how often. The wife, however, both observes and counts; accustomed as she is to hear the cleverest (and most unintelligible) remarks from her husband's lips daily, she can't help remembering them when they occur again.

The hairdresser reappeared unexpectedly, bringing a fleeting cloud with him. He said he had been to all the poor devils in the house to see if he could get as much of the Martinmas rent out of them in advance as would pay his subscription to the shooting match, but that they were a set of church mice and he hadn't succeeded. The whole garrison of them were naturally unequal to the payment of an impost of this description six whole weeks before it was due, inasmuch as the majority of them didn't see how they were to pay it when it *was* due. So the Saxon came to the grandee of his house, to the "Lord of Ducats" as he styled the advocate. Siebenkæs couldn't find in his heart to disappoint the patient soul with another "no" on the top of those he had borne so good-humouredly; his wife and he scraped together the little small change they had left out of the ducat, and sent him away rejoicing with half of the

rent, three gulden. All they had left for themselves was—the question what they should do for light in the evening; for there weren't even a couple of groschen in the house to get half a pound of candles, and there were no candles *in natura*.

I cannot say that he here turned deadly pale, or fainted, or began to rave. Praise be to every manly soul who has drunk the icy whey of stoicism for only half a spring, and does not fall down paralysed and frozen, like a woman, before the chill spectre of penury. In an age which has had all its strongest sinews cut through except the universal one, money, any diatribe, even the most extravagant, against riches, is nobler and more useful than the most accurately just depreciation of poverty. For pasquinades on gold dirt are agreeable to the rich, reminding them that though their riches may take to themselves wings, true happiness does not depend thereon; while the poor derive from them not bitterer feeling merely, but also the sweeter satisfaction of conquering the same. All that is base in man—thoughts, fancies, what we look on as being examples—all join in one chorus in praise of gold; why should we desire to deprive poverty of her true reserve force, her *chevaliers d'honneur*, philosophy and beggars' pride?

The first thing Siebenkæs opened was not his mouth, but the door, and then the pewter cupboard in the kitchen, from which he carefully and with a good deal of gravity took down a bell-shaped tureen and three pewter plates, and put them on a chair. Lenette could no longer stand by in silence; she clasped her hands and said in a faint voice of shame, "Merciful Providence! is it come to selling our dishes?"

"I'm only going to turn them into silver," he said; "as kings make church bells into dollars, so shall we make our bell-dishes into coin. There's nothing you need be ashamed about in converting trash of table ware, the coffins of beasts, into currency, when Duke Christian of Brunswick turned a king's silver coffin into dollars in 1662. Is a plate an apostle, do you think? Great monarchs have taken many an apostle, if he happened to be a silver one, Hugo of St. Caro and others as well, divided them (as it were) into chapters, verses, and legends, sent them to the mint, and then dispatched them off all over the world in that analysed form."

"Ah! stupid nonsense," she answered.

Some few readers will probably say "What else was it?" and I ought long ago to have apologized, perhaps, for the style of speech, so incomprehensible to Lenette, which the advocate makes use of.

He justified it satisfactorily to himself by the consideration that his wife always had some DISTANT idea of what he was talking about, even when he made use of the most learned technical expressions, and the farthest-fetched plays upon words, because of its being good practice, and of his liking to hear himself do it. "Women," he would repeat, "have a distant and dim comprehension of all these things, and therefore don't waste, in long tedious efforts to discover the precise signification of these unintelligibilities, precious time which might be better employed." This, I may observe, is not much encouragement for Reinhold's 'Lexicon to Jean Paul's Levana,' nor for me personally either, in some senses.

"Ah! stuff and nonsense" had been Lenette's answer. Firmian merely asked her to bring the pewter into the sitting-room, and he would talk the matter over sensibly. But he might as well have set forth his reasons before a woman's skin stuffed with straw. What she chiefly blamed him for, was that by his contribution to the shooting-club purse he had emptied hers. And thus she herself suggested to him the best answer he could have made. He said, "It was an angel that put it in my head; because

on St. Andrew's Day I shall regain everything that I turn into silver now, and repewterise it immediately. To please you, I shall keep not only the tureen and the plates I get as prizes, but all the rest of the pewter ware, and put it all into your cupboard. I assure you I had made up my mind before to sell all my prizes."

What was to be done, then? There was no help for it. This banished and expatriated table ware was lowered in the darkness of evening into old Sabel's basket—and she was celebrated all over the town for transacting this sort of commission agency or transfer business, with as discreet a silence as if she were dealing in stolen gold. "Nobody gets it out of *me*," she would say, "whose the things are. The treasurer, who's dead and gone poor man—you know I sold everything he had in the world for him—he often used to say there was never the equal of me."

But, my poor dear young couple, I fear this Sabbath[40] or "Descent of the Saviour into Hades" is but little likely to help you long, in that antechamber of hell which you've got into. The flames are gone from about you to-day, certainly, and a cool sea-breeze is refreshing you, but tomorrow and the day after the old smoke and the old fire will be blazing at your hearts! However, I don't want to put any restrictions upon your trade in tin. We're quite right to have a good dinner to-day though we know perfectly well we shall be just every bit as hungry to-morrow again.

So the next morning Siebenkæs begged that he might be allowed to be all the quieter that day because he had been obliged to talk so much the day before. Our dear Lenette, who was a live washing-machine and scouring-mill, and in whose eyes the washing bill and the bill of fare had much of the weight of a confessor's certificate, would sooner have let go her hold of everything in the world—her husband included—than of the duster and the besom. She thought this was merely *his* obstinate persistency, whereas it was really her own, in blowing the organ bellows and thundering away upon her pedal reed stops right behind her author's back during the morning hours, whose mouths had two kinds of gold in them for *him*, namely gold from the golden age, and ordinary metallic gold. She might have played with a thirty-two feet stop out in the afternoon as long as she liked, but she wasn't to be got out of her usual daily routine. A woman is the most heterogeneous compound of obstinate will and self-sacrifice that I have ever met with; she would let her head be cut off by the headsman of Paris for her husband's sake, very likely, but not a single hair of it. And she can deny herself to almost any extent for others' good, but not one bit for her own. She can forego sleep for three nights running for a sick person, but not one minute of a nap before bed-time, to ensure herself a better night's sleep in bed. Neither the souls of the blest, nor butterflies, though neither of them possess stomachs, can eat less than a woman going to a ball or to her wedding, or than one cooking for her guests; but if it's only her doctor and her own health that forbid her some Esau's mess or other, she eats it that instant. Now men's sacrifices are all just turned the opposite way.

Lenette, impelled by two imposing forces, what she was asked to do and what she wanted to do, tried to find the feminine line of the resultant, and hit upon the middle course of stopping her scouring and sweeping as long as he was sitting at his writing. But the moment he got up, and went to the piano for a couple of minutes, or to the window, or across the doorstep, that instant back she would bring her washing and scrubbing instruments of torture into the room again. Siebenkæs wasn't long in

[40] According to the Rabbin, the pains of the damned are intermitted on the Sabbath; the Christians hold that the same was the case during the descent into Hades.

becoming cognisant of this terrible alternation and relieving-of-the-guard between her besom and his (satirical) one; and the way she watched and lay in wait for his movements drove all the ideas in his head higgledy-piggledy. At first he bore it with really very great patience, as great as ever a husband has, patience, that is, which lasts for a short time. But after reflecting for a considerable period in silence, that the public, as well as he, were sufferers by this room-cleaning business, and that all posterity was, in a manner, watching and hanging upon every stroke of that besom, which might do its work just as well in the afternoon when he would only be at his law papers—the tumour of his anger suddenly broke, and he grew mad, *i. e.* madder than he was before, and ran up to her and cried—

"Oh! this is the very devil! At it again, eh! I see what you're about. You watch till I get up from the table! Just be kind enough to finish me off at once; hunger and worry will kill me before Easter, whether or not. Good God! It's a thing I really can *not* comprehend. She sees as well as possible that my book is our larder—that there are whole rations of bread in every page of it—yet she holds my hands the entire morning, so that I can't do a line of it. Here I've been sitting on the nest all this time and only hatched as far as letter E, where I describe the ascent of Justice to heaven. Oh! Lenette! Lenette!"

"Very well," said Lenette, "it's all the same whatever I do, it's sure to be wrong; do let me tidy the house properly, like any other woman."

And she asked him, in a simple manner, why it was that the bookbinder's little boy (the language is mine, not hers), who played fantasias the whole day long upon a child's toy fiddle, composing and enjoying whole Alexander's Feasts upon it, didn't disturb him with his screeching *un*harmonical progressions—and how he bore the chimneysweep's sweeping the other day so much better than he did her sweeping of the room. And as he couldn't quite manage to condense, just in a moment, into few words the demonstration of the magnitude of the difference which existed between these things, he found it better to get into a rage again, and say—

"Do you suppose I'm going to make a great long speech and explanation gratis, and lose dollar after dollar at my work? *Himmel*! *Kreuz*! *Wetter*! The municipal code, the Roman pandects, forbid a coppersmith even to enter a street where a professor is working, and here's my own wife harder than an old jurist—and not only that—she's the coppersmith herself. I'll tell you what it is, Lenette, I shall really speak to the Schulrath about this." This did a great deal of service.

The produce of the Trinity dollar here arrived before the Schulrath; a piece of polite attention which no one would have expected from a man of so much learning and knowledge. No doubt all my readers will be as much delighted as if they were husbands of Lenette themselves at the fact that she was a perfect angel all the afternoon; her hands made no more noise at their work than her fingers or her needle; she even put off the doing of several things which were not necessary. She accompanied a sister in the oratorical art, who came in with a divine bonnet (in her hands, to be altered), all the way down stairs, not so much out of politeness as thoughtfulness, that all the points of principal importance connected with the doing up of the bonnet, which had already been settled, might be gone over again two or three times out of the advocate's hearing.

This touched the old noise-hunter, and went to the weak and tender spot in him, his heart. He sought long in himself for a fitting thank-offering in return, till he at last hit upon quite a new sort of one.

“Listen, child,” he said, taking her hand very affectionately; “wouldn’t it be more reasonable in me if I were to amuse myself with my writing in the *evening*? I mean, if the husband were to do his creating at a time when the wife had no washing to do. Just think what a life of nectar and ambrosia that would be; we should sit opposite to each other with a candle between us—you at your sewing, I at my writing—the other people in the house would all have their work done and be at their beer—of course there wouldn’t be customers with bonnets coming at that time of night to make themselves visible and audible. The evenings will be getting longer too, and of course I shall have the more time for my writing fun, but we need say nothing about that now. What do you think, or what do you *say* (if you like the expression better), to this new style of life? Remember too, that we’re quite rich again now—the Russian Trinity dollar is like so much found money.”

“Oh! it will be delightful,” she said, “I shall be able to do all my household work in the morning, as a proper reasonable housekeeper should.”

“Yes, just so,” he answered, “I shall write away quietly at my satires all morning, then wait till evening, and go on where I left off.”

The evening of nectar and ambrosia came duly on, and was quite without a rival among all evenings that had gone before it. A young married couple, sitting one on each side of a table, working away quietly at their work, with a candle between them, have a considerable notion what happiness is. He was all happy thoughts and kisses; she all smiles, and what little noise she made with the frying-pan seemed no louder to him than what she made with her needle. “When people are earning double working-pay by the light of one candle,” he said, greatly delighted at the domestic reformation, “they needn’t, as far as I see, restrict themselves to a miserable dip, the thickness of a worm, which they can see nothing by, unless it be the wretchedness of its own light. To-morrow we’ll set up a mould candle, and no more about it.”

As I take some credit to myself for selecting for narration in this story such events only as are of universal interest, it will be sufficient cursorily to mention that the mould candle duly appeared next evening, and kindled a feeble strife, because, *apropos* of this candle, the advocate once more brought forward a new theory of his, concerning the lighting of candles. He held the somewhat schismatic opinion that the rational way of lighting all candles, more particularly thick ones, was to light them at the thick end, and not at the top or thin end; and that this was the reason of there being two wicks projecting from every candle. “A law of combustion,” he would add, “in support of which I need only refer (at least for women of sense) to the self-evident truth that, when a candle is burning down, it keeps growing larger and larger at its lower extremity—just as people who are burning down from debauchery grow thicker at theirs, with fat and dropsy. If we light the candle at the top, we find the result to be a useless lump, plug, or stump of tallow running all over our candlestick. Whereas, if we light it at the bottom, the liquefied grease from the thick end wraps itself gradually and with the most exquisite symmetry all over the thinner end as if feeding it, and equalising its proportions.”

In reply to which, Lenette, with some force, adduced Shaftesbury’s touchstone of truth, ridicule. “Why, everybody that came in of an evening, and noticed that I had put my candle upside down in the candlestick, would burst out laughing; and it would be the wife that everybody would blame.” So that a mutual treaty of peace had to put a period to this battle of the candle, to the effect that he should light his candle at the bottom, and she hers at the top. And for the present, as the candle common to

both parties happened to be thick at the top, he agreed to admit, without objection, the erroneous method of lighting.

However, the Devil, who crosses and blesses himself at such treaties of peace, managed so to play his cards, that on this very day Siebenkæs chanced, in his reading, to come upon the touching anecdote of the younger Pliny's wife holding the lamp for her husband that he might see to write. And it occurred to him that, now that he was getting along so swimmingly with his selection from the said Devil's Papers, it would be a splendid arrangement, and save him many interruptions, if Lenette would snuff the candle always instead of his doing it himself.

"Of course," said she, "I shall be delighted." The first fifteen or twenty minutes passed, and everything seemed to be all right.

The above period having elapsed, he cocked up his chin towards the candle, by way of reminder to her to snuff it. Next, he gently touched the snuffers with the tip of his pen, with the like object, not saying anything however; and a little while after that, he moved the candlestick a little bit, and said softly, "The candle." Matters now began to assume a more serious aspect; he began to observe and watch with greater attention the gradual obscuration of his paper, and consequently the very snuffers which, in Lenette's hands, had promised to throw so much light on his labours, became the means of impeding his progress quite as effectually as the crabs did Hercules in his battle with the hydra. The two wretched ideas, "snuff" and "snuffers," took bodily shape, and danced hand in hand, with a sprightly pertness up and down on every letter of his most biting satires. "Lenette," he had soon to say again, "please to amputate that stupid black stump there, on both our accounts."

"Dear me, have I been forgetting it?" she said, and snuffed it in a great hurry.

Readers of a historical turn—such as I should wish mine to be—can now see that things couldn't but get worse and worse, and more and more out of joint. He had often to stop, making letters a yard or so in length, waiting till some beneficent hand should remove the black thorn from the rose of light, till, at length, he broke out with the word "Snuff!" Then he took to varying his verbs, saying, "Enlighten!" or "Behead!" or "Nip-off." Or he endeavoured to introduce an agreeable variety by using other forms of speech, such as "The candle's cap, Capmaker;" "There's a long spot in the sun again;" or, "This is a charming *chiaroscuro*, well adapted for night thoughts in a beautiful Correggio-night; but snuff away all the same."

At last, shortly before supper, when the charcoal stack in the flame had really attained a great height, he inhaled half a river of air into his lungs, and, slowly dropping it out again, said, in a grimly mild manner, "You don't snuff a bit—as far as I can see, the black funereal pyre might rise up to the ceiling for all you would care. All right! I prefer to be the candle-snuffer of this theatre myself till supper-time; and while we're at supper I shall just say to you, as a rational man, what there is to say on the subject." "Oh! yes, please," she said, quite delighted.

When she had set four eggs on the table, two for each, he commenced: "You see, I had been looking forward to my working at night being attended with several advantages, because I thought you would have managed this easy little task of snuffing the candle always at the right time, as a Roman lady of high rank made herself do duty as a candlestick for her celebrated husband, Pliny junior (to use a commercial expression), and held his light for him. I was mistaken, it appears; for, unfortunately, I can't write with my toes under the table, like a person with no arms, nor yet in the dark, as a clairvoyant might. The only use the candle is to me, in the

circumstances, is that it serves as an Epictetus lamp, enabling me to get some practice in stoicism. It had often as much as twelve inches of eclipse, like a sun, and I wished in vain, darling, for an invisible eclipse—such as frequently occurs in the heavens. The cursed slag of our candle hatches just these obscure ideas and gloomy night thoughts, which authors (too) often have. Whereas, gracious goodness! if you had only snuffed, as you ought to have done——"

"You're in fun, are you not?" she asked. "My stitches are much smaller than your strokes, and I'm sure I saw quite well."

"Well, dear," he continued, "I'll proceed to point out to you that, on the grounds of psychology and mental science, it isn't that it matters a bit whether a person who is writing and thinking *sees* a little more or less distinctly or not, it's the snuffers and the snuff that he can't get out of his head, and they get behind his spiritual legs, trip up his ideas, and stop him, just as a log does a horse hobbled to it. For even when you've only just snuffed the candle, and I'm in the full enjoyment of the light, I begin to look out for the instant when you'll do it next. Now, this watching being in itself neither visible nor audible, can be nothing but a thought, or idea; and as every thought has the property of occupying the mind to the exclusion of all others, it follows that all an author's other and more valuable ideas are sent at once to the dogs. But this is by no means the worst of the affair. I, of course, *ought* not to have had to occupy my head with the idea of candle-snuffing any more than with that of snuff-taking; but when the ardently longed-for snuffing never comes off at all, the black smut on the ripe ear of light keeps growing longer—the darkness deepening—a regular funereal torch feebly casting its ray upon a half-dead writer, who can't drive from his head the thought of the conjugal hand which could snap all the fetters asunder with one single snip;—then, my dearest Lenette, it's not easy for the said writer to help writing like an ass, and stamping like a dromedary. At least, I express my own opinion and experience on the subject!"

On this, she assured him that, if he were really serious, she would take great care to do it properly next evening.

And, in truth, this story must give her credit for keeping her word, for she not only snuffed much oftener than the night before, but, the fact is, she *hardly ever left off* snuffing, particularly after he had nodded his head once or twice by way of thanks.

"Don't snuff *too* often, darling," he said, at length, but very, very kindly. "If you attempt *too* fine sub-sub-subdivisions (fractions of fractions of fractions of fractions) of the wick, it'll be almost as bad as ever—a candle snuffed too short gives as little light as one with an overgrown wick which you may apply to the lights of the world and of the Church, that's to say if you *can*. It's only for a short while *before* and *after* the snuffing, *entre chien et loup* as it were, that that delicious middle-age of the soul prevails when it can see to perfection; when it is truly a life for the gods, a just proportion of black and white, both in the candle and on the book."

I and others really do not see any great reason to congratulate ourselves upon this new turn of events. The poor's advocate has evidently laid upon himself the additional burden, that all the time he is writing he has to keep watching and calculating,—superficially perhaps, but still, watching and calculating—the mean term, or middle-distance, between the long wick and the short. And what time has he left for his work?

Some minutes after, when the snuffing came a little too soon, he asked, though somewhat doubtfully, "Dirty clothes for the wash already?" Next time, as she let it be

almost too long before she snuffed, he looked at her interrogatively, and said, “Well? well?”

“In one instant,” said she. By-and-by, he having got rather more deeply absorbed than usual in his writing, and she in her work, he found, when he suddenly came to himself and looked, one of the longest spears in the candle that had yet appeared, and with two or three thieves round it to the bargain.

“Oh, good Lord! ’Pon my soul, this is really the life of a dog!” cried he; and, seizing the snuffers in a fury, he snuffed the candle—out.

This holiday pause of darkness afforded a capital opportunity for jumping up, flying into a passion, and pointing out to Lenette more in detail how it was that she plagued and tormented him, however admirably he might have arranged things; and, like all women, had neither rhyme nor reason in her ways of doing things, always snuffing either too close or not close enough. She, however, lighted the candle without saying a word, and he got into a greater rage than before, and demanded to be informed whether he had ever as yet asked anything of her but the merest trifles possible to conceive, and if anybody but his own wedded wife would have hesitated for a moment to attend to them. “Just answer me,” he said.

She did not answer him; she set the freshly-lighted candle on the table, and tears were in her eyes. It was the first time he had caused her a tear, since her marriage. In a moment, like a person magnetised, he saw and diagnosed all that was diseased and unhealthy in his system; and, on the spot, he cast out the old Adam, and shied him contemptuously away into a corner. This was an easy task for *him*; his heart was always so open to love and justice, that the moment these goddesses came into view, the tone of anger with which he had commenced a sentence would fall into gentle melody before he reached the end of it; he could stop his battle-axe in the middle of its stroke.

So that a household peace was here concluded, the instruments thereof being one pair of moist eyes and one pair of bright kind ones; and a Westphalia treaty of peace accorded one candle to each party, with absolute freedom of snuffing.

But the peace was soon embittered, inasmuch as Penia, goddess of poverty (who has thousands of invisible churches all about the country, where most houses are her tabernacles and lazar cells), began to make manifest her bodily presence and her all-controlling power. There was no more money in the house. But, rather than place his honour and his freedom in pledge, and incur obligations which he had less and less prospect of repaying—I mean, rather than borrow—he would have sold all he had, and himself into the bargain, like the old German. It is said, the national debt of England, if counted out in dollars, would make a ring round the earth, like a second equator; however, I have not as yet measured this nose-ring of the British Lion, this annular eclipse, or halo, round the sun of Britain, myself. But I know that Siebenkæs would have considered a negative money-girdle of this sort about his waist to be a penance-belt stuck full of spines, or an iron ring, such as people who tow boats have on; a girdle compressing the heart in a fatal manner. Even supposing he were to borrow, and then stop payment, as nations and banking-houses do—a catastrophe which debtors and aristocratic persons, who have their wits about them, manage to avoid without difficulty, by the simple expedient of never *beginning* payment—yet, having only one friend whom he could convert into a creditor (Stiefel), he couldn’t possibly have seen this dear friend, who was in the first rank of his spiritual creditors already, figuring in the fifth rank, or that of the unpaid. He therefore avoided such a

two-fold transgression as this would have been—a sin against both friendship and honour—by pledging things of less value, namely, household furniture.

He went back (but alone) to the pewter cupboard in the kitchen, and peeped through the rail to see whether there were two ranks of dishes or three. Alas! there wag but one rear-rank man of a plate standing behind his front-rank man, like double notes of interrogation. He marched the rear-rank man to the front accordingly, and gave him for travelling companions and fellow-refugees a herring-dish, a sauce-boat, and a salad-bowl. Having effected this reduction of his army, he extended the remaining troops so as to occupy a wider front, and subdivided the three large gaps into twenty small ones. He then moved these disbanded soldiers to the sitting-room, and went and called Lenette, who was in the bookbinder's room.

"I've been looking at our pewter cupboard for the last five or ten minutes," he said. "I really shouldn't have noticed, if I hadn't known it, that I had taken away the tureen and the plates. Should you?"

"Ah, indeed, I do notice it every day of my life," she declared.

Here, however, being rather uneasy at the idea of what might be the result of *too* long an inspection, he hurried her into the sitting-room, where the dishes were which he had just taken out, and made known his intention of transposing, like a clever musician, this quartett from the key of pewter into that of silver. He proposed the selling of them, that she might be got to agree the more easily to their being pawned. But she pulled out every stop of the feminine organ, the clarion, the stopped diapason, flute, bird-stop, *vox humana*, and, lastly, the tremolo stop. He might say whatever he liked; *she* said whatever *she* liked. A man does not try to arrest the iron arm of necessity, or to avert it; he calmly awaits its stroke; a woman tries to struggle away from its grip, at any rate for a few hours, before it encircles her. It was in vain that Siebenkæs quietly and simply asked her if she knew what else was to be done. To questions of this sort, there float up and down in women's heads not one complete answer, but thousands of half answers, which are supposed to amount to a whole one, just as in the differential calculus an infinite number of straight lines go to form a curved one. Some of these unripe, half-formed, fugitive, mutually auxiliary answers were——

"He shouldn't have changed his name, and he would have had his mother's money by this time."

"Of course, he might borrow."

"Look at all his clients, well off and comfortable, and he won't ask them to pay him."

"He never dreams of asking a fee for defending the infanticide."

"And he shouldn't spend so much money." "He needn't have paid that half-term's rent in advance." For the latter would have kept him going for a day or two, you see!

It is always a vain task to oppose the "minority of one" of the complete and true answer to the immense majority of feminine partial proofs of this sort; women know, at any rate, thus much of the law of Switzerland, that four half or invalid witnesses outweigh one whole or valid one.[41] But the best way of confuting them is, to let them say what they have got to say, and not utter a word yourself; they're certain to diverge, before very long, into subsidiary or accessory matters, which you yield to

[41] In Bern and the Pays-du-Vaud, two male witnesses, or four female, are necessary for a legal proof.

them, confuting them, as regards the real subject of argument, simply by action. This is the only species of confutation which they ever forgive. Siebenkæs, unfortunately, attempted to apply the surgical bandage of philosophy to Lenette's two principal members, her head and her heart, and therefore commenced as follows—

"Dear wife, in the parish church you sing against worldly riches, like the rest of the congregation, and yet you have them fixed on your heart as firmly as your brooch. Now, I don't go to a church, it's true, but I have a pulpit in my own breast, and I prize one single happy moment more than the whole of this pewter dirt. Tell me truly now, has your immortal heart been pained by the tragical fate of the soup-tureen, or was it only your pericardium? The doctors prescribe tin, in powder, for worms; and may not this miserable tin, which we have broken into little pieces and swallowed, have had a similar effect on the abominable worms of the heart? Collect yourself, and think of our cobbler here, does his soup taste any the worse to him out of his painted iron *saucière* because his bit of roast meat is eaten out of it too? You sit behind that pincushion of yours, and can't see that society is mad, and drinks coffee, tea, and chocolate out of different cups, and has particular kinds of plates for fruit, for salad, and for herrings, and particular sorts of dishes for hares, fish, and poultry. And I say that it will get madder and madder as time goes on, and order as many kinds of fruit plates from the china shops as there are different fruits in the gardens—at least, I should do it myself; and if I were a crown prince, or a grand master, I should insist upon having lark dishes and lark knives, snipe dishes and snipe knives; neither would I carve the haunch of a stag of sixteen upon any plate I had once had a stag of eight upon. The world is a fine madhouse, and one gets up and preaches his false doctrine in it when another has done, just as they do in a Quaker meeting. So the Bedlamites think that only two follies are veritable follies, follies which are past, and follies which are yet to come—old follies and new; but I would show them that theirs partake of the nature of both."

Lenette's only reply was an inexpressibly *gentle* request: "Oh! please, Firmian, do *not* sell the pewter."

"Very well, then, I shan't!" (he answered, with a bitter satirical joy at having got the brilliant neck of the pigeon fairly into the noose which he had so long had ready baited for it). "The emperor Antoninus sent his real silver plate to the mint, so that I might surely send mine; but just as you like: I don't care twopence. Not an ounce of it shall be old; I shall merely pawn! I'm much obliged to you for the suggestion; and if I only hit the eagle's tail on St. Andrew's Day, or the imperial globe, I can redeem the whole of it in a minute—I mean with the money of the prize; at all events, the salad-bowl and the soup-tureen. I think you're quite right. Old Sabel's in the house, is she not? She can take the things and bring back the money."

She let it be so now. The shooting-match on St. Andrew's Day was her Fortunatus's wishing-cap, the wooden wings of the eagle were as waxen flying-apparatus fixed on to her hopes, the powder and shot were the flower-seeds of her future blossoms of peace (as they are to crowned heads also). Thou poor soul, in many senses of the word! But the poor hope incredibly more than the rich; therefore it is that poor devils are more apt to catch the infection of lotteries than the rich—just as they are to catch the plague and other epidemics.

Siebenkæs—who looked down with contempt not only on the loss of his household goods, but on the loss of his money—was secretly resolved to leave the trash at the pawnbroker's, unredeemed for ever, like a state-bond, even though he should chance

to be king (at the shooting-match), and convert the transaction into a regular sale some future day, when he happened to be passing the shop.

After a few bright quiet days Peltzstiefel came again to make an evening call. Amid the manifold embargoes laid upon their supplies, the risks attending their smuggling operations, and as a tear or a sigh was laid as a tax which *must* necessarily be paid upon every loaf of bread, Firmian had had no time, to say nothing of inclination, to remember his jealousy. In Lenette's case, matters were necessarily exactly reversed; and if she really has any love for Stiefel, it must grow faster on his money-dunghill than on the advocate's field all over wells of hunger. The Schulrath's eye was not one of those which read the troubles of a household in a minute, though they are masked by smiling faces; he noticed nothing of the kind. And for that very reason it came to pass that this friendly trio spent a happy hour free from clouds, during which, though the sun of happiness did not shine, yet the moon of happiness (hope and memory) rose shimmering in their sky. Moreover, Siebenkæs had the enjoyment of being provided with a cultivated listener, who could follow and appreciate the jingle of the bells on the jester's cap, the trumpet fanfares of his Leibgeberish sallies. Lenette could neither follow nor appreciate them in the very least, and even Peltzstiefel didn't understand him when he *read* him, but only when he *heard him talk*. The two men at first talked only of persons, not of things, as women do; only that they called their chronique scandaleuse by the name of History of Literature and Men of Letters. For literary men like to know every little trait and peculiarity of a great author—what clothes he wears, and what his favourite dishes are. For similar reasons, women minutely observe every little trait and peculiarity of any crown princess who happens to pass through the town, even to her ribbons and fringes. From literary men they passed to scholarship; and then all the clouds of this life melted away, and in the land of learning, the fair realm of science, the downcast sorrowful head, wrapped and veiled in the black Lenten altar-cloth of hardship and privation, is lifted up once more. The soul inhales the mountain air of its native land, and looks down from the lofty peak of Pindus upon its poor bruised and wounded body lying beneath—that body which it has to drag and bear about, sighing under its weight. When some dunned, needy scholar, some skin-and-bone reading-master, a poor curate with five children, or a baited and badgered tutor, is lying woeful and wretched—every nerve quivering under some instrument of torture—and a brother of his craft, plagued by just as many instruments of torture as himself, comes and argues and philosophises with him a whole evening, and tells him all the latest opinions of the literary papers, then truly the sand-glass which marks the hours of the torture[42] is laid on its side—Orpheus comes, all bright and shining, with the lyre of knowledge in his hand, into the psychic hell of the two brethren in office, the sad tears vanish from their brightening eyes, the snakes of the furies twine into graceful curls, the Ixion's wheel rolls harmoniously to the lyre, and these two poor Sisyphuses sit resting quietly on their stones and listen to the music. But the poor curate's, the reading-master's, the scholar's, good wife, what is her comfort in her misery? She has none except her husband, who ought, therefore, to be very tender to all her shortcomings.

The reader was made aware in the first book that Leibgeber had sent three programmes from Bayreuth. Stiefel brought the one, by Dr. Frank, with him, and asked Siebenkæs to write a notice of it for the 'Kuhschnappel Heavenly Messenger.' He also took out of his pocket another little book, to receive its sentence. The reader will hail both these works with gladness, seeing that my hero and his has no money

[42] The sand-glass is upright during the time the torture goes on.

in the house, and will be able to live for a day or two by reviewing them. The second manuscript, which was in a roll, was entitled: 'Lessingii, Emilia Galotti. Pro gymnasmatis loco latine reddita et publice acta, moderante J. H. Steffens. Cellis 1788.'

It seems that a good many of the subscribers to the 'Heavenly Messenger' have complained of the length of time which elapsed before this work was noticed, drawing disadvantageous comparisons between the 'Messenger' and the 'Universal German Library;' for the latter, notwithstanding the greatness of its universal German circulation, notices good works within a few years of their birth—sometimes even as early as the third year of their existence—so that the favourable notice can frequently be bound up with the work, the first paper-covers of it not being worn out before. The reason, however, why the 'Heavenly Messenger' did not, and in fact could not, review more of the books of the year 1788, was, that it was not until five years after that date that it—first saw the light itself.

"Don't you think," said Siebenkæs, in a friendly manner to Peltzstiefel, "that if I'm going to write proper notices of Messrs. Frank and Steffens here, my wife should take care not to make a thundering noise, swishing away with her broom at my back?"

"That might really be a matter of very considerable importance," said Stiefel, gravely. Upon which a playful and somewhat abridged report of the proceedings in the household action of inhibition was laid before him. Wendeline fixed her kindly eyes on Peltzstiefel's face, striving to read the *Rubrum* (the red title), and the *Nigrum* (the black body matter) of his judgment there before it was pronounced. Both colours were there. But though Stiefel's bosom heaved with genuine sighs of the deepest affection for her, he nevertheless addressed her as follows—

"Madame Siebenkæs, this really won't do at all; for God hath not created anything nobler than a scholar sitting at his writing. Hundreds of thousands of people, ten times told, are sitting in every quarter of the globe, as if on school-forms before him, and to all of these he has to speak. Errors held by the wisest and cleverest people he has to eradicate: ages, long since gone to dust and passed away, with those who lived in them, he has to describe with accuracy and minuteness; systems, the most profound and the most complex, he has to confute and overthrow, or otherwise to invent and establish, himself. His light has to pierce through massy crowns, through the Pope's triple tiara, through Capuchin hoods and through wreaths of laurel—to pierce them all and enlighten the brains within. This is his work; and this work he can perform. But Madame Siebenkæs, what a strain on his faculties! What a grand sustained effort is necessary! It is a hard matter and a difficult to set up a book in type, but harder still to write it! Think what the strain must have been when Pindar wrote, and Homer, earlier still—I mean in the 'Iliad'—and so with one after another, down to our own day. Is it any wonder, then, that great writers, in the terrible strain and absorption of all their ideas, have often scarcely known where they were, what they were doing, or what they would be at; that they were blind and dumb, and insensible to everything but what was perceived by the *five interior spiritual senses*, like blind people, who see beautifully in their dreams, but in their waking state are, as we have said, blind! This state of absorbedness and strain it is which I consider to explain how it was that Socrates and Archimedes could stand and be completely unconscious of the storm and turmoil going on around them; how Cardanus in the profundity of his meditation was unconscious of his Chiragra; others of the gout; one Frenchman of a great conflagration, and a second Frenchman of the death of his wife."

“There, you see,” said Lenette, much delighted, in a low voice to her husband, “how can a learned gentleman possibly hear his wife when she’s at her washing and scrubbing?”

Stiefel, unmoved, went on with the thread of his argument: “Now, a fire of this description can only be kindled in absolute and uninterrupted calm. And this is the reason why all the great artists and men of letters in Paris live nowhere but in the Rue Ste. Victoire; the other streets are all too noisy. And it is hence that no smiths, tinkers, or tinmen, are allowed to work in the street where a professor lives.”

“No TINMEN especially,” added Siebenkæs, very gravely. “It should always be remembered that the mind cannot entertain more than half-a-dozen of ideas at a time; so that if the idea of noise should make its appearance as a wicked seventh, of course some one or other of the previous ideas, which might otherwise have been followed up or written down, takes its departure from the head altogether.”

Indeed Stiefel made Lenette give him her hand as a pledge that she would always stand still, like Joshua’s sun, while Firmian was smiting the foe with pen and scourge.

“Haven’t I often asked the bookbinder myself,” she said, “not to hammer so hard upon his books, because my husband would hear him when he was making *his*.” However, she gave the Schulrath her hand, and he went away contented with their contentment, leaving them quite hopeful of quieter times.

But, ye dear souls, of how little use to you is this state of peace, seeing ye are on half-pay and starving in this cold, empty, orphan hospital of an earth—how little will it help you in these dim labyrinthian wanderings of your destiny, of which even the Ariadne clue-threads all turn to nets and snares? How long will the poor’s advocate manage to live on the produce of the pawned pewter, and on the price of the two reviews which he is going to write? Only, we are all like the Adam of the epic, and take our first night to be the day of judgment, and the setting of the sun for the end of the world. We sorrow for our friends, just as if there were no brighter future YONDER, and we sorrow for ourselves as if there were no brighter future HERE. For all our passions are born Atheists and unbelievers.

Chapter VI

MATRIMONIAL JARS—EXTRA LEAFLET ON THE LOQUACITY OF WOMEN—MORE PLEDGING—THE MORTAR AND THE SNUFF-MILL—A SCHOLAR'S KISS—ON THE CONSOLATIONS OF HUMANITY—CONTINUATION OF THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

This chapter commences at once with pecuniary difficulties. The wretched, leaky Danaid's bucket which our good couple had to use for washing their groschen or two, their grains of gold-dust—few and far between as they were—out of the sands of their Pactolus, had always run dry again in the course of a couple of days, or of three at the outside. On this occasion, however, they had something certain to go upon, namely, the reviews of the two works; they could count upon four florins certainly, if not upon five.

Early next day, after his morning kiss, Firmian seated himself upon his critical judgment-bench again, and proceeded to pass his sentences. He might have written an epic poem, so light were the trade-winds which had hitherto been prevalent during the early hours of the day. From eight o'clock in the morning till eleven in the forenoon, he was engaged in holding up to the world in a favourable light the programme of Dr. Frank of Pavia, which was entitled: 'Sermo Academicus de civis medici in republica conditione atque officiis, ex lege præipue erutis. Auct. Frank. 1785.' He criticised, praised, blamed, and made extracts from this little production, till he thought he had covered enough paper to earn what would suffice to redeem the pawned herring-dish, salad-bowl, sauce-boat, and plates—his views on the work occupying one sheet, four pages, and fifteen lines.

The morning had passed so pleasantly, in holding Vehmgericht in this manner, that he thought he might as well go on, and hold another in the afternoon on the other book. He had never ventured upon this before; in the afternoons he had done advocate's work, not reviewer's, appearing in the character of defendant (*maker* of defence), not of fiscal (prosecutor). He had ample reason for this, seeing that every afternoon girls and maid-servants came with bonnets and caps, and with *mouths* full of conversational treasures, which they at once unpacked; richer in language than the Arabs, who have only a thousand *words* to express the same idea, these young women had a thousand *idioms* for it, or different ways of putting it;—and, as an organ when it's out of order, immediately begins to cipher on twenty of its pipes or so at a time as soon as you begin to work the bellows, though no notes may be pressed down, so would they the moment the bellows of their lungs was set a-going. He didn't mind this, however, seeing that at the particular hours to which these feminine alarum clocks were set, he let his own juristical alarum go rattling off too, and during the arguing of Lenette's cases, went on with the arguing of his. He wasn't disturbed by this; he maintained: "A lawyer is not to be put out, he can open and close his sentences when he chooses—his periods are long tapeworms, and can be lengthened or cut down with impunity—for each segment of them is itself a worm, each comma a period."

But reviewing was another matter, and couldn't be done so well. At the same time, I shall here faithfully transcribe for the benefit of the unlearned (the learned have read the review long ago), so much as he actually did manage to get done after his dinner.

He wrote down the title of Steffen's Latin translation of "Emilia Galotti," and proceeded as follows—

"This translation meets a want which we have long experienced. It is, indeed, a striking phenomenon, that so few of the German classics have as yet been translated into Latin for the use of scholars, who, for their part, have supplied us with German versions of nearly all the Greek and Roman classic authors. The German nation can point to literary productions of its own which are quite worthy of perusal by scholars and by linguists, who, although they can translate them, do not understand them, because they are not written in Latin. Lichtenberg's 'Pocket Calendar' has appeared simultaneously in a German edition—for the English, who are studying German—and in a French for our own *haute noblesse*. But why should not German original works, and even the very 'Calendar' itself, be made known to linguists and to scholars by means of a good and faithful Latin translation? There can be no doubt that they would be the very first to be struck by the great resemblance which may be traced between the odes of Ramler and those of Horace, if the former were but translated. The reviewer must confess that it has always been matter of surprise, as well as regret, to him that but two correct editions of Klopstock's 'Messiah' have as yet appeared, the original edition and his own—and that there is no Latin edition of it for scholars—(Lessing having scarcely translated the 'Invocation' in his miscellaneous writings)—nor one in the curial style for lawyers, nor a plain prose one for the commercial world, nor one in Jew-German for the Jewish community."

When he had got thus far, he was compelled to stop, because a housemaid *wouldn't* stop, but went on reiterating what her mistress had gone on re-iterating, namely, how her night-cap was to be done up; twenty times did she sketch the ground-plan and elevation of the said cap, and laid weight on the necessity for speedy execution. Lenette answered her tautologies with equivalent ones, paying her back to the full in her own coin. Scarce was the housemaid out at the door, when the reviewer said—

"I haven't written a word while that windmill was clacking. Lenette, tell me, is it really a positive impossibility for a woman to say, 'It's four o'clock,' instead of 'The four quarters to four have gone?' Can no woman say, 'The head-clout will be ready to-morrow,' and then an end of the matter? Can no woman say, 'I want a dollar for it,' and there an end of the story? Nor, 'Run in again to-morrow!' and no more about it? Can *you* not do it, for instance?"

Lenette answered very coldly, "Oh! of course you think everybody thinks just as you think yourself!"

Lenette had two feminine bad habits, which have sent millions of male rockets, or pyrotechnic serpents—namely, curses—up skywards. The first was, that whenever she gave the servant an order, she did it as if it were a memorial in two copies, and then went out of the room with her and repeated the order in question three or four times more in the passage. The second was, that let Siebenkæs shout a thing to her, as distinctly as man could, her first answer was, "What?" or, "What do you say?" Now, I not only advise ladies always to demand a "second of exchange" of this sort when they are in any embarrassment for an answer, and I laud them for so doing; but in cases where what is required of them is attention, not the truth, this *ancora* and *bis* which they cry to a speaker who is anxious not to waste time, is as cumbersome as it is unnecessary. Matters of this kind are trifles in married life only so long as the sufferer by them does not complain of them. But when they have been found fault

with they are worse than deadly sins, and felonies, and adulteries—seeing that they occur much more frequently.

If the author were disturbed at his work by pleonasms of the above description; what he would do would be, not deliver a serious lecture, but (because this is a good opportunity) write the following

EXTRA LEAFLET ON FEMALE LOQUACITY.

"The author of the work on 'Marriage' has said, 'A woman who does not talk is a stupid woman.' But it is easier to be his encomiast than his disciple. The cleverest women are often silent with women, and the most stupid and most silent are often both with men. On the whole, this statement, which has been applied to the male sex, is true also of the female, namely, that those who think most have least to say; as frogs cease croaking when a light is brought to the side of their pond. Moreover, the extreme talkativeness of women is a result of the sedentary nature of their occupations. Men, whose work is sedentary, such as tailors, shoemakers, weavers, have in common with women not only their hypochondriac fancies, but also their loquacity.

"The little work-tables, where feminine fingers are employed, are also the playgrounds of the feminine imagination, and their needles become little magic wands, wherewith they transform their rooms into isles of spirits filled with dreams. Hence it is that a letter or a book distracts a woman who is in love more than the knitting of a whole pair of stockings. Savages say that the monkeys refrain from talking that they may not be made to work; but many a woman talks twice as much when she is working as when she is not.

"I have devoted much thought to the question, what purpose this peculiarity subserves in the economy of the universe. At first it might strike us that Nature has ordained these re-iterations of that which has been already said with a view to the development of metaphysical truths: for, as demonstration, according to Jacobi and Kant, is merely a series, or progression, of identical propositions, it is evident that women, who always proceed from the same thing to the same thing, are continually demonstrating. There can be no doubt, however, that the object which Nature has chiefly had in view is the following. Accurate observers of nature have pointed out that the reason why the leaves of trees keep up their constant fluttering motion is that the atmosphere may be purified by this perpetual flagellation—this oscillation of the leaves having very much the effect of a light and gentle breeze.[43] It would, however, be very wonderful had Nature—always economising her forces, Nature, who never does anything in vain—ordained this much longer oscillation, this seventy years' wagging of the feminine tongue, to no definite purpose. For the purpose in question, however, we have not far to seek. It is the same which is subserved by the quivering of the leaves of trees. The endless, regular, unceasing beat of the feminine tongue is to assist in agitating and stirring up the atmosphere, which would otherwise become putrescent. The moon has her ocean of water, and the feminine head has its ocean of air, to stir into salubrity and to keep in perpetual freshness. Hence a universal Pythagorean noviciate would, sooner or later, give rise to epidemics, and Chartreuses of nuns would become pesthouses. Hence it is that

[43] We cannot say, however, that it is by carrying away noxious vapours that the wind purifies the air, since while it blows *my* noxious emanations to the person behind me, it brings me those of the person before me; and because stagnant water does not become putrid solely because there is no current to carry away decaying matter.

diseases of the pestiferous type are less frequent among civilised nations, who talk the most. And hence Nature's beneficent arrangement that it is exactly in the largest cities—and moreover in the winter—and moreover indoors—and in large assemblages—that women talk most, inasmuch as it is exactly in these places and at these periods that the atmosphere is most impure, and charged with the largest proportion of carbonic acid and other products of respiration, &c., requiring to be thoroughly fanned and set in motion. And, indeed, Nature here overthrows all artificial barriers and impediments; for, although many European women have endeavoured to imitate those of America—who fill their mouths with water in order to keep silence—and, while making calls, fill theirs with tea or coffee, yet these fluids have been found rather to facilitate than to prevent the free flow of feminine speech.

"I trust that in this I am far from being like the narrow-minded teleologists, who, to every grand sun-path, or sun-orbit of Nature, must always be appending and intercalating little subsidiary foot-tracks and ends in view. Such persons might permit themselves the supposition (*I* should be ashamed to do so) that the oscillation of the female tongue, the use of which is sufficiently apparent in the motion which it communicates to the atmosphere, may possibly serve to give typical illustration to some thought or idea of a spiritual nature—*e. g*. the female soul itself, perhaps.

"This belongs to that class of things with respect to which Kant has said that they can neither be proved nor disproved. I myself should rather incline, however, to the opinion that the talking of women is an indication of the cessation of thought and mental activity—as in a good mill the warning bell only rings when there is no corn left in the hopper. Moreover, every husband knows that tongues are attached to women's heads in order to give due notice, by their clanging, that some contradiction, something irregular or impossible, is dominating in them.[44] Similarly, H. Müller's calculating machine has a little bell in it, which rings merely to give notice that some error has occurred in a calculation. However, it now remains for the natural philosopher to prosecute this inquiry, and to determine to what extent my views may prove to be erroneous."

I may just mention that the above leaflet was written by the advocate.

He did not finish his review till the following morning. He had intended to go on writing down his ideas on the subject of the translation of Emilia Galotti till the money coming to him as the price of the ideas should be enough to pay for new toes to his boots—Fecht asked a sheet and a half for doing the pair—but he had not time for this, as he was obliged to calculate the price of his notice by the compositor's sight-rule, and get the money for it that very day.

The reviews were sent to the editor; the critical invoice amounted to three florins four groschen and five pfennige. Strange! we smile when we see the spiritual and the corporeal, intellect and hard cash, pain and pecuniary compensation, stated as sums in proportion; but is not our whole life an equation, a sum in "partnership" between soul and body; and is not all action *upon* us corporeal, and all *re*action *from* us spiritual?

The servant-girl brought back only "kind regards;" not the leaves of silver which his ink should have crystallised into. Peltzstiefel had not given the matter a thought. He was so absorbed in his studies that he was indifferent to his own money, and blind to

[44] A woman finds it much easier to yield and say nothing when she is in the right than when she is in the wrong.

the poverty of other people. He was capable, indeed, of noticing a *hiatus*; but it must be in a manuscript—not in his own or other people's shoes, stockings, &c. An inward fire blinded this fortunate man to the phosphorescence of the rotten wood around him. And happy is every actor in the school-theatricals of life who finds the lofty inward delusion suffice to compensate him for the delusions without, or to hide them from his view;—who is so carried away by the enthusiasm with which he enters into and renders his spiritual *rôle*, that the coarse daubs of landscapes of the scenery seem to bloom, and the branches to rustle in the refreshing showers (of peas) from the rain-box—and who does not wake to reality at the shifting of the scenes.

But this beautiful blindness of the Rath was very distressing to our two dear friends; their little constellation, which was to have shone in their evening sky, fell all down in meteoric drops upon the earth. I do not blame Stiefel; he had an ear for distress, though not an eye. But ye rich and great ones of the earth, who, helpless in the honeycombs of your pleasures, swimming with clogged wings in your melted sugar of roses, do not find it an easy matter to move your hand, put it into your money-bag, and take out the wage of him who helped to fill your honey-cells—an hour of judgment will strike at last for *you*, and ask you if ye were worthy to *live*, let alone to live a life of pleasure, when ye avoid even the *trifling* trouble of *paying* the poor who have undergone the *immense* trouble of *earning*. But ye would be better if ye thought what misery your comfortable, indolent, indisposition to open a purse, or to read a little account, often inflicts upon the poor; if ye pictured to yourselves the backward start of hopeless disappointment of some poor woman whose husband comes home without his money—the starvation, the obliteration of so many hopes, and the weary sorrowful days of a whole family.

The advocate, therefore, put on his wicked silverising face again and went prying about into every corner with his eyeglass, making himself into a species of pressgang of the furniture. As a king or an English minister sits up in his bed at night, rests his head on his hand, and considers what commodity or what tree-stem full of birch-sap he may stick his winetap of a new tax into, or (in another metaphor) so cut the peat of taxation that new peat may grow in its place: thus did Siebenkæs. With his letter of marque in his hand he scanned minutely every flag that hove in sight; he lifted up his shaving-dish and set it down; he shook the paralytic arms of an old chair till they cracked again—he subjected it to a trial more severe, by sitting down in it and getting up again.—I interrupt my period to observe *en passant* that Lenette fully understood the danger of this conscription and measuring of the children of the land, and that she protested continuously and unavailingly against this game of pledges with Job-like lamentations.—He also took down from its hook an old yellow mirror, with a gilt leaf-pattern frame, which hung in the bedroom opposite the green-railed bed, examined its wooden case and the back of it, moved the glass of it up and down a little and then hung it up again—an old firedog and some bedroom crockery he did not touch; he whipt the lid off a porcelain butter-boat, made, according to the plastic art of the period, in the shape of a cow, and glanced into the inside of it, but set it back, empty and full of dust, as an ornament on the mantelpiece again; he weighed, longer and with both hands, a spice-mortar, and put it back again into the cupboard.

He looked more and more dangerous, and more and more merry; he drew out with both arms the drawer of a wardrobe, shoved back table-napkins, and begun to overhaul a mourning-dress of checked cotton a little ——. But here Lenette flew out, seized him by his overhauling arm, and cried, "Why not, indeed! But, please God, it shall *not* come to *that* with *me*!"

He shut the drawer quietly, opened the cupboard again, and carefully lifted the mortar on to the table, saying, “Oh! very well, it matters little to me, it comes all to the same thing; the mortar will have to take its departure.” By covering this bell of shame with his open hand by way of a damper, he was able to take out the pestle, its clapper, without producing any ring or clang. He had been perfectly aware all the time that she would rather pawn the garment of her soul (*i. e.* her body) than the checked garment of that garment; but it was of set purpose that, like the Court of Rome, he demanded the entire hand that he might be the more likely to obtain a single finger of it—in this case the mortar—and moreover he hoped the mere frequency with which he reiterated his determination would save him the necessity of stating any reasons, and that he would familiarise Lenette with the bugbear and hobgoblin by keeping it continually before her eyes (I mean, with his design upon the mortar). Wherefore he went on to say, “The fact is, that it’s very little that we have to pound in the course of a twelvemonth, except when we have a quarter of a fat beast; at the same time, just give me some idea why you’re so anxious to keep the checked gown—what on earth is the use of it? The only time you can wear it will be when I depart this life. Now, Lenette, that’s a terrible sort of idea; I can’t stand it. Coin the dress into silver—eliminate it altogether; I’ll send two pairs of mourning-buckles of mine along with it; I hope I may never have anything to buckle with them again.”

She stormed without bounds and preached with much wisdom against all “careless, thoughtless householders;” and this for the very reason, that she felt it was only too probable that he would soon take every article of furniture in the place (which he had been feeling and valuing, like a person buying bullocks) to the slaughter-house, and—goodness gracious! the checked dress among the rest. “I had rather starve,” she cried, “than throw away that mortar for a mere song. The Schulrath is sure to be here to-morrow evening, with the money for your reviews.”

“Now you begin to talk sense,” said he; and he carried the pestle horizontally in both his hands into the bedroom, and laid it on to Lenette’s pillow—next bringing the mortar, and placing it on his own. “If people should happen to hear it ring,” he said, “they would think I wanted to turn it into silver, as we were pounding nothing in it; and I shouldn’t like that.”

The united capital contained in his greenish-yellow cotton-purse, and her large money-bag (which she wore at her girdle), amounted to about three groschen, good money. In the evening there would have to be a groschen-loaf bought, for cash, and the remainder of the metallic-seed must be sown in the morning to grow the breakfast- and dinner-crop. The servant-girl went out for the bread, but came back with the groschen and with the Job’s message, “There’s nothing left at the bakers’ shops at this time of night but two-groschen loaves; father (the cobbler Fecht) couldn’t get any either.” This was lucky; the advocate could enter into partnership with the shoemaker, and it would be easy for these partners, by each contributing a groschen to the partnership funds, to obtain a two-groschen loaf. The Fechts were asked if they agreed to this. The cobbler, who made no secret of his daily bankruptcies, answered—

“With all my heart. G—d d—n me! (Heaven forgive me for swearing) if I and the whole crew of young tatterdemalions in the place have had a scrap of anything to fill our mouths with the whole blessed day but waxed-ends.” In short, this coalition of the *tiers état* with the learned estates put an end to the famine, and the covenanting parties broke the loaf in two and weighed it in a just balance, it being itself both the weight and the thing weighed. Ah! ye rich! Ye, with your manna, or bread sent from

heaven, little think how indispensable to poverty are small weights, apothecaries' measure, heller-loaves,[45] a dinner for eight kreuzers (and your shirt washed into the bargain); and a broken-bread shop, where mere crumbs and black-bread powder are to be had for money; and how the comfort of a whole family's evening depends on the fact that your hundredweights are on sale in lots of half-an-ounce.

They ate, and were content. Lenette was in good humour because she had gained her point. At night the advocate put the things which were to be pawned upon a soft chair. In the morning she facilitated his writing by keeping very quiet. It was a good omen, however, that she did not put the mortar back into the cupboard. And Siebenkæs fired off various queries out of the said bomb-mortar in parabolic curves. He knew perfectly well that the Loretto- and Harmonica-bell in question must march that day or the next over the frontier for a small pecuniary *Abzug-geld*.[46] Women always like to put everything off till the very last possible moment.

Peltzstiefel came in that evening. It was both ridiculous and natural to expect that the first thing the editor of the 'Heavenly Messenger' would do would be to pay the critic his wages, so that he might at least be able to set before his editor a candlestick with a candle in it, and a beer-glass containing beer. Nothing can be more cruel than an anxiety of this sort, because this kind of shame breaks in a moment all the springs in the human machine. Siebenkæs wouldn't let it trouble his head, because he knew Stiefel wouldn't let it trouble his. But Lenette was to be pitied, inasmuch as the blushes of her shame were heightened by her fondness for Stiefel! At last the Rath put his hand in his pocket. They thought now he was going to produce the review-money; but all he took out was his snuff-machine, his tobacco-grater, and he dived back into his coat-tail pocket for half-an-ounce of rappee to put upon this little chopping-bench. But he had grated the half-ounce already. He searched his breeches-pockets for money to send for another half-ounce. Truly—and here he swore an oath for which he would have incurred a fine had he been in England—he had sent, like an ass, not only his purse but also the money for the reviews, carefully counted out and neatly wrapped in paper, with his breeches—they were his plush ones—to the tailor's. He said it wasn't the first time, and it was a lucky job that the tailor was an honest man; the only thing was, he hadn't noticed how much there was in his purse. He innocently requested Lenette to "send and get him an ounce of rappee; he would repay her next morning, when he sent the money for the reviews." Siebenkæs roguishly added, "And send for some beer at the same time, dear." He and Stiefel looked out of window; but he saw that his poor wife—her bosom torn with sighs, and suffering *peine forte et dure*—stole into the bedroom and noiselessly put the spice-mill into her apron.

After a good half-hour, rappee, beer, money, and happiness entered the room; the bell-metal of the mortar was transformed into sustenance for the inward man, and the bell in question had been somewhat like the little altar-bell, which in this case, besides *announcing* a transubstantiation, or transformation of the substance of the bread, as it does in the Roman Catholic Church, had *undergone* one itself. Their blood no longer gurgled among rocks and stones, but flowed softly and tranquilly along, by meadows, and over silver sands. Such is man. When he is in the depths of misery, the first happy moment lifts him out; when he is at the height of bliss, the remotest sorrowful moment, even though it is down beneath the horizon, casts him to earth. No great man, who has *maîtres de cuisine*, clerks of the cellar, capon-

[45] Heller = half-a-farthing.
[46] *I.e.* a sum which people pay to the exchequer for permission to leave the country.

stuffers, and confectioners, has any true enjoyment of the pleasure it is to give and receive hospitality; he gets and gives no thanks. But a poor man and his poor guest, with whom he halves his loaf and his can, are united by a mutual bond of gratitude.

The evening wound a soft bandage about the pain of the morning. The poppy-juice of sixty drops of happiness was taken hourly, and the medicine had a gently soothing and exhilarating power. When his old, kind friend was leaving, Siebenkæs gave him a hearty, grateful kiss for his cheering visit, Lenette standing by, with the candle in her hand. Her husband, as some little compensation to her for having pounded her little fit of obstinacy to groats in the mortar, said to her in an off-hand, cheerful manner, "You give him one, too." The blushes mantled on her cheeks like fire, and she leant back, as if she had a mouth to avoid already. It was quite clear that, if she had not been obliged to perform the office of torch-bearer, she would have fled to her room on the spot. The Rath stood before her beaming with affectionate friendliness—something like a white winter-landscape in sunshine—waiting till—she should give him the kiss. The fruitlessness of this expectation, and the prematureness of her bending her head out of the way, began to vex him a little at last. Somewhat hurt, but still beaming as affectionately as ever, he said—

"Am I not worth a kiss, Madam Siebenkæs?"

Her husband said, "Surely you don't expect my wife to *give* you the kiss. She would set her hair and everything in a blaze with the candle!"

Upon this, Peltzstiefel inclined his head slowly and cautiously, and at the same time commandingly, down to her mouth, and laid his warm lips on hers, like the half of a stick of melted sealing-wax on the other half. Lenette gave him more space, by bending back her head; yet it must be said that while she held her left arm with the candle high up in the air, for fear of fire, she did a good deal to push away the Rath—another, more proximate, fire—politely with the other. When he was gone, she was still just the least bit embarrassed. She moved about with a certain floating motion, as though some great happiness was buoying her up with its wings—the evening red was still bright on her cheek, though the moon was high in the heavens: her eyes were bright, but dreamy, seeming to notice nothing about her—her smiles came before her words, and she spake very few—not the slightest allusion was made to the mortar. She touched everything more gently, and looked out of the window at the sky two or three times. She didn't seem to care to eat more of the two-groschen loaf, and drank no beer, but only a glass or two of water. Anybody else—myself for example—would have held up his finger and sworn he was looking upon a girl who had just had a first kiss from her sweetheart.

And I shouldn't have regretted having taken that oath had I seen the sudden blush which suffused her face next day when the money for the reviews and the snuff was brought. It was a miracle, and an extraordinary piece of politeness, that Peltzstiefel should not have forgotten about his having contracted this little loan—little debts of two or three groschen always escaped his preoccupied memory. But rich people, who always carry less money about them than the poor, and therefore borrow from them, ought to inscribe trifling debts of this sort on a memorial tablet, in their brain, because it is very wrong to break into a poor devil's purse, who gets, moreover, no thanks for these groschen of his which thus drop into the stream of Lethe.

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Now, I beg to say, I should be happy to give two sheets of this manuscript if the day of the shooting-match were but come, solely because our dear couple build so upon it

and upon its bird-pole. For the position of these people is really going on from bad to worse; the days of their destiny move with those of the calendar, from October on to November, that is to say, from the end of summer to the beginning of winter, and they find that moral frosts and nights get harder and longer in the same ratio with those of the season. However, I must go regularly on with my story.

I think there is no doubt that November, the month which is such a *Novembriseur* of the British, is the most horrible month of all the year—for me it is a regular *Septembriseur*. I wish I could hybernate, sleep, till the beginning of the Christmas month, December. The November of ’85 had, at the commencement of its reign, a dreadful wheezing breath, a hand as cold as death, and an unpleasant lachrymal fistula; in fact it was unendurable. The northeast wind, which in summer it is so pleasant to hear blowing past one’s ears, because one knows it is a sure sign of settled weather, is, in autumn, only a sign of steady cold. To our couple the weathercock was really a funeral standard. Though they didn’t exactly go out to the woods themselves with baskets and barrows to pick up fallen branches and twigs, like the poor day-labourer, they had to buy the stuff for firewood from the wood-gatherers, by weight, as if it had been wood from the Indies, and it had to be dried by the combustion of other wood before it would burn. But this damp cold weather was more trying to the advocate’s stoicism, after all, than even to his purse; he couldn’t run out and go up a hill, and look about him, and seek in the heavens for that which consoles and comforts the anxious and sorrowful, that which dissipates the clouds which shroud our life, and shows us guiding nebulæ (Magellan’s clouds), if nothing else, gleaming through the fog-banks. For when he could go up the Rabenstein, or some other hill, he could get sight from thence of the aurora of the sun of happiness, though that sun was under his horizon; the sorrows and torments of this earthly life lay, writhing, like other vipers, in the clefts and hollows beneath him, and no rattlesnake could rear itself with its fangs up to his hill. Ah! there, in the free air, close to the ocean of life which stretches on into the invisible distance of infinity, near to the lofty heavens, the blue coal smoke of the stifling, suffocating dwelling of our daily life cannot rise to us, we see its wreaths hanging far down beneath; our sorrows drop, like leeches, from our bleeding bosoms, and raised, for the time, above our woes, we stretch our arms—no fetters on them now, though sore and marked, and bruised with the galling iron—we stretch them out as if to soar in the pure bright æther; we stretch them out, and fain would take to our bosom the peaceful universe above us, we stretch them to the invisible eternal Father, like children hastening home to Him—and we open them wider yet to clasp our visible mother, created Nature, crying, “Oh take not this solace, this comfort, away from me, when I am down there again among the fog and the sorrow.” And why is it that prisoners and the sick are so wretched in their confinement? They are there shut up in their holes, the clouds sail over them, they can only see the mountains far away in the distance, these mountains whence, as from those of the Polar regions in summer midnights, the sun, down below the horizon, can be seen shining with a mild face, as if in slumber. But in this wretched weather though Siebenkæs could not enjoy the consolations of imagination, which bloom beneath the open sky, he could derive comfort from reason, which thrives in the flower-pots of the window-sills. His chief consolation, which I commend to everybody, was this: Man is under the pressure of a necessity of two kinds—an every-day necessity, which, everybody bears uncomplainingly, and a rare, or yearly-recurrent necessity, which is only submitted to after struggles and complaints. The daily and everlastingly recurrent necessity is this—that corn does not ripen in winter—that we have not got wings, though so many lower creatures have them—or

that we cannot go and stand upon the ring-shaped craters of the lunar mountains, and looking down into the abysses, which are miles in depth, watch the marvellous and beautiful effects of the setting sun's rays. The annual, or rarely recurrent, necessity is that there is rainy weather when the corn is in blossom—that there are a great many water-meadows of this world where it is very bad walking, and that sometimes, because we have corns, or no shoes, we cannot even walk anywhere. Only the annual necessity and the daily are of exactly equal magnitude, and it is just as senseless to murmur because we have paralysed limbs as because we have no wings. All the PAST—and this alone is the subject of our sorrow—is of so iron a necessity that in the eyes of a superior intelligence it is just as senseless of an apothecary to mourn because his shop is burnt to the ground as to sigh because he can't go botanising in the moon, although there may be many things in the phials there which he has not got in his.

I mean to introduce an extra leaflet here on the consolations which we may meet with in this damp, chilly, draughty life of ours. Anybody who may be annoyed at these brief digressions of mine, and is scarcely to be consoled, let him seek consolation in this—

EXTRA LEAFLET ON CONSOLATION.

A time may, that is to say, *must* come when it shall be held to be a moral obligation not only to cease to torment other people, but to cease to torment ourselves; a time must and will come when we shall wipe away the greater part of our tears, even here on earth, were it only from proper pride.

It is true, nature is so constantly drawing tears from our eyes, and forcing sighs from our breasts, that a wise man can scarcely ever wholly lay aside his *body's* garb of mourning; but let his soul wear none! For if it is a simple duty or merit to endure minor sorrows with proper cheerfulness, it is likewise a merit, only a greater one, to bear the greatest sorrows bravely, just as the same reason which enjoins the forgiveness of small injuries is equally valid for the forgiveness of the greatest.

What we have principally to contend against, and to treat with due contempt, in sorrow, as in anger, is its paralysing poisonous sweetness, which we are so loth to exchange for the exertion of consoling ourselves and of exercising our reasoning faculties.

We must not expect Philosophy to produce, with one stroke of the pen, the converse effect to that which Rubens produced, when he converted a smiling child into a weeping one with one stroke of his brush. It is sufficient if she converts the soul's deep mourning garb into half-mourning; it is enough when I can say to myself, "I am content to bear that share of my sorrow of which my philosophy has not relieved me; but for her it would have been greater—the gnat's sting would have been a wasp's."

It is only through the imagination, as from an electric condenser, that even physical pain emits its sparks upon us. We would bear the severest physical pains without a wince if they were not of longer duration than a sixtieth part of a second; but we never really do have an hour of pain to endure, but only a succession of sixtieth parts of a second of pain, the sixty separate rays of which are concentrated into the focus and burning-point of a second, and directed upon our nerves by the imagination alone. The most painful part of corporeal pain is the *in*corporeal part of it, that is to say, our own impatience, and our delusive conviction that it will last for ever.

We all know for certain that we shall have given up grieving for many a loss, in twenty, ten, or two years why do we not say to ourselves, “Very well—if this is an opinion which I shall cease to hold in twenty years’ time,—I prefer to abandon it to-day, at once? Why must it take me twenty years to abandon an error, when I need not hold it twenty hours?”

When I awake from a dream which has painted for me an Otaheite on the black background of the night, and find the flowery land melted away, I scarcely sigh, and I think it was but a dream. How were it if I had actually possessed this flowery island in waking life, and it had been submerged in the sea by an earthquake? Why should I not, *then* also, say, “The island was but a dream”? Why am I more inconsolable for the loss of a LONGER dream than for the loss of a SHORTER (for that is what constitutes the distinction),—and why does man think a great loss less necessary and less probable than a small?

The reason is that every sentiment and every passion is a mad thing, demanding, or building, a complete world of its own. We are capable of being vexed because it’s past twelve o’clock, or because it’s *not* past, but only *just* twelve o’clock. What nonsense! The passion wants besides a personality of its own (sein eignes Ich), and a world of its own,—a time of its own as well. I beg every one, just for once, to let his passions speak plainly out, and to listen to them, and ascertain what it is that they really each of them want; he will be dismayed when he sees what monstrous things are these desires of theirs which they have previously only half muttered. Anger would have but one neck for all mankind, love would have but one heart, sorrow but one pair of lachrymal ducts, and pride two bent knees!

When I was reading in Widman’s ‘Höfer Chronik’ the account of the fearful, bloody times of the thirty years’ war, and, as it were, lived them over again; when I heard once more the cries for help of those poor suffering people, all struggling in the Danube-whirlpools of their days—and saw the beating of their hands, and their delirious wanderings on the crumbling pillars of broken bridges, foaming billows and drifting ice-floes dashing against them; and then, when I thought “All these waves have gone down, the ice is melted, the howling turmoil is all sunk to silence, so are the human beings and all their sighs”—I was filled with a melancholy comfort, a thought of consolation for *all* times, and I asked, “Was, and is, then, this passing, cursory, transient burst of sorrow at the CHURCHYARD-GATE OF LIFE, which three steps into the nearest cavern could end, a fit cause for this cowardly lamentation?” Truly if, as I believe, there be such a thing as true patience under an eternal woe, then, verily, patience under a transitory sorrow is hardly worth the name.

A great but unmerited national calamity should not humble us, as the theologians would have it—it should make us proud. When the long, heavy sword of war falls upon mankind, and thousands of blanched hearts are torn and bleeding—or when in the blue, pure evening sky the hot cloud of a burning city, smoking on its funereal pyre, hangs dark and lurid, like a cloud of ashes, the ashes of thousands of hearts and joys all burnt to cinders and dust—then let thy spirit be lifted up in pride, let it loathe, contemn, and despise tears, and that for which they fall, and let it say—

“Thou art much too small a thing, thou every-day, common life, that an immortal being should be inconsolable with regard to *thee*, thou torn and tattered chance-bargain of an existence. Here upon this earth—the ashes of centuries rolled into a sphere, worked into shape and form from vapour by convulsion—the cry of one

dreaming in a sorrowful dream—I say, it is a disgrace that the sigh should cease only when the breast which gives it utterance is resolved into its elements, and that the tear should cease to flow only when the eye is closed in death."

But moderate this thy sublime transport of indignation and put to thyself this question, "If He, the Infinite one, who, veiled from thy sight, sits surrounded by the gleaming abysses, without bounds save such as Himself creates, were to lay bare to thy sight the immeasurability of infinity, and let Himself be seen of thee as he distributes the suns, the great spirits, the little human hearts, and our days, and a tear or two therein; wouldst thou rise up out of thy dust against Him, and say, 'Almighty, be other than thou art!'"

But there is one sorrow which will be forgiven thee, and for which there is recompense; it is sorrow for thy dead. For this sweet sorrow for thy lost ones is, in truth, but another form of consolation; when we long for them, this is but a sadder way of loving them still; and when we think of their departure we shed tears, as well as when we picture to ourselves our happy meeting with them again. And perhaps these tears differ not.

Continuation And Conclusion Of Chapter VI

THE CHECKED CALICO DRESS—MORE PLEDGES—CHRISTIAN NEGLECT OF THE STUDY OF JUDAISM—A HELPING ARM (OF LEATHER) STRETCHED FORTH FROM THE CLOUDS—THE AUCTION.

The St. Andrew's shooting-match will take place in the seventh chapter: the present one fills up the wintry thorny interval up to that period—that is to say, the wolf-month with its wolf-hunger. Siebenkæs would at that period have been much annoyed if any one had told him beforehand with what compassion the flourishing state of his trading enterprises was one day to be described by me, and, as a consequence, read by millions of persons in all time to come. He wanted no pity, and said, "If *I* am quite happy, why should *you* be pitying me?" The articles of household furniture which he had touched, as with the hand of death, or notched with his axe, like trees marked for cutting, were one by one duly felled and hauled away. The mirror, with the floral border, in the bedroom (which, luckily for itself, could not see itself in any other), was the first thing to be tolled out of the house by the passing- or vesper-bell, under the pall of an apron. Before he stationed it in the train of this dance of death, he proposed to Lenette a substitute for it, the checked calico mourning-dress, in order to accustom her to the idea. It was the "Censeo Carthaginem delendam" (I vote for the destruction of Carthage) which old Cato used to say daily in the senate after every speech.

Next the old arm-chair was got rid of bodily (not like Shakespeare's arm-chair, which was weighed out by the ounce, like saffron, or in carats, like gold), and the firedog went in company with it. Siebenkæs had the wisdom to say, before they went away, "Censeo Carthaginem delendam," *i. e.* "Wouldn't it be better to pawn the checked calico?"

They could barely subsist for two days upon the dog and the chair.

And then the process of alchemical transmutation of metals was applied to the shaving-basin and the bedroom crockery, which were converted into table-money. Of course he previously said "Censeo." It is scarcely worth the trouble, but I may just observe here how little fruit was born by this branch of trade; it was rather a woody branch than a fruit-bearing one.

The lean porcelain cow or butter-boat would scarcely have served as their nourishing milch cow for more than a day, if she had not been attended by seven potentates (that is to say, most miserable prints of them), who went "into the bargain," but for whom the woman at the shop added some melted butter. Wherefore he said "Censeo." Many of my readers must remember my mentioning that, a short time ago, when he was distributing sentences of death among the furniture, he did not take very much notice of certain table-napkins which were lying beside the checked calico dress. Now, however, he acted as screech-owl, or bird of death, and gallows-priest to them also, and routed them out all but a few. When they were gone, he remarked, in an incidental manner, shortly before Martinmas Day, that the napkin-press was still to the fore, though it was not very clear what was the use of it, as there was nothing for it to press.

"If such a thing should be necessary," he said, "the press might very well get leave of absence on private affairs, until *we* get through the smoothing-press, oiling-press,

and napkin-press of destiny, and come out all smooth and beautiful ourselves, and can stick the napkins into our button-holes on their return." His first intention had even been to reverse the order of the funeral procession, and put the press in the van of it as *avant-courier* of the napkins, and in that event he would only have had to invert his syllogism (as well as his procession) in this way: "I don't see what we can do with the napkins, or how we're to press them and keep them smooth, till we get the press home again."

I am most firmly convinced that the majority of people would have done as Lenette did with reference to my trade-consul Siebenkæs, and his Hanseatic confederation with everybody who dealt in anything—that is, clasped her hands above her head, and said, "Oh! the thoughtless, silly creature! he'll soon be a beggar at this rate: the beautiful furniture!"

Firmian's constant answer was—

"You would have me kneel down and howl, and tear my coat in lamentation, like a Jew—my coat, which is torn already and pull my hair out by the roots—that hair, which terror frequently causes to fall off in a single night. Isn't it enough if *you* do the howling? Are you not my appointed *præfica* and keening-woman? Wife, I swear to you, and that as solemnly as if I were standing on pig's bristles,[47] that if it is the will of God, who has given me so light and merry a heart—if it be His will that I am to go about the town with eight thousand holes in my coat, and without a sole to either shoe or stocking that I am to go on always getting poorer and poorer" (here his eyes grew moist in spite of him, and his voice faltered), "may the devil take me and lash me to death with the tuft of his tail if I leave off laughing and singing; and anybody who pities me, I tell him to his face, is an ass. Good heavens! the apostles, and Diogenes, and Epictetus, and Socrates, had seldom a whole coat to their backs—never such a thing as a shirt—and shall a creature such as I let a hair of him turn grey for such a reason, in miserable PROVINCIALISTIC times such as these?"

Right, my Firmian! Have a proper contempt for the narrow heart-sacs of the big clothes-moths about you—the human furniture-boring worms. And ye, poor devils, who chance to be reading me—whether ye be sitting in colleges or in offices, or even in parsonage-houses, who perhaps haven't got a hat without a hole in it to put on your heads, most certainly haven't got a black one—rise above the effeminate surroundings of your times to the grand Greek and Roman days, wherein it was thought no disgrace to a noble human creature to have neither clothes nor temple, like the statue of Hercules; take heed only that your soul shares not the poverty of your outward circumstances; lift your faces to heaven with pride—a sickly faint northern Aurora is veiling it, but the eternal stars are breaking through the thin blood-red storm!

It was but a few weeks now to the St. Andrew's Day shooting-match, which was Lenette's consolation in all her troubles, and to which all her wishes were directed; however, there came one day on which she was something worse than melancholy—inconsolable.

This was Michaelmas: on that day the press was to have followed Lenette's Salzburg emigrants, the napkins, as their lady superior; but nobody in all the town would have anything to do with it. The sole anchor of refuge was one Jew, because there was no species of animal (in the shape of articles of merchandise) which did not flee to his

[47] Jews were formerly obliged to stand with bare feet on pig's-skin when they took oath.

Noah's ark of a shop. Unfortunately, however, the day when the napkin-press applied to him was a Jewish feast-day, which he kept more strictly than ever he did his word. He said he would see about it to-morrow.

Permit me, if you please, to take this opportunity of making a few remarks of importance. Is it not a piece of most culpable negligence on the part of the Government that, seeing the Jews are, as it were, farmers-general and metal-kings of the Christians in German states, the days of their feasts and fasts, and other times connected with their worship, are not published and clearly made known for the benefit of those very numerous persons who wish to borrow of them, or have any business to transact with them? Those who suffer most from this omission are just the upper circles of society, persons of birth and rank, officials of high position; these are the persons who bring papers and want money on Feasts of Haman, Feasts of Esther, of the Destruction of the Temple, of the Rejoicing of the Law, and can't obtain any. Surely the Jewish festivals, with the hours at which they begin and end, ought to be given in every almanack—as they have been fortunately, for a considerable time, in those of Berlin and Bavaria—or in newspapers—or be proclaimed by the crier, and carefully taught in schools. The Jew, indeed, has no need of a calendar of *our* festivals, since we are always ready to put off and postpone, if he likes, every Sunday of the year, though it were the first Sunday of it, the feast of the Jewish Circumcision; and consequently hereafter, when the universal monarchy of the Jews is actually established, he won't take the trouble to append a Christian calendar to his own Jewish calendars, as we now append the Jewish to our Christian. The necessity, however, of inculcating in our schools a better and more exact acquaintance with the seasons of the Jewish festivals, and with their religious observances in general, will not be so fully manifest until hereafter, when the Jews shall have elevated Germany to the proud position of being their Land of Promise, leaving us to make our crusade, and our return to the Asiatic land of promise, if we feel disposed—to a holy sepulchre, and a sacred Calvary.

And yet *I* think (to close this digression by another) that hereafter, when we become the Christian numerators of Jewish denominators, we should be wrong to set out, as modern crusaders, for the holy land, as to which the Jews themselves trouble their heads but little. It is certain that they will treat us with a far wider measure of the spirit of tolerance than we, unfortunately, have extended to them; but their genius for commerce, which they have hitherto been so much reproached with, will be found to prove itself a guardian angel for us poor Christians, and to take us under its tutelage, inasmuch as we are so indispensably necessary to them as purchasers and consumers of the unprepared hindquarters of the cattle (for it is only the fore-quarters which they may eat, unless the veins are all taken out). Who else but Christians can take the place of the beasts of burden—as no animal may be degraded by working on the "Schabbes"[48] (Sabbath)—and perform the necessary draught and other labour? and to whom are they to entrust the performance of menial and manual employments, like the ancient republicans, but to us, their nobler slaves and helots, whom they will, therefore, be sure to treat with more consideration than they have heretofore treated us when we have omitted to pay our promissory notes as they became due.

[48] Animals may not carry anything on the Schabbes; even the lappets which fowls sometimes have tied to them as marks of distinction, have to be taken off on that day; and the Jews must get non-Jews to milk for them; they may not even wipe off dust or moisture from their persons.

I return to our poor's advocate, and record that on Michaelmas Day he could get no money, and consequently no Michaelmas goose. Lenette's grief at the absence of the goose of her ecclesiastical communion we must all share. Women, who care less about eating and drinking than the most ascetic philosophers—caring, indeed, more about the latter themselves than about the former—are at the same time not to be controlled if they have to go without certain *chronological* articles of diet. Their natural liking for burgherly festivities brings it about that they would rather go without the appointed hymns and the gospel of the day than without butter-cakes at Christmas, cheesecakes at Easter, the goose at Michaelmas; their stomachs require a particular cover for each festival, like Catholic altars. So that the canonical dish is a kind of secondary sacrament, which, like the primary one, they take, not for the palate's sake, but "by reason of the ordinance." Antoninus and Epictetus could provide Siebenkæs with no efficient substitute for the goose, with which to console the weeping Lenette, who said, "We really *are* Christians, whatever you may say, and belong to the Lutheran Church; and every Lutheran has a goose on his table to-day—I'm sure my poor dear father and mother always had. As for you, *you* believe in nothing." Whether he believed in anything or not, however, he slipped off, though it was the afternoon of the Jewish feast-day, to the Jew, who kept a nice pen of geese, with livers both fat and lean, serving as a post-stable for country friends of his own religion. When he went into his place he pulled a duodecimo Hebrew Bible out of his pocket and put it down on the table, with the words, "It was a great pleasure to him to meet with a keen, diligent, student of the law; to such a man it would be a real satisfaction to make a present of his Bible, without asking a halfpenny for it; as it was, an unpointed edition (that is to say, one without vowels), he couldn't read it himself, especially as even if it had *had* points, he couldn't have managed it. This napkin-press of mine, here"—he said, producing it from under his coat-tails "I should be very glad if you would allow me to leave with you, because I find it a good deal in my way at home; I don't quite know what to do with it. You see, I have particular reasons for being anxious to get hold of a goose out of your pen; I don't mind if it's as thin as a whipping-post. *If you like*, you may *call* it giving it to me in charity on a holy day of this sort, for all I care; it'll make no difference to *me*. If I should ever come and take away the press again, it'll be an easy matter, and it'll be time enough, to go into the transaction afresh."

It was thus that, in order to secure his wife the free exercise of her religious observances, he *brought in* this goose of controversy, which *seemed* to have some polemical bearing, as well as to be connected with distinctive doctrines of faith; and next day these two Doctor Martin Lutherists ate up the Schmalkaldian article (and, indeed, *another* Schmalkaldian article, a *commercial* one—cold iron, namely—has often been employed in defence of the articles of theology). Thus was the capitol of the Lutheran religion saved, in an easy manner, by the bird, which was roasted (so to speak) at the fire of an *auto-da-fé*.

But on this particular morning up came the wigmaker, an individual whom he was delighted to see generally, though *not* to-day, for on the day before, Michaelmas, the quarter's house rent was due, as we may remember. The *Friseur* presented himself as a sort of mute bill "at sight;" yet he was polite enough not to *ask* for anything. He merely mentioned, in a casual manner, that "there was going to be an auction of a variety of things on the Monday before St. Andrew's Day, and in case the advocate might care to get together a few things for it, he thought he would give him notice of it, as he held a life appointment from the Houses of Assembly as auction-crier."

He was scarcely down stairs before Lenette gave deep, but not loud, expression to her woes, saying he had "dunned them now, and that the whole house must know all about their disreputable style of housekeeping: had he not talked about furniture?" It was incomprehensible how the poor woman could have fancied anybody had been in the dark about it before! Poor people are always the first to nose out poverty. At the same time Firmian had been ashamed to tell the *Friseur* that he had been obliged to appoint himself auctioneer of his own furniture. Here he perceived that he blushed for his poverty more before one person, and before the poor, than he did before a whole town, and before the rich; and he flew into a furious indignation with these execrable *eructations* of human vanity in his noblest parts.

The path from hence to St. Andrew's Day, all bordered with nothing but thistles as it is, cannot possibly seem longer, even to the reader, than it did to my hero, who, moreover, had to take hold of the thistles and pull them up with his own hands. The garden of his life kept getting more and more like a *jardin Anglais*, where only prickly and barren trees, but no fruit-trees, were to be found.

Every night, when he opened the latch of his bed-railings, he would say, with great enjoyment, to his Lenette, "Only twenty (or nineteen, or eighteen, or seventeen) days now to the shooting-match." But the hairdresser and auction-crier had played the deuce and all with Lenette, though the evenings were long and dark and splendidly convenient for needy borrowers on deposit, veiling and hiding the naked, abashed, misery of the poor; she was ashamed the people in the house should know, and afraid to meet them. Firmian, who was astonished equally at the inexhaustible resources of his brain and of his house, and who kept saying to himself, "Do you know, I'm really curious to see what I shall hit upon to-day again, and how I shall manage to get out of *this* difficulty now—" Firmian, a day or two after the Michaelmas dinner, got his eye upon two more good articles of furniture—a long cask-siphon and a rocking-horse (a relic of his childhood). "We haven't a cask, and we haven't a baby," he said. But his wife implored him, for heaven's sake, "not to put her to this shame. The horse and the siphon" (she said) "are things that would stick out of the basket so terribly, or out from under one's apron, and in the moonlight everybody would see them."

And yet *something* must go! Firmian said, in an odd cutting, yet sorrowful way, "It must be so! Fate, like Pritzel,[49] is beating on the bottom of the drum, and the oats are jumping on the top of it; we have got to eat off the drum."

"Anything," she said, faint and beaten, "except things that stick out so." She searched about, opened the top drawer of the cupboard, and took out a faded wreath of artificial flowers: she said, "Rather take this!" and neither smiled nor wept! *He* had often looked at it; but as he had sent it to her himself last New Year's Day, the day of their betrothal, and because it was so romantically beautiful (a white rose, two red rosebuds, and a border of forget-me-nots) every fibre of that tender heart of his would have stood out against parting with this pretty relic—this memorial of better, happier, days. The patient, resigned way in which she made the sacrifice of these poor old flowers tore his heart in two. "Lenette!" he said, moved beyond expression—"why, you know, these are our betrothal flowers!"

"Well, who's to be any the wiser," she said, quite cheerfully and quite coolly. "You see they're not so *big* as other things are."

[49] Prizelius trained war-horses to stand the beating of the drums in battle, by strewing oats on the tops of drums, and beating on the lower side of them while the horses ate the oats as they jumped about on the top.

“Have you forgotten, then quite,” he stammered, “what I told you these flowers meant?”

“Let me see,” the said, more coldly still, and proud of the goodness of her memory, “the forget-me-nots mean that I’m not to forget you, and that you won’t forget me—the buds mean happiness—no, no, the buds mean happiness that’s not quite all come yet—and the white rose—I don’t recollect now *what* the white rose means——”

“It means pain” (he said, overwhelmed with emotion), “and innocence, and sorrow, and a poor white face.” He clasped her in his arms, as the tears came to his eyes, and cried, “Oh! poor darling! poor darling! What can I do? It’s all beyond me! I should like to give you everything the world contains, and I have nothing——”

He ceased suddenly, for while his arms were round her, she had shut up the drawer of the cupboard, and was looking at him with calm, clear, gentle eyes, not the trace of a tear in them. She resumed her petition in the old tone saying, “I may keep the siphon and the horse, mayn’t I? We shall get more money for the flowers.” What he said was, “Lenette! Oh, darling Lenette,” over and over again, each time more tenderly.

“But why not?” she asked, more gently each time, for she didn’t understand him in the least. “I had sooner pawn the coat off my back,” was his answer. But as she now got the alarming idea into her head that what he was driving at was the calico gown, and as *this* put her into a great state, and as she immediately began to inveigh warmly against all pledging of large articles; and as he clearly perceived that her previous coldness had been thoroughly genuine, and not assumed, he knew, alas! the very worst, a grief which no sweet drops of philosophy could avail to alleviate, namely—she either loved him no longer, or, she had never really loved him at all.

The sinews of his arms were now fairly cut in two, the sinews of his arms which had till now kept misfortune at bay. In the prostration of this his (spiritual) putrid fever he could say nothing but—“Whatever you please, dear; it’s all the same to me now.”

Upon that, she went out delighted, and quickly, to old Sabel, but came back again immediately. This pleased him; sorrow having gnawed deeper into his heart during the three moments she was gone, he could follow up the bitter speech with these quiet words: “Put up your marriage wreath along with the other flowers, there’ll be a little more weight, and a little more money for it; though it is nothing like such pretty work as my flowers.”

“My marriage wreath?” cried Lenette, colouring with anger, while two bitter tears burst from her eyes. “No, that I positively *shall* NOT let go, it shall be put with me into my coffin, as my poor dear mother’s was. Did you not take it up in your hand from the table on my wedding-day, when I had taken it off to have my hair powdered, and say you thought quite as much of it as you did of the marriage ceremony itself, if not more? (I noticed what you said very carefully, and remember it quite distinctly). No, no, I am your wife, at all events, and I shall never let that wreath go as long as *I* live.”

His emotion now took a new bent, one more in harmony with hers, but he masked this behind the question, “What made you come back in such a hurry?” It was that old Sabel had just been in at the bookbinder’s, it seemed, and Herr von Meyern had been there too. That young gentleman was in the habit of getting off his horse and dropping in, partly to see what new books the ladies were having bound at the bookbinder’s, and in what sort of pretty bindings, partly to stick up his leg with its

riding boot upon the cobbler's bench and get him to stitch a top tighter, asking about all sorts of things during the process. The world—(which expression can only mean the collection of female tongue-threshers of empty straw belonging to Kuhschnappel)—may undoubtedly conclude, if it be so minded, the Venner to be a regular Henry the Fowler with respect to more women than one in the house, the latter being a feminine *Volière* to him; but I want proofs of this. Lenette, however, didn't trouble herself about any proofs, but piously fled out of the way of Rosa the birdcatcher.

I further relate (doing so, moreover, without any very marked blush for the mutability of the human heart) that at this point Firmian's compressed thoracic cavity grew several inches wider, so as to give admission to a considerable modicum of happiness, for no other reason but that Lenette had kept such a tight grasp of her marriage-wreath, and had endured the Venner for so short a time. "She is faithful, at all events, although she may be rather cool; in fact, I don't really believe she *is* a bit cool, either, after all." So that he was quite pleased that she should have her way (which was *his* also) about keeping the wedding-wreath in the house and in her heart. Besides which, without contending further about the betrothal-wreath, he let her have that *other* way of hers, though less willingly—this being a proceeding which hurt *his* feelings only, not hers. His old flower keepsake was accordingly deposited in the hands of an obliging lady who rejoiced in the title of "Appraiser," on the solemn understanding that it was to be redeemed with the very first dollar which should drop from the bird-pole on St. Andrew's Day.

The blood-money of these silken flowers was so parcelled out as to be made available by way of stepping-stones in the muddy path leading to the Sunday before the shooting-match. This Sunday (the 27th November, 1785) was to be followed by the Monday for which the auction had been announced; on the Wednesday he (and I hope all of us with him) would be in his place in front of the bird-pole.

It is true, however, that on the Sunday he had to ford a stream swollen to a considerable extent by rainy weather; we will go through it after him, but I give due notice that, in the middle, it is pretty deep.

The stomach of his inner man evinced a wonderful disrelish, and exhibited a reversed peristaltic motion towards everything in the shape of pawning, since the affair of the flowers. The reason was—there was nothing more to which he could *refer* his wife. At first, he used to refer her to the shooting-match; but when the mortar and the chair had evacuated the fortress without tuck of drum, they not being articles of a sort to be obtained as prizes for shooting, he took to referring her to public auctions at which he could always buy what he might require at about half price. Finally, though still referring her to auctions, he did so no longer with a view to import, but to export, trade—as a seller, rather than as a buyer, of commodities; in which respect he surpasses Spain.

He who has risen victorious over great and serious attacks of an insulting or offensive nature, has often had to yield to very small and trifling ones; and so it is with our troubles. The stout, firm heart, which has beat strongly on all through long years of bitter trial and affliction, will often break at once, like over-flooded ice, at some lightest touch of Fortune's foot. Till now, Siebenkæs had carried himself erect, and borne his burden without a bend, ay, and with a merrier heart than many a man. Up to this hour, he really hadn't minded the whole affair one single button. Had he not (merely to mention one or two instances) pointed out that, in the matter of clothes,

he was better off than the Emperor of Germany, who (he said) had nothing to put on, on his coronation-day in Frankfort, but a frightful old cast-off robe of Charles the Great's, not much better than Rabelais's old gown, though *that* was not by several centuries so old as the Imperial one? And once when his wife was sadly looking over his fading perennial clothes flora, he told her all she had to do was to suppose he was serving in the new world with a thousand or so of other Anspach men, and the ship which was bringing out their new uniforms had been captured by the enemy, so that the whole force had nothing to put on but what they would have preferred to have been able to take off. Likewise that what he had had to go upon, and to take his stand upon for a considerable time past, had been something much superior to his own pair of boots (by this he clearly meant pure apathy); as for his boots, they, having been twice new fronted, had been shoved in like pocket telescopes, or trombones, till they had become a pair of fair halt-boots; just as the German *corpora*, also, by the influence of long years of civilisation and culture, have got considerably taken in, the long rifle having been docked into a short, or non-commissioned officers' rifle.

But on the Sunday to which I am alluding, he was far too much scared at the sight of one single bird of prey and of ill omen, flying athwart the lonely Sahara desert in which his life was passing. He himself was taken by surprise at this alarm of his; he would have expected anything else but alarm under the circumstances. For as it had hitherto been his custom to prepare himself for dark and tragic scenes by comedy rehearsals of them—by which I mean, that he carefully read up, beforehand, all the legal steps which Herr von Blaise could take against him, thus taking up, in sport, and in advance, the burdens which the future had in store—it astonished him greatly to find that an ill, quite certain to come, and clearly foreseen, should prove to have longer thorns, when it came up towards him out of the future, than it seemed to possess while still at a distance.

So that when, on the Sunday, the messenger of the Inheritance Office came, with the long-expected THIRD dilatory plea of the Heimlicher, and with the third affirmatory decree written on the face thereof, as his breast was in the condition of a vacuum (no air to breathe in it) before his coming, his poor heart grew sick and breathless indeed, when this fresh stroke of the air-pump exhausted the receiver even more thoroughly than it had been emptied before.

Amid the multiplicity of matters which it has been my duty to report to the public, I have omitted, on purpose, all mention of the second of Mr. Blaise's dilatory pleas, because I thought I might assume that every reader who has had as much as half a ship's pound weight of legal documents through his hands—or one single settlement of law accounts—would take it for granted, as a matter of course, that the first petition for delay would infallibly be followed by a second. It reflects much discredit on our administration of justice that every upright, honourable counsel finds himself compelled to adduce such a number of reasons (I wish I might say "lies") before he can be accorded the smallest, necessary term of delay; he has got to say his children and his wife are dying; that he has met with all kinds of unfortunate accidents, and has thousands of things to do, journeys to make, and sicknesses. Whereas it ought to be quite enough for him to say that the preparation of the innumerable petitions for delay with which he is overwhelmed, leaves him little time to write anything else. People ought to notice that these petitions for delay tend, as all other petitions do, to the protracting of the suit, just as all the wheels of a watch work together to retard the principal wheel. A slow pulse is a sign of longevity not only in human beings but in lawsuits. It seems to me that an advocate who has any conscience is glad to do

what he can to promote the length of life in his opponent's suit—not in his own client's, he would make an end of *that* in a minute if he could—partly to punish the said opponent, partly to terrify him, or else to snatch, from his grasp a favourable judgment (a sort of thing as to which nobody can form an idea whether it is likely or not)—for as many years as possible; just as in 'Gulliver's Travels,' the people who had a black mark on their brow were doomed to the torture of eternal life. The object of the man of business on the opposite side is a similar prolongation of the war to *his* opponents, and thus the two counsel immesh the two clients in a long drag-net of documents, &c., each with the best possible intentions. On the whole, lawyers are not so indifferent to the question, "What is the law?" as to the question, "What is justice?" For which reason they prefer arguing to writing; as *Simonides*, when he was asked by the king the question, "What is God?" begged for a day to consider his answer—then for another day—then for another—and for another, and always for another, because no man's life is sufficient to answer that question—so the jurist, when he is asked, "What is justice?" keeps continually asking for more and more delays—he can never reply to the question—indeed, if the judges and clients would let him, he would gladly devote his whole life to writing replies to a legal question of this sort. Advocates are so used to this way of looking at matters, that it never strikes them that there is anything unusual about it.

I return to my story. This blow of the iron secular arm, with its six long thief- and writing-fingers, all but felled Siebenkæs to the earth. The vapours about his path in life condensed to morning mist, the morning mist to evening clouds, the clouds to showers of rain. "Many a poor devil has more to do than he can manage," he said. If he had had a pleasant, cheerful wife, he would not have said this; but one such as his, who painfully *trailed* her cross (instead of taking it up), and was all lamentations—an elegiac poetess, a Job's comforter—was herself a *second* cross to bear.

He set to work and thought the whole thing over; he had hardly enough left to buy the next year's almanack, or a bundle of Hamburgh quills (for his satires used up Lenette's feather dusters much more than his own energies, so that he often thought of cutting Stiefel's red pipe-stalk into a pen); he would have been delighted to convert his plates into something to eat (there were none left, however), following the example of the Gauls, who used round pieces of bread as plates first, and afterwards as dessert; or of the Huns, who, after riding upon pieces of beef (by way of saddles) till it was partly cooked, dined upon these saddles. His half-boots would need to be new fronted, and abbreviated for the third time, before the arrival of the impending shooting-match day; and of the necessary requisites for the performance of that operation the only one in existence was the artist, Fecht the cobbler. In short, for that important occasion he had nothing to put on his back or in his pocket, his bullet-pouch, or his powder-horn.

When a man intentionally works his anxieties and apprehensions up to the highest possible pitch, some consolation is sure to fall upon his heart from heaven, like a drop of warm rain. Siebenkæs began catechising himself more strictly, asking himself what it really was that he was tormenting himself about. Nothing but the fear of having to go to the shooting-match without money, without powder and shot, and without having had his boots abbreviated for the third time! "Is that really all?" he said. "And what, if you please, is there to make it a compulsory matter that I should go there at all? I'll tell you what it is" (he went on to himself), "I am the monkey complaining bitterly that, having stuck his hand into a narrow-mouthed bottle of rice, and filled it, he can't pull it out without a corkscrew. All I've got to do is to sell

my rifle and my shooting ticket; all I've got to do is to open my hand and draw it out empty." So he made up his mind to take his rifle to the barber on the day of the auction to be put up to sale.

All battered, bruised, and weary with the day, he climbed into his bed, with the thought of which safe and sheltered anchoring ground he consoled himself all day long. "There is this blessed property about night," he said, as he sat and spread the feathers of his quilt level, "that while it lasts we need trouble ourselves neither about candles, coals, victuals, drink, debts, nor clothes; all we want is a bed. A poor fellow is in peace and comfort as long as he is lying down: and, luckily, he has only got to stand for half of his time."

The attacks of syncope, to which our souls and our cheerfulness are subject, cease, as those of the body do (according to Zimmermann), when the patient is placed in a horizontal position.

Had his bed been provided with bed-tassel, I should have called it the capstan, whereby he heaved himself slowly up on the Monday morning from his resting place. When he got up, he ascended to the garret, where his rifle was nailed up in an old, long field-chest, to keep it safe. This rifle was a valuable legacy from his father, who had been huntsman and gun-loader to a great prince of the empire. He took a crowbar, and, using it as a lever, prised up the lid with its roots, *i. e.* nails; and the first thing he saw in it was a leather arm, which "gave him quite a turn;" for he had had many a good thrashing from that arm in bygone days.

It will not take me too far out of my way to expend a word or two on this subject. This full-dress arm had been borne by Siebenkæs's father on his body (as it might be in the field of his escutcheon) ever since the time when he had lost his natural arm in the military service of the before-mentioned prince, who, as some slight reward, had got him his appointment as gun-loader to his corps of Jägers. The gun-loader wore this auxiliary arm fastened to a hook on his left shoulder; it being more like the arm of a Hussar's pelisse, or an elongated glove, worn by way of ornament, than as a *mouth* Christian of an arm (pretending to be what it was not). In the education of his children, however, the leather arm served, to some extent, the purpose of a school library and Bible Society, and was the *collaborateur* of the fleshly arm. Every-day shortcomings—for instance, when Firmian made a mistake in his multiplication, or rode on the pointer dog, or ate gunpowder, or broke a pipe—were punished *not* severely, that is, only with a stick, which in all good schools runs up the backs of the children by way of capillary sap-vessel or siphon, to supply the nourishing juice of knowledge; or is the carriage-pole to which entire winter-schools are harnessed, and at which they tug with a will. But there were two other sorts of transgressions which he punished *more* severely. When one of the children laughed at table during meals, or hesitated, or made a blunder during the long table-grace or evening prayers, he would immediately amputate his adventitious arm with his natural one, and administer a tremendous thrashing to the little darling.

Firmian remembered, as if it had happened yesterday, one occasion when he and his sisters had been thrashed, turn about, for a whole half-hour at dinner-time with the battle-flail, because one of them began to laugh while the long muscle was swishing about the ears of another, who was serious enough. The sight of the bit of leather made his heart burn even at this day. I can quite see the advantage to parents and teachers who try the expedient of unhooking an empty by an organic arm, and smiting a pupil with this species of Concordat, and alliance between the *temporal*

and *spiritual arms*; but this mode of punishment ought to be *invariably* the one made use of; for there is nothing which infuriates children more than anything *new* in the way of instruments of punishment, or a new mode of application of those in general use. A child who is accustomed to rulers and blows on the back, must not be set upon with boxes on the ear and bare hands; nor one accustomed to the latter treated to the former. The author of these Flower-pieces had once a slipper thrown at him in his earlier days. The scar of that slipper is still fresh in his heart, whereas he has scarcely any recollection of lickings of the ordinary sort.

Siebenkæs pulled the arm of punishment and the rifle out of the chest; but what a treasure trove there was beneath them! Here was help, indeed! At all events he could go to the shooting-match in shorter boots, and eat whatever he liked for some days to come. What most astonishes both him and me in this affair (it is easily explicable, however) is that he had never thought of it sooner, inasmuch as his father was a Jäger; while, on the other hand, I must confess it could not have happened on a luckier day, because it chanced to be just the day of the auction.

The hunting spear, the horse's tail, the decoy bird, the fox-trap, the *couteau de chasse*, the medicine-chest, the fencing mask and foil—a collection of things which he had never had a thought of looking for in the chest—could be taken over instantly to the town-house, and set up to auction on the spot by the hairdressing Saxon.

It was done accordingly. After all his troubles, the little piece of good luck warmed and gladdened his heart. He went himself after the box—which was sent just as it stood to the auction, except that the rifle and the leathern artery were kept back—to hear what would be offered for the things.

He took up his position (on account of the excessive length of his half-boots) at the back of the auctioneer's table, close to his hectic landlord. The sight of this pile of heterogeneous goods and chattels all heaped up higgledy-piggledy (as if some grand conflagration were raging, and it had been collected in haste for safety; or as if it were the plunder of some captured city), goods and chattels sold, for the most part, by people on the downward path to poverty, and bought by those who had arrived at poverty already—had the effect of making him contemn and despise more every moment all this complex pumping apparatus, this machinery for keeping the spring-wells of a few petty, feeble lives in clear and vigorous flow; and he himself, the engineer and driver of this machinery, felt his sense of manliness grow stronger. He was furious with himself, because his soul had seemed yesterday to be but a sham jewel, which a drop of aquafortis deprives of its colour and lustre, whereas a real jewel never loses either.

Nothing awakens our humour more, nor renders us more utterly indifferent to the honour paid to mere rank and worldly position, than our being in any manner compelled to fall back upon the honour due to ourselves (independently of our chance position), our own *intrinsic worth*, our being compelled to tar over our inner being with philosophy (as if it were a Diogenes' tub), by way of protection against injuries from without; or (in a prettier metaphor) when, like pearl oysters, we have to exude pearls of maxims to fill the holes which worms bore in our mother-of-pearl. Now pearls are better than uninjured mother-of-pearl; an idea which I should like to have written in letters of gold.

I have good reasons of my own for prefacing what has to follow with all this philosophy, because I want to get the reader into such a frame of mind that he may not make too great a fuss about what the advocate is going to do now: it was really

nothing but a harmless piece of fun. As the be-powdered lungs of the auctioneer were more adapted to wheezing and coughing than to shouting, he took the auction-hammer from this hammer-man and sold off the things himself. True, he only did it for about half an hour, and only auctioned his own things; and even then he would have thought twice about taking the hammer in hand and setting to work, if it hadn't been such an indescribable delight to him to hold up the horse's tail, the spear, the decoy-bird, &c., and hammer on the table and cry, "Four groschen for the horse's tail, *once*! five kreuzer for the decoy, *twice*!—going! Half-a dollar for the fox-trap, once! two gulden for this fine foil, twice! two gulden—going—going—and gone!" He did what it is an auctioneer's duty to do, he praised the goods. He turned the horse's tail over and over, and opened it out before the huntsmen who were at the sale (the shooting-match had attracted many from a distance, as carrion does vultures), stroked it with and against the hair, and said there was enough of it to make snares for all the blackbirds in the Black Forest. He held up the decoy-bird in its best light, exhibiting to the company its wooden beak, its wings, talons, and feathers, and only wished there were a hawk present, that he might bait the decoy and lure it.

The entries in his housekeeping account-book, which, on account of the wretchedness of my memory, I have had to refer to twice, show that the sum received from the huntsmen amounted to seven florins and some groschen. This does not include the medicine-chest nor the long-necked mask; for nobody would have anything to say to *them*. When he went home he poured the whole of this crown-treasure and sinking-fund into Lenette's gold satchel, taking occasion to warn her and himself of the dangers of great riches, and holding up to both the example of those who are arrogant by reason of wealth, and must therefore of necessity, sooner or later, come to ruin.

In my Seventh Chapter, which I shall commence immediately, I shall at length be able, after all these thousands of domestic worries and miseries, to conduct the learned world of Germany to the shooting-ground and present to them my hero as a worthy member of the shooting-club, with a rifle and bullets, and properly and respectably—well, *booted*, more than *attired* for his bullets are cast, his rifle cleaned, and his boots have put on their shoes, Fecht having stitched, on his knee, the three-quarter boots down to half-boots, and soled them with the—leather arm, of which enough has been said already.

Chapter VII

THE SHOOTING-MATCH—ROSA'S AUTUMNAL CAMPAIGN—CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING CURSES, KISSES, AND THE MILITIA.

There is nothing which so much inconveniences me, or is so much to the prejudice of this story (so beautiful in itself), as the fact that I have made a resolution to restrict it within the compass of four alphabets. I have thus, by my own act, deprived myself of everything in the shape of room for digressions. I find myself, metaphorically, in a somewhat similar position to one which I once found myself in, without metaphor, on an occasion when I was measuring the diameter and circumference of the town of Hof. On that occasion I had fastened a Catel's pedometer by a hook to the waistband of my trousers and the silken cord which runs down the thigh to a curved hook of steel at my knee, so that the three indexes on one dial (of which the first marks a hundred steps, the second a thousand, and the third up to twenty thousand) were all moving just as I moved myself. At this moment I met a young lady, whom it was incumbent on me that I should see home. I begged her to excuse me, as I had a Catel's pedometer on, and had already made a certain number of steps towards my measurement of the diameter of Hof. "You see, in a moment," I said, "how I am situated. The pedometer, like a species of conscience, records all the steps I take; and, with a lady, I shall be obliged to take shorter steps, besides thousands of sideway and backward steps, all of which the pedometer will put to the account of the diameter. So, you see, I am afraid it's quite impossible that I *can* have the pleasure of——" However, this only made her the more determined that I *should*, and I was well laughed at; but I screwed myself to the spot, and wouldn't stir. At last I said I would go home with her, pedometer and all, if she would just read off my indexes for me (seeing I couldn't twist myself down low enough to see the dial)—read them off for me twice—firstly, then and there, and secondly, when we got to her house—so that I might deduct the steps taken by me in this young lady's company from the size of Hof. This agreement was honestly kept; and this little account of the occurrence may be of service to me some day if ever I publish (as I have not given up all hopes of doing) my perspective sketch of the town of Hof; and townspeople who saw me walking with the said young lady, and with the pedometer trailing at my knee, might cast it in my teeth and say it was a lame affair, and that nobody could calculate as to the steps he might take in a lady's company, far less apply them to the measurement of a town.

St. Andrew's Day was bright and fine, and not very windy. It was tolerably warm, and there wasn't as much snow in the furrows as would have cooled a nutshell of wine, or knocked over a humming-bird. On the previous Tuesday Siebenkæs had been looking on with the other spectators, when the bird-pole had described its majestic arc in descending to impale the black golden eagle with outstretched wings, and rise again therewith on high. He felt some emotion as the thought struck him, "That bird of prey up there holds in his claws, and will dispense, the happiness or the misery of thy Lenette's coming weeks, and our goddess of Fortune has transformed herself and dwindled into that black form, nothing left of her but her WINGS and BALL."

On St. Andrew's morning, as he said good-bye to Lenette, with kisses, and in his abbreviated boots, over which he had a pair of goloshes, she said, "May God grant you luck, and not let you do any mischief with your rifle." She asked several times if there was nothing he had forgotten—his eyeglass, or his handkerchief, or his purse;

"And mind you don't get into any quarrel with Mr. von Meyern," was her parting counsel: and finally, as one or two preliminary thundrous drum-ruffles were heard from the direction of the courthouse, she added most anxiously, "For God's sake, mind and don't shoot yourself; my blood will run cold the whole forenoon every time I hear a gun go off!"

At length the long thread of riflemen, rolled up like a ball, began to unwind itself, and the waving line, like a great serpent, moved off in surging convolutions to the sound of trumpets and drums. A banner represented the serpent's crest, and the standard-bearer's coat was like a second flag beneath the other. The town-soldiery, more remarkable for quality than for quantity, shot the mottled line of competitors at intervals with the white of their uniforms. The auctioneering hairdresser—the only member of the lower ten thousand who rejoiced in a powdered head—tripped along, keeping the white peak of his cap at the due degree of distance from the leather pigtails of the aristocracy, which he had that morning tied and powdered. The multitude felt what a lofty position in this world really was, when, with bent heads, they raised their eyes to Heimlicher von Blaise, the director of the competition, who accompanied the procession in his capacity of aorta of the whole arterial system, or elementary fire of all these ignes-fatui—or, in a word, as master of the shooters' lodge. Happy was the wife who peeped out and saw her husband marching past in the procession—happy was Lenette, for her husband was there, and looked gallantly up as he passed by. His short boots looked very nice, indeed; they were made both in the old fashion and in the new, and, like man, had put on the new (short) Adam over the old one.

I wish Schulrath Stiefel had given a thought or so to the St. Andrew's shooting-match, and looked out of his window at his Orestes; however, he went on with his reviewing.

Now, when these processional caterpillars had crept together again at the shooting-ground, as upon a leaf—when the eagle hung in his heavenly eyrie, like the crest of the future's armorial bearings—when the wind instruments, which the troop of "wandering minstrels" had scarce been able to hold firmly to their lips, blared out their loudest now that the band was halted, and as the procession, with martial tramp and rattle of grounded rifles, came with a rush into the empty echoing shooting-house, everybody, strictly speaking, was more or less out of his senses, and mentally intoxicated; and that although the lots were not even drawn, far less any shot fired. Siebenkæs said to himself, "The whole thing is stuff and nonsense, yet see how it has gone to all our heads, and how a mere *unbroken* faded flower-wreath of pleasant *trifles*, wound ten times about our hearts, half chokes and darkens them. Our thirsty heart is made of loose, absorptive mould; a warm shower makes it swell, and as it expands it cracks the roots of all the plants that are growing in it."

Mr. von Blaise, who smiled unceasingly upon my hero, and treated the others with the rudeness becoming authority, ordered the lots to be drawn which were to decide the order in which the competitors were to shoot. The reader cannot expect Chance to stop the wheel of Fortune, thrust in her hand, and, behind her bandage, pull out from among seventy numbers the very first for the advocate; she drew him the twelfth, however. And at length the brave Germans and imperial citizens opened fire upon the Roman eagle. At first they aimed at his crown. The eagerness and zeal of these pretenders were proportioned to the importance of the affair: was there not a royal revenue of six florins attached to this golden penthouse when the bullet brought it down—to say nothing whatever of other crown property, consisting of

three pounds of tow and a pewter shaving-dish. The fellows did what they could; but the rifle placed the crown of the eagle, not, alas! on our hero's head, but upon that of No. 11, his predecessor, the hectic Saxon. He had need of it, poor fellow! seeing that, like a Prince of Wales, he had come into possession of the crown debts sooner than of the crown itself.

At a shooting contest of this kind nothing is better calculated to dissipate everything in the shape of tedium than to have arrangements made for "running shooting" (as it is called) being carried on by those who are waiting their turn at the birdpole. A man who has to wait while sixty-nine other people slowly aim and shoot before his turn comes round, may find a good deal to amuse him if, during that time, he can load and aim at something of a less lofty kind—for instance, a Capuchin general. The "running" or "swing" shooting, as carried out at Kuhschnappel, differs in no respect from that of other places. A piece of canvas is hung up, and floats to and fro; there are painted dishes of edibles upon it, as on a table-cloth, and whoever puts a bullet through one of these paintings obtains the original—just as princes choose their brides from their portraits, before bringing home the brides in person; or as witches stick pins into a man's image in order to wound the prototype himself. The Kuhschnappelers were, on this occasion, shooting at a portrait on this canvas, which a great many persons considered to represent a Capuchin general. I know that there were some who, basing their opinion chiefly upon the red hat in the portrait, considered it to represent a cardinal, or cardinal-protector, but these have clearly, in the first place, got to settle the point with a third party, which differed from both of those above mentioned, holding that it portrayed the whore of Babylon—that is to say, a European one. From all of which we may form a pretty accurate estimate of the amount of truth contained in another rumour—which I contradicted in the first hour of its existence—namely, that the Augsburg people had taken offence at this effigy-arquebusading, and had written, in consequence, to the attorney-general representing that they felt themselves aggrieved, and that it was an injustice to one religion if, within the bounds of the holy Roman empire, a general of a religious order should be shot to shivers, without a Lutheran superintendent general being also shot to shivers at the same time. I should certainly have heard something further about this, if it had been anything but mere wind. Indeed, I have a shrewd suspicion that the whole story is no more than a false tradition, or garbled version of *another* story, which a gentleman of rank belonging to Vienna recently *lied* to me at table. What he said was, that in the more considerable towns of the empire, where the spirit-level of religious toleration has established a beautiful equilibrium between Papists and Lutherans, many had complained, on the part of the Lutherans, of the circumstance that although there were equal numbers of night-watchmen and censors (that is, transcendental night-watchmen), keepers of hotels, and keepers of circulating libraries of each communion, yet there were more Papists hanged than Lutherans; so that it was very clear, whether the Jesuits had to do with it or not, that a high and important post such as the gallows was not filled with the same amount of impartiality as the Council of State, but with a certain bias towards the Catholics. I thought of contradicting the story, in the most distinct terms, in the 'Literary Gazette' of December last, but Government declined to pay the expense of the insertion.

However, although those who occupied themselves with the "swing" shooting *did* only have a Capuchin to aim at, the said swing shooting was every bit as important a business as the shooting at the *standing* mark. I must point out (in this connection) that there were edible prizes attached to the divers bodily members of this said general of his order, which had their attractions for riflemen of a reflective turn of

mind. An entire Bohemian porker was the prize appointed for him who should pierce the heart of the Capuchin pasha—which heart, however, was represented by a spot no bigger than a beauty-patch—so that he who should hit this little mark would have need of all his skill and nerve. The cardinal's hat was easier of attainment, for which reason it was worth only a couple of jack. The honorarium of the oculist who should succeed in inserting new (*leaden*) pupils into the cardinal's eyes consisted of an equivalent number of geese. As he was portrayed in the full fervour of prayer, it was well worth anyone's while to send a bullet through between his hands, seeing that this would be tantamount to knocking the two fore-quarters out of a cantering, smoked pig. And each of the cardinal's feet rested upon a fine hind-quarter or ham. I do not hesitate for a moment—whatever the imperial burgh of Kuhschnappel may say to it—to record, with the utmost distinctness, that no portion of the whole lord-protector was more poorly endowed, or had a scantier revenue and salarium allotted to it, than his navel; for there was nothing to be got out of that, with however good a bullet, but a Bologna sausage.

The advocate had failed in his designs upon the crown; but fortune chucked him the cardinal's hat to make up for it—the cardinal's hat with two pike inside it. But some puissant necromantic spell of invulnerability turned all his bullets aside from the eagle's head, and from the general's too. He would fain have sent one eye, at any rate, out of the face of the harlot of Babylon, but he could not manage that either.

Now the prize-lists—which are correct, seeing that they were made out by the secretary, under the eyes of the president, Herr von Blaise—state with distinctness that the head, the ring in the beak, and the little flag, fell into the hands of numbers 16, 2, and 63.

The sceptre was now being aimed at; and Siebenkæs would have been very very glad, for his dear little wife's sake (waiting for him now, as she was, with the soup), to have sent that, at least, flying out of the eagle's talons, and to have fixed it, by way of a bayonet, on to his rifle.

All the numbers who had tried their best to break off this golden oak-branch had shot in vain, except the worst—the most to be dreaded of all—his own predecessor and landlord. *He* aimed, and shot—and the gilded harpoon quivered. Siebenkæs fired—and the eel-spear came tumbling down.

Messrs. Meyern and Blaise smiled, and uttered congratulations; the blowers of instruments, crooked and straight, blew, in honour of the advent of this new bird-member, a blast both loud and shrill (like the Karlsbad people, when a new bath-guest arrives), looking closely and carefully at their music as they did so, though they had played their little *fanfares* far oftener than the very night-watchmen. All the infantas—I mean all the children—began a race for the sceptre, but the buffoon dashed among them, and scattered them; and, taking up the sceptre, presented that emblem of sovereignty to the advocate with one hand, holding in the other his *own* emblem of sovereignty, the whip.

Siebenkæs contemplated with a smile the little twig of timber—the little branch, sticking to which the buzzing swarms of nations are so often borne away; and he veiled his satisfaction under cover of the following satirical remarks (which the reigning Heimlicher overheard, and applied to himself):—

"A very pretty little frog-shooter! It *ought*, by rights, to be a honey-gauge; but the poor bees are crushed by it, that their honey-bags may be got out of them! The Waiwodes and the despots, child-like, put the bees of the country to death, and take

the honey from their *stomachs*, not from, their *combs*. A truly preposterous and absurd implement! It is made of wood; very likely a piece broken off a shepherd's crook, and gilded, pointed, and notched—one of those shepherd's staves with which the shepherds often drag the sheep's fat out of them while they are feeding in the meadows!"

He had ceased to be conscious, now, when he emitted the bitterest satirical matter (there was never a drop of it in his heart); he often turned mere acquaintances into foes with some joke, made merely for the sake of jesting; and couldn't imagine what made people vexed with him, and why it was that *he* couldn't have his little bit of fun with them as well as any one else.

He put the sceptre into the breast of his coat and took it home, seeing that they would not shoot up to his number again before dinner-time. He held it up straight and stiff, as the king of diamonds holds his, and said to Lenette, "There's a soup-ladle and sugar-tongs for you, all in one!" the allusion being to the two pewter prizes, which, in company with a sum of nine florins, had fallen to his share by way of sceptre-fief. It was enough for one shot. And next he gave an account of the catching of the pike. He expected that Lenette would, at the very least, go through the five dancing positions and execute Euler's "knight's move" on the chess-board of the room-floor, into the bargain, within the first five seconds after hearing the news. She did what she *could* do, namely, nothing at all; and said what she knew, namely, that the landlady had been holding forth, with bitter severity, to the bookseller's wife, on the subject of the non-payment of the rent, and further, concerning her own husband, whom she characterised as a smooth-tongued flatterer and payer of compliments—a man who didn't half threaten people. "What I tell you," repeated the sceptre-bearer, "is, that I have this day had the luck to shoot a couple of pikes and a sceptre, Wendeline Engelkraut!" and he banged his sceptre-knout in indignation upon the table where the crockery was all set out. She answered at last, "Well, Lucas came running a short time ago and told me all about *that*; I *am so* glad about it, but I should quite think you will shoot a good many more things yet—will you not? I said so to the bookseller's wife."

She was slipping into her old cart-rut again, you see, but Firmian thought, "She can cry and mourn loud enough, but deuce a bit of gladness can she show when a fellow comes home with a pike or two under his arm, and a sceptre or so." It was just the same with the wife of the gentle-hearted Racine, when he threw down a long purse of golden Louis XVI. he had got hold of, on the table.

How, or whence, oh! beloved wives, cometh to you the naughty trick ye have of making a kind of parade of an insupportable frigidity and indifference, just on the very occasions when your husbands come to you laden with good news, or with presents—that at the very moment when Fate brightens the wine of your joy into "bloom," your vats grow turbid with the lees of the *old* liquor? Comes it from your custom of showing only one of your faces at a time, like your sister and prototype, the moon? or from a peevish discontent with destiny? or is its cause a sweet, delicious, overflowing happiness and gladness, making the heart too full and the tongue too hard to move?

I believe it is often from all these causes combined.

In men, again—sometimes, too, in women, but only in one out of a thousand—it may arise from the sad thought of the sharks which tear off the arm with which, down in the dark ocean, all breathless and anxious, we have clasped hold of four pearls of

happiness. Or, perhaps, from a deeper question still. Is not our heart's inward bliss but an olive-leaf which a dove brings to us, fluttering over the great deluge foaming and seething all round us—an olive-leaf which she has culled for us away in the far distant Paradise, high up above the flood, clear and blissful in the eternal sun? And if all we attain of that whole olive-garden is but one leaf, instead of all its flowers and its fruit, is this leaf of peace, is this dove of peace, to give to us something *beyond* peace—namely, hope?

Firmian went back to the shooting-ground, his breast full of growing hopes. The heart of man, which, in matters of chance, makes its calculations in direct defiance of the theory of probabilities, and when heads have turned up once, expects them three times running—(although what *ought* to be anticipated is the very reverse)—or reckons upon hitting the eagle's talon became it has knocked the sceptre out of it—this heart of man, uncontrollable alike in its fears and in its hopes, the advocate took with him to the shooters' trench.

He came not by the talons, however. And at the folded praying claws or hands of the general of the Capuchins—these algebraic exponents or heraldic devices of two forequarters of pork—aimed he alike in vain.

It mattered not; more was left of the eagle, when all was done, than would be this day of Poland, if the latter, or its coat of arms—a silver eagle in a bloody field—were to be set up on a throne or a bird-pole, and shot at by a shooting-club composed of an army or two.

Even the imperial globe was not yet knocked down. Number 69, a formidable foregoer, Mr. Everard Rosa von Meyern, had taken his aim—eager to cull *this* forbidden fruit—a Ribstone pippin and football fit for a very prince, such as this imperial apple, was a thing of too great price to be grasped for the sake of what was to be gained along with it—'twas honour alone that fired his heart—he pulled his trigger, and he might just as well have aimed in the opposite direction. Rosa—this particular apple being too high out of his reach—went, all blushes, in among the lady spectators, dealing out apples of Paris all round, and telling each lady how lovely she was, that she might be convinced how handsome he was himself. In the eyes of a woman, her panegyrist is, firstly, a very *clever* man, and, ere long, such a *nice*-LOOKING one. Rosa knew that grains of incense are the anise which these doves fly after, as though infatuated.

Our friend had no need to disquiet himself about any of the would-be fruit-gatherers—about the second, eighth, or ninth, till it came to the eleventh—and he was the Saxon, who shot like the demon in person. There were few among the seventy who didn't wish this accursed gallows-number at the deuce, or at all events into the vegetable kingdom, where it is altogether absent.[50] The hairdresser fired, struck the eagle on the leg, and the leg remained hanging aloft, with the imperial globe in the talons.

His lodger (and lawyer) came up to the scratch, but the landlord stood still in the trench, to satisfy his soul with curses of his luckless star. As the former levelled the sights of his rifle upon the ball above, he made up his mind that he would not aim at the ball at all, but at the eagle's tail, so as simply to *shake* the apple down.

[50] There is no plant with eleven stamens.

In one second the worm-eaten world-apple fell. The Saxon cursed beyond all description.

Siebenkæs all but offered up an inward prayer, not because a pewter mustard-pot, a sugar-dish, and five florins came showering along with the apple into his lap, but for the piece of good luck—for the warm burst of sunshine which thus came breaking out from among the clouds of the distant storm. "Thou wouldst prove this soul of mine, happy Fortune," thought he, "and thou placest it, as men do watches, in all positions—perpendicular and horizontal, quiet and unquiet—to see if it will go and mark the time correctly in all, or no. Ay, truly! it *shall*!"

He let this little, bright, miniature earth-ball roll from one hand to the other, spinning and weaving, as he did so, the following brief chain of syllogisms:—"What a genealogical tree of copies! Nothing but pictures within pictures comedies within comedies! The emperor's globe is an emblem of this terrestrial globe of ours—the core of each is a handful of earth—and this emperor's globe of mine, again, is a miniature emblem of a real emperor's, with even less of earth—none at all, in fact. The mustard-pot and sugar-dish, again, are emblems of this emblem. What a long, diminishing series, ere man arrives at enjoyment!" Most of man's pleasures are but *preparations* for pleasure; he thinks he has attained his *ends*, when he has merely got hold of his *means* to those ends. The burning sun of bliss is beheld of our feeble eyes but in the seventy mirrors of our seventy years. Each of these mirrors reflects that sun's image less brightly—more faint and pale—upon the next; and in the seventieth it shimmers upon us all frozen, and is become a moon.

He ran home, but without his globe, for he did not mean to tell her of that till the evening. It was a great refreshment to him to slip, during his shooting vacations, away from the public turmoil to his quiet little chamber, give a rapid narrative of anything of importance going on, and then cast himself back into the *mêlée*. As his number was a next-door neighbour to Rosa's, and they had, consequently, their holidays at the same time, it surprises me that he did not come upon Herr von Meyern beneath his own window, inasmuch as that gentleman was walking up and down there, with his head elevated, like an ant. He who desires to destroy a young gentleman of this species, let him look for him *under* (if not *in*) a lady's window; just as an experienced gardener, when he wants to kill woodlice or earwigs, needs only lift up his flower-pots to annihilate them by the score.

Siebenkæs did not hit so much as another shaving the whole of the afternoon; even the very tail, which he had attacked with such success in his bold stroke for the conquest of the globe of the holy Roman empire, resisted all his efforts to knock it off. He let himself be drummed and fifed home by the town militia towards evening. When he got to his wife's door, he there assumed the *rôle* of Knecht Ruprecht (the children's "Bogie," who, on St. Andrew's Day, bestows upon them, for the *first* time in their career, fruit, and fear along with the same), and, growling in a terrible manner, chucked his (wooden) apple in to her; a piece of fun which delighted her immensely. But really I ought not to record such little trifles.

As Firmian laid his head on his pillow, he said to his wife, "This time to-morrow, wife, we shall know if it be two crowned heads that we are going to lay on the pillow, or not! I shall just *recall* this important minute to your memory to-morrow night, when we're going to bed!" When he got up in the morning he said, "Very likely this is the last time that I shall rise a common, ordinary person, without a crown."

He was so anxious to have the mutilated bird (all wet with dew, a mass of gunshot wounds and compound fractures) once more before his bodily eyes, that he hardly knew how to possess himself in patience till the time came. But it was only as long as he *did not* see the eagle that his hopes of shooting himself into a king at him endured. He was, therefore, delighted to agree to a proposal made by the clever Saxon, whose bullet had throughout the proceedings always cleared the way for his number-neighbour's; the proposal was, "we go shares in gains and in losses—in the bird and in the cardinal." This copartnership doubled the advocate's hopes by the process of halving them.

But these companions in arms didn't bring down a single painted splinter the whole of the afternoon. Each in his secret heart thought the other was the bird of evil omen; for in matters of chance we are prone to hang our faith upon a bit of superstition, rather than to nothing at all. The fickle Babylonish harlot went fluttering off with that amount of bashful coyness, that the hairdresser once sent a bullet within an ace of the fellow who was working her backwards and forwards.

At last, however, in the afternoon, he sent his Cupid's dart right through that black heart of hers, and, by consequence, through the pig at the same time. This almost terrified Firmian; he said that if he couldn't hit anything himself he would accept only the head of this pig—this polypus in the heart of the Babylonian *fille de joie*. All that was left of the bird was its *torso*, which stuck to its perch like the very Rump Parliament, which these pretenders to the crown would so fain have dissolved.

A regular running musketry fusilade of eager interest, enthusiasm, emulation, now went flashing from breast to breast, fanned by every puff of powder which rose in smoke as a rifle went off. When the bird shook a little all the competitors shook also, except Herr von Meyern, who had gone off, and—seeing what a state of excitement everybody was in, especially our hero—marched away to Madame Siebenkæs, thinking that he had a better chance of becoming, in *that* quarter, king of a queen than he had here of acquiring the sovereignty of the riflemen. However, my readers and I shall slip into the Siebenkæs' chamber after him presently.

Twice already had the seventy numbers loaded in vain for the decisive shot; the obstinate stump still stuck glued to its perch, and scarce so much as trembled; the poor tantalised hearts were torn and pierced by every bullet that sped on its course. Their fears waxed apace, so did their hopes, but most of all their curses (those brief ejaculatory prayers to the devil). The theologians of the seventh decade of the present century had the devil often enough in their pens—in their denials or in their assertions of him—but the Kuhschnappelers had him far oftener in their mouths, particularly the upper classes.

Seneca, in his 'Remedies for Anger,' has omitted the simplest of all, the devil. True, the Kabbalists highly extol the therapeutic powers of the word Shemhamphorash, which is a name of a diametrically opposite character; but I have observed, for my part, that the spotted, malignant fever of wrath, so readily diagnosed by the raving delirium of the patient, is instantly relieved, dispersed, and mitigated, by invoking the name of the devil, which is perhaps, indeed, quite as efficacious a remedy as the wearing of amulets. In the absence of this name, the ancients, who were altogether without a Satan, recommended a mere repetition of the A B C, which, it is true, does *contain* the devil's name, only too much diluted with other letters. And the word Abracadabra, spoken *diminuendo*, was a cure for corporeal fevers. As regards the inflammatory fever of anger, however, the greater the quantity of morbid matter

which has to be ejected from the system through the secretions of the mouth, the greater is the number of devils necessary to make mention of. For a mere trifling irritation—a mild case of simple anger—"the devil," or perhaps "hell and the devil," will generally be found sufficient; but for the pleuritic fever of rage I should be disposed to prescribe "the devil and his infernal grandmother:" strengthening the dose, moreover, with a "*donnerwetter*" or two, and a few "*sacraments*," as the curative powers of the electric fluid are now so generally recognised. It is unnecessary to point out to me that in cases of absolute canine fury or maniacal wrath, doses of the specific, such as the foregoing, are of little avail; I should, of course, let a patient in this condition be "taken and torn by all the devils in hell." But what I would fain render clear is that, in all these remedies, the real *specific* is the devil; for as it is his sting which is the cause of our malady, he himself has got to be employed as the remedy, just as the stings of scorpions are cured by the application of scorpions in powder.

The tumult of anticipation shook up the aristocracy and the sixpenny gallery into one common whole. On occasions like this—as also in the chase and in agricultural operations—the aristocracy forget what they are, viz., something better than the citizen classes. An aristocrat should, in my opinion, never for a moment lose sight of the fact that his position with reference to the common herd is that which the actor now a days stands in with respect to the chorus. In the time of Thespis the whole of the tragedy was sung and acted by the chorus, while one single actor, called the protagonist, delivered a speech or two, unaccompanied by any music, bearing on the subject of the play. Æschylus introduced a second actor, the deuteragonist; Sophocles even a third, the tritagonist. In more recent times the actors have been retained, but the chorus omitted, unless we consider those who applaud to represent it. In a similar manner also, in this world of ours (mankind's natural theatre), the chorus, *i. e*. the people, has been gradually cleared off the stage, only with more advantage than in the case of smaller theatrical ones, and promoted from taking part in the action of the drama (which the protagonists (princes), deuteragonists (ministers), and tritagonists (people of quality), are better fit to do), to the post of spectators who criticise and applaud—what was the chorus in Athens, now sitting at ease in the pit, near the orchestra, and before the stage where the great "business" is going on.

By this time it was past two o'clock, and the afternoons were brief; yet the saucy bird would not stir. Everybody swore that the carpenter who had hatched it from its native block was a low scoundrel, and must have carved it out of tough branchwood. But at last, all battered, with nearly the whole of its paint broken away from it, it did appear to be somewhat disposed to topple down. The hairdresser, who, like the common herd in general, was conscientious towards individuals only, not towards an aggregation of them, now without any scruple secretly doubled his bullets (since he could not double his rifle), putting in one for himself and one for his brother in arms, in the hope that this decomposing medium might have the effect of precipitating the eagle. "The devil and his infernal grandmother!" cried he, when he had fired his shot, making use of the febrifuge or cooling draught above alluded to. He now had to place all his trust in his lodger, to whom he handed his rifle. Siebenkæs fired, and the Saxon cried, "Ten thousand devils!" doubling in vain the dose of devils, as he had the dose of bullets.

They now, in despair, laid aside their rifles and also their hopes; for there were more pretenders to this crown than there were to that of Rome in the time of Galienus,

when there were but thirty. This shooting septuaginta had all telescopes at their eyes (when they had not rifles there), that they might observe how there were a greater number of bullets in this heaven-suspended constellation of theirs than there are stars in the astronomical one of the eagle. The faces of all beholders were now turned towards this Keblah of a bird, like those of the Jews towards their ruined Jerusalem. Even old Sabel sat behind her table of sweetmeats customerless, and gazing up at the eagle. The earlier numbers didn't even give themselves the trouble of shaking a pinch of powder into their pans.

Firmian pitied these oppressed hearts, swimming heavily in turbid, earthy blood—for whom at this time, the setting sun, the bright array of sky tints, and the broad, fair world were all invisible—or, rather, all shrivelled up to a battered block of wood. The surest token that these hearts were all lying fettered in the eternal dungeon of need and necessity, was that none could make a single witty allusion either to the bird or the kingship. It is only concerning matters which leave our souls free and unshackled that we notice similitudes and connection.

"This bird," thought Firmian, "is the decoy of all these men, and the money is what baits the lure." But he himself had three reasons for desiring to be king: firstly, to laugh himself to death at his own coronation; secondly, on account of his Lenette: thirdly, on account of the Saxon.

The second half of the seventy gradually fired off, and the earlier numbers began to load again, if it were for nothing but the fun of the thing. Every one put in two bullets now. Our two Hanseatic confederates came once more up to the mark, and Siebenkæs borrowed a more powerful glass, screwing it on to his rifle like the finder of a telescope.

No. 10 loosened the bird from its joining to the pole. Nothing but the sheer weight of it now retained it on its perch, for they had well nigh saturated and incrusted the wood of it with lead (as certain springs transform wood into iron).

The Saxon had but to graze the eagle-torso—ay, or even the perch of it—nay, the very evening breeze had but to give an extra puff—to send the bird of prey swooping down. He had his rifle to his shoulder—aimed for a whole eternity (there were fifty florins hanging in the sky)—and pulled his trigger. The powder flashed in the pan. The band had all their trumpets ready at their lips—trumpets horizontal, music perpendicular—the boys stood round ready to seize the fallen skeleton; the buffoon in his excitement couldn't think of a joke to make—his ideas were all up beside the bird; the poor, anxious, eager, excited hairdresser drew his trigger once more, and again 'twas but a flash in the pan. Great drops of perspiration bedewed him; he glowed, he trembled; loaded, aimed, fired, and sent his bullet several ells, at the least, away over the bird.

He stepped back, pale and silent, in a cold perspiration; not an oath did he utter; nay, I suspect he offered up a silent prayer or two that his co-partner might, by heaven's grace, capture the feathered game.

Firmian went forward, thinking as hard as he could about something else, to keep down his thrilling excitement; aimed, not very long, at this, his anchor in his little storms, as it hung hovering in the twilight, fired; saw the old stump turn three times round in the air, like Fortune's wheel, and, at last, break loose, and come pitching down.

As, when the old French kings were crowned, a live bird always fluttered in the air; as, at the apotheoses of the Roman emperors, an eagle soared skyward from out the funeral pyre, so did one swoop downward from the heavens at the coronation of my hero.

The children screamed, and the trumpets blared. One moiety of the assemblage crowded to see who the new king was, and to have a look at him; while the other moiety streamed crowding round the jester, as he advanced bearing that shattered bullet-case, the eagle's body, holding it up above the heads of the throng. The barber ran to meet it, crying, "Vive le roi," and adding that he was a king himself into the bargain; and Firmian moved towards the door in silence, full of happiness, but fuller of emotion.

And now it is time that we should all of us hurry to the town to see how Rosa fares, what kind of throne he gains *chez* Madame Siebenkæs (while her husband is thus ascending *his*)—a richer throne, or only a pillory—and what number of steps he climbs towards whichever of the two it may prove to be.

Rosa knocked at Lenette's door, and straightway entered in at it, in order that she might not have a chance of coming and ascertaining who was there. "He had torn himself away from the shooting-match; her husband was coming immediately, and he would wait for him there. His rifle had once more been excessively fortunate." It was with these truths that he came into the presence of the alarmed Lenette, bearing, however upon his countenance, an assumed aristocratic frigid zone. He walked, in an easy and unconcerned manner, up and down the room. He inquired whether this April weather affected her health at all; as for himself, it produced in him a kind of miserable prostrating low fever. Lenette, timid and nervous, stood at the window, her eyes half in the street, half in the room. He glanced, in passing, at her work-table, took up a paper bonnet shape and a pair of scissors, and put them down again, his attention being arrested by a paper of pins. "Why, these are No. 8's," he said; "these pins are a great deal too large, Madame; their heads would do for No. 1 shot. The lady whose hat you were putting them in ought really to be immensely grateful to me."

He then went quickly up to her, and, from a spot a trifling distance below her heart (where she had a whole quiver, or thorn-hedge of needles planted, ready for use), he plucked one out with a dauntless coolness, and held it up for her inspection, saying, "Look how badly this is plated; 'twill spoil every stitch you take with it." He threw it out of the window, and evinced symptoms of being about to pluck out the remainder from that heart (where the fates had stuck none other than such as were "badly plated"), and stick the contents of his own needle-book into that pretty pincushion instead. But she waved him off with an icy, repellant, gesture, saying, "Don't trouble yourself."

"I really wish your husband would come," he said, looking at his watch. "The king's shot must be over long ere this time."

He took up the paper cap-pattern again, and the scissors; but, as she fixed on him a gaze of deep anxiety (lest he should spoil her pattern), he took from his pocket a sheet of verses dipped in hippocrene, and, by way of passing the time, he clipped this up, by wavy lines, into a series of hearts, one within the other. This gentleman, who, like the Augurs, always strove to carry off the *heart* of the sacrifice—he, whose own heart (like that of a coquette) constantly grew again as often as he lost it (as a lizard's tail does)—he had the *word* "heart," which Germans and men in general seem almost

to shrink from uttering, continually on his tongue, or, at all events, impressions of it in his hand.

My belief that his motive for leaving behind him (as he did) his needles, and his rhymeful hearts, was that he had observed of women that they always think fondly of an absent person when they chance to see something of his which he has left behind. Rosa belonged to that class of persons (of both sexes) who never show any cleverness, delicacy of perception, or knowledge of human nature, save in matters relating to love of the opposite sex.

He now catechised out of her a number of cooking and washing receipts of various kinds, and these, despite her cautious monosyllabicity, she imparted—prescription fashion—in all their fulness, both of words and of ingredients. At length he made preparations for departure, saying, he had been most anxious for her husband's homecoming because of a certain matter of business which he could not well discuss with him on the shooting-ground, among so many people, and before Herr von Blaise. "I shall come another day," he said; "but the most important point of the affair I can mention to yourself," and he sat down before her, with his hat and stick in his hand. Just as he commenced his recital, however, observing that she was standing, he laid aside his hat and stick to place a chair for her, opposite to his. His propinquity was grateful to her Schneiderian membrane, at any rate; his odour was paradisaic; his pocket-handkerchief a musk-bag, his head an altar of incense, or magnified civet-ball. (Shaw has remarked that the whole viper tribe has the property of emitting a peculiar, sweet scent.)

"She might readily see," he said, "that it referred to that wretched lawsuit with the Heimlicher. The poor's advocate did not deserve, indeed, that a man should interest himself in *his* favour; but then, you see, he had an *admirable* wife, who *did* deserve it." (He italicised the word "admirable" by means of a hurried squeeze of her hand.) "He had been fortunate enough to induce Herr von Blaise to defer his 'no' three separate times, though he had not as yet been able to speak to the advocate in person. But now, that a pasquinade of Mr. Leibgeber's (whose hand was well known), had come to light near a stove-statue at the Heimlicher's, nothing approximating to a yielding, or a payment of the trust-fund, was to be dreamt of for a moment. Now this was a state of matters for which his very heart bled, particularly as, since he had been in such poor health of late, he felt only too keen a sympathy and interest in everything; he knew perfectly well what an unhappy condition her (Lenette's) household matters had been placed in by this lawsuit; and had often sighed, in vain, over many things. He should be delighted, therefore, to advance whatever she might require for current expenditure. As yet she did not know *him* in the slightest degree, and perhaps could scarce surmise what he did, from motives of the purest benevolence, for six charities in Kuhschnappel—though he could produce documentary evidence if she liked," and he did produce and hand to her six receipts of the Charitable Commission. I should not be giving proof of that impartiality of character which I bear the reputation of possessing, did I not here freely admit, and clearly place on record, that the Venner had, from his youth up, always shown a certain disposition to benefit and assist the poor of both sexes, and that his consciousness that he dealt in this large-hearted manner, did (when compared with the narrow close-fistedness prevalent in Kuhschnappel) give him some warrant for bearing himself with a certain amount of proper pride towards those mean and miserly beings who sate in judgment upon his little genial breaches of the moral laws. For his conscience bore him witness that, conversely to the process whereby spiders

are metamorphosed into jewels, he spun his shining webs (of gold and silver), and in their meshes, wet with the glittering dew of tears, made an occasional capture from time to time.

But for a woman like Lenette (he continued) he would do things of a much grander description; as proofs of which, given already by him, he needed only to point to the fact that he had set at defiance the Heimlicher's hostility towards her husband, and that he had more than once quietly swallowed speeches of her husband's own, such as in his social position he had never suffered anybody to address to him before. "Name any sum of money you are in want of; by Heaven, all you have to do is to ask for it."

Lenette, bashful and trembling, glowed red with shame at this discovery of (what she had believed to be) the mystery of her poverty and her pawnings. With the view of pouring a few drops of oil on the troubled waters, he began, by way of preamble, to make some disparaging remarks concerning his fiancée at Bayreuth. "She reads too much, and doesn't work enough. I only wish she could have the benefit of a few lessons from *you* in housekeeping. And really, a lady such as you, with so many attractions (quite unaware of them, too, herself), so much patience, such wonderful diligence and assiduity, should have a very different kind of household than this place for her sphere of action." Her hand was by this time lying still in the stocks—the close arrest—of his; her wings and her tongue, as well as her hands, were tied and fettered by that fainthearted incapacity of self-assertion which is born of the sense of poverty. When women were in question, Mr. Everard's longings and likings paid no heed to boundary-marks; but rather strove hard to obliterate them, and get rid of them altogether. Most men, in the wild, unreasoning whirl of their appetites, are like the jay, which tears the carnation to tatters in order to get at its seeds.

Upon her downcast eyes he now riveted a long gaze of fondness, not withdrawing it, however, when she raised them up; and, by dint of keeping his eyes very wide open, and thinking with great vividness on pathetic and touching subjects, he managed to squeeze out about as much water as would have sufficed to make an end of a humming bird of the smaller sort.

In him, as in a fine actor, all false emotions became for the time real and genuine; and when he flattered any one, he at once began to respect him. As soon as he felt there were tears enough in his eyes, and sighs enough in his breast, he asked her if she had *any idea* what was causing them. She looked innocently, and with kindly alarm, into those eyes of his, and her own began to overflow. This greatly encouraged him, and he said, "It is the fact that *you* have not such a happy lot as you deserve."

Ah! selfish pigmy! at such a moment you might have spared this poor, anxious, trembling soul, sinking, well nigh, in an ocean of tears for all the long, long past.

But he knew no sorrow save of the theatrical, the transient, the petty, and the sham sort; and so he spared her not.

Yet that which he had expected would prove the bridge from his heart to hers, namely, sorrow, became, on the contrary, the portcullis barrier between them. A dance, or some *joyful* tumult of the senses would have brought him further with this *commonplace*, every-day, honest, and upright woman than three pailfuls of selfish tears. His hopes rose high, as he laid his flowery, sorrow-laden head upon his hands, down into her lap.

But Lenette jumped up with such a suddenness that it nearly knocked him over altogether. She gazed inquiringly into his eyes. Upright women must, I think, have some instinct of their own concerning the lightnings of the eye, by means of which they can distinguish between the lurid flashes of hell and the pure coruscations of heaven. This profligate was as little aware of the flashes of his eyes as was Moses of the brightness of his countenance. Her glance shrunk before his scorching gaze; at the same time I feel it incumbent on me as an historian—seeing that readers by the thousand (and I myself into the bargain) are all up in arms to such an extent against this defenceless Everard—not to conceal the fact that Lenette had had her mind's eye firmly fixed upon certain rather rude and free-handed sketches which Schulrath Stiefel had drawn for her of the manœuvring grounds of rakes in general (and this one in particular), and, in consequence, had pricked up her ears in alarm at each move he made, whether in advance or in retreat.

And yet every word I write in defence of the poor rascal will only tell against him now; indeed, there are many ladies whose acquaintance with the Salic Law (or Mr. Meiner's work) teaches them that in former times the penalty for touching a woman's hand was the same as for hewing off a man's middle finger, namely, fifteen shillings, and who, being indignant with Rosa for his hand pressures, would fain have him to be duly punished therefor. I am convinced that these ladies would by no means be pacified were I to go on speaking in his extenuation, for they have doubtless learnt, out of Mallet's 'Introduction to the History of Denmark,' that formerly persons who kissed without leave, and against the will, were, by the law of the land, liable to be banished. And there are very many women of the present day who are strictly governed by the ancient pandects of Germany, and, in the case of lip-thieves (since, in the eye of the law, banishment and confinement to one place are held to be tantamount and equivalent one to another), they adjudge them—not, it is true, to be *banished from* their chambers, but to *remain in* them; similarly, they lodge debtors (to whom they have given their hearts, and who insist on retaining possession of the same) in the Marshalsea of the Matrimonial Torus.

When Rosa jumped up (as before set forth), he had nothing to urge in extenuation of his false step but an aggravation or augmentation of it, and accordingly he fairly took the marble goddess in his arms—But at this point my progress is barred for a moment by an observation which has to be made ere I proceed; it is this: There are many kindly beauties who cover their retreats or make amends for their denials by concessions. By way of making themselves some amends for their hard services in the campaign of virtue, they offer no resistance at all in matters of the smaller sort, skilfully abandoning a good many intrenchments and outworks (in the shape of words, articles of dress, and so on), to enable them to deftly steal a march upon the enemy and outmanœuvre him—just as clever generals burn the suburbs that they may fight the better up in the citadel.

My sole object in making this observation is to point out that it did not apply to Lenette in any respect whatever. Pure as she was in soul and in body, she might have gone straight away into heaven just as she stood, without changing so much as a stitch of her attire—have taken her eyes, heart, clothes, everything except that tongue of hers, which was uncultivated, rude, indiscreet; so that her resistance to Everard's attempted burglary on her lips was unnecessarily grave and discourteous (considering what a trifling case of orchard-robbery it really was), much more so than it would have been had Lenette been able to drive the Schulrath's highly-coloured prognostics concerning Rosa out of her head.

Rosa had anticipated a denial of a less unpleasant kind. His obstinacy availed him nothing as against hers, which was the greater of the two. A gnat-swarm of firm and passionate resolves buzzed about his ears; but when at length (probably inspired thereto by the Schulrath) she said, “Your lordship remembers that the Tenth Commandment says, ‘Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife’”—from the crossroad between love and hatred, on which he was standing, he suddenly made a great jump—into his pocket and brought out a wreath of artificial flowers, “There!” he cried, “take them, you nasty, inexorable creature! just this one forget-me-not as a souvenir; devil fly away with me if I want anything further!” If she *had* taken it, he *would* immediately have wanted something further; but she turned her face aside and repulsed the silken garland with both hands. At this the honeycomb of love in his heart soured into very vinegar; he grew wild with fury, and throwing the flowers right over the table, he cried, “Why, they are your own pawned flowers—I redeemed them myself—so take them you *must*.” On which he took his departure, not, however, without making his bow, which Lenette, all hurt and offended as she was, ceremoniously returned.

She took the envenomed wreath to the window, to have a better light to examine it by. Alas! these were indeed, and beyond all doubt, the very roses and rosebuds whose steely thorns were wet with the blood-drops from a pair of pierced hearts. Whilst she, thus weeping and bowed beneath the weight of her woe, stunned and stupid rather than observant, stood at her window, it suddenly struck her as a strange circumstance that the torturer of her soul, though he had gone rattling down the stairs in a hurry with noise enough, had never gone out at the street-door. After a long and attentive watch, during which anxiety, closely bordering upon terror, assumed the *rôle* of comforter and spake louder than her sorrow (the future, at the same time, driving the past out of view), the becrowned hairdresser came galloping home (the crown of his hat pointing heavenwards), and shouted to her in a mere parenthetical manner as he dashed by, “Madame the queen!” for his great idea was, that before anything else he should rush home, and there on the spot, and without a moment’s delay, make proclamation of the kingship and queenship of four persons.

There now devolves upon me the duty of conducting my readers to the corner where the Venner is cowering. From Lenette he had *descended* (in two senses of that word) to the hairdresser’s wife, one of that common class of women who never so much as dream of an infidelity all the year round—for no horse in all the kingdom is harder worked—and commit one only when there appears on the scene some tempter, whom they neither invite nor resist, probably forgetting all about the incident by the time next baking day comes round. On the whole, the superiority which the female middle-class is disposed to arrogate to itself over that of a higher rank, is just about equally great as it is questionable. There are not a great many tempters in the middle-class, and those there are are not of a very tempting sort.

Like the earthworm, which has ten hearts that extend all the way from one end of it to the other, Rosa was fitted out with as many hearts as there are species of women; for the delicate, the coarse, the religious, the immoral—every sort, in fact; he was always ready with the appropriate heart. For as Lessing and others so frequently blame the critics for narrowness and onesidedness in matters of taste, inculcating upon them a greater universality of it—a greater power of appreciation of the beautiful, to whatsoever times and nations belonging—so do men of the world also advocate a universality of taste for the *live* beautiful, on two legs, not excluding any variety of it, but deriving gratification from all. This taste the Venner possessed.

There was such a marked distinction between his feelings for the wigmaker's wife and for Lenette, that, in revenge upon the latter, he came to the determination, on the stair, to take a jump right over this distinction and slip in to pay a visit to the landlady, while her narrow-chested husband was away scheming and plotting in confederacy for a crown in another quarter. Sophia (this was her name) had been always combing at wigs in the bookbinder's on the occasions when the Venner had been sitting there on the business of getting his novels and life romances done up and bound, and there they had communicated to one other, by looks and glances, all that which people are not in the habit of confiding to third parties. Meyern made his *entrée* into the childless abode with all the confident assurance of an epic poet, who soars superior to all prefaces. There was a certain corner partitioned off from the room by boards: it contained little or nothing—no window, no chair, a little warmth from the sitting-room, a clothes-cupboard, and the couple's bed.

When the first compliments had been exchanged, Rosa took up a position behind the door of this partitioned space, for the street passed close by the window, and at this late hour he was anxious not to give occasion to unpleasant surmises on the part of passers by. Of a sudden, however, Sophia saw her husband run by the window. The intent to commit a sin may betray itself by a superabundance of carefulness and caution; Rosa and Sophia were so startled at the sight of the runner, that she begged the young gentleman to get behind the partition until her husband should go back to the shooting-range. The Venner went stumbling into the *sanctum sanctorum*, while Sophia placed herself at the door of it, and, as her husband entered, made as though she were just coming out of it, closing the door after her. The moment he had stuttered out the news of his elevation in rank, he darted out of the room, crying, "She upstairs there knows nothing about it yet." Gladness and hurried draughts of liquor had just blurred the sharp outlines of his lighter ideas with a thin haze or fog. He ran out and called "Madame Siebenkæs" up the stairs (he was anxious to be off again so as to join the procession). She hastened half way down, heard the glad news with trembling, and, either by way of masking her joy, or as a fruit of a warmer liking for her husband now that fortune seemed kinder to him (or it may have been, perhaps, *another* fruit which joy commonly bears, namely, anxiety, or shall I name it fear?), she threw down to him the question, "Is Mr. von Meyern out yet?"

"What! was *he* in my room just now?" cried he, while his wife echoed, unbidden, from the door, "Has *he* been in the house?" "He was here, upstairs," Lenette replied, with a touch of suspicion, "and he hasn't gone out yet."

The hairdresser's suspicions were now awakened, for the consumptive trust no woman, and, like children, take every chimney-sweep they see for the devil himself, hoof, horns, tail and all. "Things are not all exactly as they should be here, Sophy," said he to his wife. The passing brain-dropsy, induced by what he had drunk during the day and by his half-share in a throne and fifty florins, had the effect of screwing his courage up to such a pitch that he secretly formed the idea of treating the Venner to a good sound cudgelling in the event of his coming upon him in any illegal corner. Accordingly he started upon voyages of discovery, first exploring the entrance passage, where Rosa's sweet-scented head served him as a trail, or lure; he followed this incense-pillar of cloud into his own room, observing that this Ariadne's thread of his, this sweet odour, grew stronger as he went. Here among the flowers lay the serpent—as, according to Pliny, sweet-smelling forests harbour venomous snakes. Sophia wished herself in the nethermost of Dante's hells, though in fact and reality she *was* there already. It dawned upon the hairdresser that if the Venner would only

stay where he was, in the closed titmouse-trap of the partitioned corner, he should have bruin safe in his toils; consequently he reserved till the last a peep into the said corner. What is historically certain is, that he seized upon a pair of curling-tongs wherewith to probe the dark corner and gauge the cubic contents thereof. Into its dark depths he made a horizontal lunge with his tongs, but encountered nothing. He next inserted this probe, this searcher of his, into more places than one—firstly, into the bed, next, under the bed (taking this time the precaution to keep opening and shutting the tongs, which were not hot, on the chance of some stray lock of hair getting caught in them in the darkness.) However, all this trap captured was air. At this juncture he came upon a clothes-cupboard, the door of which had always stood gaping ajar for the last six years or so; the key had been lost just that time, and in this slipshod household it was a matter of necessity to keep this door open, otherwise the lock would have snapped to, and there would have been no getting in. To-day, however, this door was close shut. The Venner (in a profuse perspiration) was inside; the *friseur* pressed the lock home, and then the net was fairly over the quail.

The hairdresser, now master of the situation, quietly took the command of his establishment at his ease; the Venner could not get out!

He despatched Sophia (as red as a furnace and loudly dissentient, though forced to obey) for the locksmith and his breaching implements; however, she quite made up her mind to come back with a lie, not with a locksmith. When she had marched off he fetched Fecht, the cobbler, up, to be at once his witness of and his assistant in that which he proposed to accomplish. The shoe-stitcher crept into the room softly at his heels; the phthisic haircurler went up to the canary-cage and addressed the bird imprisoned therein (tapping the while with his tongs on the gate of this fortress of Engelsburg) as follows: “I *know* you are in there, honourable Sir, make a move; there’s nobody here but me, as yet (there’ll soon be more). I can break the cupboard open with my tongs and let you out.” Laying his ear close to the door of this Spandau, he heard the captive sigh.

“Ah! you are puffing and panting a little, honourable gentleman,” said the wigmaker; “I am here at the door by myself now. When the locksmith comes and breaks it open, we shall all see you, and I’ll call the whole house; but all I shall ask to let you jump out now, quietly, and be off unseen, will be a mere trifle. Give me that hat of yours, and a shilling or two, and give me your custom.”

At length the miserable prisoner knocked upon the door and said, “I *am* in here; just let me out, will you, my man, and I’ll do all you say. I can help, from the inside, to break open the door.” The wigmaker and the cobbler applied their battering apparatus to the “parloir” of this donjon-keep, and the captive bounded forth. During the breaking open of the gates of jubilee the friseur parleyed or negotiated a little more, and amerced the anchorite in the locksmith’s fee; at last, bringing Rosa forth, like Pallas in her mail, when she issued from Jove’s cranium into the light of day, “The landlord,” said Fecht, “couldn’t have managed the job without me.”

Rosa opened his eyes wide at the sight of this auxiliary deliverer from the house of bondage, took off the sweet-smelling hat (which the cobbler immediately clapped on to his own head), shed some drops of golden rain from his waistcoat-pocket upon the pair, and, in dread of them and of the locksmith’s arrival, fled home bareheaded in the dark. The friseur, whose bald pate was so near to the triple crown of the emperors of old, and the popes of the present (for the eagle gave him a crown, the Venner a hat, and his wife had nearly placed something else——),—however, the friseur, in high

satisfaction of this new martyr-crown of felt, which he had been envying the Venner the possession of all the afternoon, went back with it to the shooting-ground, that he might have the gratification of marching home in company with his co-emperor, attended by their subjects and their vassals.

The wigmaker took his hat off to his royal brother Siebenkæs (that hat so much more worthy of a co-king than his former one), and told him something of what had been happening.

The Heimlicher von Blaise smiled his Domitian smile to-day more affectionately than ever, which made the bird emperor far from comfortable; for friendliness and smiling make the heart colder when it is cold to begin with, and warmer when it is warm—just as *spiritus nitri* does water. From a friendliness of this particular kind nothing was to be expected but its opposite, as in ancient jurisprudence excessive piety in a woman was merely a proof that she had sold herself to the devil. Christ's implements of torture became holy relics; and, conversely, relics of saints often become implements of torture.

Under the twinkling gleams of the wide, starry firmament (where new constellations kept bursting into view, in the shape of banging rockets) the grand procession marched along. The competitors who had come after the king's shot had fired their rifles in the air, by way of salute to the royal pair. The two kings walked side by side, but the one who belonged to the guild of wigmakers found some difficulty in standing (what between joy and beer), and would gladly have sat down upon a throne. However, over these seventy Brethren of the Eagle, and the two vicars of the empire, we are losing sight, and delaying to treat of something else.

To wit, the town militia, who are also present, or more properly speaking, the Royal Kuhschnappel Militia. Concerning this regiment I think a good deal, and say only about half what I think. A city or county militia regiment—and particularly the Royal Kuhschnappel Militia—is a distinguished and important body of men, whose *raison d'être* is to scorn and show contempt for the enemy, by always turning their backs upon him—showing him, in fact, nothing *but* backs, like a well-ordered library. If the enemy has anything in the nature of courage, then our said force sacrifices to Fear like the ancient Spartans; and as poets and actors ought in the first place to experience and picture to themselves in a vivid manner the emotions they are about to portray, the militia endeavours to give an illustration, in itself, of that panic terror into which it would fain throw the enemy. Now with the view of affording these men of war (or "of peace" if you prefer it) the necessary amount of practice in the mimic representation of terror, they are daily put through a process of being terrified at the city gates. It is *called* "being relieved." When one of these men of peace is on sentry, another of them, a comrade of his, marches up to his sentry box, shouts out words of command at him in a warlike tone of voice, and makes hostile and threatening gestures in close proximity to his nose; the one who is on sentry also cries out in a similar voice, goes through certain motions with his weapon, and then lays it down and gets away as fast as he can; the conqueror in this brief winter campaign retains possession of the field, and puts on the watchcoat which he has taken from the other man by way of booty; but that they may each have an opportunity of being terrified by the others, they take the part of conqueror turn about. A warrior of this peaceful order may very often be most dangerous in actual war, when, in the act of bolting, he happens, in throwing his rifle away with the bayonet fixed, to throw it too far, and harpoon his too proximate pursuer with it. Militiamen of this sort ("precious" they are in every sense) are usually posted, for greater security's sake, in public places

where they are safe from injury, such as the gates of towns, where these harpooners are protected by the town and gate; at the same time I have often wished, in passing, that these students of the art military were provided with a good thick stick, so that they might have something to defend themselves with if anybody should try to take away their muskets.

It will appear to many that I am but artfully cloaking the shortcomings of the militia in these respects; I am prepared for this—but it is not difficult to perceive that this species of praise also applies to all small standing armies of lesser principalities—forces which are recruited only that they may recruit. I shall here utter myself on this subject a little. Vuillaume recommends educators to teach children to play at soldiers, to make them drill and mount guard, in order to accustom them, by this play, to firm and active habits both of body and of mind; in short, to render them firm and upright. This soldier-game has been carried on for a considerable time already in Campe's Institute. But is Mr. Vuillaume really ignorant that scholar-drill, such as he recommends, has been long since introduced by every good prince of the empire into his dominions? Does he suppose it is anything new when I tell him that these princes seize upon all strong young fellows (as soon as they attain the canonical height) and have them drilled, in order that they, the State's children, may thus be taught *mores*, carriage, and all that has to be acquired in the State's school? The truth is that, even in the very smallest principalities, the soldiers often possess all the acquirements and accomplishments of real soldiers; they can present arms, stand bolt upright at portals, and *smoke* at all events, if not *fire*—matters which a poodle learns with ease, but a country bumpkin with more difficulty.

To these rehearsals of warlike business I attribute it that many otherwise clever and sensible men have allowed themselves to believe that this sham soldiery of the little States, is in fact a real soldiery; they must otherwise have seen in a moment that with so small a force neither could a small territory be defended, nor a large one attacked; neither is there indeed any need for even this small force, since in Germany the question of relative strength is merged in that of equality of religion. Hunger, cold, nakedness, and privation are the benefits which Vuillaume considers the soldier-game to hold out to his scholars, as lessons in patient endurance and fortitude; now these are the very advantages which the State schools above referred to confer upon the young men of the country—and that much more thoroughly and efficaciously than Vuillaume does—which, of course, is the entire object of the institution. I am quite aware that there are not infrequent cases in which perhaps a third part of the population escapes being made into soldiery, and consequently gets none of the valuable practice in question; at the same time there can be no doubt that if we even get the length of having two-thirds of the population with rifles on their shoulders in the place of scythes, the remaining third (inasmuch as it has considerably less to mow, to thresh, and to subsist upon) obtains the before-mentioned benefits (of cold, hunger, nakedness, &c.), almost gratis, and without having to fire so much as a single shot. Let but barracks be multiplied in a sufficient ratio in a country, in a province, parish, town, village (as the case may be), and the remainder of the houses will of themselves settle down, into suburbs, and accessory and out-buildings to the barracks, nay, become absolute conventual establishments, in which the three monastic vows (the Prince alone being *père provincial*) are, whether *taken* or *not*, at all events most religiously *kept*.

We now hear the two vicars of the empire go into their homes. The friseur's sole punishment to his wife is a narrative of the whole affair, and a sight of the hat; while

the advocate rewards Lenette with the kiss which she had refused to other lips. If her story did not please him, the teller of it did, and on the whole the only thing she omitted was the flower-wreath, and the allusions made to it. She would not cloud the happiness of his evening, nor bring back upon him the pain and the reproaches of that other evening when she had pawned it. I, like many of my readers, had expected that Lenette would have received the news of the enthronisation far too coldly; she has deceived us all; she received it even too joyfully. But there were two good reasons for this; she had heard of it an hour before, and consequently the first feminine mourning over a joy had had time to give place to the joy itself. For women are like thermometers, which on a sudden application of heat sink at first a few degrees, as a preliminary to rising a good many. The second reason for her being thus indulgent and sympathetic was the humiliating consciousness she possessed of the Venner's visit, and of the wreath in its hiding-place; for we are often severe when we are strong, and practise forbearance when we stand in need of it.

I now wish the entire royal family and household a good night, and a pleasant awaking in the eighth chapter.

Chapter VIII

SCRUPLES AS TO PAYMENT OF DEBTS—THE RICH PAUPER'S SUNDAY THRONE-CEREMONIAL—ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS ON THE GRAVE—NEW THISTLE SEEDLINGS OF CONTENTION.

Siebenkæs, a king, and yet a poor's-advocate and member of a wood-economising association, arose next morning a man who could lay forty good florins down upon his table at any hour of the day. The whole of that forenoon he enjoyed a pleasure which possesses, for the virtuous and right-thinking, an especial charm—that of paying debts: firstly, to the Saxon his house-rent, and then to the butchers, bakers, and other nurses of this needy machine, our body, their little duodecimo accounts. For he was like the aristocracy who borrow from the lower classes, not money, but only victuals, just as there are many judges who are bribeable with the latter, but not with the former.

That he does pay his debts is not a circumstance which should lower him in the opinion of anybody who remembers that he is a man of very poor "extraction"—scarcely of any "extraction" at all, in fact. A man of rank is expected (as a thing becoming his position) *not* to pay his debts, for thanks to the papal indulgences granted to his noble ancestors at the time of the Crusades, he need give his mind no trouble on the subject of liability, and least of all should liabilities of a *pecuniary* nature cause him a thought. To place a man of a high and delicate sense of honour, a courtier say, under an obligation (*e.g.* to lend him money) is to wound his feelings to a greater or less extent; and a wound of this sort to the feelings is a matter which his refined sensitive nature naturally leads him to endeavour to forgive; he will, therefore, do his utmost to drive the injury thus done him, with all its attendant circumstances, completely out of his mind. Should the person who inflicted this hurt upon his sense of honour remind him of it, he will then, with genuine delicacy of feeling, make as if he were scarcely aware that he had *been* wounded. Rough young squires, again, and officers on the march *do* really pay, and moreover, they coin (if the expression may be used) for themselves the money they require, as is the case in Algiers, where every one possesses the privilege of minting. In Malta there is current a leathern coin of the value of eightpence, on which is the legend "Non As, sed Fides." With leather money of a somewhat different description, not circular in shape, but drawn out to some length, more like that of the ancient Spartans (and, indeed, this sort of money usually gets the appellation of dog-whips or riding-whips), the landed gentry and people of village nobility pay their coachmen, Jews, carpenters, and others to whom they owe money—*going on* paying them, in fact, until they are quite satisfied. Indeed I once stood at table and saw officers, men most tenacious of their honour, take their swords from the wall or from their sides, and therewith, when the boots asked for his money, pay him in the true currency of antiquity (among the brave Spartans, also, weapons were money), so that, in fact, the fellow's jacket got a better brushing than most of the boots for cleaning which he wanted to be paid. And looking at the matter all round, ought it *really* to be accounted a grave offence in military personages, even of the highest rank, to pay their small debts? So that often, when some wretched tailor asks for metal, they take the iron ell-measure from him, and (while, moreover, applying to *him* in person the very measure which he applied to their furs) press—not perhaps *into* his hands, but *on* to a part of his body on which "contour" lines might be drawn—not mere coins, or bills on approved security, but a

metal which Peru with all its wealth does not boast the possession of, the aforesaid iron to wit? In Sumatra the skulls of the enemy are their Louis d'ors and head-pieces, and even *this* species of currency—the hostile head of the tradesman who has furnished goods—is often taken by the nobler creditor, just by way of satisfying him "in full of all demands." Neither in the Clausular Jurisprudence nor in the most recent Prussian code is it enacted that a creditor is to stipulate in his bill which species of currency he elects to be paid in by his noble debtor, the metallic currency or the castigatory.

On this Thursday morning Siebenkæs had a tough and ticklish argument, or piece of special pleading, to go through on the subject of the half-heart or (half-pig) of the cardinal protector, which his co-king, the hairdresser, pressed the acceptance of upon him, by way of making more sure of duly sharing all the prizes which appertained to the king's shot himself. But his having gained the twenty-five florin prize did not add to the warmth of his arguments, and at last he agreed to the arrangement that the animal should be eaten, pure and clean, like a passover lamb, next Sunday in Siebenkæs's room by the lodgers generally, and by the two rifle kings with their queens in company with Schulrath Stiefel. The flower goddess of the days of man took at this juncture a fingertipful or two of seeds of quickly blooming and quickly fading flowers (such as like the hellebore come into blossom in our December) and sowed them beside the path which Firmian's steps most often trod. Ah, happy man, how soon will these forced blossoms fall from your days. Will not your philosophic Diana-and-bread-fruit tree (which takes the place, in your case, of an oak of lamentation) fare like the cut plants which people put in lime-water in their chambers on St. Andrew's Day, and which, after a hurried outburst of yellowish leaves and feeble dingy flowers, fade and perish for good and all?

Sleep, riches, and health, to be truly enjoyed, must be interrupted; it is only during the first few days after the burden of poverty or sickness has been lifted from a man's shoulders, that the upright posture, and the free breath, cause their fullest measure of delight. These days lasted for our Firmian until the Sunday. He built a whole cubic-foot of his Devil rampart (in his 'Selection from the Devil's Papers'), he wrote reviews, he wrote law papers, he kept a careful eye on the maintenance of the household truce (liable to be disturbed by the question of the redemption of the pawned furniture). I shall treat of this matter firstly, before proceeding to give an account of the Platonic banquet of the Sunday. On Firmian's coronation-day he invested twenty-one florins in a watch, with the view of avoiding frittering away his money by driblets; he thought it well to cast an anchor of hope into his watch-pocket. Then, when his wife talked of redeeming the salad-bowl, the herring-dish, and other pledges a matter involving not kisses only but half of his capital—he would say, "I'm not in favour of it, old Sabel would very soon have to carry them off again; however, if you're determined, pray have them out, I shall not interfere." If he had offered any opposition, back they would have had to come; but, inasmuch as he poured the greater portion of his cash into her money bag, and as she marked its daily ebb—and as she could go and redeem the furniture any day—why for that very reason she let it alone. Women are fond of putting off, men of pushing on; with the former, patience most speedily gains us our point; with the latter (ministers of the crown for instance) *im*patience. I here once more remind all German husbands, who have any pledge they do not wish to redeem, how to deal with their fair registers.

Every morning she said, "Ah! we really must send and get back our plates," to which he as regularly antiphonated, "*I* don't think so; I praise you rather for not doing it."

And in this manner he caused his own desire to assume the form of another person's desert. Firmian understood some individual specimens of humanity, but not humanity as a class, in its broad sense; he was embarrassed with every woman at first, while her acquaintance was new, though not so afterwards when he came to know her better; he knew exactly how one *ought* to talk, walk, and stand, in "society," but he never put this knowledge in practice; he took accurate note of all outward and inward awkwardness of other people, but yet retained all his own; and after treating his acquaintances for years with the airs of a superior, experienced man of the world accustomed to "society," he would suddenly find, on some occasion of his being from home, that, unlike a true man of the world, he had no effect or influence whatever on people to whom he was a stranger; to make a long tale short, he was a man of letters.

Meanwhile, however, before the Sunday came, notwithstanding all the peace-sermons and peace-treaties in his heart, he found that he had plumped, before he knew where he was, right into the thick of a household battle of the frogs and mice once more, which occurred as follows:—It is matter of history, derived from his own statement, that, as Lenette kept on ceaselessly washing her hands and arms, as well as other things by the hundred (although, for the most part, with cold water, it being impossible to have warm water continually ready)—that, I say, he simply asked, in the gentlest tone in the world, the kindly and half-playful question, "Doesn't that cold water give you cold?" She answered "No," in a *sostenuto* voice. "Perhaps *warm* water would be more likely to do so, would it?" he continued. Her answer was, "Yes, it would," delivered in a snapping *staccato*. Moralists and psychologists, who may be a good deal surprised at this half-angry answer to a question so innocent, are, contrary to my expectations, far behindhand in their knowledge of psychology in general, and the psychology of this tale in particular. Lenette knew by experience that the advocate, like Socrates, generally opened his battles in the most dulcet tones, as the Spartans commenced theirs to the sound of flutes, and, in fact, continued them in the same strain, that, like the said Spartans, he might retain complete command of himself. She therefore dreaded that, on this occasion also, his flute-text might usher in a declaration of war against the feminine form of government, of which the various provinces of work are divided one from another by washing-waters, as the judicial districts of modern Bavaria are by rivers.

"What key is a husband to play his tune in, I ask you all!" the advocate would often cry with curses, "since, whether he takes it in the major or in the minor, or plays piano or forte, it seems all the same in the end?"

On the present occasion, however, all he was aiming at, his gentleness of demeanour notwithstanding, was a preface to a proper system of educating or training the bodies of children. For after her answer he went on to say, "I am delighted to hear you say so. If we had children, I see you would be continually washing them, and with cold water, too, over their whole bodies, and this would invigorate them and make them strong and hardy, since, as you say, it produces warmth." Her only answer to this was to hold her hands aloft, folded for victory, like the biblical prophet—for, in her eyes, a cold bathing of children was a Herodian blood-bath. Firmian then developed with much greater clearness his invigorating system of upbringing, while more and more strenuously strove his wife against it, with all her feathers ruffled, till by dint of able exposition on both sides of the respective masculine and feminine systems of rearing, they had nearly reached a point where they would have clashed together, like a couple of summer thunderclouds, had not he dispelled these by firing the following

shot: “Good heavens! have *we* any children? Why should we make fools of ourselves in this way about the matter?”

“I was speaking of other people’s children,” was Lenette’s reply.

Consequently, as I said above, war did *not* break out, but, on the other hand, the morning of the Sabbath of peace brake in, and with it came the guests who were bent upon possessing themselves of (and eating) the warm and divided heart, or pig, of the Babylonish harlot, or Cardinal Protector. It seemed, in fact, as if some happy star of the wise men of the East must be standing in the heavens above this houseful of recipients of out-door relief, for there had, by good luck, been a gale of wind on the previous Friday which had blown down some half of the Government forest and strewn the path to Advent, for the poor, so grandly with branches (and the trees attached) that the entire staff of forest officials could not hinder the ingathering of such a vintage. For many a long year the Morbitzer’s house hadn’t boasted anything approaching to such a stock of timber, part of it purchased, part adroitly collected.

And if every Sunday is—in a poor man’s quarters—in itself and in the nature of things, not only a sun-day, but a moon-and-stars-day into the bargain a day when a poor fellow has his mouthful or two of food, his trifle or two of good clothes, his twelve hours for eating and twelve for lying down, besides the necessary neighbours to talk with—it may be conjectured in what a superlative sort this particular Sunday dawned upon the Morbitzer household, where everybody was as sure of eating his share of the pig in the afternoon as of hearing the sermon in the morning, and with as little to pay for the one as for the other, seeing that it was a settled matter that the lodger of greatest dignity in the establishment had determined that his coronation feast should be celebrated nowhere but there, at the table with mere working men.

Old Sabel was on the spot before the earliest church-bell had begun to toll. The rifle-king’s crown-treasury could afford to appoint her hereditary mistress of the kitchen, under Lenette, for a kreuzer or two and a plate or so of victuals; but the queen looked upon her as a superfluity and coadjutor, or auxiliary queen. A king on the chessboard gets two queens whenever a mere ordinary pawn gets moved on to the place of royalty, one of the royal squares (though he has not lost his first consort); and indeed it is just the same when it happens under the canopy of a throne. Lenette, however, would have preferred to have washed, cooked, and served the meats with her own unassisted hands, like a true Homeric or Carlovingian princess. The marksman-monarch himself fled the noisy, dusty throne-scaffold of the day, and in a loose old coat, happy and free, he rambled about the broad green levels of the quiet, blue, latter autumn, checked by no interfering dry stems or straw sheaves standing sentry on the plain, and bursting no thicker barrier-chains than the webs of the spiders. Never do husbands more happily and tranquilly take their walks abroad—out in the open country, or, indeed, up and down in other people’s rooms—than when, in their own, the stamping-mills, the sugar and fanning-mills are at work, whirling and roaring, and they promise themselves, at their home-coming, the clean, finished product and outcome of all these mill-wheels. Siebenkæs glanced with a poet’s idyllic eye from his quiet meadow into the distant noise-chamber, full of pans, choppers, and besoms, and found true and deep delight in a peaceful contemplation of the whirl of backwards and forwards assiduity going on there, and in picturing to himself and joining in, the pleasant tongue-visions of the hungry guests, till suddenly he grew red and hot. “You’re doing a fine thing!” he said, addressing himself; “*I* could do that, myself, too! But there’s the poor wife scrubbing and cooking herself to death at home, and nobody giving her even a thought of thanks.” And the least he could do

was to vow, on the spot, that however he might find things moved about and "put in order" in the house on his return, he would accept and belaud it all without a word of demur.

And history vouches, to his honour, for the fact that when, on his reaching the house, he found his bookshelves dusted and his inkpot washed white on the outside, and all his belongings "put in order"—(in a *different* order to the previous one, be it observed),—he at once praised Lenette in the kindest manner, without a shade of irritation, and said she had performed her household processes and accomplished her cleaning and brushing in a manner quite after his heart, for that it was impossible to be *too* exquisitely neat and spick and span in the eyes of commonplace women, particularly such as composed the infernal triumvirate who were to be present that day (*i. e.* the bookbinder's, the barber's, and the shoemaker's wives); and on that account he had left the intendance-general of the theatre of operations entirely to her—whereas, in the case of scholars, like Stiefel and himself, the room might be turned into a complete English scouring, carding, and brushing apparatus—for men of their sort never glanced down at trifles of that description from their sublime heights of mental contemplation.

But how pleasantly and cheerily did the president of the eating congress put all things in train by this his kindly temper, even before the assembling of the congress; though this appeared most fully after it *had* assembled. When the thirteen United States, by their thirteen deputies, dine together at a round table to celebrate some arrangement which they have jointly arrived at (and that they do so at least, establishes the fact that when thirteen dine at a table the thirteenth does not necessarily die), it is an easy matter for the thirteen free states in question, paying, as they do, the expenses out of thirteen treasuries, to treat their delegates as liberally as Firmian treated his guests. It is pleasant to look at cattle grazing in the meadows, but not so pleasant to see Nebuchadnezzar conducting himself like one of them; and similarly it is repulsive to see a man of cultivation pasturing with a too eager delight on the stomach's meadow, the dinner-table (though it is not so in the case of the poor). Firmian's guests were all of one mind, even the married couples; for it is a leading characteristic of the lower classes that they enter into a dozen treaties of peace and make as many declarations of war, in the course of the four-and-twenty hours, and particularly that they ennoble each of their meals into a feast of love and reconciliation. Firmian saw in the lower classes a kind of standing troupe of actors playing Shakespeare's comedies, and thousands of times fancied that the dramatist himself was prompting them unseen. He had long coveted the pleasure of having some enjoyment or other of which he could give away some portion to the poor; he envied those rich Britons who pay the score of a beershop full of labourers, or, like Cæsar, give free commons to an entire town. The poor who *have* houses give to the poor who have not—one lazzarone gives to another—as shell-fish become the habitations of other crustaceans, and earthworms are the habitable universes of lesser worms.

In the evening arrived Peltzstiefel, who was too learned a man to eat swine's flesh, or a measure of salt, among the untaught vulgar. And then Siebenkæs could once more entertain an idea unintelligible to any one but Stiefel. He could lay the sceptre and the tinted glass-ball of the imperial globe upon the table, and in his capacity of king of the feast and of the eagle, say that his long hair served him for a crown, like that of the old Frank kings, his own crown having been knocked down by his landlord's rifle; he could assert that the rule by which only he by whose hands the eagle was brought

down became king was clearly imitated from the code of the Fraticelli Berghadi, who could only elect to the papacy a person who had killed a child. That 'twas true he had it not in his power to reign over Kuhschnappel so long by fourteen days as the King of Prussia over the ecclesiastical see of Elten (the latter period being one of *fifteen* days)—that 'twas true he had a crown and revenues, but the latter were sadly reduced, cut down by one-half, in fact—and that he was far too much like the Great Mogul, who formerly had an income of two hundred and twenty-six millions a year, but now receives only the one hundred and thirteenth part of that sum; however, at his (Siebenkæs's) coronation, though there had been no general liberation of the *wicked* prisoners, yet *one good* one had been released, namely, himself; also that, like Peter the Second of Arragon, he had been crowned with nothing worse than bread: finally that, under his ephemeral rule, nobody was beheaded, robbed, or beaten to death; and—which delighted him most of all—the feeling that he was like one of the ancient German princes, who governed, defended, and increased a free people, and was a member of that free people himself, &c. &c.

The throats in this royal chamber grew louder and drier as the evening advanced; the pipes (those chimneys of the mouth) made of the room a heaven of clouds, and of their heads heavens of joy. Outside, the autumn sun brooded, with warm, flaming wings, over the cold, naked earth, as if in haste to hatch the spring. The guests had drawn the quint, (I mean the five prizes of the five senses) out of the ninety numbers, or ninety years of the lottery of human life; the famished eyes were sparkling, and in Firmian's soul the buds of gladness had burst their leaflet envelopes and swelled forth into flower. Deep happiness always leads love by the hand; and Firmian longed to-day, with an unutterable longing, to press his heart, all heavy with bliss, upon Lenette's breast, and there forget all his wants and hers.

These circumstances, in their combination, inspired him with a strange idea. He determined, on this happy day, to go and redeem the pawned silken flower-wreath and plant it in some dark spot out of doors, then take her out there in the evening, or perhaps even in the night, and give her a pleasant little surprise at the sight of it. He slipped out and took his way to the pawnbroker's; but—as all our resolves begin in us as tiny sparks, and end in broad lightning flashes—so, as he went, he improved his original idea (of redeeming the wreath from pawn) into an altogether different one, that of buying real flowers and planting *them* by way of goal of the nocturnal ramble. There was no difficulty in getting red and white roses from the greenhouse of a gardener of the Prince of Oettingen-Spielberg, who had lately come to the place. He walked round under the upright glass roofs, all behung with blossom, went to the gardener and got what he wanted—only no forget-me-nots, for these, of course, the man had left the meadows to supply. But forget-me-nots were indispensable, to make the loving surprise complete. He therefore took his real autumn flowers to the pawnbroker woman's, in whose hands his silk plants had been deposited, that he might twine the dead, poor, cocoon forget-me-nots among the living roses. What was his astonishment to learn that the pledge had been redeemed and taken away by Mr. von Meyern, and that he had paid a sum of money so considerable that the woman thought she still owed the advocate a debt of thanks. It needed all the strength of a heart fortified by love to keep him from going at once to the Venner with a storm of reproaches for this move of warlike strategy—this pledge-robbery—for he could scarce endure the thought (a mistaken idea, 'tis true, only given rise to by Lenette's silence on the subject of the garland) of his pure love's pretty token in Rosa's beringed and thievish fingers. The brokeress, too, though she was not to blame, would have been severely taken to task had it been any other day, one less full of love

and happiness; as it was, however, Firmian cursed in a merely general manner, especially as the woman gave him silk forget-me-nots of somebody else's, when he said he wanted some. When in the street again, he was at variance with himself as to the spot where he should plant his flowers; he wished he knew where to find some fresh-dug bed of fine old mould, of which the dark colour should set off to advantage the red and blue of the flowers. At length he saw a field which is broken into beds at all seasons—in summer and in winter, ay, in the bitterest cold—the churchyard, with its church, hanging like a vineyard on the slope of a hill beyond the town. He slipped in by a back entrance and saw the fresh-raised boundary-hillock which marked the close of an earthly life, rolled, as it were, up to the foot of the triumphal gate, through which a mother, with her newborn child in her arms, had passed away into the brighter world. Upon this earthen bier he laid his flowers down, like a funeral garland, and then went home.

The members of the gladsome company had scarcely missed him; they were floating, like fish benumbed in their element saturated with foreign matter, paralysed with the poison of pleasure; but Stiefel was still in his senses, and was talking with Lenette. The world has already learned from the former portion of this history—the people of the house, too, were well aware—that Firmian was fond of running away from his guests, in order to throw himself back into their society with a greater zest, and that he interrupted his pleasures in order that he might savour them—as Montaigne used to have himself awakened from his sleep that he might thoroughly appreciate what it was—and so Firmian merely said that he had been out.

All the waves, even the most turbulent of them, subsided at last, and there was nothing left in the ebb save those three pearl mussels, our three friends. Firmian gazed with tender eyes upon Lenette's bright ones, for he loved her the more fondly because he had a pleasure in store for her. Stiefel glowed with a love so pure that, without any serious error of logic, he was able to define and classify it to himself as a mere sympathetic rejoicing in her happiness; particularly as his love for the wife placed wings, not fetters, upon his affection for her husband. Indeed the Schulrath's anxiety was directed altogether to the reverse side of the question, his only doubt being whether he had it in him to express his love with adequate force and ardour. Therefore he pressed both their hands many times, and laid them between his own; he said beauty was a thing to which he very rarely paid any attention, but that he *had* been observant of it that day, because that of Mrs. Siebenkæs had appeared to such great advantage amid all her labours, particularly with all these ordinary women about her, and at *them* he had not so much as looked. He assured the advocate that he had considered his goodness and kindness to this admirable wife of his as a mark of increased personal friendship for himself; and he asseverated to her that his affection for her, of which he had given some little proof as they came together from Augspurg in the coach, would grow stronger the more she loved his friend, and through that friend, himself.

Into this cup of joy of hers Firmian of course cast no drop of poison relative to (what he *supposed* to be) the news of the Venner's having made prize of the flowers. He was so happy that day; his little toy crown had so tenderly covered and soothed all the bleeding wounds on that head of his whence he had lifted his crown of thorns just a little way (as Alexander's diadem soothed the bleeding head of Lysimachus), that his only wish was that the night might be as long as a Polar one, since it was just as calm and peaceful, as bright and serene. In moments like these the poison fangs of all our

troubles are broken out, and a Paul, like him in Malta of old, has turned all the tongues of the soul's serpents to stone.

When Stiefel rose to go, Firmian did not detain him, but insisted that he should allow them both to go with him, not to their own door only, but to his. They went out. The broad heaven, with the streets of the City of God all lit with the lamps which are suns, drew them on, out beyond the narrow crossways of the town, and into the great spectacle hall of night, where we breathe the blue of heaven, and drink the east breeze. We should conclude and sanctify all our chamber feasts by "going to church" in that cool, vast temple, that great cathedral whose dome is adorned with the sacred picture of the Most Holy, portrayed in a mosaic of stars. They roamed on refreshed and exalted by breezes of the coming spring hastening to blow before their appointed time, those breezes which wipe the snow away from the mountains. All nature gave promise of a mild winter—to lead the poor, who have no fuel, gently through the darkest quarter of the year—it was a season such as none curse except the rich, who can order sleighs but not snow.

The two men carried on a conversation befitting the sublimity of the night; Lenette said nothing. Firmian said, "How near together these miserable oyster banks, the villages, seem to be, and how small they are; when we go from one of these villages to another the journey seems to us about the same in length as a mite's, if it crawled on a map from the name of the one to the name of the other, might appear to it. And to higher spirits our earth-ball may perhaps be a globe for their children, which their tutor turns and explains."

"Yet," said Stiefel, "there may very possibly be worlds even smaller than this earth of ours; and, after all, there *must* be something in ours since the Lord Christ died for it." At this the warm blood rushed to Lenette's heart. Firmian merely answered, "More Saviours than one have died for this world and mankind, and I am convinced that Christ will one day take many a good man by the hand, and say, '*You* have suffered under your Pontius Pilate too!' And for that matter many a seeming Pilate is very likely a Messiah, if the truth were known." Lenette's secret dread was that her husband was really an absolute Atheist, or at all events a "philosopher."

He led them by snaky windings and corkscrew paths to the churchyard; but suddenly his eyes grew moist, as one's do when passing through a thick mist, when he thought of the mother's grave with the flowers on it, and on Lenette who gave no sign of ever becoming one. He strove to expel the sadness from his heart by philosophic speeches. He said human beings and watches stop while they are being wound up for a new long day; and that he believed that those dark intervals of sleep and death, which break up and divide our existence into segments, prevent any one particular idea from getting to glare too brightly, and our never-cooling desires from searing us wholly—and oven our ideas from interflowing into confusion—just as the planetary systems are separated by gloomy wastes of space, and the solar systems by yet greater gulfs of darkness. That the human spirit could never take in and contain the endless stream of knowledge which flows throughout eternity, but that it sips it by portions at a time, with intervals between: the eternal day would blind our souls were it not broken into separate days by midsummer nights (which we call, now sleep, now death), framing its noons in a border of mornings and evenings.

Lenette was frightened, and would have liked to run away behind the wall and not go into the churchyard; however, she had to go in. Firmian, holding her closely to him, took a roundabout path to the place where the wreath was. He closed the little

clattering metal gates which guarded the pious verses and the brief life-careers. They came to the better-class graves nearest the church, which lay round that fortress like a kind of moat. Here there were nothing but upright monuments standing over the quiet mummies below, while further on were mere trapdoors let down upon recumbent human beings. A bony head, which was sleeping in the open air, Firmian set a-rolling, and—heedless of Lenette's oft-renewed entreaties to him not to make himself "unclean"—he took up in both his hands this last capsule case of a spirit of many dwelling places, and, looking into the empty window-openings of the ruined pleasure-house, said, "They ought to get up into the pulpit inside there at midnight, and put this scalped mask of our Personality down upon the desk in place of the Bible and the hourglass, and preach upon it as a text to the *other* heads sitting there still packed in their skins. They should have *my* head, if they liked to skin it after my decease, and hook it up in the church like a herring's, upon a string, by way of angel at the font—so that the silly souls might for once in their lives look *upward* and then *downward*—for we hang and hover between heaven and the grave. The hazel-nut worm is still in *our* heads, Herr Schulrath, but it has gone through its transformation and flown out from this one, for there are two holes in it and a kernel of dust."[51]

Lenette was terrified at this godless jesting in such close proximity to ghosts; yet it was but a disguised form of mental exaltation. All at once she whispered, "There's something looking down at us over the top of the charnel house. See, see, it's raising itself higher up." It was only the evening breeze lifting a cloud higher; but this cloud had the semblance of a bier resting on the roof, and a hand was stretched forth from it, while a star, shining close to the cloud's edge, seemed like a white flower laid on the heart of the form which lay upon the bier of cloud.

"It is only a cloud," said Firmian; "come nearer to the house, and then we shall lose sight of it." This furnished him with the best possible pretext for leading her up to the blooming Eden in miniature upon the grave. When they had walked some twenty paces, the bier was hidden by the house. "Dear me," said the Rath, "what may that be in flower there?" "Upon my life," cried Firmian, "white and red roses, and forget-me-nots, wife." She looked tremblingly, doubtingly, inquiringly at this resting-place of a heart, decked with a garland, at this altar with the sacrifice lying beneath it. "Very well then, Firmian," she cried, "I'm sure I can't help it, it is no fault of mine; but *oh*! you *shouldn't* have done such a thing! oh dear! oh dear! will you *never* cease tormenting me!" She began to weep, and hid her streaming eyes on Stiefel's arm.

For she, who was so delicately clever in nothing as in touchiness and taking umbrage, supposed this garland was the silken one from her wardrobe, and that her husband knew that Rosa had presented it to her, and had placed the flowers upon this grave of a woman, dead in childbed, in mockery either of her childlessness or of herself. These mutual misunderstandings were to the full as confounding to him as to her; he had to combat *her* errors, and at the same time ask himself what his *own* consisted of. It was only now that she told him that Rosa had some time since returned the pawned wreath to her. Upon the green thistle-plant of mistrust of her love, a flower or two now came out; nothing is more painful than when a person whom we love hides something from us for the first time, were it but the merest trifle. It was a great distress and disappointment to Firmian that the pleasant surprise he had prepared should have taken such a bitter turn. There was too much of the artificial about his garland to commence with, but the foul fiend, Chance, had malevolently crisped and

[51] Two holes in a hazel-nut show that the beetle which gnawed away its kernel, in the shape of a little larval worm, has crept out in its transformed state.

twirled it up, with added weeds, into a more unreal and unnatural affair than ever. Let us take care then not to hire Chance into the heart's service.

The Schulrath, at his wits' end, gave vent to his embarrassment in a warm curse or two upon the Venner's head; he tried to establish a peace congress between the husband and wife (who were sunk in silent musing), and strongly urged Lenette to give her hand to her husband and be reconciled to him. But nothing would induce her. Yet, after long hesitation, she agreed to do it, but only on condition that he would first *wash* his hands. Hers shrunk away in convulsive loathing from touching those which had been in contact with a skull.

The Schulrath took away the battle-flag from them, and delivered a peace-sermon which came warm from his heart. He reminded them what the place was in which they stood, surrounded by human beings all gone to their last account; he bade them think for a moment how near they were to the angels who guard the graves of the just, the very mother (he pointed out) who was mouldering at their feet, with her baby in her arms (and whose eldest son he himself was bringing along in his Latin studies—he was then in Scheller's *principia*), might be said to be admonishing them not to fall out about a flower or two over her quiet grave, but rather to take them away as olive-branches of peace. Lenette's heart drank *his* theologic holy water with far greater zest than Firmian's pure, philosophic Alp water, and the latter's lofty thoughts of Death shot athwart her soul without the slightest penetration. However, the sacrifice of reconciliation was accomplished and mutual letters of indulgence exchanged. At the same time, a peace like this, brought about by a third party, is always something in the nature of a mere suspension of hostilities. Strangely enough they both awoke in the morning with tears in their eyes, but could not tell whether happy dreams or sad ones had left these drops behind.

First Flower Piece

THE DEAD CHRIST PROCLAIMS THAT THERE IS NO GOD.

INTRODUCTION.

My aim in writing this fiction must be my excuse for its audacity.

Men, as a class, deny God's existence with about the same small amount of true consideration, conviction, and feeling as that with which most individual men admit it. Even in our regularly established *systems* of belief we form collections of mere words, game-counters, medallions—just as coin-collectors accumulate cabinetsful of coins—and not till long after our collection is made do we convert the words into sentiments, the coins into enjoyments. We may believe in the immortality of the soul for twenty years long, yet it may be the twenty-first before, in some one supreme moment, we suddenly perceive, to our astonishment, what this belief involves, and how wonderful is the warmth of that naphtha spring.

In a similar manner to this, I myself was suddenly horror-struck at the perception of the poison-power of that vapour which strikes with such suffocating fumes to the heart of him who enters the school of Atheistic doctrine. It would cause me less pain to deny immortality than to deny God's existence. In the former case, what I lose is but a world hidden by clouds; but in the latter, I lose this present world, that is to say, its sun. The whole spiritual universe is shattered and shivered, by the hand of Atheism, into innumerable glittering quicksilver globules of individual personalities, running hither and thither at random, coalescing, and parting asunder without unity, coherence, or consistency. In all this wide universe there is none so utterly solitary and alone as a denier of God. With orphaned heart—a heart which has lost the Great Father—he mourns beside the immeasurable corpse of Nature, a corpse no longer animated or held together by the Great Spirit of the Universe—a corpse which grows in its grave; and by this corpse he mourns until he himself crumbles and falls away from it into nothingness. The wide earth lies before such an one like the great Egyptian sphinx of stone, half-buried in the desert sand; the immeasurable universe has become for him but the cold iron-mask upon an eternity which is without form and void.

I would also fain awaken, with this piece of fiction, some alarm in the hearts of certain masters and teachers (reading, as well as *read*); for, in truth, these men (now that they have come to do their appointed day's work, like so many convicts, in the canal-diggings and in the mine-shaft excavations, of the "critical" schools of philosophy) discuss God's existence as cold-bloodedly and chill-heartedly as though it were a question of the existence of the kraken or the unicorn.

For others, who have not progressed quite so far as this I would further remark, that the belief in immortality may without contradiction, co-exist with the belief in Atheism, for the self-same necessity which, in this life, placed my little shining dew-drop of a personality in a flower-cup and beneath a sun, can certainly do the same in a second life—ay, and could embody me with still greater ease for a second time than for the first.

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When, in our childhood, we are told that, at midnight, when our sleep reaches near the soul and darkens our very dreams, the dead arise from theirs, and in the churches ape the religious services of the living, we shudder at death, because of the dead, and in the loneliness of night we turn our eyes in terror from the tall windows of the silent church, and dread to look at their pale shimmer to see whether it be truly the reflection of the moon's beams—or *something else*!

Childhood and its terrors (even more than its pleasures) assume, in our dreams, wings and brightness, shining glowworm-like in the dark night of the soul. Extinguish not these little flickering sparks! Leave us the dim and painful dreams even; they serve to make life's high-lights all the more brilliant. And what will ye give us in exchange for the dreams which raise and bear us up from beneath the roar of the falling cataract back to the peaceful mountain-heights of childhood, where the river of life was flowing as yet in peace, reflecting heaven upon its little surface, on towards the precipices of the future course.

Once on a summer evening I was lying upon a quiet hillside in the sun. I fell asleep, and dreamed that I awoke in a churchyard. The rattle of the wheels of the clock running down as it was striking eleven, had awakened me. I looked for the sun in the dark and void night sky, for I supposed that some eclipse was hiding it with the moon. And all the graves were open, and the iron doors of the charnel-house kept opening and shutting, moved by invisible hands. Athwart the walls shadows went flitting; but no bodies cast those shadows and there were others, too, moving about out in the open air. Within the open coffins there were none now asleep, except the children. Nothing was in the sky but sultry fog, heavy and grey, ranging there in great clammy folds; and some gigantic shadow closed and closed this fog as in a net, and drew it ever nearer, closer, and hotter. Up overhead I heard the thunder of distant avalanches, and beneath my feet the first footfalls of a boundless earthquake. The church was heaved and shaken to and fro by two terrific discords striving in it, beating in stormy effort to attain harmonious resolution. Now and then a greyish glimmer passed with rapid gleam flittering athwart the windows; but, whenever this glimmer came, the lead and iron of the frames always melted and ran rolling down. The fog's net, and the quaking of the earth, drove me into the temple, past gleaming, glittering basilisks, brooding in poison-nests beside the door. I passed among shadows, strange and unknown to me; but they all bore the impress of the centuries. These shadows stood all grouped about the altar, and their breasts quivered and throbbed—their *breasts* but not their hearts. There was but one of the dead still lying on his pillow, and he was one who had but just been buried in the church; he lay at peace, his breast without a throb, a happy dream upon his smiling face. But now, as I came in (I, one of the living), his sleep broke, he awoke, and smiled no more; with painful effort he raised his heavy eyelids—and there was no eye beneath—and in his beating breast there was no heart, but a deep wound instead. He raised his hands, folded as it for prayer; but then his arms shot out and came apart from his poor trunk, the folded hands came off and fell away. Upon the dome above there was inscribed the dial of eternity—but figures there were none, and the dial itself was its own gnomon; a great black finger was pointing at it, and the dead strove hard to read the time upon it.

And at this point a lofty, noble form, bearing the impress of eternal sorrow, came sinking down towards our group, and rested on the altar; whereupon all the dead cried out, "Christ! Is there no God?"

He answered, "There is none."

At this the dead quivered and trembled; but now it was not their breasts alone that throbbed; the quivering ran all through the shadows, so that one by one the shudder shook them into nothingness. And Christ spake on, saying, “I have traversed the worlds, I have risen to the suns, with the milky ways I have passed athwart the great waste spaces of the sky; there is no God. And I descended to where the very shadow cast by Being dies out and ends, and I gazed out into the gulf beyond, and cried, ‘Father, where art Thou?’ But answer came there none, save the eternal storm which rages on, controlled by none; and towards the west, above the chasm, a gleaming rainbow hung, but there was no sun to give it birth, and so it sank and fell by drops into the gulf. And when I looked up to the boundless universe for the Divine eye, behold, it glared at me from out a socket, empty and bottomless. Over the face of chaos brooded Eternity, chewing it for ever, again and yet again. Shriek on, then, discords, shatter the shadows with your shrieking din, for He is not!”

The pale and colourless shades flickered away to nothingness, as frosty fog dissolves before warm breath, and all grew void. Ah! then the dead children, who had been asleep out in the graves, awoke, and came into the temple, and fell down before the noble form (a sight to rend one’s heart), and cried, “Jesus, have we no Father?” He made answer, with streaming tears, “We are orphans all, both I and ye. We have no Father.”

Then the discords clashed and clanged more harshly yet; the shivering walls of the temple parted asunder, and the temple and the children sank—the earth and sun sank with them—and the boundless fabric of the universe sank down before us, while high on the summit of immeasurable nature Jesus stood and gazed upon the sinking universe, besprent with thousand suns, and like a mine dug in the face of black eternal night; the suns being miners’ lamps, and the milky way the veins of silvery ore.

And as he gazed upon the grinding mass of worlds, the wild torch dance of starry will-o’-the-wisps, and all the coral banks of throbbing hearts—and saw how world by world shook forth its glimmering souls on to the Ocean of Death—then He, sublime, loftiest of finite beings, raised his eyes towards the nothingness and boundless void, saying, “Oh dead, dumb, nothingness! necessity endless and chill! Oh! mad unreasoning Chance—when will ye dash this fabric into atoms, and me too? Chance, knowest thou—thou knowest not—when thou dost march, hurricane-winged, amid the whirling snow of stars, extinguishing sun after sun upon thy onward way, and when the sparkling dew of constellations ceases to gleam, as thou dost pass them by? How every soul in this great corpse-trench of an universe is utterly alone? *I* am alone—none by me—O Father, Father! where is that boundless breast of thine, that I may rest upon it? Alas! if every soul be its own father and creator, why shall it not be its own destroying angel too? Is this a man still near me? Wretched being! That petty life of thine is but the sigh of nature, or the echo of that sigh. Your wavering cloudy forms are but reflections of rays cast by a concave mirror upon the clouds of dust which shroud your world—dust which is dead men’s ashes. Look ye down into the chasm athwart the face of which the ash-clouds float and fly. A mist of worlds rises up from the Ocean of Death; the future is a gathering cloud, the present a falling vapour. Dost thou see and know thy earth?”

Here Christ looked downward, and his eyes grew full of tears, and he spake on, and said, “Alas! I, too, was once of that poor earth; then I was happy, then I still possessed my infinite Father, and I could look up from the hills with joy to the boundless heaven, and I could cry even in the bitterness of death, ‘My Father, take

thy Son from out this bleeding earthly shell, and lift Him to thy heart.' Alas! too happy dwellers upon earth, ye still believe in Him. Your sun, it may be, is setting at this hour, and amid flowers and brilliance, and with tears ye sink upon your knees, and, lifting up your hands in rapturous joy, ye cry each one aloud up to the open heavens, 'Oh Father, infinite, eternal, hear! Thou knowest *me* in all my littleness, even as Thou knowest all things, and Thou seest my wounds and sorrows, and Thou wilt receive me after death and soothe and heal them all.' Alas! unhappy souls! For after death these wounds will *not* be healed. But when the sad and weary lays down his worn and wounded frame upon the earth to sleep towards a fairer brighter morn all truth, goodness and joy,—behold! he awakes amid a howling chaos, in a night endless and everlasting; and no morning dawns, there is no healing hand, no everlasting Father. Oh, mortal, who standest near, if still thou breathest the breath of life, worship and pray to Him, or else thou losest Him for evermore."

And I fell down and peered into the shining mass of worlds, and beheld the coils of the great serpent of eternity all twined about those worlds; these mighty coils began to writhe and rise, and then again they tightened and contracted, folding round the universe twice as closely as before; they wound about all nature in thousandfolds, and crashed the worlds together, and crushed down the boundless temple to a little churchyard chapel. And all grew narrow, and dark, and terrible. And then a great immeasurable bell began to swing in act to toll the last hour of Time, and shatter the fabric of the universe to countless atoms,—when my sleep broke up, and I awoke.

And my soul wept for joy that it could still worship God—my gladness, and my weeping, and my faith—these were my prayer! And as I rose the sun was gleaming low in the west, behind the ripe purple ears of corn, and casting in peace the reflection of his evening blushes over the sky to where the little moon was rising clear and cloudless in the east. And between the heaven and the earth, a gladsome, shortlived world was spreading tiny wings, and, like myself, *living* in the eternal Father's sight. And from all nature round, on every hand, rose music-tones of peace and joy, a rich, soft, gentle harmony, like the sweet chime of bells at evening pealing far away.

Second Flower Piece

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM.

A sky of glorious and sublime beauty was spread out above this earth; a rainbow stood in the east, like the circle of eternity: a storm, with broken wings, passed thundering, as if weary, along by the lightning conductors, and away through the glowing gate of Eden in the west; the evening sun gazed after the storm with a brightness tender as if it shone through tears, resting its glance upon the great triumphal arch of Nature. All enraptured with the loveliness of the scene, I closed my eyes, and seeing nothing, save the sun shining warm and glowing through my lids, listened to the thunder as it died away in the far distance. And at length the mists of sleep sank down into my soul, and shrouded all the spring in folds of grey; but soon there came luminous bands of brightness piercing through the mist, and by-and-by shone many-tinted lines of beauty, and ere long the dark face of my sleep was painted with the brilliant pictures of the world of dreams.

And then I thought that I was standing in the second world, and all about me a dim green grassy plain, which, in the distance, merged into brighter flowers, and woods of glowing red, and hills so clear that you could see the lodes of gold within them. Beyond these crystal hills there glowed a bright rose dawn of morning, with dewy rainbows arching it all over. All the shining woods were sprent with suns (where earthly forests would have gleamed with drops of dew); while all the flowers were draped with nebulæ, as earthly flowers are hung with gossamer. At times the meadows shook, as waves of motion passed quivering over them—but this was not because the zephyrs bent the grasses in their play—it was that passing souls brushed them with unseen wings. I was invisible in this second world, for there this shell of ours is but a little shroud, a tiny fleck of fog not yet condensed.

And on the brink of this, the second world, reposed the holy Virgin near her Son; and she was looking downward to our earth, there as it floated dwarfed and far beneath, in its pale, feeble spring-time, on the mighty face of the Ocean of Death. And every wave was tossing it at will, and its dim light was nothing but the shadow of a shadow. Then Mary's heart beat with a yearning pulse, when she beheld the old beloved world, and all her soul grew tender, and she said, with brightening glance, "Oh, Son! this heart of mine is full of longing, and mine eyes with tears, for all these my beloved human friends! Raise the earth near us, that I once more may look into the eyes of mine own race, my brothers, and my sisters. Ah! my tears will fall when I behold the living once again."

But Christ replied, "The earth is but a dream of many dreams; and thou must sleep to see these dreams."

And Mary answered, "I will gladly sleep that I may dream of man." And then Christ said, "Say what the dream shall show thee."

"Oh beloved! I would the dream would show me mankind's love. Love such as hearts which meet once more in bliss after long painful parting only know."

And as she spake it, lo! the angel of Death stood close behind her, and with closing eyes she sank upon his bosom, which was cold as polar ice. And then the little earth rose quivering up, but as it neared it paled and narrowed, and grew more dim and small. The clouds about it parted, and the cleft mists gave to view the little night in

which it lay, and from a sleeping brook a star or two of the second world were mirrored back. And all the children lay sleeping on the earth, and all were smiling—for they had seen Mary appear to them as they slept, in semblance of a mother. But, in the night, stood one unhappy being, the power of outward grief almost gone from her, except in sighs which tore her breaking heart. Even her very tears had ceased to flow. Oh! gaze no more, sad soul, towards the west, where stands the house of mourning all behung with funeral crape; nor to the east, upon the grave and house of death. For this one day, turn thy sad gaze away from that drear charnel house where the loved corpse is laid, so that the cool night breeze may fan and wake him from his sleep earlier than if he were shut up within the narrow grave! Yet, no! bereaved one, gaze thy fill on thy beloved one while he still is here, and ere he falls to dust—and steep thy heart deep in the eternal woe.

As then an echo in the lone churchyard began to talk in faint and murmuring tones, repeating the notes of the low-voiced funeral hymn that rose within the house of mourning; and this after-song, floating half-heard in air—as though the dead were chanting low—tore all her heart in twain; and then her tears found vent and flowed anew, and wild with sorrow she raised her voice and cried, “For ever silent! oh my love, my love! Callest thou me once more? oh, speak again—but once—only this once, once more, to me whom thou hast left for ever! Ah, no! nothing but silence; no sound except the echo stirring among the graves. All the poor dead lie deaf beneath, and not a tone comes from the broken heart.”

But when the mourning hymn ceased of a sudden, and the dying echo from the graves sung faintly on alone, a tremor seized her, and her very life shook in the balance; for the echo came nearer and nearer, and from out the night one of the dead came close. And he stretched forth his pale and shadowy hand and took her own, saying, “My darling, why is it that you weep? Where have we been so long? for I have been dreaming that I had lost you!” But they had not lost each other. From Mary’s closed lids there fell some happy tears, and ere her son could wipe those tears away, the earth had sunk back to its place again—and on its face this happy pair, restored to one another, and in bliss.

Then all at once there rose a spark of fire up from the earth, and presently a soul hovered all trembling near the second world, as if in doubt whether to enter there. And Christ a second time raised up the earth ball, and the bodily frame from whence this soul had winged its way was lying still on earth, marked with the scars and wounds of a long life. Beside this fallen leafage of the soul a grey old man was standing, and, speaking to the corpse, he said, “I am as old as thou; why must my death be after thine, oh kind and faithful wife? Morning by morning, evening by evening, now, what can I do but think how deep thy grave, how far thy form has crumbled on its course to undistinguished dust, till my time comes to lie and crumble with thee side by side! I am alone! And *what* a loneliness is mine! For nothing hears me now. *She* cannot hear! Well! well! To-morrow I shall gaze with such a woe upon her faithful hands and her grey hairs that my poor broken life must snap and end. Oh, thou All-merciful! end it to-day; spare me that last great sorrow.”

Why should it be that, even in old age, when man has grown so weary and oppressed, and has descended to the lowest and last of all the steps that lead him downward to his grave, the spectre, Sorrow, sits so heavy upon him, bowing his head (where every bygone year has left its special thorns) to earth with a new despair?

But the Lord Christ sent not the angel of death with the hand of ice; for he himself looked on the bereaved old man, standing so near him now, with such a glance of glowing solar warmth that the ripe fruit broke from the tree. Like sudden flame his soul burst upwards from his riven heart, and hovering above the second world rejoined that other soul it loved so well; there knit together in silent close embrace, like those of old, they trembled downward into Elysium, where no embrace finds end. And Mary stretched, all love, her hands towards them, and all joy and rapture from her dream, she cried, “Ah, happy pair, ye are together now for evermore.”

But now there rose a pillar of red vapour up on high above the hapless earth, and clung there hiding with its dun folds a battle-field’s loud roar. At length the smoke parted asunder, and two bleeding men were seen lying enlocked in each other’s bleeding arms. They were two grand and glorious friends, and they had sacrificed all to each other, ay! and their very selves,—but not the Fatherland. “Lay thy wounds upon mine, beloved friend. The past lies all behind us now, we can be friends again; thou hast sacrificed me to the Fatherland, as I have thee. Give me thy heart again, ere it bleeds quite away. Alas! we can only die together now.” And each gave to his friend his pierced and wounded heart. But these glorious friends beamed with a lustre such that Death shrank back, and the great berg of ice, wherewith he crushes man, melted away at touching their warm hearts. And the earth *kept* those two, who rose above her level like two lofty mountains, dowering her with streams, with healing virtues, and with lofty views, she giving only *clouds* to them in return.

Mary in her dream here glanced and bent her head towards her son, for truly he alone can read, support, and succour hearts like these.

Why does she smile now, like some happy mother? Is it because the earth she loves so well, still rising nearer, seems to hover close above the border of the second world, sweet with the flowers of spring, while nightingales lie brooding, with those burning hearts of theirs pressed on the grasses and the meadow blooms,—the stormy skies all brightening into rainbows? Is it because the earth, never to be forgotten of her heart, now shows so happy and so gay bedecked in its spring dress, radiant in all its flowers, the joy hymn bursting from all its singers’ throats? No, not for this alone; that happy smile breaks over her sleeping face because she sees a mother and her child. For this must be a mother who bends down and holds her arms wide open, and calls in sweet enraptured tones, “Come, darling child, come to my heart again.” This is her child, we see and know, standing all innocence, within the ringing temple of the spring, by his good genius who teaches him—and now goes running up to that smiling form—thus early blest, pressed to that heart overflowing with a mother’s love, scarce understanding the blissful words she speaks. “Oh, dearest child, how thou delightest me. Art thou happy too? Thou lovest me! Oh, look at me, my own, and smile for evermore.”

But now the very blissfulness of her dream woke Mary up; and with a tender tremor she fell upon her own son’s heart, saying with tears, “None, save a mother, *knows* what it is to love.” And as she spoke the earth sank to its place (where its own æther flowed around its orb), and with it that glad mother with her arms about her child.

And all this bliss bursting upon my heart dissolved my dream. And I awoke—but nothing had truly changed or passed away; for the mother of my dream still clasped her child close to her heart here on earth’s face; she reads my dream, and, for its truth, forgives, perchance, the dreamer who tells his tale.

Book III

Chapter IX

A POTATO WAR WITH WOMEN—AND WITH MEN—A WALK IN DECEMBER—TINDER FOR JEALOUSY—A WAR OF SUCCESSION ON THE SUBJECT OF A PIECE OF CHECKED CALICO—RUPTURE WITH STIEFEL—SAD EVENING MUSIC.

I should very much like to make an incidental digression about this point; however, I feel that I don't dare.

You see there are, now-a-days, so very few readers (at all events, of the younger and more aristocratic sort) who don't know everything—while, at the same time, they expect their pet authors (and I don't blame them for it) to know more than themselves—which is impossible. By the help of the English machinery (now brought to such high perfection), of encyclopædias, of encyclopædic-dictionaries, of conversations-lexicons, of excerpts from conversations-lexicons, of Ersch and Gruber's 'Universal Dictionaries of all the Sciences,' a young man, after devoting his *days* to it for a month or two (he has no occasion to devote his *nights*) converts himself into a perfect Senatus Academicus of all the Faculties of a University, which he represents in his own single person; besides, in a sense, also himself standing to it in the relation of the student-body at the same time.

I have never, myself, met with a phenomenal youth of the sort above described, unless it were, perhaps, a fellow I once heard playing in the Baireuth band, who represented in his own person a whole Royal Academy of Music—a complete orchestra—inasmuch as he held, carried, and played upon instruments of every kind. This Panharmonist performing, to us partial harmonists only (as we were), blew a French horn, which he held under his right arm, and this right arm bowed a fiddle placed under his left; and that left arm beat, at the proper moments, a drum which was fastened on his back; his cap was hung round with bells, out of which he shook an accompaniment "alla Turca," by moving his head, and he had a cymbal strapped upon each of his knees, which he banged vigorously together; so that the man was all music, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot So that, one is tempted to make this simile-man an occasion and ground-work of further similes, and liken him to a prince who represents in his own person all the instruments of his State, and all its members and representatives. Now, in the presence of readers who are all-knowers, just as this man was an all-player, how is a humble individual such as I, who am but a mere Heidelberg master of seven arts, at the outside, and doctor of a small trifle of philosophy, or so, to venture to take upon himself to attempt such a thing as a bit of a digression with any approach to the clever or the felicitous about it? No; the safe course, in the circumstances, for me is to go quietly on with my story.

We find the advocate, Siebenkæs, once more, then, in full blossom of hope; although that blossom is all sterile, and not of the sort which bears fruit. After his royal shot, he had reckoned upon, at any rate, as many happy days as the money would last for—upon fourteen at least; but mourning-black, now the traveller's uniform, ought to have been the colour of his upon his earthly night-journey—that *voyage pittoresque* for poets. Though marmots and squirrels know how to plug up that particular hole in their dwellings which chances to be on the side from which the approaching storm is coming, men do not; Firmian thought if the hole in his *purse* was mended no more was necessary. Alas! a better thing than money now departed from him—*Love*. His

good Lenette receded to a greater distance from his heart, as he did from hers, day by day.

Her having concealed from him the fact that Rosa had given back the wreath, formed in his heart (as foreign matter lodged in any vessel of the body always does) the nucleus of a gradual deposit of stone about it. But that was only a small matter.

For she brushed and scraped of a morning, and every morning, and that whether (as the saying goes) he "liked it or lumped it."

She would persist, and insist, on communicating all her prorogations of parliament and other decrees to the servant girl, in several duplicates and revised copies, let him protest as much as he chose.

She asked him every thing she had to ask him (no matter what) two or three separate times over; and that whether he shouted beforehand like a quack doctor at a fair, or swore afterwards like one of his customers.

She continued to say, "It has struck four quarters to four o'clock."

When he had proved, with immense care and trouble, that Augspurg was not in the Island of Cyprus, she would return him the quiet incontrovertible answer, "Well, it's not in Roumania either, nor in Bulgaria, nor in the Principality of Jauer, nor in Vauduz, nor in the neighbourhood of Hüshen—two very little, insignificant places, both of them." He could never bring her to give an unqualified assent, when he made the unconditional and positive assertion (in a loud voice), "It's in Swabia—or the devil's in it." She would go no further than to admit that it was situated, in a certain sense, and to some extent, between Franconia, Bavaria, and Switzerland, &c.; it was only to the bookbinder's wife that she would *acknowledge* that it was in Swabia.

Burdens, nay, overloads, of this sort, however, can be borne more or less easily and bravely by a soul fortified by the example of great sufferers—such as a Lycurgus, who let himself be deprived of an eye, and an Epictetus, who allowed his master to hack off his leg; and all these little failings of Lenette's have been touched upon in a previous chapter. But I have to tell of new shortcomings besides; and as regards these, I leave it to unbiassed married men to determine whether they are among the matters which husbands can, and should, put up with.

Firstly: Lenette washed her hands forty times in the course of the day, at the very least; no matter what she touched, she must needs put herself through this process of Holy Re-baptism; like a Jew, she was rendered unclean by the propinquity of *everything*. She would far more probably have followed the example of Rabbi Akiba, than have been in the least astonished at his proceedings—who, when he was a captive in prison, and in the direst distress for water, instead of quenching his thirst with the very small quantity of it he could get, preferred to use it for his ablutions.

"Of course it is right and proper that she should be scrupulous about cleanliness," said Siebenkæs, "and more so than I am; but there are limits to all things. Why doesn't she rub herself with a towel when anybody breathes upon her? Why not purify her lips with soap after a fly has deposited itself (and not *only* itself) upon them? I'm sure she turns our sitting-room into a regular English man-of-war, scoured and holystoned from stem to stern every morning; and I look on as pleased as any officer on her quarter-deck."

If a heavy Irish rain-cloud, or a waterspout with its attendant thunders and lightnings, came over his and her days, she always managed to put her husband right

under water (like a Dutch fortress), with all his courageous energy, and gave free course to all her tears. But when the sun of happiness cast a feeble ray no broader than a window into the room, Lenette would always have a hundred things, other than this pleasant one, to attend to and to look at. Firmian had particularly made up his mind that he would most thoroughly winnow the husks from the corn of these few days during which he had a few shillings of ready money in his pocket; that he would skim off the cream of them, and completely hide, with a thick veil, the second Janus face, let it be smiling or weeping over the past or the future, as the case might be; but Lenette would insist upon rending this veil, and pointing to the hidden face. "My dear soul!" her husband more than once implored her, "do but wait till we're as poor as church mice, and leading the life of a dog, again; then I'll groan and moan with you with the greatest pleasure." And she only once made him any pertinent answer, namely, "How long will it be before we're without a farthing in the house?" But to this he was able to return a still more apposite reply: "If that is your way of looking at the matter, you will never be able to enjoy a single quiet, bright, happy day, unless one can give you his solemn oath that there will never come another dark, cloudy, wretched one again; in which case, of course, you can *never* enjoy one. What king or emperor—ay! and though he had thrones upon the head of him and crowns under his tail—can ever be sure but that any post-delivery, or any sitting of his parliament, may bring him a cloudy time of it; yet he passes his happy day in his *Sans Souci*, or his *Bellevue* (or whatever he may call it), and enjoys his life." (She shook her head). "I can prove it to you in print, and from the Greek." And, opening the New Testament, he read out the following passage (inserted by himself on the spur of the moment): "If, in a time of good fortune and happiness, thou delayest the joy of thine heart until a moment shall come in which nothing shall lie before thee save hopes in unbroken sequence for whole years to come, then there can be no true happiness on the face of this changing world. For after ten days, or years, some sorrow shall surely come; and thus thou canst delight in no May-day, though it shower blossoms and nightingales upon thee, since, beyond all doubt, the winter will come thereafter, with its nights and its snowflakes. Yet thou enjoyest thine ardent youth, not thinking with dread upon the ice-pit of age, which is ready in the background, with a gradually-increasing coldness to preserve thee for a certain season. Look, then, upon the glad To-day as a long youth; and let the sad Day-after-to-morrow appear unto thee but as a brief old age."

"The Latin or the Greek always has a more religious sound, I know," she answered, "and we often hear the thing in the pulpit, too; and whenever I do hear it preached I always go home and feel much comforted and consoled, till the money's all gone again."

He had greater difficulty still to get her to jump for joy quite to his liking at the dinner-table at mid-day. If, instead of their every-day fare, some extraordinary fleshpot of Egypt should chance to be smoking on the table—some dish such as the Counts of Wratislaw might have served, and the Counts of Waldstein have carved, without a blush—then Siebenkæs might be sure that his wife would have at least one hundred things more than usual to finish and to put away before she could come to dinner. There sits her husband, eager to begin; he looks round for her, quietly at first, angrily after a while, but keeps command of himself for two or three entire minutes, during which he has time to remember all his troubles as well as think about the roast—then, however, he discharges the first thunder-clap of his storm, and shouts, "Thunder and lightning! here have I been sitting for a whole Eternity, and everything getting as cold as charity. Wife! Wife!!"

In Lenette, as in other women, the cause of this was not ill-temper, neither was it stupidity, nor stubborn indifference to the matter or to her husband; she really could not do otherwise, however, and that's quite sufficient explanation.

At the same time, my friend Siebenkæs—who will have this story in his hands even before the printer's devils get hold of it—musn't take it ill of me that I divulge to the world in general certain small breakfast-failings of his own—which he has communicated to me with his own lips. As he lay in his trellis-bed in the morning, before getting up, with his eyes closed, there would suddenly flash upon him ideas for his book, and forms in which to express them, such as never occurred to him while he was sitting or standing during the day; and, indeed, I have in the course of my reading found that there have been many men of learning—such, for instance, as Descartes, Abbé Galiani, Basedow—I, myself, too, whom of course I don't count, who belonged to the Coleopterous family of backswimmers (*Notonectæ*), and got on quickest in the recumbent position, and in whose cases bed has been the brewing-kettle of their most brilliant and original ideas. I, myself, could point to many such which I have written down immediately after getting out of bed in the morning. Any one who sets himself to work to explain this phenomenon should adduce in the first place the matutinal power of the brain, and the fact of its lending itself with a more nimble, as well as vigorous obedience to the impulses of the spirit after its internal and external holiday of rest; next, the freedom and facility both of thinking and of brain mobility, which the manifold impulsions of the day has not yet begun to weary and impair; and, lastly, the vigour which is a peculiar property of all firstborn things—a vigour which our earliest morning thoughts possess in common with the first impressions of youth.

Now, after the above explanations, it will doubtless seem clear that, when the advocate lay in this fashion, sprouting and sending out long shoots in the warm forcing-house of the pillow, and bearing the most precious flowers and fruit, nothing could strike upon his ear in a harsher and more distracting manner than the voice of Lenette calling from the next room, "Come to breakfast, the coffee's ready." He generally gave birth to one or two more happy turns of expression after he *did* hear it, pricking his ears all the while, however, in dread of a second order to march. But as Lenette knew that he always allowed himself a considerable number of minutes of grace after the summons, she always cried, "Get up, the coffee's cold," when it was only just coming to the boil. The notonectic satirist, for his part, had observed the law which governed this precession of the equinoxes, and lay quietly among the feathers breeding his ideas happy and undisturbed when it was only once that she had summoned him, merely answering, "This very moment!" and availing himself of the double usance prescribed by law.

This obliged his wife, for her part, to go farther back, and when the coffee was made and standing by the fire, to cry, "Come, dear, it's getting quite cold." Now, on this system, of getting earlier on one side and later on the other, matters became more critical every day, with nowhere a prospect of extrication from the difficulty; in fact, what was naturally to be expected was the arrival of a state of things in which Lenette would end by calling him to get up a whole day too soon; although, in the end, this would eventuate in a mere restoration of the original condition of affairs, just as our suppers at the present day threaten to become too-early breakfasts, and our breakfasts unfashionably early dinners. Had Siebenkæs been able to bear the process of grinding the coffee, he might have moored himself to that as to an anchor of hope, and it would then have been a simple matter to calculate the time the coffee would

take to get ready; but this he could not, for, in the absence of a coffee-mill, the coffee was bought ready ground (by everybody in the house, for that matter). If Lenette could have been induced to call him just one exact minute before the coffee was boiling and smoking, *she* would have done instead of the coffee-mill—however, she could *not* be induced.

What are trifling differences of opinion before marriage assume large dimensions thereafter—as north winds are warm in summer and cold in winter; the zephyr, when it is breathed forth by conjugal lungs, is like Homer's zephyr, concerning the biting keenness of which the poet sings so much. For this period onward, Firmian set himself to look with much care and minuteness for every crack, feather, flaw, or cloudiness, which might be discoverable in that diamond—Lenette's heart. Poor fellow! this being the case with thee, soon, soon must the crumbling altar of thy love go toppling down one stone after another, and the sacrificial fire flutter and go out.

He now discovered that she was not nearly as learned a woman as Mdlles. Burmann and Reiske. It is true no book wearied her, but neither did any interest her, and she could read her one book of Sermons as often as scholars can go through Homer and Kant. Her secular or "profane" authors were only two; in fact, one married pair of authors—the immortal authoress of her own cookery receipts, and that, lady's husband—but the latter she never read. She paid his essays the tribute of her profoundest admiration, but she never glanced into them. Three sensible words with the bookbinder's wife were of more value in her eyes than all the bookbinder's and bookmaker's printed ones put together. To a literary man who is making new arguments, and new ink, all the year long, it is incomprehensible how those persons who have neither a book, nor a pen, nor a drop of ink in the house (except the pale rusty liquid borrowed from the village schoolmaster) can exist at all. Firmian sometimes appointed himself a species of special Professor-extraordinary, and mounted the professional chair with the view of initiating Lenette into one or two of the elementary principles of Astronomy; but either she had no pineal gland (that manor-house of the soul and its ideas), or else the chambers of her brain were saturated, satiated, and crammed to the roof with lace, bonnets, shirts, and saucepans; at all events, it was beyond his power to get a single star into her head bigger than a reel of cotton. With Pneumatology (Psychology), again, his difficulty was exactly of the *converse* sort. In this branch of science, where the calculus of the infinitesimally small would have come to his aid with an equal amount of serviceableness as that of the infinitely great in astronomy, Lenette expanded and stretched out the dimensions of the angels, souls, and so forth, passing the minutest and most ethereal of spiritual beings through the stretching mill of her imagination, so that angels—of whom the scholiasts would have invited whole companies to a carpet-dance on the tip of a new needle (or have threaded them with it by couples on one and the same point of space)—expanded on her hands to such an extent that each angel would have filled a cradle by itself; and as for the Devil, he swelled out upon her till he got to be pretty much about the size of her husband.

Further, Siebenkæs discovered an iron-mould stain, a pock-mark or wart, on her heart; he could never warm her into a true lyric enthusiasm of Love, in which she should forget heaven and earth, and all things. She could count the strokes of the town clock amid his kisses; though some affecting story or discourse of his might bring the big tears to her eyes, she could still hear the soup-pot boiling over, and run away to it, tears and all. She would join devoutly in the hymns which came resounding from the other lodgers' rooms of a Sunday, but in the middle of a verse

ask the prosaic question, “What shall I warm for supper?” and he never could forget that, once, when she was listening, apparently much interested and quite touched, to one of his chamber-sermons on death and immortality, she looked at him, thoughtfully it is true, but with a glance directed downward, and said, “Don’t put on that left stocking to-morrow morning till I’ve darned it for you.”

The author of this tale declares that he has sometimes been driven nearly out of his mind by feminine *entr’actes* of this sort, against the occurrence of which there is no warranty for the man who soars up into the æther in company with these beautiful birds of paradise, and there hovers up and down with them, in the fond hope of hatching the eggs of his phantasies upon their backs up among the clouds.[52] All in an instant, down drops the winged mate, as if by magic, with a green gleam, on to a clod of earth. I admit that this is but an excellence the more; it makes them resemble the hens, whose eyes the Great Optician of the Universe has made so perfect that they can see the most distant sparrow-hawk in the sky as well as the nearest grain of malt on the dunghill. It is to be hoped, indeed, that the author of this story, should he ever chance to marry, may meet with a wife to whom he may be able to give readings concerning the more essential principles and dictata of psychology and astronomy without her bringing in the subject of his stockings in the middle of his loftiest and fullest flights of enthusiasm; but yet he will be well content should one possessed of moderate excellencies fall to his lot—one who shall be capable of accompanying him, side by side with him, in his flights, so far as they may extend—whose eyes and heart may be wide enough to take in the blooming earth and the shining heavens in great, grand masses at a time, and not in mere infinitesimal particles; for whom this universe shall be something higher than a nursery and a ball-room; and who, with feelings delicate and tender, and a heart both pious and wide, should be continually making her husband better and holier. The author’s fondest wishes go not beyond this.

Thus, then, while the flowers, if not the leaves, were falling fast from Firmian’s love, Lenette’s was like a rose somewhat overblown, whose beauty a touch will scatter to the earth. Her husband’s endless arguments wearied her heart at length. Moreover, she was one of those women whose loveliest blossoms remain sterile and dead, unless children troop around to enjoy them, as the flowers of the vine do not produce grapes unless frequented by bees. She belonged to this class of women also in this respect, that she was born to be the spiral mainspring of a housekeeping engine—the stage-manageress of a great household theatre. Alas! the market-value of the shares, and the state of the treasury of the said theatre are well-known to everybody—from Hamburg to Ofen.

Moreover, our couple, like phœnixes and giants, were childless: the two columns stood apart and unconnected, no fruit garlands twining about them to bind them one to another. Firmian had, in imagination, thoroughly rehearsed the character of *père de famille*, and dispatcher of invitations to be godfather, but it never came to a performance.

What was most of all effective in breaking him away from Lenette’s heart, however, was his dissimilarity to Peltzstiefel. The Schulrath had in him as much of the wearisome, the deliberately circumspect, the grave and reserved, the stiff and starched, the pompous and inflated, the heavy and the dull, as——these three lines

[52] Allusion to the fable that the male birds of paradise hatch the eggs on the backs of the females up in air.

have; but this delighted the very soul of our born housekeeper. Siebenkæs, again, was like a jerboa from morning till night. She often said to him, “I’m sure people must think you’re not quite right in the head;” to which he would answer, “And am I?” He concealed the beauty of his character behind a comedy mask, and the trodden-down heels of the buskins he always wore made his stature seem shorter than it really was. The brief drama of his own life he turned into a mere burlesque and parodied epic, and it was from higher motives than mere vain folly that he so gave himself over to grotesque performances. In the first place he delighted with a deep delight in the sense of freedom of soul, and entire absence of all conventional trammels; secondly, he found pleasure in the thought that he travestied—not imitated—the follies of his fellow-men. In acting his part he had a double enjoyment—that of comedian as well as that of the spectator. A person who puts humour into action is a satirical *improvisatore*. Every male reader understands this though no female reader does. I have often wished that I could place in the hands of a woman, looking at the white sun-ray of wisdom broken into a tinted spectrum by the prism of humour, some powerful lens which should *burn* that spectrum back into its pristine whiteness,—but it is not to be done. The fine, delicate, womanly sense of the fit, the proper, the becoming, seems to be torn and scratched by the touch of anything angular and unpolished; these souls, so firmly welded on to the every-day, commonplace, conventional relations of things, cannot understand souls which place themselves in antagonism to these relations. And therefore it is that humorists are so rare in the hereditary kingdoms of women, courts—and in their realm of shadows, France.

Lenette could not be otherwise than much, and continually, vexed and annoyed with this whistling, singing, dancing husband of hers—a man who didn’t behave to his very clients with anything like proper professional gravity; who, sad to say—and people assured her it was a fact—often walked in circles round the gallows on the hill,—concerning whose sanity sensible people spoke very doubtfully—as to whom she complained, that you would never think, to see him, that he lived in a royal burgh, the capital of the province—and who was respectful and reserved only before one person in the world, namely, himself. Why, when maidservants, from the very best houses in the place, came in—with linen to be made up, and so on—didn’t they very often see him jump up and, without a “With your leave,” or “By your leave,” to anybody, run to his old, battered, rattling piano (it still had all its keys, and nearly as many strings), and there he would stand with a wooden yard-measure in his mouth, up which, as over a drawbridge, the notes climbed to him from the soundboard, then through the portcullis of his teeth, finally arriving at his soul by way of the Eustachian tube and the drum of the ear. He held this stork’s-beak of a yard-measure between his teeth as described in order to magnify the inaudible pianissimo of his piano into a fortissimo at its upper end. However, humour looks paler when reflected in narrative than in the vividness of reality.

That portion of earth’s surface on which these two stood was riven into two distinct islets by these continual tremblings of the soil, and these islets kept drifting steadily further and further apart. And ere long there came a serious shock of earthquake.

For the Heimlicher came on the stage again, with his plea of demurrer to Siebenkæs’s suit, in which all he demanded was justice and equity—in other words, the money which was in question, unless Siebenkæs could prove himself to be himself, that is to say, the ward, whose patrimony the Heimlicher had hitherto kept in his paternal hands and purse. This juridical Hell-river took Firmian’s breath away and struck ice-cold to his heart, though he had jumped over the three previous petitions for

postponement as easily as the crowned lion over the three rivers in the Gotha coat-of-arms. The wounds which we receive from Fate soon heal, but those inflicted by the blunt and rusty torture-implement of an unjust man suppurate and take long to close. This cut, made into nerves already laid bare by so many a rude clutch and sharp tongue, caused our dear friend some severe pain; yet he had seen that the cut was coming long before it came, and had cried to his spirit, "Look out—mind your head!" Alas! there is something *new* in *every* pain. He had even taken legal steps in anticipation of it. A few weeks before he had had evidence sent from Leipsic, where he had studied, to prove that he had formerly been known by the name of Leibgeber, and was, consequently, Blaise's ward. A young notary there, of the name of Giegold, an old college friend and literary brother in arms, had done him the service of seeing all the people who had known of his Leibgeberhood—particularly a rusty, musty old tutor, who had often been present when the guardian's register-ships came in—and a postman, who had piloted them into port, and his landlord and other well-informed persons, who all took the Jus credulitalis (or oath of conviction), and whose evidence the young lawyer forwarded to Siebenkæs (like a mountain full of precious ore); he had no great difficulty, to speak of, in paying the postage of it, as he was king of the marksmen.

With this stout club of evidence he resisted and withstood his guardian and robber.

When Blaise's denial was lodged, the timid Lenette gave herself and the suit up for lost; poverty, lean and bare, seemed in *her* eyes now to enmesh them in a network of parasite ivy, and there was no other prospect for them but to perish and fall to the ground. Her first proceeding was to burst into loud abuse of Von Meyern; for as he had himself told her that his father-in-law's three applications for delay had been the result of *his* intercession, which he had made for her sake alone, she looked upon Blaise's plea of demurrer as being the first thorn-sucker sent forth by Rosa's revengeful soul in return for the imprisonment and the sacking he had undergone in Firmian's house (and half ascribed to her), and for what he had lost.

Up to the day of the shooting-match he had supposed that the husband was his enemy, but not the wife; then, however, his pleasant conceit had been embittered and proved to be groundless. But the Venner not being present to hear her reproaches, she was obliged to turn the full stream of her anger on to her husband, to whom she attributed all the blame, because of his having so wickedly and sinfully changed names with Leibgeber. He who has married a wife will be prepared to relieve me of the trouble of mentioning that it made not the slightest difference what Siebenkæs said in reply or adduced concerning Blaise's wickedness (who, being the greatest Judas Iscariot and corn-Jew the world contained, would have robbed him just the same if his name had been Leibgeber still, and would have found out a thousand legal byepaths by which to proceed to the plundering of his ward). It had no effect. At last the following words were forced out of him: "You are quite as unjust as I should be were I to attribute this document of Blaise's to your behaviour to the Venner." Nothing irritates women so much as derogatory comparisons; they apply them indiscriminately, without distinction. Lenette's ears lengthened to tongues, like those of Rumour; her husband was immediately out-bawled and unlistened to.

He was obliged to send privately to Peltzstiefel to ask where he had been so long, and why he had utterly forgotten their house; Stiefel was not even in his own house, however, but out walking, for it was a beautiful day.

"Lenette," said Siebenkæs suddenly—he often preferred vaulting over a marsh on the leaping-pole of an idea to wading painfully across it on the long stilts of syllogism, and was anxious to banish from her memory the innocent remark which he had let slip about Rosa, and which she had so utterly misunderstood—"Lenette, I'll tell you what we'll do this afternoon; we'll take a strong cup of coffee, and go and take a walk and enjoy ourselves: it is not a Sunday, but it *is* the day which all the Catholics in the town keep holiday on as the feast of the Annunciation, and the weather is really *too* magnificent. We'll go and sit in the big upstairs room at the Rifle Club-house, as it would be a little too warm outside perhaps, and we can look down from the windows and see all the heterodox people promenading in their best clothes—and our Lutheran Stiefel among them, who knows?"

Either I am more in error than I often am, or this was a most agreeable surprise to Lenette. Coffee, in the morning the water-of-baptism and altar-wine of the fair sex, is their love-philter and their waters-of-strife in the afternoon (the *latter*, however, only as regards the absent); but what a wondrous mill-stream for the setting in motion of the machinery of the ideas must an afternoon cup of coffee on a common working-day be for a woman such as Lenette, who rarely had any on other than Sunday afternoons; for before the days of the blockade of the continent it cost too much money.

A woman who is really very much delighted needs but a very short time to put on her black silk bonnet and take her big church-fan, and (contrary to all her ordinary manners and customs) be *quite* ready and dressed for a walk to the Rifle Club-house, even going the length of making the coffee during the process of dressing, so as to be able to take it, and the milk, with her in her hand.

Our couple set forth at two o'clock in the happiest possible frame of mind, carrying with them warm in their pockets what was to be warmed up later on in the afternoon.

Even at two o'clock, early as it was, the western and southern hills lay all beflooded with the warm evening glow with which the low December sun was bathing them, while great glaciers of cloud, ranged about the sky, cast their cheerful lights over the landscape. All about this world there beamed a beautiful brightness, which cheered and lighted up many a dark and narrow life.

Siebenkæs pointed out the eagle's perch to Lenette while they were still at some distance from it—the alpenstock or boat-pole which had so recently helped him out of his most imminent difficulties. When they reached the Clubhouse he took her and showed her the shooter's-stand where he had shot himself with his rifle up to the dignity of bird emperor, and out of the Frankfort-Jew's-quarter of duns, liberating at his coronation at least *one* debtor, namely, himself. They had room and to spare to "spread themselves out" (so to speak) upstairs in the members' hall—he at a writing-table by the right-hand window, and she with her work at another on the left.

How the coffee gave warmth to this December festival may be imagined, but not described.

Lenette put on one stocking of her husband's after another—put them on her left arm, that is, while her right wielded the darning-needle; and as she sat, with a stocking generally quite open at the bottom, she was, as regarded one of her arms at all events, like a lady with the long, fashionable Danish mittens, with holes for the fingers. However, she did not raise these arm-stockings of hers high enough to be seen by the people walking in the upper walks, but kept nodding down her "your very humble and obedient servant" from the open window to numbers of the most genteel

she-heretics as they passed, wearing her own works of art upon their heads, in honour of the Annunciation-feast; and more than one sent an obliging salute up to her roof-thatcher.

The strictest religious and political parity being established by law in Kuhschnappel, it was natural that Protestants of position should also go a-walking on this Catholic holiday. However, the advocate was perhaps enjoying himself quite as much as his wife; he went on writing his 'Devil's Papers,' and at the same time feasting his gaze upon the high places, the *sommités* of the landscape, if not of Kuhschnappel society.

When he first entered the room he had a most agreeable reception from a child's trumpet, left there by accident; the paint was not quite all licked away from it, and it was the smell of this paint, more even than the squeak of the trumpet, which pleased him so very much, by recalling the vague delights of Christmases of the past: so that pleasure was heaped upon pleasure. He could rise from his satires and point out to Lenette the great rooks' nests in the leafless trees, and the bare tables and benches in the arbours, and the invisible guests who had occupied seats of the blessed there on summer evenings, and still remembered the time, looking forward to a repetition of it; and he could draw her attention to the fields, where, late as it was in the year, volunteer gardeneresses were gathering salad for him, namely, corn salad or rampion, which he might have some of for supper if he had a mind.

And now he sat at his window, with his eyes fixed upon the hills, all flushed with the evening red, the sun growing larger as it sunk towards them. Beyond these hills lay the lands where wandered his Leibgeber, sporting away his life.

"How delightful it is, wife," he said, "that what parts me from Leibgeber is not a mere wide level plain, with nothing but a hillock or two cropping up here and there on it, but a grand, lofty wall of mountains, behind which he stands as if behind the grating of a monastery." This sounded to her almost as if her husband was glad that this barrier stood between them; she herself had but little liking for Leibgeber, and considered him to be a sort of coin-clipper to her husband, who cut all his angles sharper than they were by nature; however, in dubious cases like this, she was always glad to ask no questions. What he *had* meant was exactly the reverse of what she supposed; he had meant that it is good, if parted from those we love, that it should be by holy hills, because they are, as it were, lofty garden-walls, behind which we picture the flowery thickets of our Edens; whereas, on the other verge of the broadest barnfloor of a level plain we only picture to ourselves a repetition of it sloping the other way. And this applies to nations as well as to individuals. The Luneburg moors or the Marklands of Prussia will not draw even an Italian's longing gaze towards Italy; but when a Markman in Italy sees the Apennines, his heart yearns to his German loved ones behind them.

As Firmian looked upon that sunny mountain-barrier between two severed spirits, there was that in his eyes which much resembled tears; but he only turned his chair a little away, that Lenette might ask no questions; he was well aware of his old ingrained habit of getting angry when anybody asked what brought tears to his eyes, and he strove with it. Was he not, in fact, tenderness personified to-day, only acting his comedy in the palest middle-tints before his wife, because he was delighting in the fresh-growth of this enjoyment of hers, of which he was himself the origin. It is true she did not discover the existence of this, his feeling of delicate consideration for her; but just as he was quite content when no one but himself (least of all, *she*) perceived that he was poking fun at her (in the most delicate manner), so was he

content that she should be in utter ignorance that he was causing her a little happiness.

At last they left the spacious room, the sun now robing them in purple hues; and as they went he drew Lenette's attention to the liquid, golden splendour shining upon the roofs of the greenhouses, and he hung himself on to the sun—at that moment cut in two by the mountain-range—that he might sink, with it, to his far-away friend. Ah! how strong is love in distance—be it distance of space, or of time, of the future or the past—ay, or that greater distance still—beyond this world! And so the evening might very well have ended in an altogether delightful manner, had not something intervened.

For some particularly ingenious evil spirit or other had taken the Heimlicher von Blaise, and so set him down, promenading in the open air, that the advocate must needs come within shooting range and hailing distance of him just on a feast of the Annunciation for *good* folks only. When the guardian went through the proper forms of salutation—accompanying them with a smile such as, fortunately, can never be seen on a child's face—Siebenkæs returned his salutes politely, although with a mere clutching and jerking at his hat—which he didn't take off. Lenette tried to make amends for this, by doubling the profundity of her own bow and curtsey; but as soon as practicable she administered to her husband a garden lecture, or, rather, a garden *paling* lecture, on his always, as if on purpose, irritating his guardian whenever he had an opportunity. "Indeed, love," he said, "I couldn't help it. I really meant nothing of the kind to-day, of all days in the year."

The truth of the matter, indeed, is, that Siebenkæs had sometime before complained to his wife that his hat, which was of softish felt, was getting a good deal spoiled by having to be so often taken off to people in the streets, and that he could think of nothing better than to protect it with a coat of mail in the shape of a stiff cover of green oilskin, so that when packed up in this pudding roll he might go on daily employing it in those offices of out-door politeness which men owe one to another, without ever having to take hold of the hat *itself* at all. Well, the first walk he took after assuming this double hat, or hat's hat, was to a grocer's, where he disembowelled the inner one from its envelope and swopped it away for six pounds of coffee, which warmed the four chambers of his brain better than the hare-skin had ever done; he then went tranquilly home, with only the coadjutor hat on his head, undetected, and thenceforward bore the empty case through the streets with a secret joy that, in a sense, he now really took off his *hat* to nobody—with other entertaining fancies bearing on the subject of his sugar-loaf.

Of course, when he forgot—and on that day in particular, it was perhaps excusable that he did so—to support his hat-case with the necessary framework of artificial rafters, it was really almost an impossibility to take this mere shell of a hat *right* OFF for purposes of salutation. The most he could do was just to *touch* it courteously, like an officer returning a salute; and thus, against his will, play the part of a rude and ill-bred individual.

And it so happened that just on this very day get it off he could not.

It was so ordained, however, that matters should not even rest *here* (as regarded our couple's promenade), but one of the above-mentioned ingenious evil spirits changed the scene of the drama with such nimbleness, that we have a fresh combination before our eyes before we know where we are. Just in front of our wedded pair, a master tailor of the Catholic confession was taking his walk, most sprucely attired in

honour of the Feast of the Annunciation, like all the rest of his *pro-* and CON-fession. As ill luck would have it, this tailor, being in a narrow walk, had (whether for fear of mud, or in the delight of his soul over his holiday) so elevated his coat-tails that the vertebral extremity, the *os coccygis*, or (shall we call it) insertion of the spinal cord, of his waistcoat, was clearly exhibited; in other words, the *background* of his waistcoat, which, as we know, is generally executed in colours more subdued than those used for the brighter and more prominent foreground on the chest of the wearer. "Hy! Mr.!" cried Lenette; "what are you doing with a lot of my chintz on the back of you?"

The truth was that this tailor had put aside and taken possession of so much of a nice green Augspurg chintz (sent to him by Lenette, on her becoming a queen, to make her a new body) as he considered proper and Christianly honest, calculating on the principle of "no charge for wine samples," and this trifle of a sample had just barely sufficed to form a sober background to his pea-green waistcoat; and he had contented himself with so dim a reverse side for this waistcoat in the confident expectation that it would never be seen. However, as the tailor went on with his walk (after Lenette had shouted her query at him), as utterly unmoved as if it had nothing on earth to do with *him*, the little spark of her anger became a blazing flame, and, regardless of all her husband's winks and whispers, she cried aloud, "Why, it's my very own chintz, that I got all the way from Augspurg; do you hear, Mr. Mowser, you've stolen my chintz, you blackguard, you!" Then, and not till then, the guilty chintz-robber turned round with much *sangfroid*, and said, "*Prove* that, if you please! But, mind, *I'll* CHINTZ YOU, if there be such a thing as law in all Kuhschnappel."

At this she burst into a conflagration. Her husband's prayers and entreaties were but as wind to her. "Ey! you riff-raff," she snapped out. "But I'll have what's my own—you villain!" she cried. The only reply the tailor vouchsafed to this attack was this—he simply lifted his coat-tails with both hands high above the endorsed waistcoat, and, bending a little forward, said, "There!" after which he strode slowly on, keeping at the same focal distance from her, so as to bask in her warmth as long as possible.

Siebenkæs was the most to be pitied on this rich feast day, when, in spite of all his juristic and theological exorcisms, he could not cast out this devil of discord—when by good luck his guardian angel suddenly emerged from a side path, Peltzstiefel to wit, taking his walk. Gone, so far as Lenette was concerned, were the tailor, the quarter-ell of chintz, the apple of discord, and the devil thereof; the blue of her eyes and the blush on her cheek fronted Stiefel as bright and as fresh as the blue of the evening sky and the blush on its sunset clouds. Ten ells of chintz and half that number of tailors with waistcoat-backs of it into the bargain, were to her, at that moment, feathers light as air, not worth a word or a farthing; so that Siebenkæs saw on the instant that Stiefel's coming was as that of a regular Mount of Olives all full of mere olive-branches of peace; although for discord devils hailing from another quarter there might without difficulty be pressed from the olives on said mountain an oil which could not be poured on any fire of matrimonial difference which *Stiefel's* would be the bucket to put out. If Lenette was a tender, delicate, white butterfly, silently hovering and fluttering about Peltzstiefel's flowery path, *out of doors*—when she got him into her house she was an absolute Greek Psyche; and, in spite of all my partiality for her, I am bound, under pain of having all the rest discredited, to insert in this protocol a clear statement (much as I regret to do so) to the effect that on this particular evening she gave one the idea of being nothing but some clear-winged

translucent soul free from all trammels of body—which, at some former time, while as yet in the body, had stood in some love-relationship to the Schulrath, but now hovered about him with upraised pinions, and fanned him with fluttering downy plumes, and which at length weary of hovering, and pleased to rest once more on the loved perch of a body, settled upon Lenette's, there being no other feminine one at hand, and there folded its wings to rest. Such seemed Lenette. But why was she thus to-day? Stiefel's ignorance and delight at it were great; Firmian's very small. Before I explain it, I will say, "I pity thee, poor husband, and thee, too, poor wife. For why must the smooth flow of the stream of your life (and of our own) be always broken by sorrows or by sins, and why cannot it fall into its grave in the *Black* Sea, without having to pass over thirteen cataracts, like the river Dnieper?" However, the reason why Lenette on this day in particular exhibited all her heart toward Stiefel, almost bared of the cloister grating of the breast, was that she was, just on this day, so keenly suffering under her misery—her poverty. Stiefel was full of genuine, solid treasures; Firmian's were all lacquered. I know that her Siebenkæs, whom before marriage she had loved with the calm and cool regard of a wife, would have found that she would have come to love him after marriage with the warm affection of a *fiancée*, if he had only been able to give her the bare necessaries of life. There are hundreds of girls who bring themselves to believe that they love the man to whom they are engaged, whereas it is not till after marriage that the play becomes a reality—and that for good reasons, both metallic and physiological. In a well-filled room and kitchen, filled with a comfortable income, and twelve household labours of Hercules, Lenette would have been quite true to the advocate, though an entire philosophical society of Stiefels had sat down all round her, and would have said and thought, every hour of the day, "No more, thank you—I am helped;" but as things were, in a house and kitchen so empty as hers, the chambers of a woman's heart grow full; in one word, no good comes of it. For a woman's soul is by nature a beautiful *fresco* painted on rooms, table-leaves, dresses, silver salvers, and household plenishing in general. A woman has a large stock of virtue, but few virtues; she needs a confined sphere and social forms, and without these flower-sticks the pure white flowers trail in the dust of the border. A man may be a citizen of the world, and if he has nothing else to put his arms round he can press the entire earthly ball to his bosom, although he can't put his arms round much more of it than will make him a grave. But a citizen*ess* of the world is a giantess, and goes through the world with nothing but spectators, and is nothing but a character on the stage.

I ought to have described the whole of this evening much more circumstantially than I have done, for it was upon this evening that the wheels of the *vis-à-vis* phæton of wedded life began to smoke, as a consequence of the friction they had recently been subjected to, and threatened to break out into a blaze of the fire of jealousy. Jealousy is like Maria Theresa's small-pox, which allowed that princess to pass with impunity through thirty hospitals, full of small-pox patients, but attacked her beneath the Crowns of Hungary and Germany. Siebenkæs had had on that of Kuhschnappel (the Bird-one) for a week or two now.

After this evening Stiefel, who took an increasing delight in sitting basking in the rays of the still rising Sun of Lenette, came oftener and oftener, and considered himself the peace-maker, not the peace-breaker.

It is now my duty to paint with the utmost minutiæ of detail the last and most important day of this year, the 31st of December, with its background and foreground all complete, and with all accessories.

Before the 31st of December arrived, of course Christmas came, a time which had to be gilt, and which turned Siebenkæs's silver age (after the Royal shot) into a brazen and a wooden age. The money went. But, worse than that, poor Firmian had fretted, and laughed, himself into an illness. A man who has all his life, upon the upper wings of Fantasy and the lower wings of good spirits, skimmed lightly away over the tops of all the spread-net snares and the open pitfalls of life, does, if once he chances to get impaled upon the hard spines of the full-blown thistles (above the purple blossoms and the honey-vessels of which he used to hover) beat in a terrible way about him, hungry, bleeding, epileptically—a glad, happy man finds in the first sunstroke of trouble well-nigh his death-blow. To the polypus of anxiety daily growing in Siebenkæs's heart add the effects of the work and excitement of authorship. He was very anxious to get done with his 'Selections from the Devil's Papers' at the earliest moment possible, so as to live on the price of them and carry on the law-suit besides. So that he sat through entire nights almost (and chairs as well). And in this way he wrote himself into an affection of the chest, such as the present author brought upon himself, and that, as far as he could make out, simply by excess of bountiful generosity towards the world of letters. He was attacked, just as I was, by a sudden pausing of the breath and of the action of the heart, succeeded by a blank disappearance of the spirit of life, and then by a throbbing rush of blood up to the brain; and this came on most frequently while he was sitting at his literary spinning-wheel and spool.[53]

However, not a soul offers either of us one single farthing, by way of indemnification, on account of it. It would appear to be ordained that authors are not to go down to posterity in the body, but only in the form of portraits or plaster-casts; as delicate trout are boiled before being sent away as presents, people don't put in the laurel-sprig (which is stuck into our mouths as lemons are into the wild boar's) until we have been killed and dished. It would be a gratification to my colleagues and to me if a reader whose heart we have moved (as well as its auricles) were only to say as much as, "This *sweet* emotion of *my* heart was not produced without a hypochondriac palpitation of theirs." We brighten and illuminate many a head which never dreams of thinking. "Yes, I have to thank *them* for this, it is true, but what is their reward? Why, pains in their *own* heads—kephalalgia and neuralgia in various forms!" Ay, he ought to interrupt me in the middle of a satire like this, and cry, "Great as is the pain which his satires cause *me*, they cause *him* far more; luckily, *my* pain is only mental!" Health of body only runs parallel with health of mind; it turns aside and departs from erudition, from over-much imagination, and from great profundity. All these as little indicate health of mind as corpulence, a runner's feet, a wrestler's arms, indicate health of body. I have often wished that all souls were bottled into their bodies as the Pyrmont water is put into its flasks. The best strength of it is allowed to escape first, because, otherwise, it would break the bottle; but it would seem that it is only in the case of colleges of cardinals (if we are to credit Gorani), cathedral chapters, &c., that this precaution is adopted, and that *their* extraordinary power of ability, which would other wise have burst their bodies up, is, as a preliminary measure, let off a good deal

[53] Particularly on cold bright winter mornings and evenings. I (and Siebenkæs for the same reason) have been troubled with this complaint for more than twenty years, and I have had an attack of it on this coldest of Christmas eves, just as I was describing it. It is nothing but a passing paralysis of the nerves of the lungs—particularly of the *nervus vagus*—and in course of time (for you see even twenty years have not been enough), lends to that pulmonary apoplexy which Leville in Paris, und recently Hohnbaum, have held to be a new form of the disease, and which, perhaps, after the precedent of "Miller's Asthma," may receive the name of "Siebenkæsian," or "Jean Paulish apoplexy."

before they are put into bodies and sent upon earth; so that the bottles last quite well for seventy or eighty years.

With a sick mind, then, and a sick heart, without money, Siebenkæs begun the last day of the year. The day itself had put on its most beautiful summer-dress—one of Berlin blue; it was as cerulean as Krishna, or the new sect of Grahamites, or the Jews in Persia. It had had a fire lighted in the balloon-stove of the sun, and the snow, delicately candied upon the earth, melted into wintergreen, like the sugar on some cunningly-devised supper-dish, as soon as the hills were brought within reach of its warmth. The year seemed to be saying good-bye to Time as if with a cheerful warmth, attended with joyful tears. Firmian longed to run and sun himself upon the moist, green sward; but he had Professor Lang, of Baireuth, to review first.

He wrote reviews as many people offer up prayers—only in time of need. It was like the water-carrying of the Athenian, done that he might afterwards devote himself to the studies of his choice without dying of hunger. But when he was reviewing, he drew his satiric sting into its sheath, constructing his criticisms of material drawn only from his store of wax and his honey-bag. “Little authors,” he said, “are always better than their works, and great ones are worse than theirs. Why should I pardon moral failings—e.g. self-conceit—in the genius, and not in the dunce? Least of all should it be forgiven the genius. Unmerited poverty and ugliness do not deserve to be ridiculed; but they as little deserve it when they *are merited*—though I am aware Cicero is against me here—for a moral fault (and consequently its punishment) can, of a certainty, not be made greater by a chance physical consequence, which sometimes follows upon it, and sometimes does not. Can it? Does an extravagant person who chances to come to poverty deserve a severer punishment than one who does not? If anything, rather the reverse.” If we apply this to bad authors, from whose own eyes their lack of merit is hidden by an impenetrable veil of self-conceit, and at whose unoffending heart the critic discharges the fury which is aroused in him by their (offending) heads, we may, indeed, direct our bitterest irony against *the race*, but the *individual* will be best instructed by means of gentleness. I think it would be the gold-test, the trial-by-crucible, of a morally great and altogether perfect scholar to give him a bad, but celebrated book to review.

For my own part, I will allow myself to be reviewed by Dr. Merkel throughout eternity if I digress again in this chapter. Firmian worked in some haste at his notice of Lang’s essay, entitled “Præmissa Historiæ Superintendentium Generalium Bairuthi non Specialium—Continuatione XX.” It was quite essential that he should get hold of a dollar or two that day, and he also longed to go and take a walk, the weather was so motherly, so *hatching*. The new year fell on the Saturday, and as early as the Thursday (the day before the one we are writing of) Lenette had begun the holding of preliminary feasts of purification (she now washed daily more and more *in advance* of actual necessities); but to-day she was keeping a regular feast of in-gathering among the furniture, &c. The room was being put through a course of derivative treatment for the clearing away of all impurities. With her eye on her *index expurgandorum*, she thrust everything that had wooden legs into the water, and followed it herself with balls of soap; in short, she paddled and bubbled, in the Levitical purification of the room, in her warm, native element, for once in her life to her heart’s full content. As for Siebenkæs, he sat bolt-upright in purgatorial fire, already beginning to emit a smell of burning.

For, as it happened, he was rather madder than usual that day, to begin with. Firstly, because he had made up his mind that he would pawn the striped calico-gown in the

afternoon, though whole nunneries were to shriek their loudest at it, and because he foresaw that he would have to grow exceedingly warm in consequence. And this resolve of resolves he had taken on this particular day, because (and this is at the same time the second reason why he was madder than usual)—because he was sorry that their good days were all gone again, and that their music of the spheres had all been marred by Lenette's funereal Misereres.

"Wife!" he said, "I'm reviewing for money now, recollect." She went on with her scraping. "I have got Professor Lang before me here—the seventh chapter of him, in which he treats of the sixth of the Superintendents-General of Bayreuth, Herr Stockfleth." She was going to stop in a minute or two, but just then, you know, she really *could* NOT. Women are fond of doing everything "by and bye"—they like putting a thing off just for a minute or two, which is the reason why they put off even their arrival in this world a few minutes longer than boys do.[54] "This essay," he continued, with forced calmness, "ought to have been reviewed in the 'Messenger' six months ago, and it'll never do for the 'Messenger' to be like the 'Universal German Library' and the Pope, and canonise people a century or so after date."

If he had only been able to maintain his forced calmness for one minute longer, he would have got to the end of Lenette's buzzing din; however, he couldn't. "Oh! the devil take me, and you, too, and the 'Messenger of the Gods' into the bargain," he burst out, starting up and dashing his pen on the floor. "I don't know," he went on, suddenly resuming his self-control, speaking in a faint, piteous tone, and sitting down, quite unnerved, feeling something like a man with cupping-glasses on all over him—"I don't know a bit what I'm translating, or whether I'm writing Stockfleth or Lang. What a stupid arrangement it is that an advocate mayn't be as deaf as a judge. If I were deaf, I should be exempt from torture then. Do you know how many people it takes to constitute a tumult by law? Either ten, or you by yourself in that washing academy of music of yours." He was not so much inclined to be reasonable as to do as the Spanish innkeeper did, who charged the noise made by his guests in the bill. But now, having had her way, and gained her point, she was noiseless in word and deed.

He finished his critique in the forenoon, and sent it to Stiefel, his chief, who wrote back that he would bring the money for it himself in the evening, for he now seized upon every possible opportunity of paying a visit. At dinner Firmian (in whose head the sultry, fœtid vapour of ill-temper would not dissolve and fall), said, "I can't understand how you come to care so very little about cleanliness and order. It would be better even if you rather *overdid* your cleanliness than otherwise. People say, what a pity it is such an orderly man as Siebenkæs should have such a slovenly kind of wife!" To irony of this sort, though she knew quite well it *was* irony, she always opposed regular formal arguments. He could never get her to enjoy these little jests instead of arguing about them, or join him in laughing at the masculine view of the question. The fact is, a woman abandons her opinion as soon as her husband adopts it. Even in church, the women sing the tunes an octave higher than the men that they may differ from them in all things.

In the afternoon the great, the momentous, hour approached in which the ostracism, the banishment from house and home, of the checked calico gown was at last to be carried out—the last and greatest deed of the year 1785. Of this signal for fight, this Timour's and Muhammed's red battle-flag, this Ziska's hide, which always set them by the ears, his very soul was sick: he would have been delighted if somebody would

[54] Buffon.

have stolen it, simply to be quit of the wearisome, threadbare idea of the wretched rag for good and all. He did not hurry himself, but introduced his petition with all the wordy prolixity of an M.P. addressing the house (at home). He asked her to guess what might be the greatest kindness, the most signal favour which she could do him on this last day of the old year. He said he had an hereditary enemy, an Anti-Christ, a dragon, living under his roof; tares sown among his wheat by an enemy, which she could pull up if she chose; and, at last, he brought the checked calico gown out of the drawer, with a kind of twilight sorrow: "*This*," he said, "is the bird of prey which pursues me; the net which Satan sets to catch me; his sheep-skin my martyr-robe, my Cassim's slipper. Dearest, do me but this one favour—send it to the pawn-shop!"

"Don't answer just yet," he said, gently laying his hand on her lips; "let me just remind you what a stupid parish did when the only blacksmith there was in it was going to be hanged in the village. This parish thought it preferable to condemn an innocent master-tailor or two to the gallows, because they could be better spared. Now, a woman of your good sense must surely see how much easier and better it would be to let me take away this mere piece of tailor's stitch-work, than metal things which we eat out of every day; the mourning calico won't be wanted, you know, as long as I'm alive."

"I've seen quite clearly for a long while past," she said, "that you've made up your mind to carry off my mourning dress from me, by hook or by crook, whether I will or no. But I'm not going to let you have it. Suppose I were to say to you, pawn your watch, how would you like that?" Perhaps the reason why husbands get into the way of issuing their orders in a needlessly dictatorial manner is, that they generally have little effect, but rather confirm opposition than overcome it.

"Damnation!" he cried; "that'll do, that's quite enough! I'm not a turkey-cock, nor a bonassus neither, to be continually driven into a frenzy by a piece of coloured rag. It goes to the pawn-shop to-day, as sure as my name's Siebenkæs."

"Your name is Leibgeber as well," said she.

"Devil fly away with me, if that calico remains in this house!" said he. On which she began to cry, and lament the bitter fortune which left her nothing now, not even the very clothes for her back. When thoughtless tears fall into a seething masculine heart, they often have the effect which drops of water have when they fall upon bubbling molten copper; the fluid mass bursts asunder with a great explosion.

"Heavenly, kind, gentle Devil," said he, "do please come and break my neck for me. May God have pity on a woman like this! Very well, then, keep your calico; keep this Lenten altar-cloth of yours to yourself. But may the Devil fly away with me if I don't cock the old deer's horns that belonged to my father on to my head this very day, like a poacher on the pillory, and hawk them about the streets for sale in broad daylight. Ay. *I give you my word of honour* it shall be done, for all the fun it may afford every soul in the place. And I shall simply say that it is your doing; I'll do it, as sure as there's a devil in hell."

He went, gnashing his teeth, to the window, and looked into the street, seeing vacancy. A rustic funeral was passing slowly by; the bier was a man's shoulder, and on it tottered a child's rude coffin.

Such a sight is a touching one, when one thinks of the little, obscure, human creature, passing over from the fœtal slumber to the slumber of death, from the amnion-membrane in this life to the shroud, that amnion-membrane of the next;

whose eyes have closed at their first glimpse of this bright earth, without looking on the parents who now gaze after it with theirs so wet with tears; which has been loved without loving in return; whose little tongue moulders to dust before it has ever spoken; as does its face ere it has smiled upon this odd, contradictory, inconsistent orb of ours. These cut buds of this mould will find a stem on which great destiny will graft them, these flowers which, like some besides, close in sleep while it is still early morning, will yet feel the rays of a morning sun which will open them once more. As Firmian looked at the cold, shrouded child passing by, in this hour, when he was ignobly quarrelling about the mourning dress (which should mourn for *him*)—now, when the very last drops of the old year were flowing so fast away, and his heart, now becoming so terribly accustomed to these passing fainting fits, forbade him to hope that he could ever complete the new one—now, amid all these pains and sorrows, he seemed to hear the unseen river of Death murmuring under his feet (as the Chinese lead rushing brooks under the soil of their gardens), and the thin, brittle crust of ice on which he was standing seemed as if it would soon crack and sink with him into the watery depths. Unspeakably touched, he said to Lenette, “Perhaps you may be quite right, dear, after all, to keep your mourning dress; you may have some presentiment that I am not going to live. Do as you think best, then, dear; I would fain not embitter this last of December any more; I don’t know that it may not be *my* last in another sense, and that in another year I may not be nearer to that poor baby than you. I am going for a walk now.”

She said nothing; all this startled and surprised her. He hurried away, to escape the answer which was sure to come eventually; his absence would, in the circumstances, be the most eloquent kind of oratory. All persons are better than their outbreaks (or ebullitions)—that is, than their *bad* ones; for all are worse than their *noble* ones, also—and when we allow the former an hour or so to dissipate and disperse, we gain something better than our point—we gain our opponent. He left Lenette a very grave subject for cogitation, however,—the stag’s horns and his word of honour.

I have already once written it. The winter was lying on the ground all bare and naked, not even the bed-sheet and chrisom-cloth of snow thrown over it; there it lay beside the dry, withered mummy of the by-gone summer. Firmian looked with an unsatisfied gaze athwart unclothed fields (over which the cradle-quilt of the snow, and the white crape of the frost, had not yet been laid), and down at the streams, not yet struck palsied and speechless. Bright, warm days at the end of December soften us with a sadness in which there are four or five bitter drops more than in that belonging to the after-summer. Up to twelve o’clock at night, and until the thirty-first day of the twelfth month, the wintry, nocturnal, idea of dissolution and decay oppresses us; but as soon as it is one in the morning, and the first of January, a morning breeze, speaking of new life, moves away the clouds which were lying over our souls, and we begin to look for the dark, pure, morning blue, the rising of the star of morning and of spring. On a December day like this the pale, dim, stagnant world of stiffened, sapless, plants about us oppresses and hems us round; and the insect-collections lying beneath the vegetation, covered with earth; and the rafter-work of bare, dry, wrinkly trees; the December sun hanging in the sky at noon no higher than the June sun does at evening; all these combined shed a yellow lustre as of death (like that of burning alcohol) over the pale, faded meadows; and long giant shadows lie extended, motionless, everywhere—*evening* shadows of this evening of nature and of the year—like the ruined remains, the burnt-out ash-heaps of nights as long as themselves. But the glistening snow, on the other hand, spread over the blooming earth under us, is like the blue foreground of spring, or a white fog a foot or two in

depth. The quiet dark sky lies above, and the white earth is like some white moon, whose sparkling ice-fields melt, as we draw nearer, into dark waving meadows of flowers.

The heart of our sorrowful Firmian grew sadder yet as he stood upon this cold, burnt-out hearth-place of nature. The daily-recurring pausings of his heart and pulse were (he thought) the sudden silences of the storm-bell in his breast, presaging a speedy end of the thunder, and dissolution of the storm-cloud, of life. He thought the faltering of his mechanism was caused by some loose pin having fallen in among the wheels somewhere; he ascribed it to polypus of the heart, and his giddiness he felt sure gave warning of an attack of apoplexy. To-day was the three hundred and sixty-fifth Act of the year, and the curtain was slowly dropping upon it already: what could this suggest to him save gloomy similes of his own epilogue—of the winter solstice of his shortened, over-shadowed life? The weeping image of his Lenette came now before his forgiving, departing soul, and he thought, "She is really not in the right; but I will yield to her, as we have not very long to be together now. I am glad for her sake, poor soul, that *my* arms are mouldering away from about her, and that her friend is taking her to his."

He went up on to the scaffold of blood and sorrow where *his* friend, Heinrich, had taken his farewell. From that eminence, as often as his heart was heavy, his glance would follow Leibgeber's path as far as the hills; but to-day his eyes were moister than before, for he had no hope that he would see the spring again. This spot was to him the hill which the Emperor Adrian permitted the Jews to go up twice in the year, that they might look towards the ruins of the holy city and weep for the place wherein their steps might tread no more. The sun was now assembling the shadows which were to close in upon the old year, and as the stars appeared—the stars which rose at evening now being those which in spring adorn the morning—fate snapped away the loveliest and richest in flowers of the liana-branches from his soul, and from the wound flowed clear water. "I shall see nothing of the coming spring," he thought, "except her blue, which, as in enamel-painting, is the first laid on of all her colours." His heart—one educated to be loving—could always fly for rest from his satires and from dry details of business-duty, sometimes, too, from Lenette's indifference and lack of sympathy, to the warm breast of the eternal goddess Nature, ever ready to take us to her heart. Into the free, unveiled, and blooming out-door world, beneath the grand wide sky, he loved to repair with all his sighs and sorrows, and in this great garden he made all his graves (as the Jews made them in smaller ones). And when our fellows forsake and wound us, the sky and the earth, and the little blooming tree, open their arms and take us into them; the flowers press themselves to our wounded hearts, the streams mingle in our tears, and the breezes breathe coolness into our sighs. A mighty angel troubles and inspires the great ocean-pool of Bethesda; into its warm waves we plunge, with all our thousand aches and pains, and ascend from the water of life with our spasms all relaxed and our health and vigour renewed once more.

Firmian walked slowly home with a heart all conciliation, and eyes which, now that it was dark, he did not take the pains to dry. He went over in his mind everything which could possibly be adduced in his Lenette's excuse. He strove to win himself over to her side of the question by reflecting that she could not (like him) arm herself against the shocks, the stumbling-stones, of life by putting on the Minerva's helm, the armour of meditation, philosophy, authorship. He thoroughly determined (he had determined the same thing thirty times before) to be as scrupulously careful to

observe in all things the outside *politesses* of life with *her* as with the most absolute stranger;[55] nay, he already enveloped himself in the fly-net or mail-shirt of patience, in case he should really find the checked calico untranslated at home. This is how we men continually behave—stopping our ears tight with both hands, trying our hardest to fall into the siesta, the mid-day sleep, of a little peace of mind (if we can only anyhow manage it); thus do our souls, swayed by our passions, reflect the sunlight of truth as one dazzling spot (like mirrors or calm water), while all the surrounding surface lies but in deeper shade.

How differently all fell out! He was received by Peltzstiefel, who advanced to meet him, all solemnity of deportment, and with a church-visitation countenance full of inspection-sermons. Lenette scarcely turned her swollen eyes towards the windward side of her husband as he came in at the door. Stiefel kept the strings tight which held the muscles of his knit face, lest it might unbend before Firmian's, which was all beaming soft with kindliness, and thus commenced: "Mr. Siebenkæs, I came to this house to hand you the money for your review of Professor Lang; but friendship demands of me a duty of a far more serious and important kind, that I should exhort you and constrain you to conduct yourself towards this poor unfortunate wife of yours here like a true Christian man to a true Christian woman." "Or even better, if you like," he said. "What is it all about, wife?" She preserved an embarrassed silence. She had asked Stiefel's advice and assistance, less for the sake of obtaining them than to have an opportunity of telling her story. The truth was, that when the Schulrath came unexpectedly in, while her burst of crying was at its bitterest, she had really just that very moment sent her checked, spiny, outer caterpillar-skin (the calico-dress, to wit) away to the pawnshop; for her husband having pledged his honour, she felt sure that, beyond a doubt, he would stick those preposterous horns on his head and really go and hawk them, all over the town, for she well knew how sacredly he kept his word, and also how utterly he disregarded "appearances,"—and that both of these peculiarities of his were always at their fellest pitch at a time of domestic difficulty like the present. Perhaps she would have told her ghostly counsellor and adviser nothing about the matter, but contented herself with having a good cry when he came, if she had had her way (and her dress); but, having sacrificed both, she needed compensation and revenge. At first she had merely reckoned up difficulties in indeterminate quantities to him; but when he pressed her more closely, her bursting heart overflowed and *all* her woes streamed forth. Stiefel, contrarily to the laws of equity (and of several universities), always held the complainant in any case to be in the right, simply because he spoke *first*: most men think impartiality of heart is impartiality of head. Stiefel swore that he would tell her husband what he ought to be told, and that the calico should be back in the house that very afternoon.

So this father-confessor began to jingle his bunch of binding-and-loosing keys in the advocate's face, and reported to him his wife's general confession and the pawning of the dress. When there are two diverse actions of a person to be given account of—a vexatious and an agreeable one—the effect depends on which is spoken of the first; it

[55] The husband should always play the lover by rights—and the lover the husband. It is impossible to describe the amount of soothing influence which little acts of politeness and innocent flatteries exercise upon just the very people who usually expect, and receive, none—wives, sisters, relations—and this even when they quite understand what this politeness really amounts to. We ought to be applying this emollient pomade to our rude rough lips all day long, even if we have only three words to speak,—and we should have a similar one for our hands, to soften down their actions. I trust that I shall always keep my resolution never to flatter any woman, not even my own wife, but I know I shall begin to break it four months and a-half after my betrothal, and go on breaking it all my life.

is the first narrated one which gives the ground-tint to the listener's mind, and the one subsequently portrayed only takes rank as a subdued accessory figure. Firmian should have heard that Lenette pawned the dress *first*, while he was still out of doors, and of her tale-bearing not till afterwards. But you see how the devil brought it about, as it really did all happen. "What!" (Siebenkæs *felt*, if not exactly *thought*) "What! She makes my rival her confidant and my judge! I bring her home a heart all kindness and reconciliation, and she makes a fresh cut in it at once, distressing and annoying me in this way, on the very last day of the year, with her confounded chattering and tale-telling." By this last expression he meant something which the reader does not yet quite understand; for I have not yet told him that Lenette had the bad habit of being—rather ill-bred; wherefore she made common people of her own sex, such as the bookbinder's wife, the recipients of her secret thoughts—the electric discharging-rods of her little atmospheric disturbances; while, at the same time, she took it ill of her husband that, though he did not, indeed, admit serving-men and maids and "the vulgar" into his own mysteries, he yet accompanied them into theirs.

Stiefel (like all people who have little knowledge of the world, and are not gifted with much tact,—who never assume anything as granted in the first place, but always go through every subject *ab initio*)—now delivered a long, theological, matrimonial-service sort of exhortation concerning love as between Christian husband and wife, and ended by insisting on the recall of the calico (his Necker, so to say). This address irritated Firmian, and that chiefly because (irrespectively of *it*) his wife thought he had not any religion, or, at all events, not so much as Stiefel. "I remember" (he said) "seeing in the history of France that Gaston, the first prince of the blood, having caused his brother some little difficulties or other of the warlike sort on one occasion, in the subsequent treaty of peace bound himself, in a special article, to love Cardinal Richelieu. Now I think there's no question but that an article to the effect that man and wife shall love one another ought to be inserted as a distinct, separate, secret clause, in all contracts of marriage; for though love, like man himself, is by origin eternal and immortal, yet, thanks to the wiles of the serpent, it certainly becomes mortal enough within a short time. But, as far as the calico's concerned, let's all thank God that *that* apple of discord has been pitched out of the house." Stiefel, by way of offering up a sacrifice, and burning a little incense before the shrine of his beloved Lenette, *insisted* on the return of the calico, and did so very firmly; for Siebenkæs's gentle, complaisant readiness to yield to him, up to this point, in little matters of sacrifice and service, had led him to entertain the deluded idea that he possessed an irresistible authority over him. The husband, a good deal agitated now, said, "We'll drop the subject, if you please." "Indeed, we'll do nothing of the kind," said Stiefel; "I must really *insist* upon it that your wife has her dress back." "It can't be done, Herr Schulrath." "I'll advance you whatever money you require," cried Stiefel, in a fever of indignation at this striking and unwonted piece of disobedience. It was now, of course, more impossible than ever for the advocate to retire from his position; he shook his head eighty times. "Either *you* are out of your mind," said Stiefel, "or *I* am; just let me go through my reasons to you once more." "Advocates," said Siebenkæs, "*were* fortunate enough, in former times, to have private chaplains of their own; but it was found that there was no converting any of them, and therefore they are now exempt from being preached at."

Lenette wept more bitterly—Stiefel shouted the louder on that account; in his annoyance at his ill success, he thought it well to repeat his commands in a ruder and blunter form; of course Siebenkæs resisted more firmly. Stiefel was a pedant, a class of men which surpasses all others in a bare-faced, blind, self-conceit, just like an

unceasing wind blowing from all the points of the compass at once (for a pedant even makes an ostentatious display of his own personal idiosyncrasies). Stiefel, like a careful and conscientious player, felt it a duty to thoroughly throw himself into the part he was representing, and carry it out in all its details, and say, “Either” “Or” Mr. Siebenkæs; “either the mourning gown comes, or *I* go, *aut-aut*. My visits cannot be of much consequence, it’s true, still they have I consider, a certain value, if it were but on Mrs. Siebenkæs’s account.” Firmian, doubly irritated, firstly at the imperious rudeness and conceit of an alternative of the sort, and secondly at the lowness of the market price for which the Rath abandoned their society, could but say, “Nobody can influence your decision on that point now but yourself. *I* most certainly cannot. It will be an easy matter for you, Herr Schulrath, to give up our acquaintance—though there is no real reason why you should—but it will not be easy for me to give up yours, although I shall have no choice.” Stiefel, from whose brow the sprouting laurels were thus so unexpectedly shorn—and that, too, in the presence of the woman he loved—had nothing to do but take his leave; but he did it with three thoughts gnawing at his heart—his vanity was hurt, his dear Lenette was crying, and her husband was rebellious and insubordinate, and resisting his authority.

And as the Schulrath said farewell for ever, a bitter, bitter sorrow stood fixed in the eyes of his beloved Lenette—a sorrow which, though the hand of time has long since covered it over, I still see there in its fixity; and she could not go down stairs, as at other times, with her sorrowing friend, but went back into the dark, unlighted room, alone with her overflowing breaking heart.

Firmian’s heart laid aside its hardness, though not its coldness, at the sight of his persecuted wife in her dry, stony grief at this falling to ruin of every one of her little plans and joys; and he did not add to her sorrow by a single word of reproach. “You see,” was all he said, “that it is no fault of mine that the Schulrath gives up our acquaintance; he ought never to have been told anything about the matter,—however, it’s all over now.” She made no reply. The hornet’s sting (which makes a triple stab), the dagger, thrown as by some revengeful Italian, was left sticking firm in her wound, which therefore could not bleed. Ah! poor soul; thou hast deprived thyself of so much! Firmian, however, could not see that he had anything to accuse himself of; he being the gentlest, the most yielding of men under the sun, always ruffled all the feathers on his body up with a rustle in an instant at the slightest touch of *compulsion*, most especially if it concerned his honour. He *would* accept a present, it is true, but only from Leibgeber, or (on rare occasions) from others in the warmest hours of soul communion; and his friend and he both held the opinion that, in friendship, not only was a farthing of quite as much value as a sovereign, but that a sovereign was worth just as little as a farthing, and that one is bound to accept the most splendid presents just as readily as the most trifling; and hence he counted it among the unrecognised blessings of childhood that children can receive gifts without any feeling of shame.

In a mental torpor he now sat down in the arm-chair, and covered his eyes with his hand; and then the mists which hid the future all rolled away, and showed in it a wide dreary tract of country, full of the black ashy ruins of burnt homesteads, and of dead bushes of underwood, and the skeletons of beasts lying in the sand. He saw that the chasm, or landslip, which had torn his heart and Lenette’s asunder, would go on gaping wider and wider; he saw, oh! so clearly and cheerlessly, that his old beautiful love would never come back, that Lenette would never lay aside her self-willed pertinacity, her whims, the habits of her daily life; that the narrow limits of her heart

and head would remain fixed firmly for ever; that she would as little learn to understand him, as get to love him; while, again, her repugnance to him would get the greater the longer her friend's banishment endured, and that her fondness for the latter would increase in proportion. Stiefel's money, and his seriousness, and religion, and attachment to herself combined to tear in two the galling bond of wedlock by the pressure of a more complex and gentle tie. Sorrowfully did Siebenkæs gaze into a long prospect of dreary days, all constrained silence, and dumb hostility and complaint.

Lenette was working in her room in silence, for her wounded heart shrunk from a word or a look as from a cold fierce wind. It was now very dark, she wanted no light. On a sudden, a wandering street-singing woman began to play a harp, and her child to accompany her on a flute, somewhere in the house downstairs. At this our friend's bursting heart seemed to have a thousand gashes inflicted on it to let it bleed gently away. As nightingales love to sing where there is an echo, so our hearts speak loudest to music. As these tones brought back to him his old hopes, almost irrecognisable now,—as he gazed down at his Arcadia now lying hidden deep, deep, beneath the stream of years, and saw himself down in it, with all his young fresh wishes, amid his long lost friends, gazing with happy eyes round their circle, all confidence and trust, his growing heart hoarding and cherishing its love and truth for some warm heart yet to be met in the time to come: and as he now burst into that music with a dissonance, crying, "And I have never found that heart, and now all is past and over," and as the pitiless tones brought pictures of blossomy springs and flowery lands, and circles of loving friends to pass, as in a camera obscura, before him—*him* who had nothing, not one soul in all the land to love him; his steadfast spirit gave way at last, and sank down on earth to rest as quite overdone, and nothing soothed him now but that which pained. Suddenly this sleep-walking music ceased, and the pause clutched, like a speechless nightmare, tighter at his heart. In the silence he went into the room and said to Lenette, "Take them down what little we have left." But over the latter words his voice broke and failed, for he saw (by the flare of some potash-burning which was going on opposite) that all her glowing face was covered with streaming, undried tears, though when he came in she pretended to be busily wiping the windowpane dimmed by her breath. She laid the money down on the window. He said, more gently yet, "Lenette, you will have to take it to them now, or they will be gone." She took it; her eyes worn with weeping met his (which were worn with weeping too); she went, and then their eyes grew well-nigh dry, so far apart were their two souls already.

They were suffering in that terrible position of circumstances when not even a moment of mutual and reciprocal emotion can any longer reconcile and warm two hearts. His whole heart swelled with overflowing affection, but hers belonged to his no more; he was urged at once by the wish to love her, and the feeling that it was now impossible, by the perception of all her shortcomings and the conviction of her indifference to him. He sat down in the window seat, and leaned his head upon the sill, where it rested, as it chanced, upon a handkerchief which she had left there, and which was moist and cold with tears. She had been solacing herself after the long oppression of the day, with this gentle effusion, much as we have a vein opened after some severe contusion. When he touched the handkerchief, an icy shudder crept down his back, like a sting of conscience, but immediately after it there came a burning glow as the thought flashed to his mind that her weeping had been for another person than himself altogether. The singing and the flute now began again (without the harp this time), and floated in the rising, falling waves, of a slow-timed

song, of which the verses ended always with the words, “Gone is gone, and dead is dead.” Sorrow now clutched him in her grasp, like some mantle-fish, casting around him her dark and suffocating folds. He pressed Lenette’s wet handkerchief to his eyes hard, and heard (but less distinctly), “Gone is gone, and dead is dead.” Then of a sudden his whole soul melted and dissolved at the thought that perhaps that halting heart of his would let him see no other new year save that of the morrow, and he thought of himself as dying; and the cold handkerchief, wet with his own tears now as well as hers, lay cool upon his burning brow, while the notes of the music seemed to mark like bells each stroke of time, so that its rapid flight was made distinguishable by the ear, and he saw himself asleep in a quiet grave, like one in the Grotto of the Serpents, but with worms in place of the serpents, licking off the burning poison of life.

The music had ceased. He heard Lenette moving in the next room and getting a light; he went to her and gave her her handkerchief. But his heart was so pained and bleeding that he longed to embrace some one, no matter whom; he was impelled to press his Lenette to his heart, his Lenette of *the past* if not of *the present*, his *suffering*, if no longer his loving, Lenette; at the same time he could not utter one word of affection, neither had he the slightest wish to do so. He put his arms round her slowly, unbent, and held her to him, but she turned her head quickly and coldly away as from a kiss which was not proffered. This pained him greatly, and he said, “Do you suppose I am any happier than you are yourself?” He laid his face down on her averted head, pressed her to him again, and then let her away; and this vain embrace at an end, his heart cried, “Gone is gone, and dead is dead.”

The silent room in which the music and the words had ceased to sound was like some unhappy village from whence the enemy has carried off all the bells, and where there is nothing but silence all the day and night, and the church tower is mute as if time itself were past.

As Firmian laid him down on his bed, he thought, “A sleep closes the old year as if it were one’s last, and ushers in the new as it does, our own lives; and I sleep on towards a future all anxiety, vague of form, and darkly veiled. Thus does man sleep at the gate behind which the dreams are barred; but although his dreams are but a step or two—a minute or two—within that gate, he cannot tell *what* dreams await him at its opening; whether in the brief unconscious night beasts of prey with glaring eyes are lying in wait to dash upon him, or smiling children to come trooping round him in their play; nor if, when the cloudy shapes beyond that mystic door come about him, their clasp is to be the fond embrace of love, or the murderous clutch of death.”

Chapter X

A LONELY NEW-YEAR'S DAY—THE LEARNED SCHALASTER—WOODEN-LEG OF APPEAL—CHAMBER POSTAL DELIVERY—THE 11TH OF FEBRUARY, AND BIRTH-DAY OF THE YEAR 1786.

I really cannot wish my hero a happy new year on a new year's day when, on his awaking in the morning, he rolls his swollen eyeballs heavily in their sockets towards the dawn, and then buries his worn and stupefied head deep again in his pillow, as he does now. A man who scarcely ever sheds a tear is always attacked in this way by physical, as a consequence of moral, pain. He lay in bed much later than usual, thinking over what he had done, and what he had now to do. He awoke, feeling; much cooler towards Lenette than he had done when he went to bed. When two hearts can no longer be brought together by the influence of some mutual, warm emotion, when the glow of enthusiasm no longer links them together, still less can they mingle and unite when the glow has passed away, and chilly reserve has resumed its sway. There is a certain half-and-half state of partial reconciliation in which the vertical index of the jewel-balance, in its glass-case, is turned by the lightest breath from the tongue of a third person; to-day, alas! the scale on Firmian's side sunk a little, and that on Lenette's went down altogether. He prepared himself, however, and dreaded at the same time, to give and to return the new year greetings. He took heart, and entered the room with his usual hearty step, as if nothing had happened. She had let the coffee-pot turn into a refrigerator rather than call him, and was standing with her back to him, at the drawer of the *commode*, tearing hearts to pieces, to see what was inside them. The hearts in question were printed new year's wishes in verse, which she had received, in happier days, from her friends in Augspurg; the kindly wishes were hidden behind groups of hearts clipped out and twined together in spiral lines. As the Holy Virgin gets behung with "*assignat*" hearts of wax, so do other virgins with paper ones; for with these fair maidens all warmth and enthusiasm gets the name of "heart," much as map-makers fancy that the outline of burning Africa has a considerable resemblance to a heart.

Firmian could well divine how many a longing sigh the poor soul had heaved over so many a ruined wish and hope, and all her mournful comparisons of the present time—with those smiling days gone by—and all that sorrow and the memory of the past spake to the gentle, tender heart. Alas! since even the happy greet the new year with sighs, the wretched may well be allowed a tear or two. He said his "good morning" gently, and had he received a gentle answer, would have gone so far as to add *his* wishes to the stock of printed ones; but Lenette, who had been oftener hurt, and more deeply too, on the previous day, than he had, snarled back at him a cold and hasty reply. So that he could not offer any wishes; she offered none; and thus stonily and thus miserably they went elbowing one another through the gate of the new year.

I must say it; he had been looking forward for something like eight weeks to the happiness of this new year's morning—to the blissful union of their hearts—to the thousands of loving wishes which he would offer—to their close embraces and happy silences of lips upon lips! Ah! how different it all was; cold, deathly cold! On some other occasion, when I have more paper, I must explain at full length why and wherefore his satirical vein served the purpose of a ferment, a leaven or yeast, or, say a kind of irrigating engine to that sensitive heart of his of which he was both proud

and ashamed at once. The royal burgh of Kuhschnappel itself had more to do with it than anything else. Upon this town, as upon some others in Germany, the dew of sensibility has never fallen (as if these places were made of metal), whilst their inhabitants have provided themselves with hearts of bone, on which, as on frozen limbs, and witches bearing the *stigmata* of the devil, it is impossible to inflict wounds of any consequence to speak of. Amid a population possessed of this sort of frigidity, one is, of course, inclined to pardon—and even go out of one's way in search of—a little warmth, even of an exaggerated kind,—whereas a man who had been living about 1785 in Leipzig, where nearly all hearts and arteries were injected full of the spirit of tears, might have been disposed to carry his humorous indignation at that circumstance a little too far, in the same way that cooks dish up watery vegetables with more pepper in wet weather than in dry.

Lenette went three times to church that day, not that there was anything extraordinary in that. It is not so much with respect to the church-goers that the words "three times" in this connection, alarming as they are, horrify one. The church-goers may sometimes, perhaps, be all the better for going so often; but it is for the sake of the unfortunate clergy who are obliged to preach so many times in one day, that they may think themselves lucky if all that happens to them is that they go to the devil and don't lose their voices into the bargain. The first time a man preaches, he certainly moves *himself* more than anybody else, and becomes his own proselyte; but when it comes to the millionth time or so of his laying down the moral law, it must be much the same with him as with the Egerian peasants, who drink the Egerian waters every day, and consequently cease to be susceptible to their derivative qualities, however visitors may be affected by them.

At dinner our melancholy pair sat silent, except that the husband, seeing the wife preparing to go to the afternoon service at church, which she had not been in the habit of attending for some time, asked her who was going to preach. "Most probably Schulrath Stiefel," she said, although he usually preached only in the morning, but just now the evening preacher couldn't preach, he had received "a chastisement from God—he had put out his collar-bone." At another time Siebenkæs would have had a good deal to say as touching the latter clause of her sentence; but on the present occasion (circumstances being as they were), all he did was to strike his plate with one of the prongs of his fork, and then hold it up to one of his ears, while he stopped the other; this droning bass, this humming harmony, bore his tortured soul away upon the waves of music, and this echoing sound-board, this vibrating bell-tongue, seemed to be singing to him (by way of new year's greeting), "Hearest thou not the distant bell ringing at the close of thy chill life's high mass? The question is, shalt thou, when next new year's day comes, be able to hear; or lying, by that time, crumbling into dust?"

After dinner he looked out of window, directing his gaze less to the street than to the sky. There, as it chanced, he saw two mock suns, and almost in the zenith the half of a rainbow with a paler one intersecting it. These tinted stars began strangely to sway his soul, making it sad, as if he saw in them the reflected image of his own dim, pale, shattered life. For to man, when swayed by emotion, Nature is ever a great mirror, all emotion too; it is only to him who is satisfied and at rest that she seems nothing but a cold, dead window between him and the world beyond.

When he was alone in the room after dinner, and the jubilant hymns from the church, and the glad song of a canary in a neighbour's room came upon his weary soul like the movement and the tumult of all the joy of his youth, now buried alive in

the tomb; and when the bright magic sunshine broke into his chamber, and light cloud-shadows slid athwart the spot of light upon the floor, questioning his sick, moaning heart in a thousand melancholy tropes, and saying, “Is it not thus with all things? Are not your own days fleeting by like vapours through a chilly sky, above a dead earth, floating away towards the night?”—he could but open his swelling heart by means of the soft-edged sword of music, that so the nearest and heaviest of the drops of his sorrow might be set free to flow. He struck a single triad chord upon his piano, and struck it once again, letting it gradually die away; the tones floated away as the clouds had, the sweet harmony trembled more slowly and more slowly, grew fainter and fainter, and ceased at last; silence, as of the grave, was all that was left. As he listened, his breath and his heart stopped, a faintness came over him which extended to his very soul; and then—and then—as floods wash the dead from out of the churches and the graves, in this morbid hour of dreams, the stream of his heart came flowing again, and bearing upon its billows a new corpse from out the future, torn all unshrouded from its earthly bed; it was his own body; he was dead. He looked out of window towards the comforting and reassuring light and star of life, but the voice within him cried on still, “Do not deceive thyself; before the new year’s wishes are said again, thou wilt have departed hence.”

When a shivering heart is thus all shorn of its leaves and standing bare, every breeze that touches it is a freezing blast. With what a soft, warm, gentle touch Lenette would have had to touch it so as not to startle it. A heart in this condition is like a clairvoyante, who feels a chill as of death in every hand which touches from beyond the charmed circle.

He determined to join the corpse-lottery (as it was called) that very day, so as to be able at all events to pay the toll or tax on his departure for the next world. He told Lenette so, but she thought this was only another of his harpings on the subject of the mourning dress. Thus cloudily passed the first day of the year, and the first week was even more rainy. The garden-hedge and fencing round Lenette’s love for Stiefel were completely cut down and pulled up now, and the love was to be clearly seen of every passer-by. Every evening at the time when the Schulrath used formerly to come, vexation and regret graved a deeper furrow on her round young face, which as time went on turned wholly into a piece of carving fretted by the hand of grief. She found out the days when he was to preach, so that she might go and hear him, and whenever a funeral passed, she went to the window to see him. The bookbinder’s wife was her “corresponding member,” from whom she constantly drew fresh discoveries concerning the Schulrath, and repeated the old ones with her over and over again. What an amount of warmth the Schulrath must have gained by reason of his focal distance, and her husband have lost on account of his proximity will be at once apparent; just as the earth derives least warmth from the sun when they are nearest together, i. e. in winter! Moreover another event came just then to pass which increased Lenette’s aversion. Von Blaize had secretly circulated a report that Siebenkæs was an atheist and no Christian. Respectable old maiden ladies and the clergy, form a charming contrast to the vindictive Romans under the Empire, who often accused, the most innocent people possible of being Christians, in order that they might obtain a martyr’s crown. The old maids and parsons aforesaid rather take the part of a man who is in a position of this kind, and deny that he is a Christian; and in this they contrast, likewise with the Romans and Italians of the present day, who always say “there are four Christians here,” when they mean “four men.” In St. Ferieux, near Besançon, the most virtuous girl used to be presented with a lace veil of the value of five shillings by way of a prize; and people like Blaize are fond of

throwing a prize for virtue of this kind, namely, a moral veil, over the good. This is why they are fond of calling thinking men infidels, and the heterodox wolves, whose teeth help to smooth and polish,—which is the reason why wolves are engraved upon the best steel blades.

When Siebenkæs first told his wife this report of Blaize's (that he was no Christian, if not, indeed, altogether an infidel), she didn't pay very much attention to it, inasmuch as it seemed out of the question such a thing could be true of a man to whom she had united herself in the holy state of matrimony. It was not until sometime afterwards that she remembered that, one month when there had been a long period of dry weather he had spoken disparagingly (without the least hesitation), not only of the Roman Catholic processions (for she did not think THEY WERE of very much use herself), but concerning the Protestant's prayers for rain, inquiring, "Do the processions, miles long, in the Arabian deserts, which go by the name of caravans, ever lead to the production of a single cloud in the sky, let them pray for rain as hard as they choose?" And "Why do the clergy get up processions only for rain or fine weather? why not to get rid of a severe winter, when at all events those who took part in the processions would feel a little warmer; or, in Holland, for bright sunny weather and the dispersion of fog; or against the aurora-borealis in Greenland?" "But what he wondered at most," he said, "was why those converters of the heathen, who pray so often, and with so much success for the sun when he's only behind a cloud or two, should not supplicate for him in circumstances of infinitely greater importance—in the polar regions, namely, where for months at a time he never appears even when the sky is altogether cloudless? Or why," he asked in the last place, "do they take no steps to petition against the great solar eclipses (which are seldom very enjoyable occurrences), suffering themselves to be outdone by savage nations in this respect, for as the latter *do* howl and pray them away?" Many speeches, in themselves innocuous at first, nay sweet, acquire poisonous properties in the storehouse of time, as sugar does when kept for thirty years in a warehouse.[56] These few words, candidly spoken out in the course of common conversation, took a great hold upon Lenette now that she sate under Stiefel's pulpit (made of apostles all carpentered up together), and heard him offering up one prayer after another, for, or against (as the case might be), sickness, government, child-birth, harvest, &c., &c.! How dear, on the other hand, Peltzstiefel grew to her; his very sermons became, in the most charming manner, regular love-letters to her heart. And indeed clericality does, at all times, stand in a very close relation to the feminine heart; that's why "hearts" formerly meant the clergy on German playing cards.

Now what all this time did Stanislaus Siebenkæs think and do? Two contradictory things. If a hard word escaped him, he was sorry for the feeble, forsaken soul, whose whole rose-border of enjoyment had been hoed up, whose first love for the Schulrath lay languishing in sorrow and famine; for the thousand charms of that imprisoned nature of hers would have opened in all their beauty to some heart she loved, which *his* was not. "And can I not see," he said further, "how impossible it is that the pin's or needle's point can act as a lightning conductor to the sultry, lightning-charged clouds of her life, in the same way that the pen's point does for mine. One *can* WRITE a good deal of one's mind, but one can't *stitch* very much off it. And when I consider what swimming-belts and cork-jackets for the deepest floods *I* am prepared with, in the shape of the self-contemplation of the Emperor Antoninus and in Arrianus Epictetus, of neither of whom *she* knows even the binding, let alone the

[56] Sander, on "The Great and Beautiful in Nature."

name (to say nothing of my astronomy and psychology); and what splendid hands at the fire engine-pumps *they* are to me when I blaze up in a conflagration of anger as I did just now, while *she* has to let *her* anger burn itself out, verily I ought to be ten times more gentle with her, instead of being ten times more irritable." If it happened, on the other hand, that he had not given but had *received* a few hard words, he thought of her warm longing for the Schulrath which she could so readily increase and magnify in secret during her wholly mechanical work, to any extent; and of the continual yielding of his own too soft heart; a thing for which his strong-souled Leibgeber would have scolded him, while his wife would have done so for the contrary defect, which she was not likely to encounter in her stiff unyielding Stiefel, judging by the recent unceremoniousness of style in which he, the other day, gave his notice of the calling in of his capital of Regard.

In this frame of mind, one day when his spirit was heavy with anger, he put to her, as she was starting again to go to the Schulrath's evening sermon, the simple little question, why it was she used formerly to go so seldom to the evening service, and now went so often? She answered that it was because the evening preacher, Mr. Schalaster, always used to preach in the evenings, but that since he had put out his collar-bone the Schulrath had taken his duty. Heaven forbid that she should go to the evening services when Mr. Schalaster's collar-bone was well again. By slow degrees he drew out of her that she considered this young Mr. Schalaster a most dangerous disseminator of false doctrine, a man who by no means adhered to Luther's bible, but believed in *Mosheh*, and in Jesos Christos, Petros and Paulos, and, in fact, *os'd* all the Apostles in such a manner as to be an offence to all Christian folks; nay he had gone the length of naming the Holy Jerusalem in such an extraordinary way that she couldn't so much as say it after him; it was soon after this that he had put out his collar-bone, but far be it from her to judge the man. "No, don't, dear," her husband said, "perhaps the young gentleman may be a little nearsighted, or he mayn't know his Greek Testament so well as he ought, the *u*'s in it are sometimes a good deal like *o*'s. Ah! how many Schalasters there are who do in their several sciences and doctrines, say Petros for Petrus, and where there's not the slightest occasion, and nothing in the shape of a stumbling-block in the path, breed dissension among mankind by means of consanguineous vowels."

On this particular occasion, however, Schalaster drew our couple a little nearer together again. It was a satisfaction to Siebenkæs to find that he had been a little mistaken up to this point, and that it was not only love to Stiefel which had taken her to evening church, but that regard for purity of doctrine had something to do with it as well. The distinction was fine, it is true; but in time of need one catches at the minutest fragment of comfort; and Siebenkæs was delighted that his wife wasn't *quite* so deeply in love with the Schulrath as he had been supposing. Let no one hear speak despairingly of the delicate gossamer web which supports us and our happiness. If we *do* spin and draw it out of *ourselves*, as the spider does hers, yet it bears us pretty firmly up, and, like the spider, we hang safe and sound in the middle of it, while the storm-wind rocks both our web and us uninjured to and fro.

From this day Siebenkæs went straightway back to his only friend in the place, Stiefel, whose little mistake he had forgiven from his heart long long since—half an hour after it happened, I believe. He knew that the sight of him would be a consolation to the exiled evangelist in his Patmos-chamber, and that his wife would find a consolation in it too. Yea, he carried greetings which had never been intrusted to him backwards and forwards between the two.

The little scraps of news of the Schulrath, which he would let drop of an evening, were to Lenette as the young green shoots which the partridge scratches up from beneath the snow. At the same time, I am not concealing the fact that I am very sorry both for him and for her; although I am not such a wretched partisan of either as to withhold my love and my sympathy from two people who are mutually misunderstanding and making war upon each other.

Out of this grey sultry sky, whose electrical machines were being charged fuller and fuller every hour, there broke, at last, a first harsh peal of thunder—Firmian lost his law suit. The Heimlicher was the catskin rubber, the foxtail switch, which charged the Inheritance Chamber, the goldsmith's pitch-cake of Justice, full of pocket-lightning. But the suit was adjudged to be lost on the simple ground that the young notary, Giegold, with whose notarial instrument Siebenkæs had armed himself, was not as yet duly matriculated. There cannot be very many persons unaware that in Saxony no legal instrument is valid unless drawn up by a notary who has been duly matriculated, while, at the same time, documentary evidence can be of no greater force in another country than of that which it possessed in the country where it was drawn up. Firmian lost his suit, and his inheritance along with it. However, the latter remained untouched, for, perhaps, nothing can keep a sum of money safer from the attacks of thieves, clients, and lawyers, than the fact of its being the subject of a lawsuit—nobody can touch it then. The sum is clearly specified in all the documents, and these documents would have, themselves, to be got out of the way before the *money* could be got at. Similarly, the good man of the farm rejoices when the weevil has papered his cornricks all over with white, because then the corn which has not had the heart of it eaten out by the spinner is safe against the ravages of all other corn worms.

A lawsuit is never more easily won than when it is lost—one lodges an appeal. After payment of the costs, ordinary and extraordinary, the law concedes the *beneficium appellationis* (benefit of appeal to a higher tribunal), although this benefit-farce cannot be of much avail to anybody who has not had certain other benefits conferred upon him beforehand.

Siebenkæs had the right to appeal; he could with ease adduce evidence of his name and wardship through a duly matriculated Leipzig notary. All he wanted was the worktool—the weapon for the fight, which was also the subject of it—to wit, money. During the ten days which the appeal (fœtus-like) had wherein to come to maturity, he went about sickly and thoughtful. Each of these decimal days exercised upon him one of the persecutions of the early Christians and decimated his hours of happiness. To apply to his Leibgeber, in Bayreuth, for money, the distance was too long and the time too short; for Leibgeber, to judge by his silence, had probably leapt ever many a mountain on the leaping-pole, the climbing-spurs, of his silhouette-clipping. Firmian cast everything to the winds, and went to his old friend, Stiefel, that he might comfort himself and tell all the story. Stiefel fumed at the sight of marshy bottomless paths of the law, and pressed upon Siebenkæs the acceptance of a pair of stilts whereon to traverse them, namely, the money necessary for the appeal. Ah! this to the disconsolate, longing, Schulrath was almost tantamount to another clasp of Lenette's beloved, clinging hand; his honest blood, coagulated by all these days of mere icy cold, thawed once more and began to flow. It was through no cheating of his sense of honour that Firmian, who preferred starving to borrowing, at once accepted Stiefel's money, looking upon each dollar as a little stone wherewith to pave the path of the law, and so pass over it unbemired. His principal idea was that he would soon be

dead, and that, at all events, his helpless widow would have the enjoyment of his inheritance.

He appealed to the Supreme Court and ordered another instrument to be drawn up in Leipzig.

These fresh nail-scratches of fortune, on the one hand, and Stiefel's kindness and money, on the other, laid up a fresh accumulation of oxygenous, or acidifying, matter in Lenette, and, at the same time, the acid of her ill-humour became (as acids in general do) stronger in a time of frost, and on this subject I shall here communicate the few meteorological observations which I have to make.

They are as follows:—Since the misunderstanding with Stiefel, Lenette was mute the whole day long, recovering from this lingual paralysis only in the presence of strangers. I presume there must exist some physical cause for the phenomenon that a woman is frequently unable to speak except in the presence of strangers, and we should be able to discover the reason of the converse phenomenon, that a mesmerized subject can converse only with the mesmerizer or with persons who are *en rapport* with him. In St. Kilda everybody coughs when a stranger arrives in the island, and although coughing is not exactly speaking, perhaps, yet it is a preliminary whirring of the wheels of the mechanism of speech. This periodic or intermittent dumbness, which, perhaps, like the non-periodic or continued form of the complaint may be the result of the suppression of (surface) outbreaks, is nothing new to the medical world. Wepfer mentions the case of a paralytic woman who could say nothing except the Lord's Prayer and the Creed; and cases of dumbness are of frequent occurrence in matrimonial life, in which the wife can say nothing to the husband beyond a word or two of the extremest necessity. There was a fever-patient at Wittenberg who couldn't speak a word the whole day long except between 12 and 1 o'clock; and we meet with plenty of poor dumb women who are only in a condition to speak for about a quarter of an hour in the course of the day, or can just manage to get out a word or two in the evening, and are obliged to have recourse to *dumb-bells* by way of helping out their meaning, using for that purpose plates, keys, and doors.

This dumbness, at last, so worked upon poor Siebenkæs that he caught it himself. He mimicked his wife as a father does his children for their good. His satiric humour often had a good deal the appearance of satiric *ill*-humour; but this was done with the sole view of keeping himself at all times perfectly calm and cool. When chamber-wenches distracted him most utterly as he was in the depths of his auctorial sugar-refinery and beer-brewery, by converting (with Lenette's assistance) his room into a regular herald's chancellery and orator's tribune, he could always bring his wife, at all events, down from the platform by striking three blows on his desk with his bird-sceptre (this was by virtue of an arrangement which he had come to with her on the subject). Also, on the many occasions when he would find himself sitting over against these talking Cicero-heads, powerless to frame an idea, or to write a line, and regretting the loss (not so much to himself as to the innumerable mass of persons of the highest condition and intelligence) of the thousands of ideas which were thus abstracted by these adepts in the art of talk—he could give a tremendous thump with his sceptre-ruler, upon the table, such as one gives to a pond to make the frogs cease croaking. What pained him most with regard to this robbery of posterity was the thought that his book would go down to it shorn of its fair and due proportions as a consequence of all this fugitive chatter. It is a beautiful thing that all authors, even those who deny the immortality of their own souls, seldom have anything to say against that of their names. As Cicero declared that he would believe in the second

life, even were there none, they cleave to a belief in the second, eternal, life of their names, however their critics may demonstrate the contrary.

Siebenkæs now most distinctly intimated to his wife, that he should not speak any more at all, not even concerning matters of the utmost necessity, and this because he simply could not and would not be distracted or chilled in the fervour of composition, by long angry discussions concerning talking, washing, or the like, neither be induced to lose his temper with her about such matters. Any given matter of perfect indifference can be spoken of in ten different tones and mistones, and, therefore, with the view of not depriving his wife of whatever enjoyment she might derive from speculating as to the *tones* in which things were capable of being said, he gave her to understand that for the future he would speak to her only in writing.

I am ready, here, with an explanation of the fullest description as to this proceeding. That grave and earnest person, the bookbinder, was exercised in his mind, all through the ecclesiastical year, by nothing to such an extent as by the conduct of his "Rascal," as he styled his son, a bit of a *mauvais sujet*, who was a better hand at reading a book than at binding one—always clipping the edges askew, or cropping them too closely, or doubling or halving the dimensions of the damp sheets by screwing the press too tight. Now these were matters of a sort which his father could by no means endure, and he lost his temper over them to such an extent that he would not *speak* to this child of the devil and his realm, not so much as a syllable. Such sumptuary laws and golden rules connected with bookmaking, therefore, as he had to communicate to his son he delivered to his wife, in her capacity of postmistress, and she (using her needle by way of rod of office) would then get up in her distant corner of the room and transmit the commands of the father to the son, who would be planing away at no very great distance. The son, who had to deliver all *his* questions and answers to the postmistress in the same manner, approved of this arrangement most thoroughly; his father's tongue gave much less trouble than before. The father got into the habit of this system and ceased to treat of anything by word of mouth, no matter what. He even got to trying to express his views concerning his son's proceedings by means of looks, darting burning glances at him, like a lover, as he sat opposite to him. An eye full of glances, however (notwithstanding the fact that there are ocular letters, as well as palatals, labials, and glossals), is at best but a box of confused pearl type. But as, by good fortune, the invention of writing, and the institution of the post-office have enabled a man, who is drifting round the North Pole on a slab of ice, to communicate with another who is sitting in a palm-tree amidst parrots in the torrid zone—this father and son (when, thus divided, they sat opposite to one another at the work-table) were provided with a means of sweetening and lightening their separation by help of an epistolary correspondence carried on across the table. Business letters of the utmost importance were conveyed from one to the other unsealed, and in complete safety, for the mail bags, the mail-packet of this penny-post, consisted of a pair of fingers. The interchange of letters and couriers between these two silent powers took place over roads so smooth, and by such an admirable system of "Poste aux Anes" without interruption and free from all delay, that the father could, without difficulty, receive a reply on a subject of importance from his correspondent within one minute of its despatch (such was the facility of communication), in fact, they were quite as near to one another as if they had been next door neighbours. I would here beg any traveller who may visit Kuhschnappel before I do so to saw off the two corners of the table, of which the one served as *Bureau d'Intelligence* to the other, put both these bureaux in his pocket and exhibit them to the curious in some great city or company—or to me in Hof.

Siebenkæs partially copied the bookbinder's system. He cut out brief letters of decretal in anticipation, to be ready for the occasions when they should be required. If Lenette put an unforeseen question to which there wasn't an answer in his letter-bag, he would write three lines and pass them across the table. Such notes of hand or orders in council as had to be renewed daily, he ordered the return of in a standing requisition, so as to save paper, and not be obliged to write a fresh order on this subject every day; for he merely passed this particular paper back across the table again. But what said Lenette to all this? I shall be better able to answer this question after relating what follows here. There was only one occasion on which he *spoke* in this deaf and dumb institution of a house of his; it was while he was eating salad out of an earthenware-dish, which had poetical as well as pictorial flowers on it by way of ornament. Lifting the salad with his fork, he disclosed to view the little *carmen* which bordered this dish, and which ran as follows:—

"Peace feeds, but strife
Consumes our life."

Whenever he lifted up a forkful of his salad, he was in a position to read one or the other foot of this didactic poem; and he did so aloud.

"Well, and what said Lenette to all this?" we inquired above. Not a word, I answer. She wasn't going to let *his* sulks and silence diminish *hers* in the slightest degree, for in the end it seemed clear to her that he was holding his tongue out of sheer ill-temper, and she wasn't going to be outdone by him in that respect. And, in fact, he carried matters further and further every day, continually passing new broken tables-of-the-law across the table to her, or carrying them round to her side. I shall not catalogue the whole of them, but merely quote a few specimens, e. g. 'The Forty-eight-pounder Paper' (he gratified himself by continually inventing new titles for these missives), of which the contents were: "Stop the mouth of that tall sewing creature there, who sees perfectly well how busy I am with my writing, or I shall seize her by that throat with which she's baiting me."

"The 'Official Gazette' paragraph:"—"Let me have a little drop of some of your dirty wash-water; I want to get the ink off these raccoon paws of mine." "The Pastoral Letter:"—"I want to get a glance or so at 'Epictetus on what Man has to endure,' could I find a moment of some sort of peace; don't disturb me." "The Pin-paper:"—"I happen to be in the middle of a satire, of the hardest and severest nature, on the subject of women; take that screeching bookbinderess down stairs to the hairdresseress, and yell away there as sprightlily as ye have a mind." "Torture-bench Note," or rather "Folio:"—"I have held out, this forenoon, through well-nigh as much as is possible; I have fought my course through besoms, feather-dusters, women's bonnets, and women's tongues. Is there no hope that, now that evening is falling, I may have a little, brief hour of peace, in which to try to get some slight idea of the sense of these terrible Acts of Parliament before me here?" Nobody can convince me that it was any blunting of the stings of these visiting cards of his (which he left upon her so very frequently), that he occasionally translated writing into speech, and when other people were present, jested with them concerning cognate subjects. Thus he said on one occasion to Meerbitzer, the hairdresser, in Lenette's presence, "Monsieur Meerbitzer, it's incredible what my housekeeping costs in the course of the year. Why, that wife of mine, there as she stands, gets through half-a-ton of food or so by herself alone, and" (when she and the barber both beat their hands together above their heads) "so do I, too." He showed it to Meerbitzer, printed in Schötzer's book,

that every one *does* consume about that quantity of sustenance in the course of the year; but did anybody in that room fancy such a thing was possible?

Ill-will towards a person is a kind of catalepsy of the mind, and so is sulking; and in this mental catalepsy, as in the bodily, every limb remains immovably fixed in the position which it chanced to be in when the attack came on. Moreover, mental catalepsy has this feature in common with corporeal—that women are more subject to it than men. Consequently the only effect upon Lenette of her husband's little joke (which *had* the outward semblance of being a piece of ill temper, although it was in reality only carried on with a view to the complete maintaining of his own calmness and self-control) was to redouble her stiffness and chilliness. Yet how very little she would have minded it had she but seen Stiefel even once in the course of the week, and had not the cares connected with those house expenses of hers (which melted down and swallowed up all the pewter-plattery of the eagle's perch) decomposed and dried up the very last drop of happy warm blood in her wretched heart. Ah! sorrow-laden soul! But, as things were, there was no help for her, nor any for him whom she so terribly misunderstood.

Poverty is the only burden which grows heavier in proportion to the number of dear ones who have to help to bear it. Had Firmian been alone, he would scarcely have so much as glanced at the holes and ruts in the streets of life; for destiny lays down little piles of stones for us every thirty steps with which we may fill the holes up. And he had a haven of refuge, a diving-bell, to fly to in the strongest gale that might blow—in the shape of his watch (to say nothing of his glorious philosophy), which he could always turn into cash. But that wife of his, and all her funereal music and Kyrie Eleisons, and a thousand things besides, and Leibgeber's inexplicable silence, and his growing ill-health—the continual immixture of all these impure matters into the breeze of his life converted it into a sultry, unnerving sirocco blast—a wind which creates in a man a dry, hot, sickly thirst, which often makes him put that into his breast which soldiers put into their mouths to cure bodily thirst, namely, cold powder and lead.

On the 11th of February, Firmian sought relief.

On the 11th of February, Euphrosyne's day, 1767, Lenette was born.

She had often mentioned this to him, and oftener yet to her sewing-customers. However, he would have forgotten all about it but for the Superintendent-General Ziethen, who had printed a book in which he reminded him of the 11th of February. The superintendent had given due notice, in this work of his, that on the 11th of February, 1786, a segment of South Germany would be sent down, by an earthquake, into the realms below, like so much corn laid by a summer storm. As a consequence, the Kuhschnapplers would have been lowered, upon the dropped coffin-cords or lowered drawbridges of sinking soil, into hell by entire companies at a time, instead of going there as single *envoyés*, as theretofore was the usage. However, nothing came of all this.

On the day before the earthquake, and before Lenette's birthday, Firmian repaired to the lifting-crane—the springboard of his soul—namely, the old height where his Henry had taken his farewell. The forms of his friend and wife stood, dim and vague, before his soul's sight. He thought upon the circumstance that since his friend had left him there had been about the same number of ruptures and divisions in his married life as, according to Moreri, took place in the Church from the time of the Apostles down to Luther's days, namely, 124. Labourers, innocent and simple, silent

and happy, were smoothing the spring's path. He had passed by gardens where they were clearing the moss and the autumn-leaves away from the trees—by beehives and vine-stocks being transplanted, cleaned, pruned—by osiers being trimmed and dressed. The sun shone bright and warm over the land, all rich with buds; and suddenly he was struck by one of these sensations which often come upon imaginative men—and this is why these are somewhat apt to be a little fanciful and visionary—it seemed to him as if his life dwelt, not in a bodily heart, but in some warm and tender tear, as if his heavy-laden soul were expanding and breaking away through some chink in its prison, and melting into a tone of music—a blue æther wave.

"I must and will forgive her, on her birthday," cried his softened heart and soul; "I have little doubt that I have been too hard upon her all this time." He resolved that he would have the Schulrath into the house, and the calico-gown beforehand, and make her a birthday present of the pair, and of a new sewing-cushion. He grasped his watch-chain and pulled out that Elijah's and Faust's mantle, which was to bear him away over all his ills by being converted into cash. He went home with every corner of his heart glowing with sunshine, artfully made his watch stop, and told Lenette he must take it to the watchmaker's to be repaired (and indeed its movements hitherto had been like those of the planets above us, a forward movement at the beginning of the terrestrial or clock-day, afterwards stationary, and latterly retrograde). In this fashion he concealed his projects from her. He took the watch himself to the market-place and sold it, though he knew very well he would never be able to write with comfort unless it was ticking on his table (like the nobleman mentioned by Locke, who could only dance in one particular room, in which there was an old box standing). Also, in the evening, the redeemed, checked shirt-of-blood, or seedbag of evil weeds, was clandestinely introduced into the house. Towards evening Firmian went to the Schulrath, and with all the warmth of his eloquent heart told him of his resolve and everything connected with it—the birthday, the return of the calico, his request to *him* to come and see them again, his own imminent death, and his resignation to everything. Warm breath of life was breathed into Stiefel, long languishing in absence and love (which, together, had gnawed him into paleness, as lime does the shadows of a fresco), when he heard that on the morrow the beloved voice of his Lenette, longed for during all this weary time (*she* could hear *his*, by-the-by, in church, of course), would once more stir the chords of his being.

I must here just glance at a defence, for a moment, as well as an accusation. The former relates to my hero, who seems rather to have rumpled his honour's patent of nobility to a greater or less extent, by having made this request to Stiefel; but, then, we must consider that his *intention* in making it was to do a great kindness to his suffering wife, and a small one to himself. The fact is, that the very strongest and roughest of men cannot hold out in the long run against the everlasting feminine sulking and undermining. For the sheer sake of a little peace and quietness, a man who may have sworn a thousand oaths before marriage that he *would* have his own way in that condition of life, comes, in the long run, to let his wife have *hers*. The remainder of Siebenkæs' conduct I have no need to defend, since 'tis not possible to do so, but only necessary. The accusation to which I alluded is against my own fellow-labourers, and it is—that they differ so widely in their romances from this Biography and from real life, in describing the ruptures and reconciliations of their characters as being possible, and as actually occurring, in periods of time so brief that one might stand by and time them with a stop-watch in one's hand. But a man does *not* break with a person he loves all in an instant; the rendings alternate with

little re-bindings with bands of silk and flowers, till at length the long alternation between seeking and shunning ends in complete separation, and it is then, and not till then, that we wretched creatures are at our wretchedest. The same is generally true of the *union* of souls; for though at times an unseen infinite Arm seems suddenly to press us upon some new heart, yet we have always long *known* this heart, in the Gallery of the Saints of our longing devotion and often taken the picture down, uncovered, and adored it. It became impossible to Firmian (sitting in the evening in his lonesome chair of anxiety and suspense) to keep all that love of his waiting with any sort of patience for the morrow. The very restraint which was upon him made his love wax warmer; and when his old familiar fear—that he would die before the equinox came round—fell upon him, it terrified him more than it was wont; but not the thought of death. What shook him was the idea of Lenette's difficulties, and how she would ever find the money requisite for the performance of the final trial, the anchor-proof[57] of his humanity. As it chanced, he had plenty of money among his fingers at this very moment. He sprang up and ran that very evening to the manager of the corpse lottery, so that, at all events, his wife should be entitled to a capital of fifty florins at his death, and be able to cover his body decently over with a little earth. I don't know the exact sum he paid; but I am quite accustomed to embarrassments of this description, which novel-writers, who can invent any sum they please in a case of this sort, have no idea of, but which are exceedingly troublesome to a writer of actual biography, who does not put down anything which he is not in a position to substantiate by documentary evidence, and a reference to records.

On the morning of the 11th of February, that is to say on the Saturday, Firmian entered his room, feeling very tender-hearted (for every illness and weakness softens our heart—loss of blood, for instance, and trouble), and all the more so because he was looking forward to a kindly, peaceful day. We love much more warmly when we are looking forward to making somebody happy than we do half an hour after, when we have done it. It was as windy this morning as if the gales were holding tournament, or riding at the ring, or as if Æolus were shooting his winds out of air-guns. Hence many people thought either that the earthquake was beginning, or that a few people here and there had hanged themselves for fear of it. Firmian met a pair of eyes in Lenette's face, from which, even at that early hour, there had fallen a warm blood-rain of tears, on this first of her days. She had not in the slightest degree guessed at his tenderness towards her, or at that which he had in his mind. She had had no thought of anything of the kind; her only idea had been, "Ah, me! since my poor father and mother have been dead and gone, there is not a soul that ever remembers I have a birthday." Something or other was evidently pre-occupying her. She looked once or twice, very inquiringly, into his eyes, and seemed to be making up her mind to something; so he put off for a time the outpouring of his full heart, and the unveiling of his twofold birthday-present. At last she came up to him slowly, with the colour in her face, tried in a troubled way to get his hand into hers, and said, with downcast eyes, in which, as yet, there were no tears, "We will be friends again to-day. If you *have* hurt me, and given me a little pain, what I want is to forgive you from my heart. Do you the same to me." This address rent his warm breast in twain, and at first all he could do was to be dumb, and clasp her in this silence to his o'er-fraught heart, saying, after a time, "Forgive *thou* me only! for, ah! I love thee far more than thou lovest me." And here, at the thought of bygone days, the heavy tear-drops rose

[57] The anchor proof consists in casting the anchor forcibly down upon a deep hard bottom.

from the depths of his laden heart, and flowed, silent and slow, as the deep streams flow. She gazed at him much astonished, saying, “We are going to be friends, then, are we, to-day? and it is my birthday. But, ah, me! it is a sad, sad birthday, too.” It was only at this point that he remembered his birthday-present. He ran and brought it that is to say, the cushion, the calico-dress, and the news that Stiefel was coming in the evening. At this she began to shed tears, and said, “Ah! did you really do all this yesterday? And you remembered that this was my birthday? Oh! it was so kind of you, and I do so thank you for it; particularly—particularly—for the delightful—cushion. I never thought you would remember anything about my wretched birthday at all!” His manly, beautiful soul, which kept no watch upon its enthusiasm (as women’s do), told her everything, including the fact that he had joined the corpse-lottery the day before, so that she might be able to put him under ground at less expense. Her emotion became as strong and as visible as his own. “No, no,” she cried at length, “God will preserve you; but, then, there’s *this* terrible day; who knows if we shall ever see another morning. Tell me, what does Mr. Stiefel think about the earthquake?” “Don’t distress yourself on that score,” said Firmian; “he says there won’t be anything of the kind.”

Reluctantly he let her away from his glowing heart. Until he went out into the free air (for writing was utterly impossible) he gazed continually upon her bright, shining face, whence all the clouds were quite cleared away. He practised upon himself an old trick he had (which *I* have learnt from him); when he wished to love some dear person very dearly, and forgive him everything, he looked long on his face. For we (that’s to say he and I) see in a human face, when it is old, the finger-board, the counting board, of all the bitter pains and sorrows which have passed so rudely over it; and when it is young, it is like a bed of flowers on the slope of a volcano, whose next eruption will split it into shivers. Either the future or the past is written on every face—making us gentle and tender, if not sad.

Firmian would have been delighted to have held his new-found, restored Lenette to his heart all the day long; at all events till evening came; but her house-work and other occupations were so many bars’ rest in this music, and her lachrymal ducts were sources of appetite, as well as of tears. And she had not the courage to question him concerning the metallic source of his gold-bearing stream, upon whose gentle waves she was floating now. But her husband gladly divulged the secret of the sale of his watch. The actual estate of matrimony was to-day to him what the pre-nuptial period is always—a *cymbale d’amour*—having a sounding-board at each of its faces which doubles, not the strings of the instrument, but the tone of those it has. The entire day was like a piece cut out of the full moon, unclouded by the slightest haze, or rather out of the second world, into which the people of the moon themselves proceed. Lenette, in her morning glow, was like the (so-called) Moss of Violet Stone—the Iolite—which gives out the perfume of a miniature-bed of violets, if you but rub it till it gets a little warm.

At evening finally appeared the Rath, all a-shake with agitation. He looked just the least bit haughty, but when he tried to wish Lenette many happy returns of the day, he could not do it for tears, which were in his throat quite as much as in his eyes. His embarrassment served to conceal hers; but *at length* the opaque mist cleared away from among them, and they were able to look at one another. And then they were very happy; Firmian forced himself to be so; the other two required no constraining.

The heavy storm-clouds, then, ceased for a time to hang and sweep so low, as they had been doing of late, over their comforted, softened hearts. The boding comet of

the future was shorn of its sword, and went sweeping on, far brighter and whiter, into the blue expanse of heaven, passing athwart more brilliant constellations. And there came into their evening a brief letter from Leibgeber, of which the joy-bringing lines bedeck and adorn our hero's evening, as well as our next chapter.

Thus did the quick, transient, quivering *Flower-pieces* of Fantasy mature in the brains of our triple alliance (as in the reader's own) into actual and living flowers of joy—as the fever-patient takes the flowers patterned upon his waving bed-curtain to be real and tangible forms. In truth, this winter night, like one of summer, would hardly quite cool down and die out on their horizon, and when they parted at midnight they said, "We have all had a very happy time."

Chapter XI

LEIBGEBER'S DISQUISITION ON FAME—FIRMIAN'S "EVENING PAPER."

In my last chapter I practised a deception on the reader out of pure goodwill towards him; however, I must let him remain undeceived until he has read the following letter of Leibgeber's:—

"Vaduz February 2, 1786.

"My Firmian Stanislaus,

"In May I shall be in Bayreuth, and you must be there too. I have nothing else of any consequence to write to you now—however, this is quite important enough, namely, that I *order* you to arrive in Bayreuth upon the first day of the month of gladness, because I have something of the most extraordinarily mad and important kind in my head concerning you, and that as sure as there is a heaven above us. My joy and your happiness depend on your making this journey. I would reveal the whole mystery to you in this letter if I were certain that it would fall into no hands but your own. Come! You might travel in company with a certain Kuhschnappler, of the name of Rosa, who is coming to Bayreuth to fetch his bride home. But if (which God forbid) this Kuhschnappler be that Meyern, of whom you have written to me, and if the said goldfish is about to come swimming here to freeze (rather than to warm) his pretty bride with his dry, wizzened arms (as in Spain they put serpents, something like him, round bottles to cool them), I shall take care, as soon as I get to Bayreuth to give her a very distinct idea of him, and shall maintain that he's ten thousand times better than the Heresiarch Bellarmin, who committed adultery a great deal oftener during his career—two thousand two hundred and thirty-six times, to wit. I have the most anxious and heartfelt longing to behold the Heimlicher von Blaise; were he but a little nearer at hand I should—(seeing that there's always something sticking in that throat of his which he has some difficulty in getting down, such as an inheritance, or somebody else's house and land),—I say, I should give him a good hard thwack every now and then in the small of his back (by way of a cure) and await the outcome—I mean, of the mouthful. I myself have been limping about the world in all directions, with my silhouette scissors, and am now taking a little rest in Vaduz at a studious, bibliothecarian Count's, who really deserves that I should like him ten times better than I do. But, you see, my fondness for *you* is fully as much as my heart can hold; and (to speak in general terms) the human race, and this green cheese of a world which it keeps on gnawing at, seem to me more and more rotten and stinking every day. I *must* say to you, '*Fame* may go to the devil!' I think I shall decidedly dip down, disappear, and get out of the way altogether, almost immediately, run right into the thick of the crowd, and come to the surface every week under a new name, so that the fools shan't know who I am. Ah! there were a few years, once on a time, when I really *did* wish to be something—if not a great author, at least a ninth elector—to be mitred, at any rate, if not belaurelled—if not (now and then) to be a pro-rector, certainly (and very often) to be a dean. At that period of my life I should have been exceedingly delighted had I suffered the most atrocious tortures from gallstones, because I should have been able to erect (with those eliminated from my system) an altar or temple in my own honour, higher than the pyramid mentioned by Ruysh in his 'Cabinet of Natural Science' as having been constructed of the forty-two gallstones of a certain noble lady. Siebenkæs, in those days I could have gotten me a beard of

wasps (as Wildau used to have one of bees)—a stinging beard of wasps, for nothing else but to become famous thereby. 'I quite admit' (said I, at the period in question) 'that it is not accorded to every son of earth (neither should he expect it), as it was to Saint Romuald (as Bembo mentions in his life of him), that a city shall beat him to death, merely to be enabled to filch his holy body by way of a relic; but he *may*, I think, without being unduly conceited, entertain a desire that a few hairs, if not of his fur-coat (as of Voltaire's, in Paris), yet, at all events, of his head, may have the good luck to be plucked out as a souvenir by people who have a certain opinion of him. (Here I chiefly allude to the reviewers.)'

"At the time in question I thought as above set forth, but *now* my views are far more enlightened. Fame is a thing altogether unworthy of fame. I was once sitting, on a cold, wet evening, on a boundary-stone, considering myself carefully, and I said, 'Now, *is* there really anything in the wide world that can be made of you? What is it? Have *you* any chance of becoming (like the deceased Cornelius Agrippa) Secretary of State for War to the Emperor Maximilian, and Historiographer to the Emperor Charles the Fifth? Will YOU ever hoist yourself up to the position of Syndic and Advocate of the city of Metz, Physician in Ordinary to the Duchess of Anjou, and Professor of Theology in Pavia? Do you find that the Cardinal of Lorraine is as anxious to stand godfather to your son as he was to Agrippa's? And would it not be ludicrous if *you* were to give out (and give yourself airs about it) that a Margrave in Italy, and the King of England, the Chancellor Mercurius Galinaria, and Margarita (a Princess of Austria), had all wished to have you in their service in the same year? Wouldn't it be ludicrous, and a lie into the bargain, to say nothing of the utter impossibility of the thing, seeing that all these people exploded into the sleeping-powder of death so many years before *you* flashed up in the shape of the priming and detonating powder of life! In what well-known work (let me ask you) does Paul Jovius style *you* a *portentosum ingenium*? What author reckons you among the *clarissima sui sæculi lumina*? If it had been the case that *you* stood in extraordinary credit with four cardinals and five bishops—with Erasmus, Melancthon, and Capellanus—wouldn't Schröckh and Schmidt have mentioned it, *en passant*, in their "History of the Reformation"? Even supposing that I were actually reposing side by side with Cornelius Agrippa under his great grove of shrubbery of laurels, the same lot would be mine and his; we should both rot away in obscurity beneath the thicket, and it would be centuries before anybody came to lift the branches and take a look at us.'

"It would do me no more good were I to go about the matter more knowingly, and have myself belauded in the 'Universal German Library.' I might stand for many a long year, with my wreath of bays round my hat in that chill pocket-Pantheon, in my niche amongst the great *literati* lying and sitting round me on their beds of state—we might all (I say) wait begarlanded there, all alone together in that Temple of Fame of ours for many a long year before a single soul came and opened the door, and looked in at us, or entered and knelt down before me; and our triumphal car would be nothing but a wheelbarrow, on which our temple, with all its riches, should be whirled occasionally to a public auction. Yet I might, perhaps, soar above all that, and make myself immortal, could I but indulge a demi-hope that my immortality would reach the ears of any but those who are themselves as yet in this mortal life. But can it afford me the smallest gratification when I am compelled to perceive that it is exactly to all the most renowned and celebrated of people, over whose faces the laurel is growing, year by year, in their coffins (as the rosemary does over humbler dead), that I can never be anything but an unexplored Africa—particularly to Shem,

Ham, and Japhet; to Absalom and his father; to both the Catos, the two Anthonys, Nebuchadnezzar, the Seventy Interpreters, and their wives; to the seven wise men of Greece; even to mere fools, such as Taubmann and Eulenspiegel? When a Henry IV., and the four Evangelists, and Bayle (who knows all the rest of the learned), and the charming Ninon (who knows them better still), and Job, the bearer of sorrows—or, at all events, the author of Job—don't know that there ever was such a thing as a Leibgeber on the face of the earth: when I am, and must ever remain, to a whole bye-gone world (*i. e.*, six thousand years replete with great and grand men and nations), a mathematical point, an invisible eclipse, a wretched *je ne sais quoi*, I really do not see how posterity (in which there mayn't be so very much after all), or the next six thousand years, can do anything to speak of by way of compensation.

"Besides, I cannot tell what description of glorious heavenly hosts and archangels there are upon other world-balls, and on the little spheres in the milky way—that paternoster bead-chaplet of world-balls—seraphs, compared to whom I cannot be looked upon as anything but a sheep. We souls do, it is true, progress to a considerable extent, and ascend to loftier levels. Even here upon earth the oyster-soul develops into a frog-soul, the frog-soul into a cod-fish, the cod-fish into a goose, thence to a sheep, an ass—aye, or even an ape—and ultimately into a Bush Hottentot (for we can suppose nothing higher than that). But a peripatetic climax of this kind begins to cease inflating one with pride when the following reflection occurs to one. Among the various individuals which compose a species of animals (among whom there *must* certainly occur geniuses, good, sound, common-sense intelligences, and absolute blockheads), we find that we remark and take notice only of the latter, or, at most, of the extremes. No species of animals (considered collectively) is close enough to our retina to admit of our perceiving its delicate middle tints and gradations: and thus must it be with *us* when some spirit, sitting in heaven, looks at us in the mass. He is so far away, that he will find some trouble (very vain trouble, too) in drawing a proper distinction between Kant, and his shaving looking-glasses—the Kantists; between Goëthe and his imitators; and will see little or no difference between members of faculty and dunces, professors' lecture-rooms and lunatic asylums; for little steps are wholly lost to the sight of one who is standing on the uppermost of them.

"Now this deprives a thinker of all pleasure and courage; and, Siebenkæs, hang me if I ever sit down and grow one bit famous, or give myself the trouble either to build up or to pull down any learned or ingenious system whatever, or write anything at all of greater length than a letter.

"Thy (not my) Self,

"L.

"P.S. I wish it would please God to grant me a second life after this, that I might have the opportunity of dealing with a few *realities* in the next world; for this one is really altogether too hollow and stupid; a wretched Nürnberg toy; nothing but the falling froth of a life; a jump through the hoop of eternity; a rotten, dusty, apple of Sodom, which, splutter as much as I will, I can't get out of my mouth. Oh!—"

To readers who think the above piece of humour not sufficiently serious, I shall prove, in another place, that it is *too* serious, and that it is only an *oppressed* heart which can jest in this fashion; that it is only an eye which is in much too feverish a condition—with the fireworks of life darting round it like the flying fire-flashes which precede *amaurosis*—which is capable of seeing and picturing such fever-forms.

Firmian understood it all, at the time in question at all events. But I must go back to the 11th of February, in order to half-deprive the reader of his sympathising enjoyment of the re-union of the trefoil of friends which then took place. Lenette's trembling petition that her husband would pardon her, was but the forced hot-bed fruit of Zichen's earth-shaking prophecy. She thought that she herself, and the ground she stood upon, were about to be let down; and it was at the near approach of death (whom she thought she already saw wagging his tiger's tail) that she held out to her husband a hand of Christian peace. For (and *to*) that beautiful soul of his (*dis*embodied) hers wept tears of love and of rapture. But very probably she, to some extent, confused her happiness with her love—satisfaction with fidelity; and (it may be suspected) the eagerness with which she was looking forward to enwrapping the Schulrath, that very evening, in a warm and tender—*gaze*, found outward expression in the shape of an unusual degree of affection for her husband. It is here most essential that I should communicate to all and sundry persons one of the most valuable of all my maxims; in dealings with even the very best woman in the world, it is of the utmost importance that we should make excessively certain, and discriminate with the utmost accuracy, what it is which she really wants (at the time being), and particularly *whom*—(this is not always the person who is thus discriminating). There is in the female heart such a rapid coming and going, and fluctuation, of emotions of every kind; such an effusion of many-tinted bubbles which reflect everything, but most particularly whatever chances to be nearest, that a woman, under the influence of emotion, shall, while she sheds a tear for *you* out of her left eye, go on thinking, and drop another for your predecessor or successor (as the case may be) out of her right. Also a feeling of tenderness for a rival falls half to a husband's share; and a woman, even the most loyally faithful, weeps more at what she thinks than at what she hears.

'Tis very stupid that so many masculine persons among us are stupid precisely on this point; that a woman thinking (as she does) more of other people's feelings than of her own, is, in this matter, neither the deceiver nor the deceived; what she is is the deception itself—the optical deception and the acoustic.

But Firmians seldom make well-digested reflections of this sort concerning elevenths of February until the twelfth. Wendeline was in love with the Schulrath; that was the fact of the matter. Like all women of any sense (in Kuhschnappel), she had believed in the superintendent-general, and in the kick he had administered to the earth, until Peltzstiefel, in the evening, unhesitatingly pronounced the idea of such a thing to be simply *impious*, when she abandoned the prophetic superintendent and gave in her adhesion to the incredulous worldling, Firmian. We all know that he had every bit as much of the masculine failing of overdoing consistency as she had of the feminine one of carrying inconsistency too far. It was foolish, therefore, in him to think that he was going to regain, by means of one grand effusion of the heart, an affection embittered by so many small effusions of gall. The grandest benefits, the loftiest manly enthusiasm, are incapable of uprooting, all in an instant, a feeling of ill-will which has rooted itself all over a person's heart with a thousand little spreading fibres. The affection which we have deprived ourselves of by means of a long-continued, gradual process of chilling, is only to be regained by an equally lengthy process of warming.

In a word, it became evident in the course of a day or two that things were just as they had been three weeks before. Lenette's love had flourished and grown to such an extent, by reason of Stiefel's absence, that there was not room for it any longer under

its bell-glass—it was shooting out leaves beyond the edge of it into the open-air. The *Aqua Toffana* of jealousy at last permeated every vessel in Firmian's body, flowed into his heart, and gnawed it slowly in pieces. He was but the tree on which Lenette had inscribed her love for another, and was withering by reason of the incisions. He *had so* hoped that the Schulrath, recalled to them on Lenette's birthday, would have healed all wounds, however deep; or at all events cicatrized them over: whereas, what he really had done was to open them all wider than ever—all unconscious as he was of it. Ah! what pain this was to the wretched husband! He grew poorer and weaker, and more miserable—both outwardly and inwardly—as the days went by, and gave up all hope of ever seeing the First of May and Bayreuth. February, March, and April passed over head—all heavy, dripping clouds, without a single break of blue sky or blink of evening-red.

On the 1st of April he lost his law-suit for the second time; and on the 13th (Maunday Thursday) he finished, for ever, his 'Evening Paper' (this was the name he gave to his diary, because he wrote it of an evening), meaning to consign *that*, along with his 'Selections from the Devil's Papers' (as far as they were completed) into Leibgeber's most faithful hands (at Bayreuth), in place of his body, so soon to vanish and be resolved into its elements. For, he thought, those hands would fainer clasp his soul (which was in the papers) than his poor meagre body—of which, *du reste*, Liebgeber always possessed a second unaltered edition (a perfect *facsimile* copy, so to speak) at all times at hand, in the shape of his own. I have no hesitation in here quoting, without emendation, the whole of this concluding page of the 'Evening Paper'—Firmian's 'Swan Song,' which—which went off by the following post.

"Yesterday, my law-suit was wrecked on the shoal of the Court of Appeal of the second instance. The defendant's counsel, and the Court, brought to bear upon me an old Statute, of force in Kuhschnappel as well as in Bayreuth, which enacts that a deposition made before a notary is not valid—depositions having to be made before the Court. These two hearings of my case render the uphill path to the third a little easier. For my poor Lenette's sake I have appealed to the Lower House, my kind Stiefel advancing me the necessary cash. Truly, in applying to the oracles of Justice we have to fast and mortify, just as much as was *de rigueur* in consulting the heathen oracles of old. I have reason to hope that I shall be able to effect my escape from the clutches of the knaves of the State;[58] or (shall I say), from these game-keepers and their *couteaux de chasse*, and hunting-spears or swords of Themis. I think I shall get through their hunting-tackle of legal proceedings, the toils, nets, and gins of their Acts of Parliament—not by my purse (which is fallen away to the thickness of an insect's feeler, and could be drawn, like a leather *queue*, through the smallest mesh in any of their legal nets)—but with my body, which, as it approaches the topmost of their nets will be turned into dust of death, and will then fly free through and over every trap they can set.

"I desire to lift my hand away from this, my evening paper, to-night for the last time, ere it becomes an absolute martyrology. If one could give away his life as a gift, I should be very happy to give mine to any dying person who would care to accept it. At the same time, let nobody suppose that because there chances to be a total eclipse of the sun above my head, I think, for a moment, that there must be one in America as well; or that I imagine the Gold Coast must be snowed up for the winter because a snowflake or two happen to be falling in front of my own nose. Life is warm and beautiful; even mine was so once. If it must be that I am to melt away, even before

[58] Servants were *called* "knaves" of old, and deserve the name pretty often at the present day.

these snowflakes, I beg of my heirs, and of all Christian people, that they will not publish any part of my selection from the 'Devil's Papers,' except that which I have copied out fair, which extends as far as the 'Satire upon Women' (inclusively). And as regards this diary of mine, in which one or two satirical fancies crop out here and there, I beg, also, that not a single one of these may be put into print.

"Should any curious inquirer into the history of this day-and-night-book of mine be anxious to discover what the heavy weights, the nests, the clothes hung out to dry upon my branches, really consisted of, that they should so bend my top shoot and my branches down (and all the more curious to know it, inasmuch as I have written humorous satires)—(though, indeed, my sole object has been to nourish and support myself by help of these satire prickles of mine, absorbent vessels, to me, like those of the torch-thistle), I beg to inform him that he seeks to know more than I know myself, and more than I mean to tell. For man and the horseradish are most biting when grated; and the satirist is sadder than the jester, for the same reason that the Urang-Utang is more melancholy than the ape, namely, because he is nobler. If this paper does really reach your hands, my Henry, my beloved, and you wish to hear somewhat concerning the hail which has kept falling deeper and deeper upon my young seed-crop—count not the melted hailstones, but the broken stalks. I have nothing left to give me joy, save your affection—everything else is battered down into ruin. Since, for more reasons than one,[59] it is most unlikely that I shall ever come to you at Bayreuth, let us part, on this page, like spirits, giving each other hands of air. I detest the sentimental, but Fate has wellnigh grafted it on to me at last, in spite of myself, and I swallow great spoonsful of that satiric Glauber's salt, which is generally so good a remedy for it—as sheep, who have caught the rot from feeding in damp meadows, are cured by licking salt. I say I swallow great spoonsful, about the size of my prizes at the bird-shooting, without the least perceptible effect. But, on the whole, it matters little. Fate, unlike our Sheriffs' Courts, does not wait until we are well before she inflicts her sentence. My giddiness and other premonitory symptoms of apoplexy, give me to understand, with sufficient clearness, that I shall soon be subjected to a good Galenian blood-letting,[60] by way of remedy for the nose-bleedings of this life. I cannot say that I am particularly glad of it, or anxious for it. On the contrary, I am annoyed with people who demand that Fate shall at once unswaddle them (for we are swaddled in our bodies, the nerves and arteries being the swaddling-bands)—as a mother does her infant just because it cries, and has a little pain in its stomach. I should be glad to remain swaddled for a while to come among the rest of the 'Children of the Rope,'[61] particularly as I cannot but fear that, in the next world, I shall be able to make little or no use of my satirical humour. However, I shall have to go. But when that comes to pass, I should like to ask you, Henry, to come some day to this town, and make them uncover your friend's quiet face, which will scarce manage to put on the Hippocratic mien again. Then, my Henry, when you gaze long upon the grey, spotty, new moon-face there, and think that very little sunshine ever fell thereon—no sunshine of love, of fame, or fortune—you will not be able to look up to heaven, and cry out to God, 'And now, at last, after all his sorrows and troubles, Thou, O God, hast annihilated him altogether; when he stretched his arms, in death, towards Thee, and that world of thine, Thou hast broken him in

[59] Lack of money and of health.
[60] One continued until fainting supervenes.
[61] Persons condemned by the secret tribunals were so styled.

sunder as he lies there—poor soul!' No, Henry, when I die, *you* will be compelled to believe in Immortality.

"Now that I have finished this 'Evening Paper' of mine, I am going to put out the light, for the full moon is shedding broad, imperial sheets of brightness into the room. Then, as there is no one else awake in the house, I will sit down in the twilight stillness, and, while I gaze at the moon's white magic amid the black magic of night, and listen to great flocks of birds of passage as they come flying hither from warmer lands through the blue, clear moonlight—while I am passing away into a sister country—I will stretch my feelers out from my snail's shell once more before the last frost closes it up for ever. Henry, I want to picture to myself to-night, clearly and brightly, all that is now over and past; the May of our friendship—every evening when we were too much moved by emotion and could not but fall into each other's arms—my hopes, so old and grey now that I hardly know them to be mine—five old, but bright and happy, springs which I still remember—my dead mother, who, when she was dying, gave me a lemon, which she thought would be put into her coffin, and said, 'Ah, I wish it were going into my bridal garland.' And I will picture to myself, also, that moment, now so near, of my *own* death, when thy image will rise before the broken sight of my soul for the last time—when I shall part from thee, and, with a dark, inward pang, which can no more bring a tear into my cold and glazing eyes, sink away from thy shadowy form into the dark, and from amid the thick and heavy clouds of death, call to thee with a faint and hollow cry, 'Henry, good-night! good-night! Ah, fare thee well! for I can say no more.'"

End of the 'Evening Paper.'

Chapter XII

THE FLIGHT OUT OF EGYPT—THE GLORIES OF TRAVEL—THE UNKNOWN—BAYREUTH—BAPTISM IN A STORM—NATHALIE AND THE HERMITAGE—THE MOST IMPORTANT CONVERSATION IN ALL THIS BOOK—AN EVENING OF FRIENDSHIP.

Once, in the Easter week, when Firmian came home from a half-hour's pleasure-trip full of forced marches, Lenette asked him why he had not come back sooner, because the postman had been with a great, enormous packet, and had said that the husband must sign the receipt for it himself. In a small establishment like Siebenkæs' an occurrence such as this ranks among the world's greatest events, or the principal revolutions in its history. The moments of waiting lay on their souls like cupping-glasses and drawing plasters. At length the postman, in his yellow uniform, put an end to the bitter-sweet hemp beating of their arteries. Firmian acknowledged the receipt of fifty dollars, while Lenette asked the postman who had sent them, and where they came from. The letter commenced thus:—

"My dear Siebenkæs,

"I have received your 'Evening Paper' and 'Devil's Selections' all safely. The rest by word of mouth.

"*Postscript*.

"But listen! If the future course of my waltz of life is a matter of the slightest interest to you—if you care in the least degree about my happiness, my plans, or ideas—if it is anything to you but a matter of the supremest indifference that I frank you as far as Bayreuth, providing you with board, lodging, and travelling expenses all on account of a project whose yarn the spinning-mills of the future must either manufacture into gin-snares and gallows-ropes (for my life), or else into rope-ladders and best bower anchor-cables—if this, and other matters more momentous still, have the smallest power over you, Firmian, for heaven's sake, on with a pair of boots and start!"

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"And, by thy holy friendship!" said Siebenkæs, "I will on with a pair, though the bolt of apoplexy should flash out of the blue sky of Swabia, and strike me down beneath a cherry-tree in full blossom. Nothing shall prevent me now!"

He kept his word, for in six days from thence we find him, at eleven o'clock at night, ready for his journey, with clean linen on his back, and in his pockets—with a hat-cover on his head (secretly freighted and stuffed with an old soft hat)—his newest boots (the antediluvian pair s relieved from duty, being left behind in garrison)—and a tower-clock, borrowed from Peltzstiefel, in his pocket—and fresh bathed, shaven, and kempt, standing by his wife and friend—both of whom kept their eyes fixed, with a gladsome, courteous watchfulness upon the departing traveller only, and did not, for the time being, look at all at one another. He took his leave of the pair while it was still night, being minded to pass the rest of it in his arm chair (of many sorrows), and be off about three o'clock, while Lenette should still be snoring. He committed to the Schulrath the office of treasurer-in-chief of the widow's fund to his grass-widow, and the managership, or, at least, the "leading business," of his miniature Covent Garden full of Gay's Beggar's Operas, the theatrical journal whereof I am here writing for the

edification of a full half of the world. “Lenette,” he said, “when you want any counsel, apply to the counsellor here; he is going to do me the favour to come and see you very often indeed.” Peltzstiefel made the most solemn promises to come every day. Lenette did not go down stairs to the door with the Schulrath when he went away, as she usually did, but remained above, and drawing her hand out of her replenished money-bag (the starved stomachic coats of which had hitherto been rubbing together), snapped it to. It is not of sufficient importance to be recorded that Siebenkæs asked her to put out the light, and go to her bed, and that he gave her charming face his long parting kiss, and said good night, and took the tender farewell, almost within the Eden-gate of the land of dreams with that redoublement of fondness with which we take our leave of those we love, and greet them when we come back to them again.

The watchman’s last call at length drew him from his sleeping chair out into the starlight, breezy morning; but, first, he crept once more into the bed-room to the rose-maiden dreaming there, warm and happy, pulled the window to (for there was a cool air from it falling upon her unprotected breast), and would not suffer his lips to touch her in an awakening kiss. He gazed at her by the light of the stars and early blush of dawn, till he turned his eyes away (fast growing dim) at the thought, “perhaps I may never see her again.”

As he passed through the sitting-room, her distaff seemed to look at him as if it were a thing of life; it was wrapped in broad bands of coloured paper (which she had put on it because she had not got silk); and there was her spinning-wheel, too, which she used to work at in the dark mornings and evenings when there was not light enough for sewing. As he pictured her to himself working industriously at them while he was away, every wish of his heart cried out, “Ah, poor darling! may all go well with her, always, whether I ever come back to her or not.”

This thought of the *last time* grew more vivid still when he was out in the open air, and felt a slight giddiness produced, in the physical part of his head, by agitation and broken sleep, as well as natural regret at the sight of his home receding from view, and the town growing dimmer, and the foreground changing into background, and the disappearance of all the paths and heights on which he had so often walked a little life into his benumbed heart, frozen by the past winter. The little leaf whereon, like a leaf roller, or miner-worm, he had been crawling and feeding, was falling now to earth behind him, a skeleton leaf.

But the first spot of foreign, unfamiliar soil, as yet unmarked by any “Station of his Passion,” drew, like a serpent-stone, an acrid drop or two of sorrow-poison out of his heart.

And now the solar flames shot higher and higher up upon the enkindled morning clouds, till, at length, hundreds of suns rose in an instant in the sky, in the streams and pools, and in the dew-cups of the flowers, while thousands of varied colours went flowing athwart the face of earth, and one bright whiteness broke from the sky.

Fate plucked away most of the yellow, faded leaves from Firmian’s soul, as gardeners remove those of plants in spring. His giddiness diminished rather than otherwise as he went on; the walking did it good. As the sun rose in heaven, another, a super-earthly sun, rose in his soul. In every valley, in every grove, on every rising ground, he broke and cast away a ring or two of the chrysalis-case of wintry life and trouble (which had been clinging so tightly to him), and unfolded his moist upper and nether

wings, and let the breeze of May waft him away, on four outspread pinions, up into the bright air among the butterflies, but higher than they, and over loftier flowers.

And then with what a burst of power the life within him began, under this new impetus, to boil and seethe, as, issuing from a diamond-mine of a valley all shade and dewdrops, he walked a pace or two up through the heaven-gate of the spring. It was as if some great earthquake had upheaved a new-created flowery plain, all dripping from the ocean, stretching further than the eye could reach, all rich in youthful powers and impulses. The fire of earth glowed beneath the roots of this great hanging garden, and the fire of heaven flamed above it burning the colours into the trees and flowers. Between the white mountains, as between porcelain towers, stood the bright tinted, flowery slopes like thrones for the fruit goddesses. And all over the face of this great camp of gladness, the cups of the flowers and the heavy dewdrops were pitched, like peopled tents. The earth teemed with young broods, and sprouting grasses, and countless little hearts; and heart after heart, life after life, burst forth into being from out the warm brooding-cells of Mother Nature—burst forth with wings, or silken threads, or delicate feelers—and hummed, and sucked, and smacked its lips and sang. And for every one of these countless honeysucking trunks a cup of gladness had long since been filled and ready.

In this great market-place of this living city of the sun, so full of glory and sounding life, the pet child of the infinite Mother stood solitary—gazing, with bright and happy eyes, delighted, around him into all its innumerable streets. But his eternal Mother wore her veil of immeasurable immensity, and it was only the warmth which pierced to his heart which told him that he was lying upon her breast. Firmian reposed from this two hours' intoxication of heart in a peasant's hut. The foaming spirit of a cup of joy like this went quicker to the heart of a sick man such as he than to those of the commoner run of sufferers.

When he went out again the glory had sobered down into brightness, and his enthusiasm into simple happiness. Every red ladybird fluttering on its way, every red church-roof, and every sparkling stream as it glittered and glistened with dancing stars, shed joyous lights and brilliant colours upon his soul. When he heard the cries of the charcoal burners in the wood, the resounding cracking of whips, and the crash of falling trees, and then, when coming out into the open, he saw the white châteaux and roads standing out against the dark-green background like constellations and milky ways, and above the shining cloud specks in the deep blue sky; while lights flashed and darted everywhere, now down from trees, now up from streams, now athwart saws in the distance—there was no such thing as a foggy corner left in his soul, nor a single spot in it all unpenetrated by the spring sunshine: the moss of gnawing, corroding care, which can grow only in damp shade, fell from his bread-trees and trees of liberty out here in the glad, free air, and his soul could not but join in the great chorus of flying and humming creatures which was rising all round him, singing, "Life is beautiful, and youth is lovelier still; but spring is loveliest of all."

The bygone winter lay behind him like the dark, frozen South Pole; the royal burgh of Kuhschnappel like some deep, dreary school-dungeon with dripping walls. The only spot in it over which broad, gladsome sunbeams were intertwining was his own home, and he pictured to himself Lenette in that home as commander-in-chief, free to talk, cook, and wash at her own sweet will, and with her head (and hands, too) full all day long of the delight that was coming in the evening. He was glad from the very depths of his heart that, in that little egg-shell of hers, that sulphur-hut and chartreuse, she should enjoy the glory and brightness which that angel Peltzstiefel

would bring with him into her St. Peter's prison. "Ah! in God's name," thought he, "may she be as happy as I am—nay, and happier, too, if that be possible."

The more villages he came to, with their troupes of strolling players (of inhabitants), the more did life in general seem to assume a theatrical guise—his past troubles were transformed into leading parts in the drama, or Aristotelian problems—his clothes into stage costumes—his new boots became *cothurna*—and his purse a theatre treasury—while a delicious stage-recognition was awaiting him in the arms of his beloved Henry.

About half-past three in the afternoon, in a Swabian village, whose name he did not inquire, his whole soul melted of a sudden to tears, so that he was completely astonished at the unlooked-for and rapid *attendrissement*. His surroundings at the time would have rather led him to anticipate a contrary effect. He was standing by an old thorn-tree, rather crooked, and dead at the top; the village women were on the green washing their clothes, which glistened in the sunlight, and throwing down chopped eggs and nettles to feed the downy, yellow goslings; a gentleman's gardener was clipping a hedge, while a herd-boy was summoning his sheep (clipped already for *their* part) round the thorn-tree, with his *cornemuse*. It was all so youthful, so pretty, so Italian! The beautiful May had half (or wholly) unclad everything and everyone—the sheep, the geese, the women, the shepherd-minstrel, the hedger, and his hedge....

Why was he thus moved to tenderness in this gladsome and smiling scene? Partly because he had been so happy all day, but chiefly by the shepherd bassoonist calling his flock together with that stage instrument of his beneath the thorn. Firmian had helped a shepherd of this sort, with a crook and a reed-pipe, to drive his own father's sheep home hundreds of times when he was a boy; and the tones of the *Ranz des Vaches* brought back in an instant his own rose-coloured childhood—it arose from out its dew of the morning, its bowers of budding blossoms and sleeping flowers, and stood before him in heavenly guise, and smiled in all its own innocence dressed in its thousand hopes, saying, "Behold me! see how lovely I am; we used to play together, you and I; how much I used to give you!—grand kingdoms, broad meadows, and gold, and a great, endless Paradise beyond the hills. But it seems you have nothing left now. And how pale you are, and worn! Come and play with me again!"

Who is there amongst us to whom Music has not brought back his childhood a thousand times? She comes and says, "Are not the rosebuds blown yet which I gave you?" Yes, yes, they are blown; they were white roses, though!

The evening made his joy-flowers close, folding their petals together above their nectaries; and an evening dew of melancholy fell ever heavier and thicker upon his soul as he went on his way. Just before sunset he came to a village; I am sorry to say I cannot remember whether it was Honbart, or Houstein, or Jaxheim; but of this I am pretty certain, that it was one of the three, because it was near the River Jagst, and in Anspach, on the borders of Ellwangen. His night-quarters lay smoking down in the valley before him. Before going on into them he lay down on the hill-side beneath a tree, whose branches were the cathedral chancel of a choir of singing creatures. Not far from him gleamed the trembling tinsel of a piece of water, glittering in the evening sun; and above him the golden leaves and the white blossoms rustled like grasses waving over flowers. The cuckoo (always her own sounding-board and multiplying echo) talked to him from the tree-top in mournful tones of sorrow; the sun was gone; the shadows were throwing thick veils of crape over the brightness of

the day. He asked himself, "*What* is my Lenette doing now? Of whom is she thinking? Who is with her?" And here there fell about his heart, like a band of ice, the thought, "Ah! but *I* have no loved one whose hand I can clasp!"

After drawing to himself a vivid picture of the tender, delicate, beautiful, woman whom he had so often invoked, but never met—to whom he would have given and sacrificed—oh! so gladly—so much! not only his heart and his life, but his every wish, his every whim—he went down the hill with streaming eyes, which he strove in vain to dry; but, at all events, any kind womanly heart (among the readers of this tale) which has loved in vain, or to its own detriment, will forgive him these burning tears, knowing, from sad personal experience, how the soul seems to journey on through a desolate wilderness, where the deathly Samiel wind blows ceaselessly, while lifeless forms lie scattered around, dashed to earth by the blast, their arms breaking from their crumbling trunks when the living touches them in act to clasp them to his own warm heart. But ye, in whose clasp so many a heart has grown cold, chilled by inconstancy or by the frost of death—ye should not mourn so bitterly as do those lonely souls who have never *lost*, because they have never *found*; who yearn for that immortal and eternal love of which even the mortal and transient reflex has never been vouchsafed to bless them.

Firmian carried with him into his night-quarters a tranquil, though a tender, heart, which healed itself in dreams. When he looked up from his slumbers, the constellations, set in his window as in a picture-frame, twinkled lovingly before his bright and happy eyes, and beamed upon him the astrological prophecy of a happy morrow.

He fluttered, with the earliest lark, up out of the furrow of his bed, with as many trills as he, and quite as much energy. That day, fatigue plucking the bird-of-paradise wings from his fancy, he could not quite get out of the territory of Anspach. The day after, he reached Bamberg, leaving on the right hand Nürnberg—that and its *Pays Coutumiers* and *Pays de Droit écrit*. His path led him from one paradise to another. The plain seemed to be one great mosaic of gardens; the hills seemed to crouch closer to the earth, as if to let men the more readily climb up upon their backs and humps. The groves of deciduous trees were like garlands, twined and placed to adorn Nature on some great festal day; and the setting sun often glowed through the trellis-work of some leafy balustrade on a hill-side, like a purple apple in some perforated fruit-vase. In one valley one longed to take one's mid-day sleep; in another, one's breakfast; in this stream, to see the moon reflected when she stood in the zenith; to see her rise behind this group of trees; to see the sun rise out of that green trellised bed of trees at the *Streitberg*.

When he arrived the next day at Streitberg, where all those delights could be indulged in at once, he might easily have seen the top of the spire of Bayreuth put on the blushing tints of the evening Aurora—unless he was a much worse walker than his historian; however, he did not care to do so. He said to himself, "I should be an ass were I to go rushing, all dog-tired and dried up as I am, upon the first hour of a delicious reunion and meeting of this sort; neither he (Leibgeber) nor I would get a wink of sleep; and what should we have time to talk about at this hour in the evening? No, no, better wait, and get there the first thing in the morning, about six o'clock, and so have the whole day before us for our millennium."

Accordingly he passed the night in Fantaisie, an artificial pleasure, rose, and flower-valley, half a mile from Bayreuth. I find it a very hard and difficult matter to reserve

the erection of my paper model of this Seifersdorf miniature valley (which I should so much like to introduce at this point), until I find a roomier place for it than the present; however, I can't help it, and should I not find such a place, there is sure to be ample space in the blank pages at the end of the book.

Firmian started, then, in company with a body of bats and beetles—the advanced guard of a beautiful bright day—and bringing up the rear (so to speak) of the people of Bayreuth, who had just finished their Sunday and Feast of the Ascension (it was the 7th of May): and he walked so late that the moon, in her first quarter, was casting deep, strong shadows of the blossoms and branches upon the greensward. Thus late in the evening, then, Firmian climbed a height from whence he could look down, with tears of joy, to Bayreuth—where the beloved brother of his soul was waiting for him and thinking of him—as it lay softly veiled in the bridal night of spring, and broidered over with shining flakes of Luna's radiance. I can affirm in his name with a "Verily" that he nearly did what *I should* have done myself; that is to say, *I*, with a heart welling up in such a warm sort of manner as *his* was, and on a night all so adorned and pranked out with gold and silver, should have made but one bound into the Sun Hotel, and into my Leibgeber's arms. However, he went back again into his odour-breathing Capua (Fantaisie), and there, in the brief intervening space of time between his return and supper and evening prayer time, he met—beside a dried-up water-basin or fish-pond, peopled by a race of deities transformed into stone—he met with nothing less than an exceedingly charming adventure. I proceed to give an account of it.

Beside the wall which surrounded the little lake in question, there was a lady standing; she was dressed all in black except her veil, which was white; she had a bouquet of faded flowers in her hand, and was turning it over with her fingers. She was looking towards the west, that is to say, away from him, and seemed to be contemplating partly the confused mass of stone *Suisseries*, and the coral-reef of sea-horses, tritons, and so on, and partly a temple, in artificial ruins, which was close by. As he passed slowly on he saw, by a side glance, that she threw a flower, not so much *at* as *over* him, as if this sign of exclamation were meant to rouse a pre-occupied person from his *reverie*. He looked round a little, just to show that he was really awake and observant, and went up to the glass-door of the artificially-ruined temple, in order to linger a little longer in the vicinity of this enigma. Inside the temple, facing him, there was a mirrored pillar, which reflected all the foreground and middle distance (including the fair unknown) in the green perspective of a long background. Firmian saw, in the mirror, the lady throw her bouquet at him bodily, and then roll an orange (which would not fly so far as the flowers) towards his feet. He turned round with a smile. A soft voice cried in an eager, hasty way, "Don't you know me?" He said, "No;" and ere he had added, more slowly, "I am a stranger," the unknown Lady Abbess had drawn near to him, and lifted the Moses veil rapidly from her face, and asked, in a louder tone, "Don't you, *now*?" And a female head which might have been sawn from the shoulders of the Vatican Apollo (only softened by some eight or ten feminine traits, and a narrower brow) glowed upon him like some bust illumined by the flare of a torch. But, on his repeating that he was a stranger, and when she examined him more closely, and without her veil, and let her gauze portcullis down again (which movements took altogether about as long as one beat of the pendulum of an astronomical clock), she turned away saying, "I beg your pardon," in a tone which expressed more womanly annoyance than embarrassment.

A very little thing would have set him off to follow her in a mechanical sort of manner. He immediately set about adorning all Fantaisie with plaster-casts of her head (instead of the stone goddesses)—of her head, which had but three pleonasms in the face of it—too much colour in the cheeks, too much curve in the nose, and too much wild fire (or rather material for kindling it) in the eyes. "That is the sort of head," he thought, "which would be well in its place in an opera-box, beside the sparkling one of some royal bride (ay, and hold its own there), and might contain all the wisdom it might deprive—other people of."

One carries a magic adventure such as this into one's dreams with one, for it is like a dream itself. The month of May now stuck in little flower-sticks to all Firmian's drooping, trembling, joy-flowers (as she had done to Nature's), and lightly bound them to them. Ah! with what brightness do even little joys beam upon the soul when it stands on some spot all darkened by clouds of sorrow—as stars shine out in the empty sky when we look up at it from a cellar or deep well.

On the exquisite morning which followed, the earth rose with the sun. Siebenkæs had his friend of all time in his head and heart more than the unknown of yesterday; although, at the same time, he took care that his path should lead him by the ocean, and the shell out of which that Venus had arisen—for mere curiosity's sake—which led to no result. And so he waded away through the moist radiance and cloudy vapour of the glittering silver-mine, tearing down in his passage the gossamer-wreaths all behung with seed-pearls of dew which hung upon the flowers; brushing (in his eagerness to reach his Olympus of yesterday) the chilled butterflies and dew-drops from off the branches, all a-flutter with the insect swarms (the key-board of a harmonica framed in flowers). He climbed to his place in the great "Auditorium" all delight at length. Bayreuth lay behind a glowing drop-curtain of mist. The sun (in his character of "king" of this drama) stood on a hill-top, and looked down at this many-tinted curtain, which took fire and blazed, while the morning breezes caught and bore away its fluttering, sparkling, tinder fragments, and scattered them over the gardens and the flowers. And soon nothing save the sun was shining; nothing round him now except the sky. Amid this radiance Siebenkæs made his entry into his dear friend's camp of recreation and head-quarter city, whereof all the buildings looked as if they were a glittering, solider sort of air-and-magic castles fallen down from the æther. It was strange, but, on noticing certain window-curtains drawn in (which the street breeze had been toying with), he could scarcely help feeling certain that it was the "Unknown" of yesterday who was doing it, although at that time of the morning (it was barely eight o'clock) a Bayreuth lady would have as little got through her flower-sleep as the red mouse-ear, or the Alpine hawksbeard.[62] His heart beat quicker at every street. It was quite a pleasure to him to lose his way a little, as to some extent delaying and adding to his happiness. At length he attained his perihelion—that is to say—reached the Sun (Hotel), where was the metallic sun which had attracted to it *his* comet, as the astronomical sun does comets in general. He inquired the number of Leibgeber's room; they said it was number 8, at the back of the house, but that he had gone that day on a trip into Swabia, unless he was still upstairs. Fortunately there just then came in from the street an individual who testified to the correctness of the latter hypothesis, and wagged his tail at sight of Siebenkæs—Leibgeber's dog to wit.

To storm up the stairs, to burst open the door of joy, to fall upon the beloved breast, was the work of a single instant; and then the barren minutes of life passed unseen

[62] The former plant opens after eight in the morning, the latter at eleven.

and unheard by the close, silent union of two human creatures, who lay clinging together on the waters of life, like two shipwrecked brothers floating, embracing and embraced, on the chill waves, with nothing left them save the heart they die upon....

As yet they had not said a word to one another. Firmian, whom a longer continuance of troubles had made the weaker of the two, wept without disguise at sight of the face of his newly recovered friend. Heinrich's features were drawn as if by pain. They both had their hats still on. Leibgeber, in his embarrassment, could think of nothing to hold on to except the bell-rope. The waiter came running in. "Oh! it's nothing!" said Leibgeber; "except, by the way, that I shan't go out now. Heaven grant," he added, "that we may get fairly into the thick of a long talk! Drag me into one, brother!"

He had no difficulty in beginning one with the pragmatic detailing of the *Nouvelle du Jour*—or rather *de la Nuit*—in short, the town (or, more properly speaking, the country) news of what had taken place on the previous day in the vicinity of the veil of the beautiful *Je ne sais quoi*.

"I know her" (Leibgeber answered), "as I know my own pulse; but I don't intend to say anything whatever about her just now. I should be obliged to sit still and wait here for such a time. Put the whole thing off till we are sitting in Abraham's warm bosom in the Hermitage, which is the second heaven of Bayreuth, next to Fantaisie,—for Fantaisie is the first heaven, and the whole country is the third."

They then made an ascent into heaven in every fresh street they came to, and also in every subject of conversation which they fell upon. "You shall knock my head off its stalk like a poppy," said Leibgeber, on Firmian's betraying (I regret to say) as great a curiosity as the reader's own to know the secret, "before I transform *my* mysteries into *yours*, either to-day, or to-morrow, or the day after that. Thus much I will tell you, that your 'Selections from the Devil's Papers' (your 'Evening Journal' contains matter more morbific) are perfectly divine, and very heavenly indeed, and not at all bad, and by no means without beauties; but, on the whole (let us say), passable enough." Leibgeber then told him how delighted he was with the work, and how it surprised him that he, a lawyer in a little country town, with nobody in it but a parcel of shopkeepers and juristic souls, with a sprinkling of higher officialities, should have managed to rise in these satires to such a freedom and purity of art; and, indeed, when *I* first read the 'Selections from the Devil's Papers,' I said, myself now and then, "I am sure *I* couldn't have written anything of the kind in Hof in Voigtland, and I *have* written one or two pretty good things there, too."

Leibgeber placed a crown on the top of the laurel wreath by declaring that it was much easier for him to laugh at the world aloud, and with both lips, than under his breath and with the pen, and this in accordance with well-tried rules of art. Siebenkæs was beyond himself with delight at his friend's praise. But let no one grudge a pleasure of this sort to our advocate, or to any other worker who, in solitude, and without a single soul to give him a word of praise, has gone steadfastly forward along the path of art which he has honestly chosen, unsupported, unassisted by the smallest encouragement of any kind, whom, at last, on reaching the goal, the fragrance of a leaf or two of laurel from a friend's hand, penetrates, strengthens, and recompenses, with an aroma as of Araby the Blest. If even the far-famed and the self-satisfied stand in need of a little of the warmth which is derived from other people's opinions, how much more the diffident and the unknown! Ah! lucky Firmian! to what a distance in the far south-south-west did the passing thunder-storms of thy life now

go drifting away. When the sun fell upon them, nothing of them was to be seen but a gentle fall of rain.

At the *table d'hôte* he observed with delight, in the case of Leibgeber, how wonderfully a constant intercourse with men and cities loosens the tongue though, at the same time, the heart puts on the bridle which has been taken from the lips. Leibgeber thought nothing of talking about himself, and this in the most humorous manner, before all sorts of grand councillors of state and chancery officials dining at the Sun—a thing which he, a cabined, cribbed, confined parish advocate would scarce have dared even after a good bottle of wine. As the discourse which he delivered on this occasion pleased the parish advocate, I shall build it into this history, and place over it the superscription—

LEIBGEBER'S DINNER SPEECH.

"I think I may venture to say that of all the Christians and persons of name and title seated at this table, not one was made into one with such wonderful difficulty as I was. My mother, a native of Gascony, was on her way to Holland, by sea, from London, where she had left my father as diocesan of a German community. But, never since there has been such a thing on the face of the earth as a councillor of the German empire, did the German Ocean rage and insurge so terrifically as upon the occasion in question when it was my mother's lot to be crossing it. Pour all hell, hissing lakes of brimstone, boiling copper, splattering devils, and all, into the cold ocean, and observe the crackling, the roaring, and the seething of the hell-flames and ocean-waves contending, till one of these hostile elements swallow up the other, and you have a faint (but, at dinner-time, a sufficient) idea of the infernal storm in which I came upon the sea, and into the world. When I tell you that the main braces, the topsail sheets, and the main topgallant stays (to say nothing of the crossjack braces and fore topgallant halyards, which were in a worse state still)—and when, moreover, the mizen topsail, and the foretop mast staysail rigging, and the flying jib (to say nothing of the spanker)—when things so accustomed to the sea as these (I say) felt as if their *last hour* was come, it was a real ocean miracle that a creature so tender as I was at that time should have managed to commence his *first*. I had about as much flesh on my body then as I have fat now, and may have weighed, at the outside, about four Nürnberg pounds, which (if we may credit the authority of the best anatomical theatres) is at the present moment about the weight of my brain alone. Besides which, I was the merest of beginners. I had seen absolutely nothing of the world, except this infernal gale. I was a creature, not so much of *few* years as of *none* at all (though everybody's life commences some nine months sooner than the parish registers indicate), excessively tender and delicate—having been (in opposition to all the rules of hygiene) kept much too warm, swaddled, and coddled during these very first nine months in question, when I ought rather to have been undergoing a preparation of some kind to enable me to bear the chill atmosphere of this world. And thus, quarter-grown, a tender flower-bud, liquidly soft as first love, when I made my appearance during a storm such as was raging (I added one or two feeble squeaks, with some difficulty, to its roar), what was to be expected was, that I should be extinguished altogether, even before it calmed down. People didn't like the idea of my going without something in the shape of a name—without some little vestige of Christianity of some kind—out of this world, which is a place whence we *do* carry away even less than we bring into it with us. But the grand difficulty experienced was that of *standing* godfather, in a rolling, plunging vessel, which pitched everything and everybody higgledy-piggledy that wasn't made fast. The chaplain was (luckily)

lying in a hammock, and he baptized down out of thence. My godfather was the boatswain, who held me for five whole minutes; but inasmuch as he couldn't, without help, stand steady enough to enable the chaplain to touch my brow with the water without missing me, he was held by the barber's mate, who was made fast to a marine, who was made fast to a boatswain's mate, who was made fast to the master-at-arms, who sat upon the knee of an old bluejacket, who held on to him like grim death.

"However, neither the ship nor the child (as I afterwards ascertained) came to any detriment; but you all see, do you not, that, hard as it is for any one amid the storms of life, to become, and continue, a Christian, or to get a name—be it in a directory, in a literary gazette, in a herald's college, or upon a medal—yet there are few who have had the same difficulty as I have had in acquiring the mere *first elements* of a name—the groundwork, the binomial root, of a Christian name, whereon, at a subsequent period, the other *great* name might be engrafted—and to get hold of a faint smattering of Christianity, as much as a catechumen and candidate as yet in a speechless and sucking condition might be capable of. There is but one thing more difficult to make; the greatest princes and heroes can only do it once in their lives—the mightiest geniuses—even the three electors of the Church, the Emperor of Germany himself, with all their united efforts, can't do more, were they to sit for years, stamping in the mint with all the latest improvements in coining machinery."

The whole of the company entreated him to explain what this was that was so hard to frame.

"'Tis a crown prince," he answered, quietly; "even a reigning sovereign finds it no easy matter to produce an appanaged prince—but, let him try as he will, even in the best days of his life, he can never produce more than one specimen of a crown prince; for a Seminarist of that sort is none of your accessory-works, but the prime mover, the regulator, the striking and driving-wheel of the whole nation. On the other hand, gentry, counts, barons, chamberlains, staff-officers, and above all, common people and subjects of the altogether every-day sort—to be brief, a scurvy crew of that description—a *generatio æquivoca*—can be brought into being by a prince with such wonderful ease that he creates these *lusus naturæ* and virgin swarms, or *protoplasmata*, in considerable numbers even in his earlier days, although in riper years he may not manage to turn out an heir to his throne. Yet, after so much preliminary drill, so many trial-shots, one would have taken one's oath the other way!"

END OF LEIBGEBER'S TABLE-TALK.

In the afternoon they paid a visit to that verdant, pleasure place, the Hermitage, and the alley leading thither seemed to their happy hearts to be a path cut through some beauteous grove of gladness. That young bird of passage, Spring, was encamped all over the plain around, her unladen floral treasures scattered about the meadows, and floating down the streams, while the birds were drawn up into air upon long sunbeams, and the world of winged creatures hovered all about in intoxication of bliss amid the exquisite scents shed abroad by kind Nature.

Leibgeber determined to pour out his heart and his secret at the Hermitage that day, and (by way of preliminary) a bottle of wine or so to begin with.

He begged and constrained Siebenkæs first of all to deliver a diary-lecture concerning his adventures by land and by water up to the present time. Firmian complied, but with discretion. Over his stomach's barren year, over his hard times,

over the (metaphorical) winter of his life (upon whose snow he had had to make his nest, icebird-like), and over all the bitter northerly wind, which drives a man to BURY himself in the earth (as soldiers do)—over all these he passed lightly and quickly. I myself must approve of him for so doing; firstly, because a man would be none who should shed a bigger tear over wounds of poverty than a young lady drops at the piercing of her ears, for in both cases the wounds become points of suspension for jewels; secondly, because Siebenkæs would not cause his friend the slightest pain on the score of their change of names, the main source of all his hunger-springs. However, his friend knew, and sympathised with him sufficiently to consider that his pale, faded face and his sunken eyes constituted a sufficient almanac month-emblem of his frost-month or winter-picture of the snowed-up tracts of his life-road.

But when Siebenkæs came to speak of the deep and secret wounds of his soul, it was all he could do to keep back the drops of blood-water which pressed to his eyes; I mean the subject of Lenette's hatred and love. But while he drew a very indulgent picture of her little love for him, and her great love for Stiefel, he used much brighter colours for the historical piece which he painted of her admirable behaviour to the Venner, and of that gentleman's wickedness in general.

"As soon as you have done," said Leibgeber, "you must allow yourself to be informed that women are not *fallen* angels, but FALLING ones. By all the heavens! while we stand patient, like sheep being shorn, they stick the shears oftener into our skins than into our wool. I should think of the fair sex if I were to cross the bridge of St. Angelo at Rome, for there are twelve statues of angels there, holding the implements of the Passion, each a different one; one has the nails, another the reed, another the dice, and similarly each woman has a peculiar torture-instrument of her own to apply to us poor lambs. Whom, think you, for instance now, is the Palladium of yesterday, your unknown beauty, going to tether to her bed-post with the nose-ring of a wedding-ring? But I must tell you about her. She is altogether glorious: she is poetic; full of romantic, enthusiastic admiration for the British, and for intellectual people in general (consequently for me), and lives with an aristocratic English lady, a sort of companion to Lady Craven and the Margrave at Fantaisie yonder. She has nothing, and accepts nothing; is poor and proud, daring to rashness, and pure as the day; and she signs herself '*Nathalie Aquiliana*.' Do you know who's going to be her husband? A horrible, burnt-out, used-up wretch—a feeble, puny creature, whose egg-shell was chipped a week or two before its time, and who now goes cheeping about our toes like a chicken with the pip; a fellow who copies Heliogabalus (who put on a new ring every day) in the matter of wedding-rings; a hop-o'-my-thumb whom I could sneeze over the North Pole (and I should like very much to do it), and whom I have the less need to give you any description of, inasmuch as you have just given *me* one of him yourself: when I tell you his name, you will see that you know him pretty well. This magnificent creature is going to be married to the Venner Rosa von Meyern!"

Firmian fell, not *from* the clouds, but right *into* them. To make a long tale short, this Nathalie is the Heimlicher's niece, of whom Leibgeber wrote some account in our first volume. "But, listen," continued Leibgeber, "I will let myself be hewn and hacked into crumbs smaller than those of Poland—into clippings not big enough to cover a Hebrew vowel—if this affair comes to anything; for I am going to put a stop to it."

Since Leibgeber (as we know) was in the habit of talking to the lady every day (his spotless soul and his bold mind having unspeakable attractions for her), all he had to do in order to break the marriage off, was simply to repeat to her what Siebenkæs had told him concerning her bridegroom elect. It was his intimacy with her, and his

resemblance to Siebenkæs which had led to her mistaking Firmian for him on the evening of his arrival.

The majority of my readers will urge against me and Leibgeber the same objection which Siebenkæs brought forward—that, Nathalie's love and marriage for money were quite out of harmony with her character, and her disregard for riches. But, in one word, all she had ever as yet seen of that gaudy flycatcher, Mr. Rosa, was his Esau's hand, that, is to say, his writing, *i. e*. his Jacob's voice; he had only written her a few irreprehensible, sentimental letters of assurance (pin-papers, stuck full of Cupid's darts and stitching-needles), and so given guarantee of the *documentary* nobility of his heart.... The Heimlicher, moreover, had written to his niece, saying, on St. Pancrasius' day (May 12th, that is in four days' time), the Venner would come and present himself, and if she refused him, let her never call herself his niece again, and starve in her native village for all he cared.

But, speaking as a man of honour, I really have never had above three of Rosa's letters in my hands for two or three minutes, and in my pocket for about an hour; and they were really not so very bad—far more moral than their author.

Just as Leibgeber said he would assume the office of consistory, and divorce Nathalie from Rosa before their marriage, she came driving up, with one or two lady friends, and got out of the carriage; but instead of going with them to where the company were assembling, she went away alone, by a solitary side walk, to the so-called Temple. In her haste she had not noticed her friend Leibgeber sitting opposite the stables. I ought to explain here that when the Bayreuthians go to the Hermitage they have been in the habit, ever since the days of the Margrave, of sitting in a little wood, all breezes and cool shade, in front of the extensive farm-buildings and stables, but having the loveliest of prospects just at their backs, which they could easily substitute for the blank wall upon which they feast their gaze, by merely getting up and going a little way out of the wood on either side.

Leibgeber told Siebenkæs he could take him to her in a moment, as she would be sure to sit down in the temple (as she usually did) to enjoy the enchanting view of the city towers and the hills, as they lay in the light of the evening sun beyond the shrubberies. He added that, unfortunately, she cared too little about appearances; and *would* go to the summer-house all by herself, greatly to the distress of the English lady, who, after the manner of her countrywomen, didn't like going anywhere alone, and wouldn't trust herself to go near even a gentleman's clothes cupboard without an Insurance Company and Bible Society of women with her to protect her. He said he had it on good authority that a British lady never permitted the *idea* of a *man* to enter her head without at once surrounding it with the number of ideas of *women*, necessary to bridle and restrain him, should he begin behaving (in the four chambers of her brain) with that amount of freedom which he might employ if *at home* there.

They found Nathalie in the open temple, with some papers in her hand. "I bring you our author of the 'Selections from the Devil's Papers,'" said Leibgeber, "which I see you are just reading; will you allow me to introduce him to you?" After a passing blush at having mistaken Siebenkæs for Leibgeber, in Fantaisie, she said to him, very kindly and pleasantly, "It would take very little to make me mistake you for your friend again, Mr. Siebenkæs; and you seem almost exactly alike in mind, as well as in body. Your satire is often exactly like his; it is only your graver 'Appendices' which I

was just reading, and which I like very much, that seem to me as if they hadn't been written by him."

I have not at present time to make—(for Leibgeber's unauthorized communication to one friend of the papers of another)—excuses occupying long pages of print to readers who may insist upon extreme delicacy in matters of this description. Suffice it to say that Leibgeber took it for granted that every one who liked *him* would join with him in liking his friends, and that Siebenkæs (and even Nathalie) would see nothing in his unhesitatingly communicating these papers, but a mere passing on of a friendly circular letter, pre-supposing, as he did, the existence between them of a triple elective affinity.

Nathalie scanned the pair—particularly Leibgeber, whose big dog she was stroking—with a kindly and observant look of comparison, as if she were trying to find out dissimilarities between them; for, in fact, Siebenkæs seemed to her to be scarcely as like his friend as she had thought. He was taller and slighter, and younger in the face; but this was because Leibgeber, whose shoulders and chest were more strongly built, bent his strange, earnest face more forward when he talked, as if he were speaking into the earth. He himself said he never *had* looked really young, not even at his baptism—as his baptismal certificate would prove—and wasn't likely to grow much younger now till he arrived at his second childhood. But when Leibgeber straightened his back somewhat, and Siebenkæs bent his a little, they looked very much like one another; however, this is more a hint for the drawer-up of their passports than anything else.

Let us felicitate the Kuhschnappel lawyer on this opportunity of enjoying a few minutes' conversation with a lady of position, and of such many-sided cultivation as even to be capable of appreciating satires. All *he* wished was that a phœnix of this sort—such as, hitherto, he had only seen a pinch or so of the ashes of in actual life, or a phœnix-feather or two preserved in a book—might not take wing and disappear *instanter*; but that he might be lucky enough to listen to a long talk between her and Leibgeber, as well as help to spin it out himself. But suddenly her Bayreuth friends came hurrying up to say that the fountains were just going to play, and there wasn't a moment to be lost. The whole party, therefore, went towards the waterworks, Siebenkæs' whole care being to keep as close as he could to the noblest of the spectatresses.

They stood by the basin, and looked at the beautiful water artifices, which, no doubt, have long since played before the reader, either on the spot, or in the pages of the various writers of travels, who have expressed themselves on the subject of them at sufficient length, and in adequate terms of laudation. All kinds of mythologic demigod-ical demibeasts spouted forth streams; and from out this world, peopled with water-gods, there spouted a crystal forest, whose descending branches, liana-like, took root again in the earth. They enjoyed for a long while the sight of this talkative, intercommingling water-world. At length the fluttering, ever-growing water-forms sank down and died; the transparent lily-stems grew shorter and shorter, as they watched them. "Why is it, I wonder?" said Nathalie to Siebenkæs, "that a waterfall lifts up one's heart; but this dying-down of these springing jets, this visible sinking away of these grand streaming beams of water, always makes me sad and anxious? We never see any such falling in of high things in real life."

Siebenkæs was thinking out the apt and comprehensive reply to this true and just expression of Nathalie's feeling, when all at once she jumped into the water to rescue,

with as little delay as possible, a child who had fallen in, a few steps away from her; for the water was there about waist-deep. Before the men who were present had so much as *thought about* it, she had *done* it; and she was right, for in this case rapidity without reflection was the good and true thing. She lifted the child out, and gave it to the women; but Siebenkæs and Leibgeber took her hands, and lightly raised the fiery creature (all blushes, of body and of soul) on to the bank. "What does it matter?" she said, with a smile, to the alarmed Siebenkæs, "I shall be none the worse," and hurried away with her friends (who were all shocked into speechlessness), having first begged Leibgeber to come next evening, with his friend, to Fantaisie. "That of course I shall do," he said; "but first of all, I am coming to see you by myself early in the morning."

The crying need of our two friends was now to be alone with one another. Leibgeber, under the new excitement, could scarce wait to attain the birch wood, where he meant to continue their previous conversation regarding Siebenkæs' domestic and conjugal affairs. With respect to Nathalie, he briefly pointed out to his astonished friend that what so much delighted him in her was just the unhesitating, downright straightforwardness which marked all her thoughts and actions, and her manly cheerfulness, athwart which the world, and poverty, and chances and accidents of every kind merely passed floating away, like light, shining summer clouds, never darkening her day. "Now as regards you and your Lenette," he went on (when they reached the solitude of the little wood), as quietly as if he had been talking continuously up to that instant, "if I were in your place, I should take an alterative, and get rid of the hard gall-stone of matrimony for good and all. You will never really be able to bear the pain of the bonds of wedlock, though you scrape and scratch away at them for years to come with all your finest hair-saws and bone-saws. The Divorce Court will give *one* grand cut and tear—and there you are, free of one another for ever and ever."

The idea of a divorce terrified Siebenkæs, although he saw very clearly that it was the only possible breaking-point for the storm-clouds of his life. He was far from grudging to Lenette either her freedom, or the marriage with Stiefel, which would infallibly result; but he felt quite sure that, however much she might wish for it, she never would consent to an enforced separation, on account of her strong regard for appearances,—also that on their road to this parting both she and he would have to pass many a bitter hour of heart-strain and nerve-fever,—and that they could hardly afford to pay for a betrothal, much less for a divorce.

It was likewise an accessory circumstance, that it was more than he could bear to think of the sight of the poor innocent soul, who had shivered at his side through so many a cold storm of life, going away for ever from his home, and from his arms—ay, and with *that handkerchief* in her hand, too!

All these considerations, with many stronger, and many weaker, he laid before his friend, finishing up with this final one: "I assure you, moreover, that if she went away from me, tag and baggage, and left me by myself in that empty room (as in a grave), and in all the blank, cleared-out spaces, where, when all's said and done, we have sat together through so many kindly happy hours, and seen the flowers growing green about us—she never could pass by my window (while she bore my name, at all events, though no longer mine), but something within me would bid me throw myself down, and dash myself in pieces at her feet. Would it not be ten times better," he continued in an altered tone, "to wait till I fall down upstairs in the room (or what does my giddiness mean), and be taken out of the window, and out of the world, in a better

fashion? Friend Death would take his long erasing knife, and scrape my name (and other blots into the bargain) out of her marriage-lines."

Contrary to all expectation, this seemed to make Leibgeber merrier and livelier than ever. "Do so!" he said; "it's the very thing! Die by all means! The funeral expenses can't possibly come to anything approaching the costs of the other kind of separation; and besides, you belong to the Burial Society." Siebenkæs stared at him in astonishment.

He went on in a tone of the utmost indifference: "Only I must tell you it will do neither of us much good, if you dawdle a long time at your saddling and bridling, and take a year or two about your dying. I should think it much more to the purpose were you to be off to Kuhschnappel as soon as ever you can, take to your sick-bed and death-bed directly you get there; and die as quickly as ever you can manage it. And I'll give you my reasons. For one thing your Lenette's year of mourning would be out just before Advent, so that she would require no dispensation, if she wanted to marry Peltzstiefel before Christmas. It would suit me very well, too, for I could then disappear in the crowd, and I shouldn't see you again for some considerable time to come. Besides, it is anything but a matter of indifference to yourself, for of course the sooner you're appointed Inspector the better."

"This is the very first of your jokes, dear old Henry," said Siebenkæs, "of which I don't understand one single word."

Leibgeber, with a disturbed countenance, whereon a whole history of the world was legible, and which indicated, as well as gave rise to, the greatest possible anticipation of something of immense importance to come, pulled a letter from his pocket and handed it to Siebenkæs in silence. It was a letter of appointment by the Count von Vaduz, constituting Leibgeber Inspector of the Chief Bailiwick of Vaduz. He next handed him a letter in the count's handwriting. While Firmian was reading the letter, Leibgeber brought out his pocket-diary, and calmly muttered to himself, "From the quarter-day after Whitsunday, it says, does it not? to the time when I am to enter upon my office; that is to say, from to-day—St. Stanislaus' Day. Ah! only think of that—how odd it seems—from St. Stanislaus' day one, two, three, four—*four* weeks and a half."

Firmian, much pleased, was handing him back the letter, but he wouldn't take it, but pressed it back to him, saying, "I read it long ago, long before *you* did. Put it in your pocket."

And here Heinrich, in a burst of solemn, impassioned, humoristic enthusiasm, knelt down in the middle of a long narrow path, which looked between the trees of the thick grove like some subterranean passage (the weathercock of the distant steeple ended off the perspective of it as if with a turnstile)—knelt down facing the west, and gazed through the long green hollow way upon the evening sun, sinking earthward like some brilliant meteor, its broad beams darting down upon the long green path, like forest-water gilt by the spring; he gazed fixedly at it, and his eyes all blinded (and lighted up) by its sheen, he began to speak as follows:—

"If there be a good spirit near me, or a guardian angel of mine or of his, or if *thy* spirit surviveth still thine ashes, oh! my old, *kind*, loving father, so deep in thy grave, then draw near, oh! thou dim and ancient shade, and grant to thy stupid, silly son (still limping about here in this fluttering, ragged shirt of a body) this one, one favour, the first and the last, and enter into Firmian's heart, and (while giving it a good sound shaking) address it as follows: 'Die, Firmian, for my son's sake, though it be but in

jest and in appearance only. Throw away your own name, go in his (which was yours before) to Vaduz as Inspector, and give yourself out to be him. My poor son here (like that *Joujou de Normandie* whereon he is sticking, which circles round the sun upon strings of sunbeams) would fain go whirling about *upon* said Joujou himself for a little while longer. Before all you parrots the ring of eternity is still hanging, and you can hop on to it and rock upon it if you will. But he does not see the ring; don't deprive the poor Poll-parrot of the pleasure of hopping about on the perch of this earth till, when he has wound his life's thread some sixty times about its reels, the reel gives a ring and a snap, the thread breaks, and all his fun is over and done!' Oh! kind spirit of my father, stir up my friend's heart this day, and guide his tongue, that it may not say 'No,' when I ask him, 'Will you do all this.'" Blinded by the evening sun, he felt for Firmian's hand, crying, "Where's your hand, dear friend? and do not say 'No.'"

But Firmian, quite carried away by emotion (for this sudden outburst of Leibgeber's long pent-up excitement was most contagious), speechless, and all in tears, like an evening shade, knelt down before his friend and fell on his breast, and said in a low tone (for he could do no otherwise), "I am ready to die for you a thousand deaths, any death you please: only say what death I can die for you. All I ask is, tell me plainly what you would have me do. I swear to you beforehand that I will do whatever you tell me; I swear it by your dear father's soul. I will gladly give my life for you, and you know I have nothing but that to give." Heinrich said, in a most unusually subdued voice, "Let's get away in among the Bayreuthians. I certainly have an attack of hydrothorax this afternoon, or else a hot mineral spring inside my waistcoat; 'pon my word, any ordinary heart ought to have a swimming-belt on, or a scaphander, in a vapour-bath of this kind." But up at the table under the trees, among the people come to keep the Whitsuntide fair, the great holiday and festival of spring—up there among people all happy and enjoying themselves, emotion was easier to conquer. Here Heinrich quickly unrolled the ground-plans and elevations of his castle in the air, the building grants of his Tower of Babel. To the Count von Vaduz (whose ears and heart opened and expanded to him hungrily) he had given his sacred word of honour that he would return to him as Inspector. But his idea was that his dear coadjutor and substitute, *cum spe succedendi*, Firmian, should take his place and personate him: Firmian, who was such a tautology of him in mind and body, that both the count, and the theory of distinctive differences itself, would have been puzzled to tell one of them from the other. Even in the worst of years the Inspectorship brought in an income of 1200 thalers; that is to say, the exact amount of Firmian's whole inheritance (now sealed up with the law's leaden signet); so that when Siebenkæs re-assumed his old name of Leibgeber, he would regain just what he had lost by changing it. "For," said Leibgeber, "now that I have read your 'Devil's Papers,' I can't endure or swallow the notion of your lying fallow any longer in Kuhschnappel; sitting there in solitude, like a pelican (or an unicorn, or an unknown hermit) in the wilderness. Now, will it take you as long to think about the matter as it takes the Chief Clerk of the Chancellery there to shake the ashes out of his pipe, when I tell you that, though *you* are a fellow who could fill any and every office in the world splendidly, there's only one calling I can follow—that of a *Grazioso*; for though I *know* more than most people, I can't put my knowledge to any practical use except satirising, and my language is a parti-coloured *Lingua Franca*, my head a Proteus, and I myself a delightful compilation of the devil and his grandmother. Besides, if I *could* do anything else, I *wouldn't*. What, am I, in the very flower of my days, to stamp and neigh, like a state draught-horse, a government prisoner in the donjon-

keep, the shoeing travis of some miserable office counting-house, with nothing to look at but my saddle and bridle hanging on the stable-wall, and the loveliest Parnassuses and Tempe valleys wooing the free feet of the sons of the Muses just outside! In the very years when my milk of life is inclined to throw out a little cream—(and the years when a fellow sours and turns to curds and whey come on so fast)—shall I go and throw the rennet of an appointment into my morning milk? Now, as for *you*, *you* have a different song to sing altogether; you are half a man of office already, and you are married into the bargain. Ah! it will beat all 'Bremish Contributions to the Pleasures of Wit and Understanding;' it will be a business far beyond every existing comic opera, and every funny novel that ever was written, when I go back to Kuhschnappel with you, and you make your will and depart this life. And then when, after we have paid you the last honours, you jump up again (in a good deal of a hurry) and take yourself off to receive greater honours still; not to enter into the bliss of the departed so much as to become a *bonâ fide* live Inspector; not to appear before a tribunal, but to take your seat upon one yourself. Joke upon joke wherever we turn! I can't quite see *all* the consequences of it yet, or only in a very half-and-half sort of way; the burial club will have to pay your afflicted widow (you can pay them back again when you're in cash). Death will fop off your ring-finger, all swollen with the betrothal ring. Your widow will be able to marry anybody she pleases (yourself if she likes), and so will you."

Here, all of a sudden, Leibgeber slapped his leg forty times running, and cried, "Ey! Ey! Ey! Ey! Ey! I can hardly wait till you're fairly dead and off the hooks; only think of this, your death may make two women widows instead of one. I will persuade Nathalie to insure herself a pension of 200 dollars a year, payable on your death, in the Royal Prussian Provident Widows' Fund[63] (you can pay them it back again as soon as you get your money). When your widow that is to be gives the Venner the sack, *you* must privately provide *her* with a sack of breadfruit. And supposing you really could never pay them back, and were to die in sober earnest, *I* should take care that their treasury was none the worse for it as soon as I was in funds again." For Leibgeber lived in a constant mysterious state of intermittent fever between riches and poverty (which he has never explained), or, to use his own expression, between the inspiration and expiration of that breath of life (Aura Vitalis) called money. Any other but this man, who played his game of life with such a dashing boldness, whose blazing fire for the true, the right, and the unselfish, had gleamed upon the advocate for so many a year as if from a lighthouse-tower, would have startled Siebenkæs, particularly in his capacity of lawyer, or have made him very angry, instead of over-persuading him. But Leibgeber thoroughly saturated him, nay, burnt him through and through with the etherial playfulness of his humour, and hurried him resistlessly on to the commission of a mimic deception, which had no aim of selfish untruthfulness or deceit.

Firmian, however, notwithstanding his intoxication of mind, retained sufficient control over himself to think, at least, of the risk which Leibgeber would run in this transaction. "Suppose," said he, "anybody should come across my dear *real* Heinrich (whose name I steal) in the vicinity of me, a coiner of false names, what then?

"Nobody ever will," said Heinrich, "for as soon as you have re-assumed your own canonical name of Leibgeber, and given up 'Firmian Stanislaus,' which was conferred upon me at such a stormy baptismal font (and Heaven grant you may do so!), I shall, under names altogether unheard of—(perhaps, indeed, that I may have the

[63] It is explained in a long note in the original, that she *could* do this even before being married.

gratification of being able to keep 365 name-days in the course of the year, I shall take every name in the calendar, one after the other)—I shall throw myself off the dry land (under these names or some of them) into the great ocean, and propel myself with my dorsal, ventral, and caudal fins (and any others I may have besides), through the waves and the billows of life towards the thick, muddy sea of death; so that 'twill probably be many a day before we meet again."

He gazed fixedly towards the sun, then sinking in glory beyond Bayreuth; his motionless eyes shone with a moister sheen, and he continued, more slowly, thus: "Firmian, the Almanac says this is St. Stanislaus' Day; it is your name-day, and mine, and the death-day of that wandering, migratory name, because you will have to give it up after your mock death. I, poor devil as I am, would fain be serious to-day—for the first time this many a long year. Go you home, alone, through the village of Johannes; I shall go by the alley; we'll meet again at the inn. By Heaven! everything is so beautiful here, and so rose-coloured, that one would think the Hermitage was a piece of the sun. Don't be very long, though!"

But a sharp pang of pain shot, with swelling folds, athwart Heinrich's face, and he averted that image of sorrow and his blinded eyes—(which were full of radiance, and of water, too)—and marched rapidly off past the spectators, looking as if at something very far away with a face of apparent attention.

Firmian, alone, with tearful eyes, fronted the gentle sunlight dissolving into varied tints over the face of the green-hued world. Close beneath the sun-fire the deep gold-mine of an evening cloud was falling in drops upon the hill-tops which lay under it; the wandering shifting gold of the evening sky lay, all transparently, upon the yellow-green buds and red and white hill-tops, whilst a great, grand, immeasurable smoke, as if of an altar, cast a strange, magic reflection—all shifting, distant, translucent hues—athwart the hills. The hills and the happy earth, reflecting the sun as it sank, seemed to be receiving him in their arms, and taking him into their embrace. But at the moment when the sun dipped wholly beneath the earth, there came (as it were) the angel of a higher light into this gleaming world (which seemed, to Firmian's tearful eyes, to tremble like some flickering fiery meteor of the air); this angel advanced, flashing like day, into the midst of the night-torch-dance of the living, who, at his coming, turned pale, and halted still. But, as Firmian dried his eyes, the sun set, the earth grew stiller and paler yet, and night, dewy and wintry, came forth from the woods.

But that melted heart of his longed for its fellows, and for all whom it knew and loved; it throbbed insatiate in this lonely prison-cell, our life; it yearned to love all humanity. Ah! the soul which has had to give up much, or has lost much, is too, too wretched on such an evening as this.

In a blissful, tranced reverie, Firmian went his way through the blossomy fragrance, among the American flowers which open to the sky of *our* night, through the closed meadows (chambers of sleep), and under dew-dropping flowers. The moon stood on the pinnacle of the heavenly temple in the midday effulgence which the sun cast up to her from the deeps beneath the earth and her evening-blushes. As Firmian passed through the leaf-hidden village of Johannes (where the houses were all scattered about in a great orchard), the evening bells from the distant hamlets were lulling the slumbering spring to sleep with cradle-songs. Æolian harps, breathed on by zephyrs, seemed to be sending forth their tones from out the evening-red, their melodies flowed softly on into the wide realm of sleep, and there took the form of dreams.

Firmian's heart, moved to its very centre, yearned for love—and for very longing he felt impelled to press his flowers into the white hands of a pretty child in Johannes—just that he might *touch* a human hand.

Go, dear Firmian, with that softened heart of yours, to your deeply-moved friend, whose inner being, too, stretches its arms out towards its likeness; for, to-day, you are nowhere so happy as together. When Firmian entered their common chamber (which, was dark save for the glow of the red twilight in the west), Heinrich turned to meet him; they fell silently into each other's arms and forgot all the tears which burned within them, even those of joy. Their embrace ended, but their silence did not. Heinrich threw himself on his bed, in his clothes, and covered himself up. Firmian sank upon the other bed and wept there, with closed lids. After an hour or two of excited fancy, heated by visions and by pangs of pain, a soft light fell upon his burning eyelids; he opened them, and there hung the pale, glowing moon over against his window. He rose up; but when he saw his friend standing pale and motionless, like a shadow cast by the moon upon the wall—and suddenly there came up from a neighbouring garden (like a nightingale's voice awaking), Rust's melody to the words—

"'Tis not for this earthly land
That Friendship weaves her holy band"—

he fell back under the load of bitter memory; an emotion, too great to bear, a spasm, closed his sad eyes, and he said, in hollow accents,

"Heinrich! oh believe in immortality. How can we love, if we perish!"

"Peace, peace!" said Heinrich. "To-day I am keeping my name-day, and that is enough; for man, certainly, has no birth-day, and, consequently, no death-day either."

Chapter XIII

A CLOCK OF HUMAN BEINGS—A COLD SHOULDER—THE VENNER.

When, in my last chapter, I spoke of ladies who were given to brevity of sleep, and awoke six hours before their sisters at the Antipodes, I think I did well not to cram into my twelfth chapter (among the numerous events so tightly packed there) a model of a certain clock, composed of men and women, which I invented a considerable time ago, but to reserve it for this thirteenth chapter, where I shall now introduce it, and set it up. I believe this humanity clock of mine was suggested to me by Linnæus' flower clock at Upsal, whose wheels were the earth and the sun, and the figures on its dial were flowers, whereof one always awoke and opened later than another. I was living at the time in Scheerau, in the middle of the market-place, and had two rooms. From the *front* room I was able to see all the market-place and the palace buildings, while my back room looked into the Botanical Gardens. Whoever may be living in these rooms now is in possession of a delightful, ready-tuned harmony between the flower clock in the garden and the mankind clock in the market-place.

At 3 A.M. the yellow meadow goatsbeard awakes—also brides—and then, too, the stable-boy begins rattling and feeding the horses under the lodger. At 4 (on Sundays) awake the little hawksweed, and ladies who are going to the Holy Communion (*chiming* clocks these may be called) and the bakers. At 5, kitchen-maids and dairy-maids awake, and buttercups; at 6, sowthistles and cooks. By 7, a good many of the wardrobe women of the palace, and the salad in the Botanical Gardens, are awake, as well as several tradeswomen. At 8, all their daughters and the little yellow mouse-ear—all the colleges and the leaves of flowers, piecrust, and law-papers, are open. At 9, the female aristocracy begin to stir, and the marygolds, to say nothing of a number of young ladies from the country, in town on a visit, glance out of their windows. At 10 and 11, the Court ladies, the whole staff of lords of the bedchamber, the green colewort and pippau of the Alps, and the Princesses' reader, arouse themselves from their morning slumber; and (so brightly is the morning sun breaking in through the many-tinted silken curtains) the whole Court curtails a morsel or so of its sleep. At 12, the Prince; at 1, his consort, and the carnation in her flower-vase—have their eyes open. What gets up at later hours in the afternoon—about 4 o'clock, say—is nothing but the red hawksweed and the night, watchman (a cuckoo clock), and these two are but evening dials, or moon clocks. From the hot eyes of the poor devil who opens them only at 5 (with the jalap), we turn our own away in sorrow; he is a sick man, who has *taken* some of it (the jalap), and only passes from fever-fancies of being griped with hot pincers to genuine, waking spasms.

I could never tell when it was 2 o'clock, because I, and a thousand other stout gentlemen and the yellow mouse-ear, were always asleep at that hour; though I awoke, with the regularity of an accurate repeater, at 3 in the afternoon and at 3 in the morning.

Thus may we human creatures serve as flower clocks to higher intelligences when our petals close upon our last bed, or as sand-glasses when our sands of life are run so far out that they are turned over into the other world. On such occasions, when seventy of man's years have ended and passed away, these higher intelligences may say, "Another hour already! Good God! how time flies!"

And this digression reminds me that it really *does* fly! Firmian and Heinrich lived on in great cheerfulness of spirit towards the jocund morning which was so close at hand, though the former could by no means take root upon any chair or room-floor all the forenoon; for, in his mind's eye, the curtain kept always rising upon the *opera buffa e seria* of his mock death, and displaying its burlesque situations. And at present (as was always the case, indeed) the presence and example of Leibgeber heightened his sense of humour and power of expressing the same. Leibgeber, who had gone through all the stage-business and scene-shifting of the sham death in an exhaustive manner weeks ago (in fancy), was thinking little about it now. The problem occupying him at present was how to extract the wick (that is to say, the bride) out of Rosa's wedding-torch, all painted and moulded as it was. Heinrich was at all times forcible, free, and bold, furious and implacable as regards anything unjust; and his righteous indignation often had much the appearance of vengeance, as here in Rosa's case, and in that of Blaise. Firmian was more kindly; he spared and pardoned, often, indeed, at the (apparent) expense of honour. *He* could never have plucked Nathalie's epistolary lover out of her bleeding heart with Leibgeber's forceps and knife. His friend, at leaving for Fantaisie that day, had to promise the gentlest of behaviour, and, for a time, silence on the subject of the Royal Prussian Widows' Fund. It would, of course, have made a terrific, bleeding wound in Nathalie's feeling of rectitude had the most distant hint been uttered of such a matter as metallic compensation for a spiritual loss such as that involved in her separation on moral grounds from the immoral Venner. She deserved to conquer (and was well able to do so), with the prospect of her victory reducing her to poverty.

Heinrich did not come back till it was somewhat late, and his face was a little troubled, though it was a happy face too. Rosa was discarded, and Nathalie pained. The English lady was at Anspach with Lady Craven, eating her butter—(for she made butter as well as books). When he had read out to Nathalie all that was written on Rosa's black board and sin-register (which he did gravely, but perhaps louder than was necessary, and with scrupulous truth), she rose up with that grand grace which is a characteristic of enthusiasm of self-sacrifice: "If you are yourself deceived in this as little as you are capable of deceiving, and if I may believe your friend as I do you, I give you my sacred word that I will not allow myself to be persuaded, or constrained, to anything. But the subject of this conversation will be here himself in a few days, and I owe it to him as well as to my own honour, to hear him, as I have given my letters into his hands. Oh! it is hard to have to speak so coldly!" As the moments passed, the rose red of her cheek paled to rose-white. She leant it on her hand, and as her eyes grew fuller, and tears dropped at last, she said, strongly and firmly, "Be in no anxiety, I shall keep my word; and then, cost what it may, I will tear myself from my friend, and go back to my poor people in Schraplau. I have lived quite long enough in the great world, though not *too* long."

Heinrich's unusual seriousness had overpowered her. Her confidence in his truth was immovable, and that (strange reason!) just because he had never seemed to fall in love with her, or to pass beyond the condition of friendship, and so did not measure her affection by his own. Perhaps she would have been angry with her bridegroom's married attorney (*i. e.* Firmian), had he not had three or four of the best possible excuses; to wit, his general mental resemblance to Leibgeber, and his physiognomical resemblance to him (which his paleness purified and refined at this juncture).

Her yesterday's request to Leibgeber to bring Siebenkæs with him in the evening was now repeated (to the former's joy), though her heart was aching in every corner. But let none take umbrage at her half-mourning for the Venner (now setting and near the horizon), or her erroneous estimate of him; for we all know that women (Heaven bless them!) often think sentiment and integrity, letters and actions, tears and honest warm blood, to be equivalent one to another.

In the afternoon Leibgeber took Siebenkæs to her as a sort of syllogistic figure in support of his argument, or set of *rationes decidendi* (for the Venner was a collection of *rationes dubitandi*). Aquiliana received Siebenkæs with a blush, which came and went in an instant; and then with the least dash of *hauteur* (result of modesty!), yet with all the kindness and good-will which she owed to his interest in her future. She lived in the English lady's rooms. The flowery valley lay without, like a world before its sun. One advantage connected with a rich pleasure-garden of this sort is that a stranger advocate finds that he can attach the floating spider-threads of his talk to the branches of it, until they have been woven into the finished art-work of a glittering web, which can float in the free air. Firmian could never emulate these clever men of the world, who only need a listener to be able to begin spinning a conversation; who, like the tree-frogs, can cling firmly to anything they chance to hop on to, however smooth, and polished it may be; yea, who can even keep afloat in a space devoid of air, and all objects whatever (which a tree-frog cannot). A man of Siebenkæs' free and independent soul cannot, however, long remain embarrassed by his unfamiliarity with his surroundings; he must speedily recover his freedom by virtue of his innate superiority to chance, external circumstances; and his unassumed and unassuming simpleness soon amply compensates for his lack of the great world's artificial and assuming simplicity.

Yesterday he had seen this Nathalie in the happy exercise and enjoyment of all her powers, and of nature and friendship, smiling and enchanting, and crowning the delightful evening with an act of brave self-devotion. Alas! how little remained to-day of all these joys, so tender and so bright. In no hour is a lovely face lovelier than at that immediately succeeding the bitter one, when tears for the loss of a heart have passed over it; for the sight of the loveliness in its sorrow, during that hour itself, would be too sad to bear. For this beautiful creature, who hid the sacrificial knife deep in her heart, where it had been plunged, and gladly let it smart there, that but the wound's bleeding might be delayed, Siebenkæs would gladly have died—in a way more serious than had been intended—could it have been of any service to her. Is it a thing so strange that the bond between them grew closer and stronger as the sand run down in the hourglass, when we consider that, swayed by an unwonted three-sided seriousness (for even Leibgeber was overtaken by this feeling), their hearts, at sight of the gala-beauty of the spring, were filled with tender, longing wishes?—that Siebenkæs, with his pale face, worn, and stamped with all the traces and marks and signs of recent, bygone, trouble and pain, shone, this day, with a soft and pleasing sheen, as of evening sunlight, on her sight, all weakened by her tears?—that she thought with pleasure on his (rather singular) merit of having, at all events, embittered some of her faithless suitor's infidelities—and that every note he touched was in the minor mode of his tender nature, because he was seeking to atone for, and cast into shade, the circumstance that it had fallen to his lot to lay waste at one fell stroke so many of this innocent, unknown creature's hopes and joys—that even his greater share of modest, respectful reserve, became him, and set him off by contrast with his counterpart, the bolder and more outspoken Heinrich? With all these charms of accidental circumstance (which win the female world far sooner than

charms of a bodily kind), Firmian was endowed in Nathalie's eyes. In *his* eyes she had attractions greater still, and altogether new to him: her cultivation and acquirements; her manly enthusiasm, her delicate refinement; her (most flattering) way of treating *him*—(none of her sex had ever before glorified him with anything like it, and this particular species of charm plunges many a man who is unused to female companionship, not only into rapture, but into matrimony),—and (two crowning delights) the facts that the whole affair was fortuitous and out of the common, and that Lenette was the exact antipodes of her in each and every respect.

Alas! poor starved, hungering Firmian. There are always a gallows, and a notice-board marked "No thoroughfare," on the banks of the streamlet of *your* life, even now that it has become a pearl-bearing brook. Your marriage ring must have pinched you a good deal, and felt very tight in a warm, temperature like this, as, indeed *all* rings feel tight in a warm bath, and loose in a cold one.

But either some naiad of a diabolical turn of mind, or some ocean god who loved a jest, took always the greatest delight in perturbing and disturbing the sea of Firmian's life, and stirring up the sand at the bottom of it just when its waters were sparkling and glowing enchantingly with phosphorescent sea creatures, or some electric matter or other, and his ship leaving a long shining wake behind her in it. For just as the glory and the beauty of the garden outside were growing moment by moment, and embarrassment vanishing away with equal rapidity, the painful memory of the late bereavement fading out of remembrance; just when the pianoforte (or, say, the pianissimo fortissimo), and the songs, duets, and trios were being opened and got ready; in fine, just as the honey-cells of their orangery of happiness, their permitted flesh-pots of Egypt, and deep communion cup of love were all ready to their lips, who came with a pop into the room but a certain bluebottle fly on two legs, who had often flown into Firmian's cup of joy before now.

The Venner, Rosa von Meyern, made his appearance on the scene, lovelily attired in saffron silk, to pay his bride his privileged ambassadorial visit.

Never in all his career did this young gentleman arrive otherwise than too soon or too late; just as he was never serious, but either lachrymose or jocular. The three faces were now each a long duodecimo edition of themselves; Leibgeber's was the only one which was not stretched on the wire-drawing press, but it was dyed a fine red by his inborn detestation of fops and maiden-hawks of every kind. Everard had come primed with one idea (taken from Stolberg's 'Homer'), which was, to ask Nathalie, on his entrance, whether she were a goddess or a mortal (in the manner of Homer's heroes), since *he* could only pretend to contend with the latter race. But at sight of the masculine pair whom the Devil levelled at his head like a double-barrelled gun, everything inside it turned to cheese and curd, immobile; *twenty* kisses wouldn't have enabled him to get his great idea a-flow again. It was five days before he got what little there was inside the bones of his head into such a fair way of recovery as to make shift to deliver himself of this idea to a distant relation of my own (how else should I have known anything about it?) in a tolerable degree of preservation. At all times nothing so paralysed him in female society as the presence of a man; he would have stormed an entire convent of women sooner than have laid siege to a single couple of novices (to say nothing of a canoness), had but a single wretched man been alongside them.

A standing troupe of players, such as I now see before my pencil, never performed in Fantaisie. Nathalie was lost in amazement (little polite), and in a quiet comparison of

this original edition with her epistolary ideal. The Venner, who took for granted that the result of her observations was just the opposite of what it really was, would have been delighted had he had it in his power to be a manifest contradiction, an antipodes to himself. I mean, he would fain have shown himself both cold and angry at finding her in the society of this couple, and also confidential and tender, so that this beggarly pair might be filled with envy and vexation at the sight of his harvest and vintage. And inasmuch as he was quite as greatly (only much more agreeably) struck with, and surprised at her appearance, as she with his, and as he had time enough before him for revenge and punishment, he chose rather to adopt the line of bragging and vaunting with the view of seasoning and blessing the visit of these two lawyer fellows with a good spice of envy. Moreover, he had the advantage of them in possessing a light horse-artillery body, and he could *mobilise* his army of physical charms quicker than they could. Siebenkæs was thinking of nothing nearer at hand than—his wife. Before Rosa's arrival he had been browsing on the idea of her as on a meadow of bitter herbs, for the rough, chapped bark of the conjugal hand was by no means capable of touching his self-love with the delicate, etherial, gentle, *snail-antennæ* touch of this unmated beauty's eiderdown fingers. But now the idea of Lenette became a pasture of sweet and succulent verdure; for his jealousy of Rosa (domiciled in two different quarters) was less awakened by Lenette's behaviour to him than by Nathalie's relations with him. The grimness of Heinrich's glances increased amain; they wandered up and down over Rosa's summer hare-skin of yellow silk with a jaundiced glare. In an irritable impulse to be doing something or other, he fumbled in his waistcoat pocket, and got hold of the profile of Herr von Blaise which he had clipped out (as we may remember) on the occasion when he stamped the glass wig to pieces (and with respect to which profile the only thing which had been distressing him for a twelvemonth past was that it was in his pocket, and not affixed to the gallows, where he could have stuck it with a hairpin the evening he went away). He pulled it out, and tousling it between his fingers, he glided nimbly backwards and forwards between Nathalie and Rosa, murmuring to Siebenkæs (with his eyes fixed on the Venner), "À la silhouette."[64]

Everard's self-love divined these flattering (and involuntary) sacrifices of the self-love of the other two, and he went on firing off at the embarrassed girl (with ever-growing superciliousness, directed to Siebenkæs's address) fragments from the story of his travels, messages from his friends, and questions concerning the arrival of his letters. The brethren, Siebenkæs and Leibgeber, sounded a retreat, but did so like true males; for they were the least bit annoyed with poor, innocent Nathalie, just as though she could have marched up to this sponsus and letter bridegroom of hers the moment he came into the room, with a salutation such as, "Sir, you can never be lord of mine, even were you nothing worse than a scoundrel, idiot, fright, prig, man-milliner," &c. But must we not, all of us (for I don't consider myself an exception), smite upon our bony, sinful breasts, and confess that we spit fire the moment modest girls refrain from spitting it instantly at those whom we may have nigrified or excommunicated in their presence; that further we insist upon their discarding wicked squires instantaneously, although they may not be in such a hurry to receive them that they should care as little what forced marches and honourable retreats their cottiers and dependents may have to make, as we fief-holders do ourselves; and that we are offended with them when they have an innocent opportunity of being

[64] The Silhouette took its name from the Controller-General so called. In Paris, an empty, blank physiognomy is called a face "à la silhouette."

false; even when they do not avail themselves of it? May Heaven improve the class of persons of whom I have just been treating.

Firmian and Heinrich roamed for an hour or two about the enchanted valley; it was full of magic flutes, magic zithers, and magic mirrors. But they had neither ears nor eyes. What they found to say concerning events heated their heads to the temperature of balloon furnaces, and Leibgeber blew a fanfare of mere satiric insults out of the reverse end of Fame's trumpet at every female Bayreuthian he met taking her evening walk. He announced it as his opinion that women were the unsafest ships in winch a man could embark on the great open ocean of life—slaveships in fact, or bucentaurs (or shuttles[65] which the Devil weaves his nets and gins with)—and the more so that, like other ships of war, they are so often and so scrupulously washed, sheathed on the outside with poisonous copper, and have about the same amount of bunting and tarry tackle (ribbons) flying about them. Heinrich had gone to Nathalie's, indulging the (highly improbable) anticipation that she would at once unhesitatingly accept and act upon his friend's deposition of evidence in his capacity of an eye- and ear-witness concerning Rosa's canonical *impedimenta* (or ecclesiastical marriage disabilities), and it was his disappointment on this score which was so gnawing upon his mind.

But just as Firmian was discussing and expatiating upon the Venner's lisping and indistinct mode of speaking (his words seemed to curl about the top of his tongue with no power of expression in them), Heinrich cried out, "Hallo! there the dirt-fly goes!" It was the Venner, floundering as a pike does in the net he has been brought to market in. As the woodpecker (naturalists call most gaudy-plumaged birds woodpeckers) winged his flight closer by them, they saw, as he passed them, that his face was a-glow with anger. Doubtless the cement which had attached him to Nathalie was broken and dissolved.

The two friends waited a little while longer in the shady walk, hoping that they might meet her; but at length they made their way back to town, meeting, as they went, a maid of hers, who was taking the following letter to Leibgeber:—

"You and your friend were, alas! quite right, and all is now at an end. Please to let me rest, and reflect for a time in solitude over the ruins of my little future. When people's lips are wounded and stitched, they are not allowed to talk, although it is not my lips but my heart that bleeds, and that for your sex. Ah! I blush when I think of all the letters I have written, which it has been such happiness to me to write—and, alas! under such a delusion!—yet I have no real reason to do so after all. You have yourself said that innocent pleasures should give us as little cause to be ashamed as blackberries, although, when the enjoyment is past, there may be a black stain on the lips. But, at all events, I thank you from my heart. As I must have been disenchanted one day, it was kind that it was not done by the wicked sorcerer himself, but by you and your most honest and truthful friend, to whom please to offer my very kind regards and remembrances.

"Yours,

"A. Nathalie."

Heinrich had expected the letter to be one of invitation, "for" (said he) "her empty heart must feel a cold void, like a finger with its nail cut too short." Firmian, whom matrimony had taught, and furnished with barometer scales and meteorological

[65] Which are called "weavers' ships" in German.

tables for observance of women, knew enough to be of opinion that a woman must, in the very hour when she had dismissed one lover (on purely moral grounds) be a little over-cool towards the person who has persuaded her thereto, even were he her *second* lover. And (I take leave here to add, myself) for the very same reasons she will exceed in warmth towards this second immediately afterwards.

"Ah! poor Nathalie!" Firmian wished unceasingly "May the flowers and blossoms be court-plaister for the wounds of your heart; may the soft æther of spring be a milk-cure for your oppressed panting bosom." It seemed unspeakably sad to him that an innocent creature like this should be thus tried and punished, as though she were guilty, and be compelled to draw the purifying air of her life from poison plants, and not from wholesome ones.

The next day all Siebenkæs did was to write a letter (in which he signed himself Leibgeber), informing the Count von Vaduz that he was unwell and as grey and yellow as a Swiss cheese. Heinrich had left him no peace until he did this. "The count," said he, "is accustomed, in my person, to a fine, blooming, sturdy Inspector; but, if he is properly prepared for the thing by a letter, he will really believe you to be me. Luckily we are neither of us men who would be asked to unbutton in any custom-house; nobody would fancy there was anything inside *our* waistcoats but skin and bone."[66]

On the Thursday Siebenkæs, standing at the hotel-door, saw the Venner, in an Electoral habit, with a full-dress parade head, and a whole Barth's vineyard in his face, driving to the Hermitage between two young ladies. When he carried this news upstairs, Leibgeber swore—(and also cursed)—to the effect that the scoundrel wasn't worthy of the society of any young lady, unless her head was a Golgotha and her heart a *gorge* (or *cul*) *de Paris*. He was quite bent on going to see Nathalie then and there, and telling her the news, but Firmian prevented him by main force.

On the Friday she herself wrote to Heinrich as follows:—

"I have mustered up courage to revoke my prohibition, and beg that you and your friend will come to-morrow to beautiful Fantaisie, when (it being Saturday) it will lie depopulated. I keep my arms about Nature and Friendship; there is no room in them for anything besides. Do you know, I dreamt last night that I saw you both in one coffin there was a white butterfly fluttering above you, and it grew larger and larger till its wings were like great white shrouds; and then it covered you both over and hid you with them, and there was no motion beneath. My dear, dear friend arrives the day after to-morrow—and to-morrow, *you*. And then, I must bid you all adieu.

"N. A."

The Saturday in question occupies the whole of the next chapter, and I can form some sort of idea of the reader's eagerness to be at it from *my own*; and all the better, seeing that *I* have read (to say nothing about writing) the said chapter already, which he has not.

[66] In Engelhardszell, for instance, the Austrian custom-house officers unbutton paunches to see whether they be fat—or cloth.

Chapter XIV

A LOVER'S DISMISSAL—FANTAISIE—THE CHILD WITH THE BOUQUET—THE EDEN OF THE NIGHT, AND THE ANGEL AT THE GATE OF PARADISE.

It was not the deeper blue of the sky (which, on the Saturday, was as rich and pure as in winter, or by night)—nor the thought of actually standing in the very presence of the sorrowing soul whom he had driven from Paradise with the Sodom apple of the serpent (Venner)—nor his own feeble health—nor memories of his own domestic life;—it was none of these matters taken singly, but the combination of all these semitones and minor intervals together which attuned our Firmian to a melting *maestoso*, and gave to his looks and thoughts (for his afternoon visit) much such a kind and degree of tenderness as he expected he should find in Nathalie's.

What he did find was precisely the reverse. In and about Nathalie there reigned such a noble *cold*, serene gladsomeness as you may find upon the loftiest mountain peaks; the cloud and the storm are *beneath*, while around there rests a purer, colder air, but a deeper blue, too, and a paler sunlight.

It cannot, of course, surprise me that you are on the tenter-hooks of anxiety to hear the account she is going to give of her rupture with Everard. But her account of it was so brief—it might have been written round a Prussian dollar—so that I must supplement it with mine, which I have taken from Rosa's own written record of it. The fact is, the Venner, five years afterwards, wrote a very passable novel (if we may credit the praise bestowed upon it in the 'Universal German Library'), into which he artfully built the whole of the rupture with Nathalie—(that severance between soul and body); at all events, this is the conclusion to which sundry hints of Nathalie's would point us. The said novel, accordingly, is my fountain of Vaucluse. Emasculate intelligences, such as Rosa's, can only reproduce *experiences*; their poetic *fœtuses* are nothing but adopted children of the actual.

To be brief, what took place was as follows. Scarce were Firmian and Heinrich gone out among the trees, when the Venner brought up his reserve of vengeance, and asked Nathalie, in a tetchy manner, how it was that she could tolerate visitors of such a poor and plebeian sort. The haste and the coldness of the departed pair had already set Nathalie on fire, and this address made her blaze forth in a flame upon her yellow-silken questioner. "A question such as that," she answered, "is very little short of an insult;" and she immediately added one of her own—for she was too warm and too proud to dissemble in the slightest, or to hold other than the straightest course with him. "You call at Mr. Siebenkæs's pretty often yourself, do you not?" "Oh!" said this empty braggart, "I call on his *wife* (to speak the simple truth); *he* is merely my pretext." "Really," said she, making her syllables last as long as her look of scorn. Meyern, amazed at this behaviour, so very unlike the tone of the antecedent epistolary correspondence (he gave the twin cronies the credit of it)—Meyern, whom her beauty, his own money, and her poverty and dependence upon Blaise (to say nothing of his position of betrothed bridegroom), had now inspired with the utmost audacity—Meyern, this brave and courageous lion, undertook, without a moment's hesitation, a task which nobody else would have ventured upon, namely, that of humiliating and bringing to her proper senses this irate Aphrodite, by reading to her the catalogue of his Cicisbean appointments, and, in general terms, unfolding before her the long perspective of the hundreds of gynæcœa and jointure-houses open to

him. “It is such an easy matter to worship false goddesses and open their temple doors, that I am charmed to be restored to the worship of the true feminine godhead, through my Babylonish captivity to you.”

All her crushed heart sighed forth, “Ah! then it is all true—he is a wicked wretch, and I am miserable indeed.” But she kept silence, outwardly, and went and looked out of the window, in anger. Her soul was one of those whose seats are the knight’s upper dais of womankind; it was ever eager to do rare, heroic acts of self-devotion and self-sacrifice; indeed, a fondness for remarkable and out-of-the-way greatness was the only littleness about it. And now, when the Venner tried to make amends for his braggadocio by a sudden jump into a light and sportive tone (a tone which, in minor warfares with the ordinary fair sex, heals breaches much quicker and better than a more serious one)—and proposed a walk in the pretty park to her, as being a spot better adapted for a reconciliation—this noble soul of hers spread wide its pure white pinions and soared away from out the foul heart of this crooked pike with his silver scales for ever! And she drew near to him and said (all a-glow, but dry-eyed wholly), “Mr. von Meyern, I have quite decided—we are parted for ever. We have never known each other, and our acquaintance is at an end. I will send you back your letters to-morrow, and you will have the goodness to return mine to me.” Had he employed a more serious tone, he might have kept hold of this strong soul for some days—perhaps weeks—longer. Without looking at him anymore, she opened a casket and began arranging letters. He tried, in a hundred speeches, to flatter and pacify her; she answered never a word. His heart boiled within him, for he gave the two advocates the blame for all this. At length he thought he would humble this deaf mute (as well as make her alter her determination), by saying, as he now did, “I don’t know what your uncle in Kuhschnappel will say to all this. *He* appears to me to set a much greater value upon my sentiments towards you than you do yourself; indeed, he seems to consider our marriage as essential to your happiness as I think it to mine.” This was a burden heavier than her back, so sore bent down by Fate, could bear. She shut up the casket hurriedly, sat down, and rested her bewildered head upon her trembling arms, shedding burning tears, which her hands strove in vain to hide. A reproach of our poverty uttered by lips we have loved, darts like red-hot iron into the heart, and scorches it dry with fire. Rosa, whose vengeance, now wreaked, gave place to the most eager love, (in hopes that her feelings were of the same selfish type as his own), threw himself on his knees before her, crying, “Oh! forget it all! What are we breaking with one another *for*, if we come really to think about it? Your precious tear-drops wash it all away. I mingle mine with them in rich abundance.”

She arose with haughty port, leaving him on his knees. “My tears,” she said, “have not the smallest reference to anything connected with you. I *am* poor, and I would not be rich. After the base, ignoble insult you have put upon me, you shall not stay and see me weep. Have the goodness to leave the room.” So that he retired; and—when one considers the weight of the sacks he had to carry—sacks of every kind (including one full of muzzles)—he really did it in a surprisingly brisk and lively manner, holding his head pretty high. His command of his temper and his apparent good humour strike one the more (for I may give him what praise he deserves), that he retained them and took them home with him, and this on an afternoon when, with the two finest and longest levers in all his collection he had utterly failed in touching the smallest point in Nathalie’s heart, or the auricles thereof. One of these levers was his old one, which he had tried upon Lenette—that of gradually twisting himself in, corkscrew fashion, in spiral serpentine lines of petty advances, approaches, attentions and illusions; but Nathalie was neither weak nor light enough to be

penetrated thus. The other lever was one from which something might really have *been* expected in the way of effect—though it actually *had* less than even the first. It consisted in showing his old scars (like an old warrior), and rejuvenating them into wounds; in this manner he bared his suffering heart, pierced by so many a false love, and which (like a dollar with a hole in it), had hung as a votive offering upon so many a shrine. His soul put on Court mourning (of sorrow) of all degrees, whole and half, in hopes of being, like a widow, more enchanting in black. The friend of a Leibgeber, however, could be softened by manly sorrows only—the womanly sort could but harden her.

Meanwhile (as we have said), he left, his *fiancée* without any pity for her self-sacrifice indeed, and equally without the slightest indignation at her refusal of him. He merely thought, "She may go to the devil;" and he could scarce sufficiently congratulate himself that he had so easily escaped the incalculable annoyance of having to endure life with a creature of the kind from one year's end to another, and to pay her the necessary respect throughout an infernal, long matrimonial life. On the other hand, his bile was mightily stirred against Leibgeber, but more particularly against Siebenkæs (whom he suspected of being the real judge of his Divorce Court), and he laid the foundation of several gall-stones in his gall-bladder, and of a slight bilious yellow tint in his eyes, with hating the advocate, which he could not do enough.

We return to the Saturday. Nathalie derived her calmness and serenity partly from her own strength of mind, but also in good measure from the pair of horses (and of rose maidens) with whom Rosa had been seen driving to the Hermitage. A woman's jealousy is always a day or two older than her love. Moreover, I know of no excellence, no weakness, shortcoming, virtue, womanliness, *manliness*, in a woman which does not tend rather to enkindle than to appease jealousy.

Not only Siebenkæs, but even Leibgeber (anxious to breathe some warmth upon her freezing soul, all stripped of its warm plumage), was this afternoon serious and cordial, not (as he usually did) dressing his rewards and punishments up in irony. Perhaps, too, her gratifying (and flattering) readiness to obey him tamed him down to some extent. Firmian had, in addition to the reasons above set forth, the more powerful ones—that the English lady was expected home the next day but one, and her coming would put a stop to all this garden pleasure, or interfere with it at all events—that he who knew well, from his own experience, what the wounds of a lost love were, had a boundless compassion for hers, and would gladly have given his own heart's blood to make up for the loss of hers—moreover, accustomed all his life to bare, mean and empty rooms, he felt a keen enjoyment in being in the richly-furnished, bright and tasteful chamber he was now in, and naturally carried over a portion of this to the account of their inhabitant and hermit.

The maid-servant, whom we have seen this week already, came in just then, with tears in her eyes, faltering out that she was going to confession, and hoped she had done nothing to displease her, &c., &c. "Anything to displease me?" cried Nathalie; "most certainly not—and I know I can say the same in your mistress's name;" and went out of the room with her and kissed her, unseen, like some good genius. How beautiful are pity and kindness to distress, in a soul which has just risen up in might to resist oppression.

Leibgeber took a volume of 'Tristram Shandy' from the English lady's library, and lay down with it on the lawn under the nearest tree, with the view of making over to his friend the undivided fruition of this anise, marchpane and honeycomb of an

afternoon of talk, which to him was merely so much every-day household fare. Moreover, all that day when he made any sign of jesting, Nathalie's eyes would implore him, "Please do not, for just this one day. Do not take pains to point out every pock-pit which Fate has left upon my inner soul to him—spare me for this once." And lastly (which was his principal reason), it would be much easier for Firmian to tell this sensitive Nathalie (now upon one-eighth pay) all his project of making her his appanaged widow, his heiress in jest—to tell it to her wrapped in a triple shroud, written in distorted characters.

Siebenkæs looked upon this undertaking as a sort of day's work at fortification making, a journey across the Alps—round the globe—into the grotto of Antiparos, a discovery of the longitude; he had not the slightest notion how even to *begin* to set about it. Indeed, he had previously told Leibgeber that, if his death were but a real one, nobody would be more ready to talk to her about it, but that for a sham death, he really could not sadden her; so that she would have to consent, altogether by some chance, and unconditionally, to become his widow. "And is my death a thing so very improbable after all?" he said. "Of course it is," answered Leibgeber. "If it were not, what would become of our death in jest. The lady will e'en have to make the best of it." It would appear that he dealt with women's hearts in a fashion somewhat colder and harder than Siebenkæs, in whose opinion (hermit connoisseur as he was of rarities in the shape of strong female souls) a delicate, suffering one like this could not be too tenderly treated. However, I do not set up to judge between the two friends.

When Leibgeber had gone out with Yorick, Siebenkæs went and stood before a fresco representing the said Yorick, and poor Maria with her flute and her goat. For the chambers of the great are picture-bibles, and an *orbis pictus*,—they sit, eat and walk in picture exhibitions, which makes it all the harder a matter for them that two, at least, of the greatest expanses in nature—the sky and the sea—cannot be painted over for them. Nathalie went up to him, and at once cried out, "What is there to see in that to-day? Away from it!" She was just as open and unconstrained in her manner with him as he could not manage to be with her. She displayed the warmth and beauty of her soul in that wherein we (unconsciously) un*veil*, or un*mask* (as the case may be), ourselves more completely than in anything—namely, her mode of bestowing praise. The illuminated triumphal arch which she erected over the head of her English lady-friend, elevated her own soul so that she stood at that gate of honour as conqueror, in laurel wreath, and glittering collar of the Order of Goodness and Worth. Her praises were the double chorus and echo of the other's excellence; she was so warm and so earnest! Ah! maidens, fairer are ye a thousand times when ye twine bridal-wreaths and laurel garlands for your companions than when ye plait them crowns of straw, and bend them collars of iron.

She told him how fond she was of British men and women, both in and out of print, although she had never seen any until the previous winter. "Unless," she said, with a smile, "our friend outside may be considered one."

Leibgeber, out on his grass mattress, raised his head and saw the couple looking down at him with faces of regard; and the shimmer of love shone forth in three pairs of eyes. One single moment of time thus clasped three sister souls together in one tender embrace.

The maid coming back from confession about this juncture in her white dress—('twas heavy-wing *cases* rather than light butterfly wings to her)—with a trifle of pretty-

tinted ribbon about it here and there; Firmian looked at this absolved one for a minute or two, and then took up her black and gold hymn-book, which she had laid down in her haste, finding inside it a whole pattern-card of silks, besides peacock's feathers. Nathalie, who saw a satirical expression dawning on his face, drove it away in an instant. "Your sex attaches just as much value to adornment as ours. Look at your Court dresses, the Coronation robes at Frankfort, and uniforms and official costumes of all kinds. Then, the peacock was the bird of the old knights and poets, and if you make vows upon his feathers, or wear garlands of them, *we* may surely wear them, or at all events *mark* (if not reward) songs with them." Every now and then a barely polite expression of astonishment at what she knew escaped the advocate in spite of himself. He turned over the leaves of the festival hymns, and came upon gilt figures of Our Lady, and found a picture wherein were two parti-coloured blotches (supposed to represent two lovers), and a phosphorescent heart, which the male blotch was offering to the female with the words:

"And is to thee my fond love all unknown!
How my heart burns is here full plainly shown"

—the whole surrounded by a tracery of leafwork. Firmian loved family and society miniature pictures when (as in this case) they were exceedingly poor as works of art. Nathalie saw and read this; she took the book in haste, snapped the clasp to, and then, when she had done so, said, "You have no objection, have you?"

Courage towards women is not inborn, but acquired. Firmian had had familiar experience of very few; wherefore this natural awe made him look upon every feminine body—particularly if of any standing in society—as a kind of sacred Ark of the Covenant whereon no finger might be laid; (for though it is proper to rise superior to considerations of rank where men are concerned, it is otherwise with women), and upon every female foot as that on which a Queen of Spain stands, and every female finger as a Franklin point emitting electric sparks. If in love with him, I might have likened her to an electrified person, *feeling* all the sparks and mock pains she emitted. At the same time, nothing could be more natural than that his reverent timidity should diminish as time went on, and that at length, (at a moment when she was looking the other way) he should take courage to deftly snatch hold of the end of one of the ribbons in her hair between his fingers—and she never be aware of it. It may have been by way of preliminary studies towards the execution of this feat that he had previously once or twice tried the effect of taking up into his hands things which had been a good deal in hers—such as her English scissors, a broken pincushion, and a pencil-case.

Taking heart of grace hereupon, he thought he would venture to take up a bunch of wax grapes (which he imagined to be made of stone, like those upon butter-boats). He gripped them, accordingly, in his fist as in a wine-press, crushed two or three of them to pieces, and then proffered as many petitions for mercy and pardon as if he had knocked over and broken the porcelain Pagoda of Nanking. "There's no harm done," she said, laughing. "We all find plenty such berries in life—with fine ripe skins—no intoxicating juice—and as easily broken—or easier."

He was in terrible dread lest this glorious, many-tinted rainbow of happiness of his should melt away into evening dew, and it disconcerted him that he no longer saw Leibgeber reading upon the flowery turf. Outside, the world was brightened into a land of the sun—every tree was a rich, firm-rooted joy-flower—the valley a condensed universe, ringing with music of the spheres. Nevertheless he had not the courage to

proffer his arm to this Venus for a stroll through the sun, *i. e.* the sunny Fantaisie; the Venner's fate, and the fact that there was a late harvest of a few visitors still walking about the gardens, rendered him bashful and mute. Of a sudden Leibgeber knocked at the window with the agate-head of his stick, crying, "Come over to dinner. My stick-head is the Vienna lantern.[67] We are sure not to get home before midnight." He had ordered a dinner in the café. Presently he cried out, "There is a pretty child here asking for you." Siebenkæs hurried out, and found it was the very child into whose hand he had pressed his flowers on the evening when, after the great feast-eve at the Hermitage, he had been soaring along on the wings of fancy through the village of Johannis. "Where is your wife, sir?" asked the child; "the lady who took me out of the water the day before yesterday? I have some beautiful flowers here that my godpapa sent me to give her. Mother will come and give her best thanks, too, as soon as she can, but just now she's in bed very unwell."

Nathalie, who had heard what the child said, came down, and said, with a blush, "Is it I, darling? Give me your flowers, then." The child, recognising her, kissed her hand, the hem of her dress, and, lastly, her lips, and would have recommenced this round of kisses, when Nathalie, in turning the flowers over, came upon three silken counterfeits amidst its living forget-me-nots and red and white roses. To Nathalie's questions as to whence these costly flowers came, the child answered, "Give me a kreuzer or two, and I'll tell you." This was done, and she added, "I got them from my godpapa, and he is a very, very grand gentleman;" then ran away among the bushes.

This bouquet was a veritable Turkish Selam-and-Flower riddle to them all. Leibgeber accounted with ease for the child's sudden marriage of Nathalie and Siebenkæs, by the circumstance that the advocate had been standing beside her at the water-side, and people, who had seen no one so constantly with her as himself, had been misled by the bodily likeness between them.

Siebenkæs's mind, however, ran more on the machine-master, Rosa (so fond of setting his patchwork life-scenes for every woman to play her part before), and the resemblance these silk flowers bare to those which the Venner had once redeemed from pawn for Lenette in Kuhschnappel struck him at once; yet how could he sadden this gladsome time, and spoil the pleasure of receiving these votive flowers, by giving words to his suspicions? Nathalie insisted upon a distribution of this floral inheritance, inasmuch as each of the three had taken part in the rescue, and Siebenkæs and Leibgeber had, at all events, rescued the rescuer. She kept the white silk roses for herself, allotted the red ones to Leibgeber (who would not have them, but asked for a proper, real, living rose instead, which he immediately put in his mouth); to Siebenkæs she gave the silken forget-me-nots, and one or two living, perfume-breathing ones as well (souls, as it were, of the artificial ones). He took them with rapture, and said the tender real ones should never wither for him. Nathalie here took a brief temporary leave of the pair, but Firmian could not find words to express all his gratitude to his friend for the means he had adopted to prolong this little day of grace which orbed his whole life round with a new heaven and a new earth.

No King of Spain ever took as little out of some six, or so (at the outside), of the hundred dishes which, by the laws of the realm, are daily served at his table, than Siebenkæs did that day out of one. Historians, worthy of credence, inform us,

[67] We have all read in the newspapers that at the Vienna balls a paper lantern is carried through the rooms, with the inscription "Supper ready." This may be called Vienna lanterning.

however, that he managed to drink a very little—a little wine it was—and that in a considerable hurry for he could not be happy enough that day to satisfy Leibgeber. The latter, not apt to be easily swayed by heart and feeling, was all the more delighted that his beloved Firmian should at last have a pole star of happiness shining in the zenith point of the heavens above his head, beaming down genial warmth upon the blossoming time of his few scattered flowers.

The rapid rate at which his duplex enjoyment kept on moving enabled him to steal a march upon the sun, and he arrived once more at the villa, whose walls were now tinted red by his beams, while the glory of evening was gilding its windows into fire. Nathalie, on the balcony, was like some sunlit soul, just ready to take wing after the departing sun, hanging with her great eyes upon the shining, quivering world rotunda all full of church-music—and on the sun flying downward from this temple, like some angel—and at the holy, luminous tomb of night into which earth was sinking.

When they came under the balcony (Nathalie beckoning them to come up to her) Heinrich handed him his stick, saying, “Keep that for me. I have enough to carry without it—if you want me, blow the whistle.” As regarded his *morale* and physique, our good Henry had the kindest and softest of human hearts within his shaggy, Bruin breast.

Ah! happy Firmian, happy in spite of all your troubles. When now you pass through the door of glass and on to the floor of iron, the sun confronts you, and sets for a second time. Earth closes her great eye, like some dying goddess! Then the hills smoke like altars—choruses call from the woods—shadows, the veils of day, float about the enkindled, translucent tree-tops and rest upon their many-tinted breast-pins (of flowers), and the gold-leaf of the evening sky throws a dead-gilt gleam towards the east, and touches with a rosy ray the vibrating breast of the hovering lark, far up evening bell of Nature. Ah! happy Firmian, should some glorious spirit from realms afar wing its flight athwart earth and her spring tide, and, as he passes, a thousand lovely evenings be concentrated into one burning one—it would not be more Elysian than this, whereof the glow is now dying out around you as the moments fly.

When the flames of the windows paled, and the moon was rising heavily behind the earth, they both went back into the twilight room, silent, and with full hearts. Firmian opened the pianoforte and, in music, went through his evening once more. The trembling strings were as tongues of fire to his full heart; the flower-ashes of his youth were blown away, and two or three youthful minutes bloomed back into life.

But as the music poured its warm life-balsam upon Nathalie’s swollen heart in all its constraint (for its wounds were only closed, not healed), it melted and gave way, the heavy tears which had been burning within it flowed forth, and it grew weak and tender, but light. Firmian, who saw she was passing once more through the gate of sacrifice towards the sacrificial knife, stopped the sacrificial music, and tried to lead her away from the altar. Just then the first beam of the moon alighted, like a swan’s wing, upon the waxen grapes. He asked her to come out into the silent, misty, after-summer of the day, the moonlit evening. She placed her arm in his without saying yes.

What a sparkling, gleaming world! Through the branches, through the fountains, over the hills and over the woodlands, the flashing molten silver was flowing, which the moon was fining from out the dross of night. Swiftly shot her glance of silver

athwart the rippling wavelet, and the glossy, shining, gently-trembling apple-leaves, pausing to rest upon the marble pillars and birch-tree stems. Nathalie and Firmian paused upon the threshold of the magic valley (it gleamed like some enchanted cavern, where night and light were playing, and all the founts of being—which by day cast up sweet odour, melody of songs and voices, feathery wings, translucent pinions—seemed sunk in voiceless slumber deep into some silent chasm). They looked up to the mountain, the Sophienberg, with its summit flattened as by the weight of years; a great mist Colossus was veiling all its Alp-like peak; next at the pale-green world, lying asleep beneath the shimmering radiance of the far-off silent suns, gleaming depths of silver star-dust, flowing faint and far before the ever-brightening rising moon; and then at one another, with hearts full to the brim of holy friendship, such a gaze as only two blest angels, new created, free and gladsome, bend in rapture on each other. "Are you as happy as I?" he asked. "No," she answered, involuntarily pressing his arm, "that I am not; for, on a night like this should follow, not a day, but something far lovelier and richer—something that should satisfy the heart's thirst, and staunch its bleeding for ever." "And what should that be?" he asked. "Death," was her answer. She lifted her streaming eyes to his and said, "You think so, too, do you not? Death for *me*." "No, no," he added quickly, "for *me*, if you will, not for *you*." To break the course of this overpowering moment, she added hurriedly, "Shall we go down to the place where we first met, and where, two days too soon, I became your friend;[68] and yet it was not too soon. Shall we?"

He obeyed her; but his soul was still a-swim among his precious thoughts, and as they went down the long, hollow, gravel-way, besprent with the shadows of the shrubs, and moonlight rippling over its white bed (flecked with shadows for stones), he said, "Yes, in an hour like this, when death and sleep send forth their brothers to us, a soul like yours may think of death.[69] But I have more cause than you, for I am happier. Oh! of all guests at Joy's festival-banquet, Death is the one whom she loves best to see; for he is himself a joy, the last and highest rapture upon earth. None but the common herd can associate humanity's lofty flight of migration into the distant land of spring with ghosts and corpses here below on earth; as when they hear the owls' voices when they are going away to warmer countries they take them for the cries of goblins. But, oh! dear, dear, Nathalie, I cannot and will not bear to think of what you say as in any shape connected with *you*. No, no, so rich a soul must come into full bloom in a far nearer, earlier spring than that beyond this life! Oh, God! it *must*!" They had reached a wall of rock over which a broad cascade of moonlight was falling; against it leant a trellis of roses, whence Natalie gathered a spray, all green and tender, with two young rose-buds just beginning to swell, and, saying "You will never blow," she placed it on her heart, and said (looking at him with a strange expression), "While they are young they scarcely prick at all."

And when they got down to the stone water-basin—the sacred spot where they first met—and could as yet find no words to utter what was in their hearts, they saw some one come up out of the dry basin. Though they smiled, it was a smile full of emotion—in all three cases—for this was their Leibgeber, who had been lying in wait for them in hiding, with a bottle of wine, among the imaged water-gods. A certain something there had been in his troubled eyes, but it had been poured out by way of libation to this spring night from our cup of joy. "This port and haven of your first

[68] Alas! that the English word "friend" is such a poor representative of the German original. Yet I cannot hit upon any other.—*Tr.*
[69] Death sends sleep, Heaven the dream.

landing here," said he, "must be properly consecrated, and *you* (to Nathalie) must join in the pledge. I swear by Heaven that there is more fruit hanging on its blue dome to-night within reach than ever hung on any green one." They took three glasses, pledged one another, and said (some of them, I imagine, in somewhat subdued tones). "To friendship! may it live for ever! may the spot where it commenced be always green! May every place blossom where it has grown, and, though all its flowers may fade, and its leaves fall and wither, may it live on for ever and for evermore!" Nathalie was obliged to turn her eyes away. Heinrich laid a hand upon the agate head of his stick (but only because his friend's hand which was holding it was over the top of it, that he might give the latter a warm and hearty pressure), and said, "Give it me; you shall have no clouds in your hand to-night;" for nature had graven cloud-streaks on the agate in her subterranean studio. Any heart—not Nathalie's only—must have been touched by this bashful cloaking of the warm token of friendship. "Are you not going to stay with us?" she asked somewhat faintly, as he was leaving them. "I'm going up to the landlord," he said, "to see if I can get hold of a flute or a horn, and if I do I shall come out and musicise over the valley, and play the springtime in."

When he was gone his friend felt as if his youth had gone with him. Suddenly he saw, high above the whirling may-beetles and the breeze-born night-butterflies, and their arrow-swift pursuers, the bats, a great train of birds of passage winging their way through the blue, like some broken cloud, coming back to our spring. Then flashed upon his open heart the memory of his lodgings in the market-town, and the time when he saw a similar flight of (earlier) birds of passage, and thought that his life would soon be at an end. These recollections, with all their tears, brought back the belief that he was soon to die; and this he must tell Nathalie. He saw the wide expanse of night stretched over the world like some great corpse but her shadowy limbs quiver under the moonlit-branches at the first touches of the morning breeze awaking in the east. She rises towards the coming sun as a dissolving vapour, an all-embracing cloud, and man says "It is day." Two crape-covered thoughts, like hideous spectres, fought within Firmian's soul. The one said, "He is going to die of apoplexy, so he never can see her more." And the other said, "He is going through the farce of a pretended death, and then he never *must* see her more." Overborne by the past as well as by the present, he took Nathalie's hand, and said, "You must pardon my being so deeply moved to-night. I shall never see you more. You are the noblest of your sex that I have ever met, but we shall never meet again. Very soon you must hear that I am dead, or that my *name*, from one cause or other has passed away, but my *heart* will still be yours, be *thine*. Oh! that the present, with its mountain-chains of grave-hillocks, but lay behind me, and the future were come, with all its open graves, and I stood on the brink of my own! For I would look once more on *thee*, then throw myself into it in bliss."

Nathalie answered not a word. She faltered suddenly in her walk, her arm trembled, her breath came thick and fast. She stopped, and, with a face as pale as death, said, in trembling accents, "Stay here on this spot; let me sit alone for a minute on that turf-bank. Ah! I am so headlong!" He saw her move trembling away. She sank, as if overwhelmed with some burden, down upon a bank of turf. She fixed her blinded eyes upon the moon (the blue sky around it seemed a night, the earth a vapour); her arm lay rigid on her lap; she did not move, except that a spasm, distantly resembling a smile, played about her lip; her eyes were tearless. But to her friend, life at that moment seemed a realm of shadows, whose outlines were floating and blending in endless changes of confusion; a tract all hollow, sunken mine-shafts full of mists in

the likeness of mountain-spirits, with but *one* single opening of outlet to the heavens, the free air, the spring, the light of day; and *that* outlet so narrow, so remote, and far above his head.

There sat Nathalie in the white crystal shimmer, like some angel upon an infant's grave; and, suddenly, the tones of Heinrich's music broke in, like bells pealing in a storm, upon their souls as they paused, all stunned (like Nature before the thunder breaks), and the warm river of melody bore away their hearts, dissolving them the while. Nathalie made an affirmative sign with her head, as if she had come to some conclusion: she rose and came forward from the green, flowery grave like some enfranchised, glorified spirit; she opened her arms wide, and came towards him. Tear after tear came coursing down her blushing face, but as yet her heart could find no words; sinking under *the* WORLD which was in her heart, she could totter no further, and he flew to meet her. She held him back that she might speak the first, her tears flowing faster and faster, but when she had cried, "My first *friend*, and my last—for the first and last time," she grew breathless and dumb, and, overburdened with sorrow, sank into his arms, upon his lips, upon his heart.

"No! no!" she murmured; "Oh! Heaven, give me but the power to speak. Firmian! my Firmian! Take all my happiness away with you—all that I have on earth. But never, by all you hold most sacred, never see me more in this world. Now" (she added very softly), "you must *swear* this to me." She drew her head back, and the tones of Heinrich's music flowed between and around them like the voice of sorrow. She gazed at him, and his pale care-worn face wrung her heart with agony; with eyes dim with tears, she implored him to swear that he would never see her more.

"Yes, noble, glorious soul," he answered, in trembling tones; "yes, then, I *swear* to thee I will never see thee more." Mute and motionless, as if smitten by the hand of death, she sank with drooping head upon his breast; and once again, like one dying, he said, "I will never see thee more." Then, beaming like some angel, she raised her face, worn with emotion to him, saying, "All is over now; take the death kiss, and speak no more." He took it, and she gently disengaged herself from his arms. But as she turned away, she put back her hand and gave him the green rosebuds with the tender thorns, and saying, "Think of to-night," went resolutely away (trembling, nevertheless), and was soon lost in the dark-green alleys, where but few beams of light struck through.

And the end of this night every soul that has loved can picture for itself without the aid of any words of mine.

First Fruit Piece

LETTER OF DR. VICTOR TO CATO THE ELDER, ON THE CONVERSION OF *I* INTO *THOU*, *HE*, *SHE*, *YE*, AND *THEY*; OR, THE FEAST OF KINDNESS OF THE 20TH MARCH.

Flachsenfingen, 1st April, 1795.

My dear Cato the Elder,

A breaker of his word like you—who made such a solemn promise to come to my feast, and yet did not come—will have to be punished by having his mouth—not stitched up (which is what savages do to word-breakers,) for that would be a loss only to your hearers—but *made to water*. When I shall have painted a full and faithful picture of our peace-festival of the soul for you, I shall stop both my ears against the curses which you will pour out on your evil genius. At this feast we all philosophised, and we were all converted, except me, who could not be reckoned a convert, inasmuch as I was myself the converter of the heathen.

Our flotilla of three boats—(the third we were obliged to take in deference to the timidity of the ladies)—got under way about one o'clock in the afternoon of the 20th of March, ran into the stream, gained the open water, and soon after one we were well in sight of the very anther-filaments and spider's-webs on the island. At a quarter-past two we landed—the professor, his wife, and a girl and boy—Melchior—Jean Paul—the Government Counsellor,—Flamin—the lovely Luna—(off goes the first of your curses here!)—the undersigned, and his wife.

Some Burgundy was then disembarked. At the commencement of spring (which was to take place that day at 38 minutes past 3 o'clock) we meant to enter upon a "stream of life," coloured and sweetened after a most superlative sort. With the island, Cato, many of us were quite enraptured, and nearly all of us wished we had paid a visit to this beautiful bowling-green in the Rhine—thin pleasure camp amid the waves—long before. Luna, elder Cato—if I mistake not thou hast seen, certainly once at the very least, that tender soul, which ought to dwell in (and heighten the tint of) a white rose in place of a body—Luna shed tears, half of delight (for they were half of sorrow for *everybody* who was not there), half of delight not so much at the families of alders upon the rounded bank, or the Lombardy poplars lying trembling in intoxication of bliss in the gentle air which breathed about them, or the sunny green paths, as at *all this* together (in the first place), and at the spring sky and the Rhine (which was showing that sky a picture, as it were, of its antipodean sky somewhere over America), and at the peace and gladness of her soul—but (above all) at the Alp in the centre of the island.

The Alp will be sketched, if an opportunity offers, in this letter. I at once asked Luna where *you* were. She said, "At the Frankfort Fair." Was she right?

When a party arrives at a place it is not, like the *Anguis Fragilis*, to be broken into ten twitching fragments by every touch of chance. Even the ladies kept with us, for I had deprived them of all opportunity of doing anything in the shape of household labour, by the arrangements I had made for the dinner. This Barataria Island was going to be an intellectual *Place d'Armes* and theatre of war that day. I love disputation. Intellectual bickerings further and heighten the happiness of congenial society, just as lovers' quarrels are a renewal of love, and fisticuffs a necessity of

Marionette operas. Certain people are like the Moravians, among whom the confessor and penitent change places, each laying a picture of his soul before the other, his own police-notice of an absconded criminal—his own advertisement in the "Hue and Cry"; and I am like them. Any blemish or shortcoming which I discover in myself or other people I immediately publish over half the town in a universal German gazette, as ladies do the witnesses' depositions of evidence concerning strangers. For the last three weeks, dear Cato, my soul has been glowing in the brightest sunlight of peace and love, cast upon me by the deceased chief *Piqueur* (a man who had not a trace of either the one or the other about him)—and now I cannot rest till I entail this precious legacy upon all of you.

As *Lieutenant de Police* of the island, I possessed the power of issuing police regulations with respect to the conversation permissible thereon, and I directed the thread of *our* talk towards the *Piqueur* in question. But the wasps came buzzing out of their nests; the first of them being your brother, Melchior, who drove his sting into the *Piqueur's* avarice, saying that people who didn't bestow their plunder upon the poor till they were in their own coffins, were like pikes who eject their (swallowed) prey when caught themselves; they should rather do as Judas Iscariot did—cast their pieces of silver into the church *before* their hanging. The next wasp was your second brother, Jean Paul, who said, "Misers are the only people who haven't had enough of life when they die. Even when they are in the very grip of Death's hand, they would fain grasp hold of money with their own. Like cap-mushrooms, when they are broken off, they cling terribly to the earth's surface with, their bleeding moiety."

"Ah!" said I, "*everyone* is a thorough miser as regards something or other, I am sorry to say. I cannot now be so hard upon a man who confines himself to mortifying and chastening *himself* as I used to be. Where is the extraordinary difference between one of your learned antiquary mint-assayers who distils, evaporates, and injects all the pleasures of his life into the rust of a collection of coins—and a miser who counts and weighs the specimens in *his* cabinet like so many votes at an election? Not, in reality, so great a difference as there is between *our opinions* of the two." I thought I had a fine chance of turning deftly to the subject of the *Piqueur* at this point, but the entire company called out to me to tell them what o'clock it was. In my capacity of Viceroy, I had disarmed all the islanders of their watches at the landing-place (as if they had been so many swords), that they might pass their day in a blissful eternity, where time was not. The only one allowed to keep his was Paul—and this was because it was one of the new Geneva sort, whose hands always point to 12 o'clock, only telling the real time when one touches a spring.

It was now past three. In thirty-eight minutes, spring, that pre-heaven upon earth—that *second* paradise—would make her grand processional progress over the ruins of the *first*. Already the clouds were all cleared away from the sky, spring breezes played coolingly about the sun, burning in the blue; on a vine-clad hill by the Rhine shore, a solo-singer from the great choir of spring—a nightingale—sent on in advance of her—was pouring out her song in a smooth-grown thicket of pruned cherry-trees; through the open trellis-work of the boughs we could see the notes vibrate in the feathers of her throat.

We climbed up the artificial Mount St. Gothard. It was set round with turf-banks and leafy niches; an oak stood on its summit by way of crown. Man (day-fly, as he is, playing above a ripple of time) cannot do without watches and date-indicators on the banks of the time-stream. Although every day is a birthday and a new year's day, he must have one of his own into the bargain. Thirty-eight minutes struck in us. And

down from the waves of throbbing blue above us came floating a broad breath of breeze, rocking the swelling grapes and the bare grafts, the delicate young branchlets, and the strong, sharp-pointed winter-corn, and lifting the soaring pigeons higher in their flight. The sun, above Switzerland, looked, in blissful intoxication, at his own face reflected in the sublime glittering ice-mirror of Mont Blanc, parting (unaware) day and night into equal halves, as if with two arms of fate, and throwing down equal portions to every land and every eye. We sang Goethe's "Hymn to the Spring." The sun sent us down (like dew) from the hill-top to the valley—the earth swelling loose fell rustling at our feet; and wine (Lethe of life) hid from our sight the misty bunks within which it rolled its way—mirroring only heaven and flowers. Clotilda said (not to us, but to her Luna)—(and here, dear Cato, I am drank with remembering; and I beg, accordingly, to invite you, at once, for the 10th of April), "Ah! dearest, how beautiful the world is sometimes. We ought not to think so poorly of it. Are we not like Orestes in the 'Iphigenia'—fancying we are in exile, though we really are in our own native land."

With every downward step from the hill we sank back into the workaday marsh-meadow of life. "What the better are we," cried Melchior, quite angrily, "for all this splendour in and around us, when to-morrow a single passionate earthquake may hurl down an avalanche of snow-masses upon all that is warm and blooming in us? it is the April of the human heart—not the April of the universe—that causes me such vexation. We are always at our hardest just after an *attendrissement*—and moved to tears just after some murderous rage—as earthquakes set warm springs flowing. Now I know quite well that, to-morrow, at the sitting of the council, I shall attack and oppose everybody and everything. Pitiable! pitiable! And you are not a whit better, Flamin."

"Not a whit," said Flamin, with touching candour. Luna and my wife took the Professor's wife between them (each taking one of her children in her lap), and sat down upon the green nether slope of the hill, on the sunny side of the nightingale. We, however, were too restless to sit down. "Alas!" (said Jean Paul, walking up and down, with his hands folded and hanging, and his hat thrown away, so that his *eyes*, at all events, might be higher and freer). "Alas! is *any* one a whit better? We take a vow of universal love to our fellow men whenever we are deeply touched—when we have buried some one, or have been thoroughly happy, or have committed some grand transgression, or looked long and closely at Nature, or are intoxicated with love, or some earthly form of intoxication: but we are really only perjurers, not philanthropists, as we fancy ourselves. We long and thirst for the love of others—but it is like mercury, it feels and looks like fountain water, and flows and glitters like it—but it *is* cold, dry, and heavy in reality. It is just those very people upon whom Nature has bestowed most gifts (and who, consequently, should not covet other people's, but be content with distributing their own), who, like princes, demand the more from their fellow men the more they *have* to give them, and the less they *do* give them. Dissensions are the more bitterly painful, the more alike the souls are between whom they take place, just as discords are harsher the nearer they approach the unison. We forgive without reason because we have found fault without reason, for a rightful and righteous anger must, of necessity, be everlasting. Nothing is a stronger evidence of the miserable subordination of our reason to our ruling passion than the fact that we place such a flat every-day matter as *time* among the cures for hate, grief, love, &c.; our impulses are to *forget* to conquer, or to grow *tired* of doing so—our wounds are to be sanded over with the Margrave's sympathetic powder of drift-sand out of

Time's sand-glass! Too miserable a business altogether! But can anything make a better of it? Certainly, least of all my complaints of it!"

"The fact is," said the serene, gentle, Professor (who only uses a *very* few pedantic tints in his style of painting), "*feelings* of love to our fellow men[70] are useless without *reasons*." "So are reasons without feelings," said Paul.

"Consequently," continued the Professor (for I could *not* manage to get my *Piqueur* brought to bear anyhow, but had to keep him idly in reserve), "the two have to be combined like *genius* and *criticism*—of which the former can produce only master-pieces and scholar-pieces, the latter only something of an everyday sort between the two. What I think is, that our lack of love arises, not from our coldness, but from a conviction that others do not deserve it. The coldest of men would acquire a greater warmth of feeling for their fellows if they acquired a higher opinion of them."

"But," asked Clotilda, "must we not forgive even the *wrong* done by our enemies? The *right* is not matter for forgiveness."

"Of course it is not," he answered, but would let himself be no further diverted from his point. "The only ugliness and hatefulness which we can truly experience hatred for is that of a *moral* sort."

"In opposition to that view of the question," said Jean Paul, "I might adduce the fierce combats of animals, and nurseries in a state of war; for in neither of these cases is there any idea of *immorality* of the enemy, although *hatred* of him exists. But were I to adduce these cases, I could answer myself—at least, so so. If we directed our hatred against things other than the immoral, we should be just as angry with the hanging branch which strikes us in the face as with the person who broke it so that it should be so placed as to do so. The rage of a chastised child is quite a different thing from the alarmed instinct of self-conservancy—the feeling of avoidance of nitric acid, or of bodily hurt. The former has in it a duplex sense of dislike, the two components of which are most dissimilar—the one referring to the cause, the other to the effect. We must distinguish between beings which are capable of morality, and such as are not, in *kind*—not in *degree*; those *incapable* of morality can never be made capable of it by the mere lapse of time, or step by step. Whence, if children at any period of their age were *utterly* non-moral beings, it would follow that they could never, at *any* period, *begin* to *become* moral beings. In brief, their anger is nothing other than a dim sense of other people's injustice. As to the animals, I don't know what else to say than that there *must* be in them something analogous to our moral sense. Those who (like us) believe them to have immortal souls, must, as a matter of course, concede them *some* beginnings some pre-existent germs of morality—although these may be overpowered and kept in the background by their animal natures even to a greater extent than (for instance) conscience is in sleep, drunkenness, or insanity. But alas! all this is night within night! And I hope this obscurity will be considered some excuse, Professor, for the manner in which I have obstructed and built out *your* light."

[70] In all this discussion what we are talking of is not that *practical* love of our fellow men, and of our enemies, which expresses itself in action, and in refraining from revenge (and which must be easy to every properly constituted person), but that *feeling* of misanthropy, or of philanthropy (as the case may be), over which the moral sense has but little power—of inward love, as distinct from actions; of secret indignation with sinners and fools. It is easier to sacrifice one's self for people than to love them—easier to do good to our enemies than to forgive them. The longing of love, as well as its seldomness, have had but one painter—F. Jakobi: we do not need a second.

"Now," he went on, "since hatred only concerns itself with *moral* defects, how strange it is that we never hate *ourselves*, even for the gravest moral defects."

"*I* think," said Flamin, "that one *does* sometimes feel the *deadliest* hatred of one's self, for over-haste."

"And then," said Jean Paul, "your argument would apply just as well to love—at least it would half apply. Come, let's hear what you've got to say to that?"

"We never *hate* ourselves," I said. "We *despise* and *pity* ourselves, when we have done wrong. Although—I *must* add this—we hate all men, our ownselves excepted, for vices. Can this be right?" "Self-hatred," went on the Professor, "is not possible, for hatred is nothing but the wishing of evil to the object of it—*i. e.*, a desire to punish, not for *bettering's* sake, but for *punishing's*. But the most repentant of sinners never can wish himself made the subject of a chastening of this kind; and even if he could, such a wish would be merely a *disguised* desire for *bettering—i. e.*, for greater happiness. But to a transgressor other than ourselves we hardly can concede *rapidity* of conversion, not, at all events, until he has gone through a proper expiation. What distinguishes our feeling concerning other people's errors from our feeling concerning our own is a sham self-love. The very minutest particle of hatred desires the unhappiness of its object; that is what I have got to prove now."

His own wife here interrupted him with the words, "My heart tells me, as plainly as possible, that I could never wish any serious misfortune to happen to my bitterest enemy—such as money troubles, or anything about her children. I could not bear even the idea of a tear being brought to her eyes on my account."

"No, I suppose not," he went on. "The better nature within us never wishes its antipode a broken leg, would not leave him without a strip of lint, or a wish for his recovery. But I know that that same 'better nature' does take a delight in his minor skin-wounds—his being put to confusion, his sleigh slipping down hill backwards, his losing his hair. The gentlest of souls hides, at the back of its tender sympathy with great troubles, its *untender* satisfaction with small ones, such as call for condolence (*a smaller thing than sympathy*). The tenderest of people, people incapable of indicting the smallest wound imaginable on their enemy's *skin*, are delighted to make a thousand deep ones in his *heart*." "Ah!" said Luna, "how can that be possible?" "I don't think it *would* be possible," Clotilda answered her, "if the pain of the soul had as definite a physiognomy, and as real tears, as that of the body."

"Exactly," said the Professor; "that is just where it is. To make ourselves feel more gently towards the wicked we have only to think of them as delivered wholly over into our hands. For what harm would one do them then? The moment they *acknowledged* their fault we would stay the rack, and bid the torture cease. What redoubles our indignation, and renders it everlasting, is the very impossibility of inflicting any punishment."

"Yes, that is quite true," said Melchior. "The oftener I read of these two live guillotines of their age, Alba and Philip (whose lips were shears of the Parcæ), or of those two other mowers of mankind, Marat and Robespierre, the deeper does the aquafortis of anger etch their condemnation into my heart, although death has drawn up their Acts of Amnesty."

"And yet, after all," I put in (leaving the Piqueur in the rear for the present), "if anybody would deliver over the King and the Duke to you and me here this afternoon, and a couple of caldrons of boiling oil into the bargain, *I* feel quite certain

I couldn't throw one of them in—at any rate till the oil had stood a long time in the cold. I should let them off with a good flogging—say 100 lashes, or so. Ah! what a cast-iron sort of fellow were he who should not soothe, and comfort with cooling, healing touch (had he the power) a heart breaking with anguish, a face whereon the worm of suffering was ploughing its tortuous track! At the same time (I continued, rapidly; for I was determined to bring in my Piqueur somehow or other), where emotion is concerned, the memory of past errors is not the smallest safeguard against new ones."

"You see, you won't allow me to speak," the Professor broke in. "I still owe you a tremendous number of proofs, and I am most anxious to acquit the debt. Our *hatred*, being an emotion, always turns every *action* into a *whole life*; every *attribute* into a *personality* (or, to speak more accurately, because our only mode of *seeing* any personality is by its reflection in the mirror of its attributes) converts *one* attribute into the sum of them. It is only in the case of liking—of friendship—that we find it easy to separate the attribute from the personality. Hatred can not do it. Nay, in the case of liking, the *converse* transformation takes place—that of the personality into the attribute. We hate as if the object of our hatred had never possessed any virtues, or inclination to them—neither pity nor truthfulness, love of the young, one single good hour, anything whatever. In brief, since it is with the *individuality* of the person whose punishment we are decreeing that we are angry (not with its characteristic of the moment), we make him out to be a *wholly* wicked being. Yet such a being is not conceivable. The voice of conscience speaking in that being would be of itself *one* goodness in him, even though it spoke in vain; the pain of that conscience would be another; each joy and each impulse of his life another."

"Ah! how delightful," said Luna, "that there is nobody so utterly bad; nobody whom one would have to hate altogether."

"You see," he continued, "it cannot be the *me* of a person that we hate; for the *me* is still the same *me* when it improves, and wins our regard."

In the warmth of our discussion we were losing sight altogether of one of the two concave mirrors which distort other people's moral distortions for us even more wildly than they are distorted to begin with—I mean, our own egotism. Often, when I have seen and heard women squabbling in the market-place (women of whom one was just as good as the other, and with just as good an opinion of herself), and one hurling her invectives with delight, like a red-hot stone, at the other's head, which seethed and swelled in waves of anger around that stone, while a third woman kept calm and cool in the midway-path between, I have been ashamed of the human race—ashamed that the self-same reproach, or immorality, which *ought* to produce exactly the same effect upon all the three, should make *too* strong an impression on the one, too weak a one on the other, none whatever on the third.

Paul pointed to the *second* of these distorting mirrors—our bodily senses. For these render the vinegar of hatred doubly bitter by throwing into its fermenting-vat these parts of the enemy which *they* take cognizance of—his clothes, movements, gestures, tones, &c.

Here we reached the Gordian knot which only I could cut with the Piqueur. "Who is to save us from these bodily senses?" I inquired (with a certain amount of hopeful expectancy). Melchior answered, "I do not allow them to influence my philanthropy, at all events. They are the straw which feeds the flame under that ascending windbag balloon, the heart."

Jean Paul thrust me back from the Gordian knot. “I,” he said, “have an admirable sweetener at all times in readiness to apply when a sinner embitters my senses. I take him, and (like a victorious enemy) strip all the clothes off him, not leaving him so much as his hat or his wig. When once I’ve got him standing there before me, cold and wretched as any corpse (I mean, of course, in imagination), I begin to feel sorry for the scoundrel. But this is not enough. I have got to sweeten myself a good deal more than this; so I proceed to slit him up with a long, slicing cut from top to bottom into three cavities (as if he were a carp), so that I can see his heart and brain pulsating. The mere sight of a red human heart (Danaid’s bucket for happiness—safe storehouse of so many a sorrow) makes my own soft and heavy; and I have often not forgiven a street robber till the Professor has been shewing us his heart and brain in the anatomical theatre. ‘Thou unhappy, sorrowful heart,’ I have always found myself thinking, with deep, sympathetic emotion, ‘how many a blood-billow has gone surging through thee, glowing and freezing in the same moment.’ But if all this process failed to have its effect, I should proceed to extremities, and smite my enemy dead; then take the naked, fluttering, trembling soul—like an evening moth—out of its brain-chamber chrysalis, and, holding up the quivering night-creature between my forefinger and thumb, gaze at it without a trace of rancour left in me.”

“To picture one’s enemy to one’s self as unclothed, or disembodied,” said I, “so as to be able to put up with him, as though he were dead (perhaps that is the chief reason why we love the dead), is just the operation *I* perform too. I often try to soften the unpleasant effect which some repulsive physiognomy produces upon me by thinking of it as scalped, and with its skin folded back.”

And now I determined, seriously and in earnest, that the sceptre and throne insignia of the conversation, should no more depart from my hands. Wherefore I commenced as follows: “But who is to provide us with the time and the power, not only to remember, but to act upon, this precious and reliable principle, or rule of conduct, right in the thick of this world’s Pyrrhic war-dance, and the rapid evolutions of our emotions? Who is to stoke the æther-flame of philanthropy with a sufficient supply of combustible matter, seeing that there are such hosts of people continually drowning it out, smothering it up, and building it in! Who is to make up to us for the lack of a gentle, quiet temperament? Who, or what?”

Just as I was going to fix the Piqueur on to this lance-shaft by way of point, the cold dinner was brought, and the Professor’s wife went to fetch her children. For the dinner had to be over before sunset; because, like a fresh supply of green firewood, it would drown out the flame of enthusiasm for a time, and break the unity of its vertical, purple fire pyramid. The company, therefore, waited in vain for me to go on with what I had to say. I shook my head, expressing, by nods, that I should do so when we were all together again, and sitting down.

While we were at dinner I was able to set up my speaking machine, and set it a-going at my ease.

“I asked you once or twice before dinner,” I commenced, “*who* can invigorate and quicken our principles of love to our fellows, and set them fully to work? I answer, the chief Piqueur can; only I’m afraid I’ve made so many false starts, and baulked in so many of my runs before making this grand jump of mine, that I have led you to entertain far greater expectations concerning it than it (or I) may be able to fulfil. A day or two before the stump-end of the chief Piqueur’s life-candle fell down and went guttering out in its candlestick-socket, he sent for me to the side of his bed of

suffering and begged me—not to prescribe for him, but—to make a thorough inspection of his house. He drew my head down close to his wretched pillow, and said, 'You see, doctor, Death has got his hunting-knife at my throat. But I'm not sorry to go, and what little I leave behind me in the shape of worldly gear goes all to the poor. It's but little that I have ever thought of scraping together for *myself*, and that is a comfort to think on now. It's for the *poor* that I have screwed and saved, pinched and pared; and when a man has done that it's a pleasure to him to make his will; he knows it will be paid back again *elsewhere*. But there's one hard stone at my heart still. You see I have neither chick nor child belonging to me, and when the breath is out of my body, the old woman who keeps my room in order will be in the house by herself. She's an honest body enough, but as poor as a church mouse, and pretty sure to help herself to something before the seals are put on my effects. Now, doctor, you are a man who are just as good to the poor as I am myself; you often prescribe for them gratis; I want to ask *you* to go through the house with the notary (I don't trust *him* a bit more than I do the old woman), take an inventory of what there is, and have a regular notarial instrument drawn up concerning my property. I've left the whole of it to the Poor-house and the Institution for Destitute Gamekeepers. The notary must begin with my breeches under the pillow here, because my purse is there.'

"A man whose stubble Death is in the very act of turning up with his plough, has, upon me, a more powerful claim than that of the *first* request—that of the *last*. I came the next day, bringing with me the notary, and also my dislike to the dying man and his distrustful suspicions. With gay indifference I helped to protocol the effects in the sick-room—his shooting-jacket, worn into shining patches by his old game-bag—his old guns and knives—even such matters as a leather over-shoe for his thumb, and a long mummy bandage for his nose, which he had worn on occasions when he had hurt himself in these members with his gun.

"As we went through the other silent chambers—empty snail-shells of his shrivelled, dried-up life—my frozen blood began to thaw within me, and to move in warm, light mercury-globules. But when I came to the lumber-room, with the notary, and tuned over the rag-fair of his old night-shirts—(caterpillar cases and blood-shirts of his feverish nights, in which I seemed still to see him groaning and thirsting)—and his *Pathebrief*,[71] and his name copied from thence with all its flourishes on to his pointer's collar—and the picture of his pretty mother with him as a smiling infant in her lap—and his wife's bridal garland of wire, covered with green silk—(Oh! for goodness' sake do *not* interrupt me with talk—I've had enough of that, Heaven knows). When I took in my hands these opera-costumes, these theatrical properties, in which the sick player down-stairs had performed his *probe-rolle*[72] of a Harpaxus for the benefit of the poor—not only did the poor fellow's *moral* emptiness of treasury, and miserable rate of monthly salary, strike me with pain, but, moreover, I wished him *no heavier suffering, no severer punishment, than he would wish for himself, were he really to repent in good earnest before his plunge into the depths of the soil*. No, not so much, for the matter of that. Therefore, my dislike to him was gone. For I put myself in his place—not *outwardly* only, as people generally do, fancying themselves in another person's physical place with *their* own souls, *their* own wishes, habitudes, &c.—but *inwardly*—in *his* mind, his youth, wishes, sufferings, thoughts.

[71] A paper, printed with symbols, &c., in which the present for a godchild is wrapped.
[72] Part which a player selects as a specimen of his powers.

"'Poor *Piqueur*,' I said, as I went down-stairs; 'I have no more satiric pleasure now over your gnawing suspicion, your errors, your self-shooting covetousness, your hungry avarice. You have got to live through a long eternity with that self, that "me" of yours, the best way you can, just as I have with mine. You have got to rise with that self of yours at the Resurrection, and go about with it, and look after it, and care for its welfare. And, of course, you can't but be *fond* of *yourself*, just as *I am* of *myself*, and put up with all that self's defects and shortcomings whether you will or not. Go in peace then into the other world, where the broken glasses of your harmonica of life will be replaced with fresh-tuned ones—in the great home of all the spirits!'

"The old woman met us on the stairs crying out that the man was dying. I went to his bed-side, looked upon his cold, yellow, senseless form, and saw that he would very soon throw off his last stage-dress, his body. Next day the tolling bell announced that, he had returned to the dust—gone back into the ground—that, stage dressing-room of souls and flowers. (And we are *rung* off and on to that stage, as well as others.)

"Meanwhile I made an experiment with my modified and mildened system of treatment, upon the poor notary devil; the day after I tried it on the jurists who came from the college. (Jean Paul! communicate your idea to us by-and-bye—do *not* interrupt me just now)—I did this, I say, and found that I was able to establish a heart-peace even with the plebeians among them—who dishonour their calling—the only really *free* one in all the body politic. For in the cases of these lawyers, and those of my own medical colleagues from whose breasts I have been so often in such a hurry to cut off, and melt down, the medals of honour which they have cast for themselves, I have had merely to take away the roof from over their heads, lift the rafters from their walls, and bare their houses to the four winds of heaven. Then I could look in and see everything there—their housekeeping, their unoffending wives, their sleep (*i. e.*, mock-death), sicknesses, sorrows, birth-days, and funeral-days, and this reconciled me to them! Of a truth, to love a man, I have only to think of his children, his parents—the love he feels and inspires. One can easily perform this philanthropic transmigration of soul at any moment, without help of the balloon of phantasy, or the diving-bell of profound reflection. Good heavens! it *does* seem hard (and a shame and disgrace into the bargain) that it should have taken me thirty years of my life to understand properly what it is that self-love is really driving at—my own and everybody else's—what it wants is, to be surrounded with mere repetitions of its own 'me.' It insists upon every infant on earth being a parson's son (as I am)—that everybody shall have lost, and gained, noble friends—that everybody shall be an M.D., and have studied at Göttingen—that his name shall be Sebastian, and that he shall be an overseer of mines, and write his life in forty-five dog-post-days—in brief, that this world shall contain a thousand million Victors instead of one. I beg that everybody may send spies into his soul, to look carefully about them and see whether it be not the case that there are thousands of instances in which what we hate a man for is, either that he is as fat as a prize pig, or as lean as a stick of vermicelli—or that he is a district secretary, or a Roman Catholic watchman in Augspurg, and wears a coat white on the one side, and green on the other—or that he eats his veal with melted butter;[73] (or, at all events, hate them *more* for these reasons; for when we are *indifferent* to people, all their external characteristics, beautiful or ugly, merely increase our indifference). People are so deep sunk in their dear selves that

[73] A Frenchman vowed he could not abide the English: "*Parce qu'ils versent du beurre fondu sur leur veau rôti.*"

everybody yawns at the *menu* of everybody else's favourite dishes, but expects *them* to be interested when *he* reads out *his* to *them*."

That feathered echo, the nightingale, was singing to us phrases of the music of the spheres, to us inaudible until thus repeated to us by her. But I had my rapid descent from my Mont Cenis to finish, and could but give utterance to my applause (of the bird and her music) by a hasty nod. "Heavenly! Elysian! I've been hearing it every now and then. But, one thing more. Since my sentimental journey in other people's souls, I have been happier and fatter than I used to be, in ball-rooms, anterooms, and large assemblages (hot lark-spits which roasted all the fat out of a Swift). This enduring of transgressors includes a greater enduring still of fools and dunces, although the great world makes war on these three tolerated sects in just the contrary ratio.

"The amnesty thus granted to humanity makes the duty of loving more easy to perform; moreover, it renders the deep blissfulness of friendship and love more justifiable; for the glow, the fire of the latter often vitrifies and calcines the heart towards the rest of mankind. And this is the reason why the last and best fruit…."

Clotilda looked inquiringly here, as if begging to be allowed one word of remonstrance with me for forgetting to put myself in the place of those whose transformation I was thus extolling. I reddened, and paused. "This," observed Jean Paul, "is the reason why a concert-room audience cries out the loudest against noise or disturbance just during the loveliest adagios—when people are most deeply touched—and swear and weep at the same time."

"I cannot help being ashamed of an experience of my own," said Clotilda. "The other day I cried so at reading Silly's letters (in Allwill's Papers) that I was obliged to put the book down. Then I went to the casino with my head full of what I had been reading—and I dare not tell you what hard opinions I entertained, several times that very evening, of several people of my acquaintance. I expected of *them* that they should all be in exactly the same mood of mind as myself—although, of course, they had not just come from reading Silly's letters."

"That is exactly what I was coming to," concluded I. "The last and best fruit, which ripens late in a soul ever warm, is tenderness towards the hard—patience with the impatient—kindly feeling for the selfish—and philanthropy towards the misanthropic."

It is a very odd thing, beloved Cato, but Jean Paul has just come and told me a murder-tale of human iniquity, which goes hissing through my heart like a red-hot iron. All my *theories* stand bright and clear as stars around my soul, but I can do nothing save look inactively down upon the billows in which my blood is foaming, heated by this subterranean earth-fire, and wait until they cool down and subside. Alas! we poor, poor mortals! Jean Paul, who knew the story the day before yesterday, and had consequently all that time to put the cooling process in practice in advance of me, is going to take charge of the picture exhibition of our insular flower-pieces in my stead, and add a postscript to this. Which is well, for to-day I really could not do it. By the 10th of April the air will have cooled; then *you* are sure to be coming, as the French election meetings begin then. We must keep the "settling weeks" of your great feast and fairtide here. Alas! in what a disquiet condition have I to stop writing to you. *You* will go on reading, but not

Your

Victor.

Postscript By Jean Paul

DEAR BROTHER.

Our Victor's virtuous indignation will soon be over and past. The reason why he, and I too, now, have made a written confession of the cure of our disposition to censure our fellows, is, that we may be compelled to be excessively ashamed of ourselves if ever we chide for more than a minute, or hate for more than a moment. This all embracing love demands a sacrifice, which is made with greater hesitation than one would expect—the sacrifice of the pleasure of being satisfied with one's self—which anger adds to the contemplation of other people's faults (and satire to the contemplation of other people's follies)—by way of a sweetening ingredient, and whose place is taken by a pure and unalloyed regret at the frequency with which the disease shifts its seat, and at the chronicity of the bleeding of the wounds and scars of helpless man.

However, for the present, what I would fain do is to steer our floating island, and its blessed twilight, close up to your view.

The sun was sinking towards the cloud Alps, and glowing white over France in the west as if it should shortly drop down on its plains as a gleaming shield of freedom, or fall into its billowy ocean as a wedding-ring between heaven and earth. The shades of evening were already overflowing the first two steps of the hill, and the darkening Rhine seemed to be passing an arm of night around the earth. We ascended our little steps as the sun descended his great ones, seeming, as we ascended, to rise from his burning grave with the face of a saint at the Resurrection. The hill lifted up our eyes and our souls. Remembering my shortcomings I took Victor's hand, and said, "Ah! dear Victor! could it but come to pass that one could make a treaty of peace with all mankind, and with one's own self—if one's shattered heart could absorb and retain, from out the leaven of the hating and hated world, nothing but the sweet, mild, life-sap of love—as the oyster, amid mud and slime, takes nothing save bright pure water into his house. Ah! if one but knew that such an event were about to come to pass of a truth, an evening of happiness such as this would refresh and fill one's thirsting breast, (all *cracked* with thirst and dryness)—would still the everlasting sigh." Victor answered (not looking round, but keeping his glowing and beglowed face—which his loving heart suffused with a brighter tint—turned to the sun, now burning half sunk in the earth), "Perhaps," he said, "that time may come; a time when we shall all be happy when a human being smiles—even should he not deserve it—when we shall speak kindly to every one—not by way of a mere sacrifice to the laws of polite society, but for very love—and there will be no difficulties, no complications, for hearts which will no longer have any inward annoyance to conceal. To-day the spring sun rests upon the world like the eye of a mother, and shines warm upon every heart, the wicked as well as the good. Yes, thou Eternal One, we here now give our hands and our hearts to thy whole creation, and no longer hate anything which thou hast made." We were overpowered, and we embraced with tears, and no words, in the first darkening of the night. Over the sun's burial place stood the zodiacal light, a red grave pyramid, flaming unmoved up into the silent deep of blue.

The City of God which hangs displayed on high above our earth, built on the arch of the Milky Way, appeared from out the endless distances with all its shining sun-lights.

We came down from the hill—each spot of earth was a hill just then; an unseen hand lifted our souls on high above the dark vapour-circle, and they looked down as if from alps, seeing nothing save gleaming peaks of other mountain ranges—for all the mean, all that was not the high, all graves, petty goals, and life careers of humanity, were veiled in heavy mist.

We lost each other amongst the paths, but in our hearts we were all together. We met again, but the silence in our souls was not broken, for each heart beat just as did all the others, and there was no difference, save the being alone, between a prayer and an embrace.

The scattered flames of our emotion had gradually merged into one glowing sun sphere, as the ancients believed that the fluttering after-midnight fires thickened ere morning into a sun.[74]

But I, a stranger, alas! in this paradise stood beneath the leafless branches, sad, and alone, beside the dark-blue Rhine stream where the stars were mirrored—it glided, with gently heaving wavelets, over the German soil, binding two great republics[75] together, like some heavenly band; and to me it seemed as though the thirst, the fire, of a breast no broader even than mine could be quenched with nothing less than the waters of this great river. Alas! we are all like this. In the transient clasp of our little grandeurs and blisses, we long to rest, and *die*, upon something *great*. We long to cast ourselves into the depths of the heavens when we see them glitter and sparkle above us—or down upon the many-tinted earth, when her flowers and grasses wave—or into the endless river, flowing as if from out the past onwards into the future.

Our ladies and the children had gone away—departing in silence from this anchorage of hours so happy—I saw them as they floated over the wavelets, singing like swans, and dropping spring flowers into the ripples, that they might float back as souvenirs to us upon our island shore. The children were sleeping softly in their arms, between the glories of the heaven and of the earth, lulled by the arms, the songs, and the ripples.

When it was 12 o'clock, and the first morning of spring was come, Victor summoned us all to the hill, we knew not wherefore. All around and beneath us was the music of the rush of the Rhine, and through it, came gliding clear the bright spring-melody of the nightingale; the stars of the twelfth hour sank, drop by drop, into the darkened grave of the sun, and went paling out among the grey ashes of the western clouds. Suddenly a straight, beautiful flame shot up in the west, and music came palpitating through the darkness.

"Do you not think of your France," said Victor, "the first hour of day is breaking for *her* this 21st of March—the day when the six thousand primary assemblies form themselves, like stars, into one constellation, that one law may burst into being from out a million hearts."

As I looked up to the sky, the Milky Way struck me as being the beam of the balance of hidden destiny, in whose weighing-pans (which are worlds) the broken, shattered, bleeding nations are weighed out for eternity. These destiny scales waver up and down as yet, because it was only a century or two ago that the weights were put into them.

[74] 'Pomp. Mel. de S. O.' i. 18.
[75] Switzerland and Holland.

We drew closer together, and (inspired by the night and the music) said, “Thou, poor country! may thy sun and thy day rise higher ere long, and cast away the blood-shirt of its morning red. May the higher genius wipe away the blood from thy hands, and the tears from thine eyes! Oh! may that genius build, support, and guard for ever the Grand Freedom Temple which is vaulted over thee like a second heaven: but also comfort every mother and every father, every child and every wife—and dry all eyes which weep for the beloved, crushed hearts which have bled and fallen, and now lie under that temple as basement stones.”

What I am going to say now can only be said to my brother, for nobody else would pardon it. Victor and I got into a boat, which was made fast with a rope to the bank, and which was drifting about with the current. We worked ourselves back to the bank, and then let the boat drift northwards again upon the ripples. In our souls (as in the world without us) sadness and exaltation were strangely blent: the music on the bank came and went—tones and stars rose and fell. The vault of heaven showed in the Rhine like some shattered bell, and up above us the dome of the temple wherein dwelleth Eternity lay in calm and motionless rest, with all its unchanging suns. From the eastward the spring breathed upon us, and the tree skeletons in the churchyard of the winter felt the presage of a near resurrection. Of a sudden Victor said—“It feels to me as though the river here were the stream of Time—our fluctuating life is carried along upon the waves of both towards the midnight.” Here my brother called to me from the island, “Brother, come into harbour and sleep; it is between one and two o’clock.”

This fraternal voice, coming to me athwart the music of the wavelets, suddenly brought a new world—perhaps the under-world—into my open soul. For a lightning flash of memory gleamed in a moment over all my dim being, reminding me that it was on this very night two-and-thirty years ago that I had made my entry upon this overclouded earth, shrouded with daily nights—and that this hour, between one and two o’clock, in which my brother was calling me into haven and to sleep, was the hour of my birth (which so often deprives man of both).

There come to us moments of twilight in which it seems as though day and night were in the act of dividing—as if we were in the very process of being created or annihilated; the stage of life and the spectators fly back out of view, our part is played out, we stand far off, in darkness and alone, but we have still got on our theatre dress, and we look at ourselves in it, and ask, “What is it that thou art, *now*, my *me*!” When we thus ask ourselves this, there is, beyond ourselves, nothing of great or of firm—everything has turned to an endless cloud of night (with rare and feeble gleams within it), which keeps falling lower and lower, and heavier with drops. Only high up above the cloud shines a resplendence—and that is God; and far beneath it a minute speck of light—and that is a human “Me”!

The heart is made of heavy earth, and therefore it cannot long endure such moments. I passed on to those sweeter seasons in which the full, tear-intoxicated heart neither can, nor will, do aught but simply weep. I had not the courage to drag my dear Victor down from the sublime region in which he was to my trifling pettinesses—but I asked him to remain beside me for a little time in this stillness which lay so silently upon the dark stream as it went flowing toward midnight and the south. Then I leant and pressed myself fondly to his side—and my little tears fell unseen into the great river—as though it had been the great stream of Time itself, into which all eyes drop their tears, and so many thousand hearts their blood-drops—for all which it neither swells nor flows the faster.

I thought as I gazed at the Rhine, “And thus, too, the dancing, billowy current of Life goes flowing on its course from out its source—hidden like the Nile’s. How little, as yet, have I done, or enjoyed! Our deserts, and our enjoyments, what petty things they are! Our *metamorphoses* are greater; our heads and our hearts go into the ground irrecognisable—altered a thousandfold—like the head of the man with the iron mask.[76] Ay! and *did* we but change! but we change so little in the earth, or even in ourselves. Every moment is to us the goal of all that have come before it. We take the seed of life for the harvest of it—the honey-dew on the ears for the sweet fruit—and we chew the flowers, like cattle! Ah! thou great GOD! what a night lieth around our sleep! we *fall* and *rise* with closed eyelids, and fly about blind, and in a deep slumber.”[77]

My hand was hanging into the water, and the cool ripples buoyed it up and down. I thought, “How straight and immovable the little light within us burns, amid the blasts of Nature’s storm! Everything around me contends and clashes together with gigantic might. The stream seizes upon the islands and the cliffs—the night-wind comes upon the river, and stalks across it, thrusting its wavelets back, and wages its strife with the forests—even up there in the tranquil blue, worlds are working against worlds—the eternal, endless mights flowing and rushing, like rivers, one against another, they come together in whirl and roar—and on the face of that eternal whirl the little worlds float eddying round the sun-vortex; nay, those shimmering constellations themselves rising zenithwards with that grand and gentle peace and calm—what are they but mountain ranges of raging sun-volcanoes, stretching into infinity beyond the reach of mind to follow. And yet the human spirit lies at rest amid this storm, peaceful as a quiet moon above a windy night. In me, at this moment, all is gentle peace. I see my own little life-brook running by me, falling, with all the rest, into the river of Time. The clear-eyed soul looks through the raging blood-rivers which are flowing round it, and through the storms which darken and obscure it, and sees, beyond them all, quiet meadows, gentle, peaceful waters, moon-shimmer, and a lovely, beautiful, tranquil, placid, peaceful angel slowly wandering there.” Yes, yes; within my soul there was a quiet Good Friday—wind-still, rain-free, and mild—neither cold nor over-warm—though shrouded in a tender cloud.

But a clear consciousness of rest is speedily the undoing thereof. I saw, floating near the island, three hyacinths which Clotilda had dropped into the wavelets as she went away. “Now, in this, thy birth-hour,” I said to myself, “the ocean of eternity is washing thousands of little hearts on to the stony shore of this world; how will it be with them one day when their birthday feast comes round? And what are your countless brothers who, with you, came thirty-two years ago into this vapour-ball, thinking now? Perhaps some terrible sorrow makes them think with bitterness of their first hour. Perhaps they sleep now—as I have slept—and must again—only deeper, deeper.” And then all my younger and older friends, now sleeping that deeper sleep, fell heavy upon my broken breast.

“I know, I think,” my Victor said, “what you are reflecting on so silently, and regretting so mutely.” I answered “No,” and then I told him all.

Then we went quickly back, and I put my arms about my other brother, and my heart went out in longing towards thee. At length we took our departure from this

[76] Which was so altered in appearance after his death by innumerable wounds, that they masked it as effectually us the iron one had done.
[77] There is a kind of sea-bird which sleeps on the wing, or floats up and down; and the motion of the sea is often what awakes it.

building-place of a more peaceful system of doctrine for our hearts—this quiet island; and the lofty hill—grand pedestal of the vases of our joy-flowers, chancel of the great temple, light-house tower in our haven of rest—seemed to gaze long after us, the hanging garden of our souls lying upon it in starry light.

And as we came to the shore, Hesperus, as star of the morning (spark which springs and shines so near the sun), rose up above the morning mists, and earlier than even the Aurora of morning, proclaimed his sire's approach. And as we thought that he shines, too, as the star of evening upon our nights here below, and yet adorns the east, and the after-midnight hours with the first of the glittering pearls of dew, each said to his gladsome heart, "And so shall all the evening stars of this our life shine upon us as stars of morning at a future day."

Think thou, too, of morning, my brother, when thou art looking upon the even; and when a sun is setting for thee, turn thee about and thou mayest see a moon rising in the east. The moon gives warrant that the sun is shining still—as Hope says, there still is happiness. But come now soon to thy Victor—and to

Thy Brother,

J. P.

END OF BOOK III.

Book IV

Chapter XV

ROSA VON MEYERN—TONE-ECHOES AND AFTER BREEZES FROM THE LOVELIEST OF ALL NIGHTS—LETTERS OF NATHALIE AND FIRMIAN—TABLE-TALK BY LEIBGEBER.

If on some dewy, warm and starry night of spring the miners in some salt mine were to have their great penthouse-roof of earth lifted away from over their heads, and find themselves thus, of a sudden, brought out from their confined, candle-lit cellar into the wide, dim, sleeping-hall of nature—out of their subterranean stillness in among the breezes, the perfumes, the whisperings of the spring—these miners would be exactly in Firmian's case, whose heretofore prisoned, silent, and serene soul the night just past had driven out of its prison with might, darkening it with new sorrows and joys, and a whole new world. Heinrich maintained a most speaking silence concerning the night in question, and, on the other hand, Firmian betrayed a mute hunting after speech. Strive as he might to fold those wings of his (which had been stretched all moist from under their wing-covers on that foregoing night for a first time), they *would not* fold quite short enough to go back under them again. Matters got to feel very oppressive and sultry for Leibgeber after a time. On that previous night they had come back in perfect silence to Bayreuth and to bed, and he wearied at the thought of all the demi-shades and demi-tints which would have to be got ready on the palette before so much as four bold touches could be given to the picture of the night.

Perhaps there is nothing more regrettable than that we do not all have the hooping-cough at one and the same time—or are not all suffering the sorrows of Werther—or are not all twenty-one, or sixty-one—or have not all hypochondria—or are not all spending our honeymoons—or indulging in games of banter. How charming it would be (were we all choristers singing in the same coughing-tutti) to find everybody else in just the same condition as ourselves—and put up with them therefore, and forgive in them that in which they were just like *us*! But as things really are—now when the one coughs to-day, and the other not till to-morrow (the simultaneous company-coughing in church always excepted); when one has to be taking dancing-lessons while another is saying his prayers in the conventicle; when one father's daughter is being held up at the font while the other's son is being lowered into his little grave;—*now*, when destiny is always striking on the hearts about us chords quite unrelated to the key of our own, or, at any rate, superfluous sixths, major sevenths, minor seconds;—now, as things are, in this universal lack of unison and harmony, what can be expected but a screeching cat-charivari—and, if we can't have a little melody, we must be content with a little *arpeggio-ing* up and down.

By way of a fever for conversation, or pump-handle wherewith to force a drop or two up from the heart, Leibgeber caught hold of Firmian's hand, and embraced it softly and warmly with all his fingers. He put one or two unimportant questions concerning what walks and expeditions they should think of for the day. But he had not foreseen that this hand-clasp would be the means of landing him in deeper difficulties of embarrassment,—for he found that it was now incumbent on him to keep a control on his *hand* as well as on his tongue—and he couldn't let Firmian's hand drop all in a moment, like a hot potato, but found it necessary to let it out of his clasp by a gradual *diminuendo*. This species of careful watch over his feelings was a process which made Leibgeber blush with shame, and drove him nearly frantic; and, indeed, he

would have thrown even this description of mine of it into the fire. I am given to understand that he never could bring himself to utter the word "heart" even to women—who always have their *heart* (namely the word) on their tongues, like a kind of *globus hystericus*. He said, "It is the bullet-screw of their real hearts,—the button on their fanfoil; and, to *me*, it is a poison *bolus*, a pitch-ball for the Bel of Babel."

So his hand escaped, on a sudden, from its close arrest; he seized his hat and stick, and cried: "I see you are just as great a goose as I am myself: *instanter*, *instantius*, *instantissime*, in three words, did you talk to her about the Widows' Fund? Yes or no—not another syllable. I go Out at that door this instant!" Siebenkæs brought out all his items of news on this subject as rapidly as possible, so as to be quit of each and all of them for ever. "She is certain to agree to it. I said nothing to her about it. I *can* NOT. But *you* can quite easily. And you must. I am going no more to Fantasie. And we shall have a grand time of it this afternoon, Heinrich! The music of our lives shall be of a sounding sort. The pedals of the joy-notes are all ready on our harps to be pressed down; and we'll press them!" Heinrich, partly recovering his equanimity, said, as he went out, "The Cremona strings of the human instrument are made of living membrane, the breast is only the sounding board—and the head is the damper."

Solitude lay around our friend like some beautiful country—all the echoes, driven away from him, and wandering, lost and astray, could find their way back to him now athwart it. And on the crape-veil, woven of the twelve past hours, which had laid itself over his life's loveliest historical picture, he could tremblingly trace that picture's lines with crayon-pencil, and trace, and trace them over again, a thousand and a thousand times! But a visit to the beautiful Fantasie—blooming richer and fairer as the hours went by—this he must deny himself; for he must not be a *living* hedge, to fence and bar Nathalie from that Valley of Blossom. He must pay for bliss with privation. The charms of the town and neighbourhood had still their bright, many-tinted skins—but their sweet kernels were gone. Everything was to him as some dessert dish which had, in the older time, had coloured sugar sprinkled over it, which was now, somehow, turned to coloured sand. All his hopes—all the flowers and fruit of his life (as is the case with our higher ones)—now grew and matured beneath the ground, like those of the subterranean vetch;[78] I mean, in the sham grave into which he was going. How little he had—and yet, how much! His feet were upon prickly rose branches, and all round the Elysian fields of his future he saw thorny bushes, bristly undergrowth, and a wall built, beginning at his grave. His Leipzig rose valley was dwindled into the one green rosebud-twig, which had been transplanted, unblown, from Nathalie's heart to his. And yet, how much he *had*. A forget-me-not, from Nathalie, for all his life to come (the silken ones she gave him were but the hulls of that whose blossom was immortal and eternal); a springtime in his soul at last, at last after all these many springs—to be *so* beloved, for the first time by a woman as an hundred dreams and poets had pictured to him that men *might* be beloved. To pass, in an instant, at a single step, from his dingy lumber room of old law papers and books into the fresh, green, flowery, golden age of love,—for the first time, not only to gain a rare and priceless love like this, but to take away with him *such* a parting kiss, like a sun into all his coming life, to light and warm it through and through for ever! *This* was bliss for one who had had his cross to bear in former days. But, more than this, he was free to let himself be borne along upon the beauteous

[78] This vetch has some of its flowers and fruit above ground, but most of them *under* it; though the latter are white.—Linnæus.

waves of this river of Eden without care or constraint, inasmuch as Nathalie never could be his, nor should he ever see her more. In Lenette he had loved no Nathalie as in the latter no Lenette. His wedded love was a prosaic summer day of sultry hay-making, but *this* was a poetic spring night of starlight and flowers, and his new world was like the name of the spot where it was created—Fantaisie. He did not deceive himself as to the fact that, as he was going to die before Nathalie, he was loving, in her, merely a departed spirit, and that *as* a departed spirit—nay, while yet in this life, of a truth, for *him*, a pure and glorified risen soul; and he freely put the question to himself whether there were any reason why he should not love this Nathalie (thus departed into the past, for *him*) as truly and fondly as any other, departed long since into a yet remoter past—the Heloise of an Abelard or St. Preux, or a poet's Laura, or a Werther's Lotte for whom his dying was not even to be as real as Werther's.

With all his efforts, he could not manage to say more to Leibgeber than, "She must have been very, very fond of *you*, this rare, exceptional soul—for it is only to my resemblance to you that I can ascribe her heavenly kindness to *me*—who am so little like other men—and have never been cared for by women." Leibgeber—and he himself as soon as he said it—laughed at this almost idiotic statement; but what is any and every lover, during his May month, but a dear, genuine, simple sheep?

Leibgeber soon came back to the hotel with the news that he had seen the English lady on her way to Fantaisie. Firmian was very glad of it. She rendered his resolve to shut himself out of the entire circle of delight easier to execute. For she was the Count von Vaduz's daughter, and consequently must not see him (Siebenkæs) at present, having to believe him hereafter to be Leibgeber. Heinrich botanised, however, the whole day on the flowery slope of Fantaisie, with the view of discovering and observing the flower *goddess*, rather than the flowers, with his botanical glasses (to wit, his eyes). But no goddess appeared. Alas! our poor wounded Nathalie had *so many* reasons for keeping aloof from the ruins of her loveliest hours—for fleeing the scene of conflagration (now overgrown with flowers) where she might encounter him whom she meant to meet no more.

A few days after this, the Venner Rosa von Meyern honoured the company at the *table d'hôte* in the 'Sun' with *his*.... If the author's calculations as to dates do not wholly mislead him, he was at dinner there on that occasion himself. But I have only an indistinct recollection of the two advocates, and none at all of the Venner—because coxcombs of his description are an uninteresting species of animals, and there are whole game-preserves and zoological gardens full of them to be met with at all times. I have more than once met with characters, in the body, whom I have subsequently taken careful wax casts of from the crowns of their heads to the soles of their boots, and then exhibited them about the country in my collection of wax-work figures. But I wish I always knew beforehand exactly *which* of the people whom I happen to be dining or travelling with chances to be the one who is going to have his portrait painted in this way. I should note down, and store up a thousand trifling, minute peculiarities, and lay them down in my epistolary cellars. As it is, I sometimes find myself obliged (and I confess it freely) to set to work and *coolly lie* a number of matters of minor importance—for instance, that a thing takes place about six o'clock, or about seven—if I happen to be wholly without documentary evidence on the point. Wherefore it is a moral certainty that if three other authors had sat down, on the same morning with me, to give the world an account of Siebenkæs's wedded life derived from the same historical sources as mine, that we four, however great our devotion to truth, would have produced family histories containing much the same

amount and description of inaccuracy as we find in those which the four Evangelists have given us; so that our tetrachord would have stood in need of a good tuning with a tuning-pipe in the shape of a "Harmony" of our Gospels.

Meyern dined at the 'Sun,' as we have said. He told Siebenkæs with a triumph, which was not without a dash of menace, that he was going back to Kuhschnappel next day. He was vainer than ever—probably he had offered his hand to some fifty of the fair sex of Bayreuth, as though he had been the giant Briareus, with fifty wedding-rings on his hundred hands. He was as greedy of the fair sex as cats are of *marum verum*; which is why both are surrounded with *metallic* guards by their possessors. When the clergy rivet poachers of this description, alive, to one particular animal of their chase by means of a strong wedding-ring, and the animal of the chase in question drags them through every thicket till they are scratched and bled to death, philanthropic weekly-papers would say that it is too severe a punishment; and it is so, no doubt, for the poor animal of the chase.

On the following day Rosa really did send to ask whether Siebenkæs had any message to send to his wife, as he was going back to see her.

Nathalie was invisible still. All that Firmian saw of her was a letter for her which he saw shaken out of the post-bag when he went (as he did every day) to see if there was one from his wife. Lenette did not require more hours to write a letter than Isocrates did years for a panegyric on the Athenians—no more, but just the same number, namely about ten. Judging by the handwriting and the seal, the letter for Nathalie was from the (step) father of his country, Herr von Blaise. "Thou darling girl," thought Firmian, "with what deliberation he will pass the burning focus of his burning-glass (formed of the ice of his heart) over every wound of thy soul! How many secret tears wilt thou weep—and no one to count them; and thou hast no hand now to dry them and hide them, except thine own!"

One exquisite, blue afternoon he went alone to the only pleasure garden which was not barred against him—the Hermitage. Memories met him every where—all painfully sweet memories. At every spot he had lost, or renounced, something of life or heart—had become a hermit, in accordance with the place's name. Could he forget the great, dim glade where, beside his kneeling friend, and before the setting sun, he had sworn to die, and part from his wife and from all the world he knew?

He left the joy-place, turned his face to the setting sun (which almost hid, in its brightness, the prospect from his sight), and strolled in circles round the town. With a deeply moved heart he gazed after the gently radiant luminary as it sank, amid the glowing cloud-embers, towards that distant spot where his widowed Lenette would be standing in her silent room, with her face lighted up by the evening red. "Ah! dear, good Lenette," the voice within him cried, "why can I not press thee to this full, tender heart, here in this paradise, in bliss? I should love thee better here, and forgive thee easier."

Yes, of a truth, it is thou, kind Nature—never ending Love, who changest, in us, distance of body into nearness of soul. It is thou who, when we are utterly happy in some distant spot, bringest to us from afar, in fancy, the beloved forms of those whom we have had to leave—they come like beautiful music, or like happy years—and we stretch out our arms to the clouds that go soaring over the hills beyond which lie the dwellings of those whom we love the best. Our severed hearts open to those distant ones as the flowers which open to the sun unfold their petals even on days when there are clouds between them.

The splendour died away, leaving the blood-like track of the sunken sun in the blue; the earth with her gardens seemed to stand out brighter and clearer. Then suddenly Firmian came on the green Tempè Vale of Fantaisie, lying before him all loveliness of sight and of sound, tinted with the red of the evening clouds and with the white of blossoming boughs. But over it stood an angel with a gleaming cloud streak for sword, saying, "Here enter thou not! Knowest thou not the Eden from whence thou hast gone out?"

Firmian turned him about, and there, in the gloaming of spring, leaned upon the wall of the first of the Bayreuth houses he reached on his homeward way; so that the wounds of his eyes might have a chance to grow whole—that he might not meet his friend bearing scars which would have to be "explained." Leibgeber was not in, however, but there was something there of a very unexpected kind—a letter from Nathalie to him.

Ye who have keenly felt—or deeply regretted—that there is a Moses-veil, an altar-railing, a prison-grating, made both of body and earth—stretched out for ever and aye, between one soul and another—*ye* cannot well blame this poor, deep-touched, solitary FRIEND, that he took up the cold paper unseen, and pressed it to his burning lips, and to his trembling heart. For of a truth, every *body*—even the human body, is, from the soul's point of view, merely the sacred *reliquiæ* of an invisible spirit; and not only the letter, which you kiss, but the hand which wrote it, too, is, like the lips, whose kiss *you think*, assures you—(but it is a deceptive assurance)—of the *closeness* of your union, your *flowing* or *fusing* into one, only the sacred outward and visible sign of a something higher and dearer; and these deceptions differ only in their sweetness.

Leibgeber came in, opened the letter, and read it aloud:

"To-morrow morning at five o'clock, I shall be turning my back upon your beautiful town. I am going to Schraplau. But I cannot leave this lovely valley, oh dear friend, without once again giving you the assurance of my unchanging friendship, and conveying to you my thanks and wishes for yours. I should so have liked to say good-bye to you in a more living manner; but my long leave-taking from my English friend is not yet over, and I have now *her* wishes to combat (as I had my *own* before) before I can bury myself in, or rather, wing my flight to my village solitude. This beautiful spring has sorely wounded me, and that with joys as well as with sorrows. But (if I may go so far afield for a comparison), my heart, like Cranmer's, is left for those I love, unconsumed amid the ashes of my funereal pyre. May all go well! well! with you—better than can ever be the case with me, a woman. Fate cannot take much from you, nay, nor give you much either. There are smiling eternal rainbows playing around *all* the waterfalls for you; but the rain-clouds of a woman's heart must drop for many a long day ere they are brightened by the sad, yet cheering tints of the Iris which memory casts upon them at length. *Your* friend is with you still, no doubt. Press him warmly to your heart, and tell him, all that *yours* wishes, and *gives* him, mine *wishes* him; and never will he, or you, whom he loves, be forgotten by me. Always

"Your Nathalie."

During the reading of this, Firmian stood with his face pressed to the window, and lifted towards the evening sky. Heinrich, with a true friend's delicacy of perception, took the answer out of his lips, and said, looking to him, "Yes, this Nathalie is good and kind, in very truth, and a thousand times better than thousands of other people

are; but I will let myself be driven over by her carriage, and crushed beneath the wheels of it, if I don't wait for her at four o'clock in the morning, get into the carriage, and sit down beside her. Ay, verily! I will get her to lend me both her ears, and I will fill them full—or my own are longer than any elephant's, though he *does* use his for fly-flappers."

"Yes, do, dear Henry," said Firmian, in the most cheerful tones he could force from his oppressed throat. "I shall give you three lines to take in your hand, just that you may have something to give her, since I am never to see her again."

There is a certain lyric intoxication of heart, during which people never ought to write letters, because, in the course of fifty years or so they may, perhaps fall into the hands of people who are without either the heart or the intoxication. However, Firmian wrote, and did not seal; and Leibgeber did not read.

"*I* bid you farewell, too! But *I* cannot say 'Don't forget me.' Ah! forget me! But leave me the forget-me-not which you gave me—to keep for evermore. Though Heaven is past and over, death has yet to come. And mine is now very near, and it is for this reason alone that I, and my dear Leibgeber even more urgently, have a favour to beg of you; but such a *strange* favour. Nathalie, do not refuse. Your soul's sphere is far, far above that of the feminine souls which are shocked and frightened at everything out of the commonplace track. *You* can dare, and can venture, nor need you fear to risk that great heart of yours (and happiness) on any cast. And now, as I spoke to you on *that* night, for the last time, this is the last time I shall write to you.

"But Eternity remains for thee and me!

"F. S."

His sleep was nothing but dreams all night, that he might be sure to awaken Leibgeber in the morning. But as early as three o'clock, the latter, in his capacity of letter-carrier, and *Maître des Requêtes*, was posted under a great linden-tree, whose hanging beds, thronged with a sleeping world of inhabitants, overhung the alley by which Nathalie was to come. Firmian, in bed, enacted Henry's part along with him, in fancy, thinking to himself, "Now she is bidding the English lady good-bye; now she is getting into the carriage; now she is passing the tree, and he is taking her horses by the bridle." He phantasised himself into dreams which stabbed his heart with pictures of her repeated refusals of his petition. What a quantity of dark and cloudy weather is born of one single, bright, starry night, in the physical world as well as in the moral. At last he dreamed that she stretched her hand to him, from her carriage, with tears in her eyes, and the green rose-twig on her breast, and said, in low sweet tones, "I *must* say no! Could *I* live long, if *you* were dead?" She pressed his hand so warmly that he awoke. The pressure was there, and lasted, and before him was the beaming daylight, and his beaming friend, who said, "She has agreed, while you've been snoring here."

He had been within a hair's breadth of missing her. She had not taken so much time to dress and depart as others do to *un*dress and arrive. A rose-branch, wet with dew, whose leaves pricked sharper than its thorns, was on her heart, and the long parting had tinted her lids with red. She was delighted to see him, though a little frightened, and anxious to hear. He gave her Firmian's open letter, to begin with, by way of credential. Her eager eyes shone out once more through two tear-drops, and she asked, "What am I to do?" "Nothing," said Leibgeber, in an artful manner, half jest, half earnest, "except allow the Prussian Treasury to remind you of his death twice a-year, as if you were his widow." She answered, "No!" pronouncedly, on one note,

behind which, however, there was only a comma, not a full stop. He once more went through his petitions, and his reasons, adding, “Do it, at least, for *my* sake, if for no other reason. I can’t bear to see him baulked of a wish, or disappointed in a hope. He is a bear whom that bear-leader, the State, keeps dancing all the winter, without a wink of winter sleep, whereas *I* seldom take my paw out of my mouth, but suck away continually. He kept awake all last night, so as to make sure of calling me in time, and he is counting the moments anxiously at home now.” She read the letter again, syllable by syllable. He did not ask for a final answer, but spun out a talk on other subjects—the morning, her journey, the village of Schraplau. The morning had already raised her pillar of fire beyond Bayreuth, the town kept adding pillars of smoke; in a few minutes he must out of the carriage and back. “And so, fare you well,” he said, in the softest of tones, with one foot on the carriage-step; “may your future grow brighter and brighter, like the day about us. And now, *what* last word am I to carry to my *good*, *dear* beloved Firmian?” (I shall make a remark in a minute or two.) She lowered her travelling-veil like the drop curtain of a drama which is done, and said in low and stifled accents, “If I must, I must; so let *this* be, also. But you are giving me *another* great sorrow to take with me on my way.” Here he jumped down, and the carriage, bearing this poor soul—poor now in so many ways—rolled on with her over the shattered ruins of her youthful life.

If he had got a “No” instead of this hard wrung-out “Yes,” he would have caught her again on the other side of the town, and been her fellow-traveller for another fragment of her journey.

I said above, that I should “make a remark;” it is this: that the friendship or love which a woman has for a man is fed by that which she sees existing between him and his friends, and grows visibly in consequence—converting it, polyp-fashion, into its own substance. It was for this reason that Leibgeber, by instinct, had given such warm expression to *his*. In the case of us, masculine lovers, again, this sort of electric coating, or magnetic armature of our love with the friendship of our beloved object with other women is most uncommon. What pleases *us*, is to see her shrinking from everybody else, growing hard and frozen to them on our account, handing *them* nothing but ices and cold pudding, but serving us with glowing goblets of love. This process of making the heart, like wine, more fiery and strong, and generous, by freezing it at the boiling-point, may please a short-sighted selfish soul; but never a clear-seeing, kindly, loving one. At all events, the author declares that, whenever *he* has caught a glimpse—in a mirror or in water—of the reverse side of the Janus-head, of which the other side has been smiling in love upon him, frowning in dislike upon the rest of the world, he has made a face or two of the same disliking sort on the spot—at the Janus-head. For the mere contrast’s sake, a girl should never slander, find fault, or dislike, at all events, while she is a lover; when she is a married woman, the mistress of a house, and has children, and cows, and servants, of course no reasonable man or husband, can possibly object to a moderate amount of bad temper, and a little scolding now and then.

Nathalie had acceded to the strange proposal for many reasons; just because it *was* a strange one; and then the word “widow” would, to her romantic heart, be constantly weaving a mourning-band of sorrow, binding her and Firmian together, and winding in charming and fanciful wreaths round the events, and the vows, of the night of their good-bye. Besides, to-day, she had been gradually ascending from one emotion to another, and had reached a height where her head began to reel. Moreover, she was boundlessly unselfish, and consequently never troubled herself to think whether a

thing had the *appearance* of selfishness or not. And, lastly, she cared less about appearances in general, and the conclusions people drew from them than, perhaps, a young lady *should* care.

Leibgeber, now that all his goals were reached, emitted a long, gladsome zodiacal light; and Firmian did not darken it with the full depth of his mourning night shadow, but only with the half-tints thereof. At the same time, he felt he could not visit either of Bayreuth's pleasure-places, Eremitage or Fantaisie, which were Herculaneum and Portici to him now. Yet he *must* pass by the latter on his homeward way, and disinter many things that were buried. He did not care to delay his return much longer; not only was the moon set now, which had shed a new silvery radiance upon all the white flowers and blossoms of the spring, but Leibgeber, besides, was a death's head *memento mori*, always saying, in the most unmistakable manner—though with neither lips nor tongue—"It must be borne in mind that thou hast got to die, in Kuhschnappel, in jest." Leibgeber's heart burned for the world without, the flames of his forest-conflagration were eager to dart and play uncontrolled over alps, islands, capital cities; the Vaduz water reservoir of acts of parliament—paper *lit-de-parade* and *lit-de-justice*—would have been to *him* a heavy, suffocating, feather-bed, such as people in a hopeless state of hydrophobia used to be smothered by out of compassion. In fact, a small town could as little endure him as he could endure a small town. Indeed, even in Bayreuth—a larger place—there were sundry *Commissaires de Justice* at the *table d'hôte* at the 'Sun' Hotel, who told me with their own lips, that when Leibgeber spoke his table-speech (reported in Chapter XII.) on the subject of Crown Princes, they thought it was a deliberate satire on a particular Margrave then reigning; whereas all his satires were really directed against the human race in *general*, not against individuals. Again, how thoughtlessly he conducted himself during the poor eight days which he spent in our good town of Hof im Voigtlande. Are there not credible "Varisker" (as according to some authorities the inhabitants of Voigtland were called in Cæsar's time—though others consider "Narisker" to have been the word), who have assured me that he bought bergamot pears in the open market-place, near the court-house, and cakes at a baker's stall, in his best suit of Sunday clothes? And are there not Nariskers of the fair sex, who, having observed his proceedings thereafter, are ready to depose that, though stall-feeding is a matter of universal enjoinment, he nevertheless ate this food-offering in the open air like a prince, and on the march, like a Roman army? There are witnesses, who waltzed with him, to testify that he went to masked balls in a *robe de chambre* and a cocked-hat and feathers, and that he had worn both all the previous day in earnest, before putting them on in the evening in jest. A Narisker not without some brains, and possessing a good memory, who was not aware that I had the fellow under my historical hands, repeated the following somewhat audacious utterances of Leibgeber's.

"Every man is a born pedant. There are very few who are hung in chains *after* they are dead: but almost every one *is* hung, in most accursed chains, *before* death; and, therefore, in most countries, 'Freeman' means provost-marshal, or hangman. Jest, as such, ought to be serious; therefore, as long as one is only in jest, it is wrong to jest in the slightest degree. He held, that the spirit which brooded, creating, over the ink of colleges was (as many Fathers of the Church held that to be which, according to Moses, moved upon the face of the waters) *wind*. In his eyes, worshipful councils, conferences, deputations, sessions, processions, &c., were not, at bottom, wholly without a spice of comic salt, looked upon as grave parodies of stiff and empty seriousness, more especially as in general there was but one member of the conclave

(or perhaps his wife) who really voted, decided, or ruled, the mystic *corpus* itself, sitting at the green table, chiefly for the joke of the thing; just as, in flute clocks, though there is a flute-player screwed on outside whose fingers work up and down upon the flute, which grows out of his mouth, and children are beyond themselves with delight at the talent of the wooden imposition, every clockmaker knows that it is *inside* that the wheels are which act on the hidden pipes with their pinions." I answered that these sayings showed that Leibgeber was of a rather audacious and ironical turn of mind. It is, perhaps, to be desired, that everybody were in a position to do what the author does in this place, namely, beg all Nariskers to have the goodness to point to any single word or deed of his which can be called satirical, or not exactly adapted to fit on to the cap-block of a *pays coutumier*. If he is not speaking the truth, he begs that he may be contradicted without the slightest hesitation.

The winnowing-fan which blew Siebenkæs out of Bayreuth on the following day, was a letter from the Count von Vaduz, in which he expressed his friendly regret on account of Leibgeber's cold-fever and tallowy appearance, at the same time begging him to hasten his entry upon the duties of his office. This letter was to Siebenkæs as a wing-membrane wherewith to hasten his flight to his seeming cocoon-grave, in order to issue forth from it a young full-fledged inspector. In our next chapter he turns him about, and quits the beautiful town. In what remains of this, he is taking private lessons in silhouette clipping from Leibgeber, whose *rôle* he is to succeed to by dying. The master-cutter, and scissorial-mentor did nothing, in this connection, worthy of being handed down to posterity by me save one thing, as to which I do not find a word in my documents, which was told me by Mr. Feldmann, the keeper of the hotel, who was carving at table when it occurred. It was only that a stranger who was dining there clipped out a profile of Leibgeber, among others; while Leibgeber, seeing what he was about, clipped out, under cover of the table-cloth, a silhouette of this supernumerary copyist's *own* head and shoulders, and when the latter handed him his, Leibgeber returned the compliment, saying "*al Pari*!" thus paying him in his own coin. This stranger made airs of various kinds, as well as silhouettes, but succeeded best with the *phlogistic* sort, which he made with his lungs, without any difficulty to speak of, and in which he throve and took on colour, as plants do; this sort of air can be breathed, and is designated by the name of "wind," to distinguish it from the other phlogistic gases which can not be inhaled. When this phlogistic wind-maker (who gave admirable lectures from town to town, on the other gases, from that portable professorial chair, his body) had departed with his cutter's wages, Heinrich contented himself with the following remarks.

"Thousands of people ought to travel and teach both at once. He who limits himself to three days can certainly (as a species of private tutor extraordinary) in that time read excellent lectures on every kind of subject which he knows little or nothing about. Thus much I see already, that there are brilliant comets—shining wandering stars—revolving round me and others, and throwing flying lights upon us concerning electricity, gases, magnetism, in short natural science in general; but this is but a small matter. May this duck's wing choke me if these rostrum carriers, and travelling professors (travelling scholars they are not), might not lecture upon science of *every* kind, with great advantage, at all events, upon the minuter branches. Could not *one*, for instance, travel and read lectures upon the first century after Christ's birth, or the first millenary before it (which is no longer), I mean, tell ladies and gentlemen all about it in a lecture or two, a second undertaking the second, a third the third, an eighteenth our own? I can quite imagine travelling medicine-chests for the soul of

this kind. But as far as I am concerned, I should by no means stop at this point—I should advertise myself as a peripatetic private tutor in branches of the minutest possible order; *e. g.*, in electoral courts, I should give lessons concerning the obligations to be entered into by the nominees to government appointments; in all and every place I should give exegetical instruction concerning the first verse of the first book of Moses—the *kraken*, the devil (who *may*, perhaps, be more or less the same as the other), on Hogarth's tail-piece, in connection with Vandyke's headpieces, on coins and in portraits; on the true distinction between the Hippocentaur, and the Onocentaur, which is more like that between genius and German criticism than anything else; on the first paragraph of Wolf, or even of Pütter; on the funeral bier of Louis (XIV.) the be-grandised, and the public rejoicings under it; on the academic licences which a passing lecturer may allow himself to take, in addition to that of pocketing his fee—the greatest of which is often that of shutting the lecture-room door, (to make a long story short) on *everything*, in fact. If we go on in this way (I can't help being struck), that when circulating high schools have got to be as common as village schools—when savants ply backwards and forwards like live shuttles between the towns (and they have begun to do so already), attaching Ariadne threads (of *talk*, at all events) everywhere, to everything, with the view of weaving them into something or other—if we go on on this road, I say, when each sun of a professor—on the Ptolemaic system, moves about among the dark orbs (fixed upon necks), which surround him, and casts his light upon each in turn (a state of things wholly opposed to the Copernican system, according to which the sun stands still on the professorial rostrum in the centre of the orbits of the revolving planets or students)—if we go on (I say once more, on this road), one may be pretty sure that the world will really come to be something at last; a *learned* world, at the very least and lowest—philosophers will obtain the true philosopher's stone—gold; what fools will obtain will be the philosophers, and knowledge of every kind: and moreover the restorers of science will get set upon *their* legs. All soil would then be classic soil—so that people would of necessity have to plough, and fight on, classic soil. Every gallows hill would be a Pindus, every prince's throne an oracle-cave of Delphi—and I should be obliged to anyone who should show me such a thing as a single ass in the whole of Germany, *then*. This is what would necessarily happen if all the world were to set out upon learned, and instructive, journeys—that portion of it being, of course, necessarily excepted which would be obliged to stay at home if there were to be anybody to listen and pay (like the *point de vue*, in military 'evolutions,' for which the adjutant is generally told off)."

Here he suddenly jumped up, and cried, "I wish to Heaven I could go to Bruckenau;[79] there, on the bath tubs, should be my professorial chair, and seat of the Muses. The tradesman's, the country gentleman's wife or daughter should lie, like a shell fish, in her closed basin and relic-casquet, with nothing sticking out but her head (just as is the case in her ordinary costume), her head which it would be my business to instruct. What discourses, *à la* St. Anthony of Padua, should I not hold with these tender tench—or sirens—though they might better be described as fortresses

[79] At page 163 of the 'Pocket-Book for Watering Places, and Visitors to them,' it is stated that while the ladies are lying bolted into their baths, young gentlemen sit on the covers and entertain them while they are under water. Against which arrangement *Reason* certainly can urge no valid objection, for the wood of the baths is quite as thick as silk; and when all is said, Everybody is, if covered at all, always in some covering *inside* of which he or she is altogether *devoid* of covering—though perhaps *Fancy*, and *Imagination* may urge this objection, that a bed-quilt a quarter of a yard thick would not be quite so becoming, or close-fitting a ball-dress as a gauze. If once the Innocence of the imagination be offended, there is no other to spare; the senses cut neither be innocent nor the contrary.

protected by moats, or wet ditches. I should sit lecturing and teaching upon the wooden holsters of their glowing charms (phosphorus-like, kept in water!) But this would be nothing compared to the benefits I should bestow upon society were *I* to have *my*self cooped into an *etui*, or scabbard of the kind, and then be net a-going like a water-organ, and, like some water-god, devote my pedagogical talents to the edification of the class of students sitting on my tub-lid! True, I should have to make my illustrative gestures under the warm water, because the only part of me out of my sheath would be my head (like the hilt of a dagger), with my master's cap on it. But the loveliest of doctrine,—luxuriant rice-ears, and succulent aquatic plants sprouting in the water—a play of philosophic water-works, and so forth, should be emitted from the bath, and send away all the beauties (whom, in fancy, I see thronging round my quaker's and Diogenes' tub) besprinkled with learning and instruction of the most superlative description. By Heaven! I ought to be off to Bruckenau this instant, not so much as a watering-place guest as in the capacity of a private tutor."

Chapter XVI

THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY, WITH ALL ITS PLEASURES—THE ARRIVAL AT HOME.

Firmian took his departure. He was sorry to leave the hotel, which had been a royal "Sans Souci" and "mon repos" to him, and turn his face away from its comfortable chambers towards his own bare comfortless rooms. To him who had never known any of the comforts—the soft *paddings*, so to speak, of this hard life of ours—who had never had any other Jack but the boot-jack, it had been an enormous pleasure and enjoyment to have the power of ringing that leading actor, John the waiter, up from his *coulisses* with such facility, and that too with plates and glasses in his hand, out of which said actor enjoyed nothing, only Siebenkæs and the public so doing. Just at the door of the hotel, he made to Mr. Feldmann, the landlord, the following eulogistic address, which shall be made him once more in print by me, by way of an additional blazon to his coat of arms, the moment it gets through the press. "There is only one thing which your guests have to desire, that they have not got, and that is the most important of all things—time. May your sun reach the sign of the crab, and remain in it." Several Bayreuthians who were standing by thought this was a miserable satire.

Henry went with Firmian some thirty paces beyond the Reformation church, as far as the church-yard, and tore himself away from him with less difficulty than usual, for he expected to see him again in a few weeks' time—on his death-bed. He would not go as far as Fantaisie with him, wishing to allow him to sink, in silence and undisturbed, and lose himself in the enjoyment of the magic echoes of the spirit-harmonies of that night of bliss wherewith all the garden would be vocal.

Alone, then, Firmian entered into the valley as into some holy temple, all sacredness and awe. Every thicket seemed, to his eyes, glorified with super-earthly light, the stream, a stream flowing out of Arcadia, and the whole valley a Vale of Tempè, transported thither and unveiled to view. And when he came to the dear and holy spot where Nathalie had prayed him to "think of that night," it seemed to him that the sun was shedding a heavenlier brightness; and that the hum of bees in the blossoms was music of spirit-voices wafted on the air, and that he must needs prostrate himself and press his heart upon the dewy sward. Upon this trembling sound-board he once more retraced the old path by which he had walked with Nathalie, and, now in a rose espalier, now from some streamlet, now from the balcony, now from some leafy nook or trembling stem, string after string, breaking from silence, gave forth once more its old lovely tone. His enraptured heart swelled, even to pain; a moist transparent shimmer was over his eyes, and dissolved into a great tear-drop. His eyes, drunken with weeping, distinguished nothing save the brightness of the morning and the whiteness of the flowers; details were hid by the flowery vail of dreaming, in whose lily perfume his soul sank down, soothed to a restful sleep. It was as if hitherto, in the enjoyment of being with his Leibgeber he had only felt half the real strength of his love for Nathalie; with such a new might and breeze of heaven did that love come breathing upon him in this solitude with ethereal tire. A world all youth burst into blossom in his heart.

Of a sudden the bells of Bayreuth came ringing into this world, striking for him the hour of his farewell to it; and there fell on him that anxious sadness with which we

linger, too long, beside a place where we have been happy, when the time has come when we must say Adieu. He went upon his way.

What a brightness fell upon all the hills and meadows, with the thought of Nathalie, and that imperishable kiss! The green world, which had been but a series of pictures for him, as he came, was now all speech and language. There was a light-magnet of happiness all day long in the dimmest corner of his being; and when, in the thick of distractions, conversations and the like, *en route*, he cast a sudden glance into himself, he found a continual sense of blissfulness within him.

How often he turned back to the Bayreuth hills, beyond which he had lived real days of youth, for the first time in his existence! Behind him Nathalie was journeying on towards the east, and breezes from that quarter—airs which had breathed gently around the distant, lonely one—came wafting back to him, and he drunk the æther-stream like the breath of one beloved.

The hills sunk low on the horizon; his paradise was whelmed in the blue of heaven. His west and Nathalie's east flowed asunder, and parted wider, faster and faster as the moments sped. One beautiful plain receded, flying behind him, after another; and he hastened past the flower-decked limbs of Spring as she lay outstretched on earth, alternating between looking and enjoying, as in early days gone by.

Thus he came at evening to the village in the valley by the Jaxt, where on his journey to Bayreuth, he had passed in review, with tears, his loveless days; but he came with a new heart, full to the brim with love and happiness; and tears flowed this time too. Here where, amid the melting magic lights of evening, he had asked himself, "What womanly soul has ever loved *you* as your old dreams have so often pictured to your heart you *might* be loved by one," and had given himself so sad an answer; here he could think on that Bayreuth night, and say, "Yes! Nathalie has loved me!" And then the old sorrow rose again, but glorified, from the dead. He had made to her a vow of invisibility here on earth; he was now journeying on towards his own death; he was to die, and never see her more. She was gone before him—had *died* first, as it were; she had merely taken away with her into the long, dim, coming years of her life the grief of having loved and lost, *twice*. "And I look into my own life here, and weep, away from her," he said, wearily, and closed his eyes undried.

Another world altogether opened upon him in the morning—not a new world by any means—the old, old familiar one. Just as if the concentric magic circles which surrounded Nathalie and Leibgeber reached no further than the little Valley of Longing on the Jaxt, and could include nothing beyond it. Every step towards home translated the poetry which had come into his life to poetic prose. The Imperial market-town (that frigid zone of his life) was nearer to him; his torrid zone, over which the faded petals of his ephemeral joy-flowers were fluttering still, was far away behind him.

But, on the other hand, the pictured imagery of his domestic life kept growing clearer and brighter, taking the form of a picture-bible, while the paintings of his month of bliss died away into a dark picture gallery. I think the weather, which was rainy, had some connection with this.

Towards the end of the week the weather, as well as penitents and churchgoers, puts on other shirts and clothes.

It was Saturday, and cloudy. Damp weather affects the walls of our brains as it does the walls of our rooms; the paperings of both imbibe the moisture, and get curled up

into clouds, until the next dry day smooths both out again. Under a blue sky, I long for eagles' pinions; under a cloudy one, I only want a goose's wing to write with. In the former case we are eager to be off and out, into the wide world; in the latter, all we want is to sit comfortably down in our arm-chair. In short, clouds, when they drop, make us domestic, citizenish, and hungry, while blue skies make us thirsty, and citizens *of the world*.

These clouds of this Saturday formed a kind of palisade about the Eden of Bayreuth. Every big drop which fell on the leaves made him think longingly of the wifely, wedded heart, which was his lawful property (and which he was soon to lose), and of his poor little lodging. At last when the ice-floes of the rugged-clouds melted into grey foam, and the setting sun was drawn like a sluice, out of this suspended mill-pond, and it poured down in consequence, Kuhschnappel came in sight.

Discordant, jarring fancies clanged in contention within him. The commonplace, narrow-minded, provincial town, seemed, when contrasted with freer and more liberal places and societies, so crowded and crushed together, so official in style, and full of Troglodytes—with doggrel, and table-verses by way of poetry—that he felt it would be a satisfaction to drag out his green trellis-bed into the market-place in broad daylight, and go to sleep beneath the very windows of the local "quality," without minding a brass-farthing what the upper council might think, or the lower council either. The nearer he came to the stage he was to die upon, the more difficult did this first rôle of his (and last but one) appear to him.

Away from home we are bold and daring: we resolve, and undertake; *at* home, we pause and hesitate, and delay.

Yes, and the smoke and smells of the mean streets gnawed into him, matters which, of themselves unaided, so sorely affect and depress us that there are very few indeed who can raise their heads wholly beyond these effluvia. For in man there nestles an accursed tendency towards still-sitting ease and comfort; like a big dog he lets himself be poked and pinched a thousand times before he takes the trouble to get up, rather than growl. Once fairly on his legs, however, he is not in a hurry to lie down again. The first heroic deed (like the first earned dollar, according to Rousseau) costs more than the next thousand. The prospect of the long, difficult, tedious and risky financial and surgical operation of a stage death stung our Siebenkæs on the domestic bolster.

But the nearer he drew to the gallows-hill (that mouse-tower of his old, narrow life), the quicker and the clearer did the thoughts of the heart-oppressing stamping-mills of past days, and of his approaching salvation, vibrate in alternation in his mind. He kept thinking that he would have to suffer care, anxiety, and struggle of all sorts, as of old, because he kept losing sight of the open sky of his future, just as we go on suffering the pain and fear of a painful dream for some time after we have awakened from it.

But when he saw the house where dwelt his Lenette, whose voice he had not heard for so many a day, the pain all vanished from his heart, the trouble from his eyes, nothing being left in them but affection and its warmest tears.

"Ah! am I not going to tear myself, so soon, from her for ever, and make her shed tears of delusion, and wound her with the terrible wounds of a funeral and mourning? and then, poor darling soul, we shall see each other no more!" he thought.

He quickened his pace. He squeezed close past the shop windows of his co-commandant, Meerbitzer, with his head thrown back, and his eyes fixed upon the up-stairs windows. Meerbitzer was in the house, splitting the Sunday wood; and Firmian signed to him not to give note of his presence by any sort of sentry-challenge. The old associate czar signed back to him, with outstretched fingers, that Lenette was alone in the room up-stairs. The old familiar ripieno voices of the house, the querulous scolding of the book-binder's wife, the damper-pedal effect of the eternal prayer and curser, Fecht, met him like so much sweet provender, as he climbed the stairs. The waning moon of his movable pewter property shone silvery and glorious upon him from the kitchen, everything fresh from its font of regeneration; a copper fish-kettle, which poisoned no vinegar as long as it was unmended, glowed upon him through the kitchen smoke like the sun in a November fog. He opened the door of the sitting-room gently; he saw no one in it, but heard Lenette making the bed in the bed-room. With a whole iron foundry hammering in his breast, he made a long, noiseless stride into the room, which was all in apple-pie order, with its Sunday shirt of white sand on already (upon which the bed-making river goddess and water nymph had expended all her aquatic arts in the production, of a highly-finished masterpiece). Ah! everything was so full of rest and peace, so tranquilly reposing after the whirl and turmoil of the week. The rain stars had risen upon everything, except his ink bottle, which was quite dry.

His writing-table was, so to speak, *manned* by two or three large heads, which, being cap-blocks, had on their Sunday bonnets, already, which would be transferred from them in their capacity of *Curatores Sexus*, next morning, to the heads of the ladies of the members of council.

He pushed the bed-room door wider open, and there, after this long separation, he saw his dear wife, standing with her back to him.

Just then he fancied he recognised Stiefel's fulling-mill steps coming up stairs; and, that he might pass his first minute on her heart unseen by a stranger eye, he said twice, softly, "Lenette!"

She started round, crying "Oh good gracious! is it you?" He had clasped her in his arms, before she got these words out, and rested on her kiss, saying, "Good evening, good evening, and how are you, and how have you been?"

His lips stifled the answers. But suddenly she pushed him back and struggled out of his arms, while two other arms clasped him swiftly, and a bass voice said, "Here am I as well; you are welcome back, praise and thanks be to God." It was the Schulrath.

Poor, fevered human creatures that we are! driven back and repulsed asunder by our own lackings, and those of others, yet continually drawn together again by never-ceasing longings, in whom one hope of finding love falls away to dust after another, whose wishes come to nothing but *memories*. Our feeble hearts are at all events glowing and right full of love in that hour when we *come back* and meet again; and in that other hour when we part, disconsolate,—as every star seems milder, larger, and lovelier when it is rising, than when it is overhead. But to souls which *always* love, and are *never* angry, these two twilights (when the morning star of meeting, and the evening star of parting shine) are too sad to bear for to *them* they seem like *nights*.

Chapter XVII

THE BUTTERFLY ROSA IN THE FORM OF MINING CATERPILLAR—THORN-CROWNS, AND THISTLE-HEADS OF JEALOUSY.

The last chapter was as brief as our delusions. It was one itself, alas! poor Firmian. After the first stormy mutual catechisings, and particularly, after the giving and receiving of all the mutual news, he saw more and more clearly that Lenette's invisible church, in which Stiefel filled the part of soul's bridegroom, was become very much of a *visible* one. It was as if the earthquake of the recent happiness had rent in twain the veil of the Holy of Holies, the inmost sanctuary, wherein Stiefel's head fluttered by way of cherub. But, to speak the truth, I am telling a lie here, because it was Lenette's special *object* to *show* and *display* a *particular* liking for the Schulrath, who, in his delight thereat, went fluttering on from Arcadia to Otaheite, and from thence to Eldorado, and from thence to Walhalla, which was a certain indication, that, up to this point, his good fortune, during Firmian's absence, had been *less*. He related that, "Rosa had broken with the Heimlicher; that the Venner, whom the latter had wanted to utilise as a spinning machine, had turned into an engine of war against him. The cause of all this had been the niece in Bayreuth, whose engagement the Venner had broken off, because he had caught her being kissed by a gentleman there."

Firmian grew red as fire, and cried "Miserable cockroach! It was *she* who broke off her engagement with that wretched lying scoundrel, not *he* who broke off his with her. Ah! Herr Schulrath, be that poor lady's true knight and champion, and run this wretched abortion of a lie through and through wherever you came across it. From whom did you get hold of this evil weed?" Stiefel pointed calmly to Lenette, saying, "From *her*!" "And where did *you* get hold of it?" Firmian cried to her in amazement. "Mr. Von Meyern," she answered, with her face all glowing red, "was here calling, and told it me himself." "But I was fetched immediately," Stiefel interrupted, "and I skilfully sent him about his business." Stiefel then asked for a correct version of what had happened. Firmian thereupon, timidly, and with many changes of tone, made a highly favourable report of the rose-maiden and her conduct of the matter ("rose-maiden" in a threefold sense, on account of the roses in her cheeks, of her victorious virtue, and the green rosebuds she had given to him). But on Lenette's account he awarded her a *proxima accessit* only, not the gold medal. He had to bind the Venner, by way of sacrificial ram, to the horns of the altar in place of Nathalie, or, at all events, harness him by way of saddle-horse to her triumphal car, and relate without disguise how Leibgeber had been the person who broke off the engagement, and, as it were, dragged her back by the sleeve, as she was making the first step into the Minotaur's cave—by means of his satiric sketches of Meyern.

"But it was *you*, of course," said Lenette, *without* any tone of interrogation, "who told Leibgeber all about him, to begin with."

"Yes," said he.

We of the human race give to words of one syllable, to "Yes," and "No," at all events, more intonations, and shades of intonations, than the Chinese themselves. The yes in question was a rapid, toneless, cold yes, being merely meant for a "What then," or "Suppose I did." She interrupted a digressive speech of Stiefel's with a point-blank, target, bull's-eye question:

"*When* had you been with her V"

At last Firmian, with his battle-telescope, saw hostile movements of all kinds going on in her heart; he made a playful diversion, and said, "Herr Schulrath, *when* did you come to see Lenette?"

"Three times every week at least, and, very often, oftener than that; always about this time of the evening," he answered.

"*Very* well," said Firmian, in a kindly and playful fashion. "I'm not going to be jealous, but be good enough to remark—and my Lenette will please to do so too—that *I* was with Nathalie, *along with Leibgeber, twice* in all; once in the afternoon, once in the evening, walking about the grounds of Fantaisie.

"Well, Lenette?"

She parted her cherry lips, and her eyes were like Volta's electric condensers.

Stiefel went away, and Lenette (from a countenance on which there seemed *two* fires burning, the fire of anger and a lovelier fire) flashed after him a spark of eye love, calculated to blow up the whole powder-mill of a jealous husband. The married pair were scarce alone, when, by way of propitiating her, he asked her if that confounded Venner had been plaguing her again; and then the firework which had been fixed ready on the scaffold of her face, went hissing off.

"Oh! of course *you* can't endure him. You are jealous of him, on account of this beautiful, *learned*, INTELLECTUAL, Nathalie of yours. Do you suppose I don't know quite well about you and her going about a whole night among the trees—and hugging and kissing! A pretty story! Ah fie! I never would have believed it of you. No wonder Mr. Meyern said 'Good morning' to her, learning and all. Oh yes! you'll excuse yourself, no doubt."

"I should have talked to you about all that most innocent affair," answered Firmian, tranquilly, "while Stiefel was here, if I had not seen quite well that you knew of it. Am *I* annoyed because *he* kissed *you* while I was away?"

This irritated her still more; firstly, because it was impossible that Firmian could know of a certainty that it was true—(and it *was*!),—and secondly, because she thought "You can forgive it very easily now that you care more for another woman than you do for me." But then, for the self-same reason (inasmuch as *she* cared more for another man than she did for *him*), *she*, of course, ought to have found no difficulty in forgiving him too. But, as usual, instead of answering his question, she put one herself: "Did *I* ever give anybody silk forget-me-nots, as *somebody* did to *somebody*? Thank goodness! mine are still in my drawer."

Here *two* hearts contended within him—a *tender* heart which was pierced by this unintentional association of forget-me-nots so dissimilar—and a *man's* heart, which was powerfully stirred and stung by this detestable defensive and offensive alliance with the fellow who, as was evident now, had sent the innocent child, whom Nathalie had rescued, to Fantaisie by way of a stalking-horse, behind which to conceal and mask himself, and the toils he had spun. As Siebenkæs now, with an outburst of anger, converted his judgment-seat into a stool of repentance for the Venner, whom he stigmatised as a canker-worm of feminine buds, a sparrowhawk, a housebreaker as regarded matrimonial treasures, and a crimp, trepanner, and soul-stealer of mated souls—vowing with the utmost warmth that it was Nathalie who had scornfully sent Rosa to the right-about, not Rosa who had rejected her: and as, of course, he

interdicted her in the most peremptory terms from everything in the nature of dissemination or repetition of the Venner's lying demi-romance, he turned his unfortunate wife into a sour, pungent, Erfurt radish, from head to foot.

Let us not fix our eyes too long, or too magisterially, upon this heat-rash or purulent fever of poor Lenette's. For my part, I am going to leave *her* alone, but make an onslaught on her entire sex at once. I shall be doing so, I trust, when I assert that women never paint with more caustic colours (Swift's black art is but weak water-colour in comparison) than when they have to portray the bodily unlovelinesses of other women. Further, that the prettiest of faces roughens and bristles into an ugly one, when it expresses anger with the feminine recruiting officer more than pity for the deserter. To speak accurately: Every woman is jealous of all other women, because—not, perhaps, her own husband (or lover, as the case may be), but—all other men are attracted by them, and are consequently not true to *her*. Therefore every woman takes the same vow concerning these vice-queens of this earth that Hannibal took concerning the Romans, and keeps it just as religiously. For which reason every woman has the power which Fordyce says all animal bodies possess—that of making all others cold; and, indeed, every woman must of necessity be an enemy and persecutor of a sex which consists entirely of rivals. And it is probable that many—for instance, nuns in their convents, and Moravians—call each other sisters, or sister-souls, with the view of giving some sort of expression to the nature of their sentiments for each other; since sisters are just the very people who quarrel the most. This is why Madame Bouillon's *parties quarrées* consisted of three men and only one woman. It may be that it led St. Athanasius, Basilius, Scotus, and other teachers of the Church to entertain the belief that, with the single exception of the Virgin Mary, all women would rise as men at the Day of Judgment, in order that there may be no anger, or envy, or bickerings in heaven. There is but one queen who is beloved, nourished and cherished by many thousands of her own sex—the queen-bee of the workers (who are of the feminine gender, according to the most recent observations).

I shall close this chapter with a sort of preliminary word for Lenette. The foul fiend Rosa, by way of giving like for like (or rather *worse* for like) had emptied whole basketsful of the seed of evil-weeds into Lenette's open heart, and unpacked compliments, to commence with, and news of her husband; then, afterwards, disparaging matter. She had believed him all the more readily because it was a clever, learned, and intellectual woman whom he was nigrifying, breaking with, and offering up as a sacrifice. What she most hated in Nathalie *was* her cleverness, her learning, and intellectualness; for it was the want of those that had brought *herself* to such shame. Like many women, she thought that the *heads* of Venuses were not "the true article" (as some connoisseurs think is the case with the Venus de Medici). What provoked her most of all was that Firmian should take another woman's part more than his own wife's—nay, at his own wife's expense; and that Nathalie, in her *conceit* and *pride*, had got ready a *sack* to give such a nice, *rich* gentleman, instead of weaving a *net* to hold him with. She was also very much annoyed that her husband had *admitted* everything, as she considered his candour was only lordly indifference as to what she might feel on the subject.

What did Firmian do? He forgave. His two reasons for doing so were good ones—"Bayreuth" and "the grave." The former had parted him from her so long; the latter was soon to part him from her for ever. A *third* reason might perhaps be this: Lenette, as regarded his love for Nathalie, was *not* so very utterly the reverse of right.

Chapter XVIII

AFTER SUMMER OF MARRIAGE—PREPARATIONS FOR DEATH.

Although Sunday was come, and the Vicar's eyes were no more open than his congregation's (because, like many of the clergy, he kept his physical eyes shut while preaching), my hero went to him to get his certificate of birth, because this was wanted for the Brandenburg Widows' Fund.

Leibgeber had charged himself with the rest. Enough of the subject—for I don't care to say more about it than I can help; because some years ago—long after all Siebenkæs's pecuniary affairs had been settled up to the last farthing, and his debt to the Fund duly paid—the 'Imperial Gazette' publicly accused me of bringing discredit upon Integrity and Widows' Funds by the last book of this story of mine, and considered it to be its (the 'Gazette's') duty to take me pretty severely to task on the subject, according to its measure of ability. But are the advocate and I the same person? Does not everybody know that my proceedings as regards my married life in general, and the Prussian Widows' Fund in particular, have been quite unlike those of Siebenkæs in every respect, and that to this very hour I have never departed this life, either in jest or in earnest, in all these years during which I have regularly paid a considerable annual contribution to the institution in question? Nay, do I not mean—(and I need have no hesitation in saying so)—to go on paying my yearly *quotum* for as many more years as I can—so that, when I die, the fund may have got more out of me than out of any other contributor?

These are my views on the subject; but I must do Siebenkæs the simple justice to state (to his credit) that the views by which he was actuated differed very, very little from my own. The only thing was, that, in Bayreuth, he had immolated his own truthful heart to the stormy urgency of his friend, Leibgeber, which had imbued and intoxicated him, in a moment of enthusiasm, with that cosmopolitan spirit of his which, in the boundless soul-transmigrations which, in the course of his never ending journeyings he passed through, had come to look upon life too much as a mere game at cards, and stage-play—as a Chicken-hazard, and Opera Buffa and Seria combined. And as, besides, he knew Leibgeber's pecuniary circumstances, and his contempt for money (and his own into the bargain), he had undertaken a *rôle* which was anything but well suited to him, and as to which he had as little foreseen the torture of difficulty which it would cost him to act it, as the penitential sermon which was to be preached from Gotha concerning it.

At the same time it was a great piece of good luck that it was *only* Becker's 'Gazette' that found out about Nathalie's straw-widowhood, and not Lenette! Heavens, if the *latter*, with her silk "Forget-me" (for the "not" had altogether disappeared from it), in her hand, had got wind of Firmian's adoptive marriage! I neither desire to judge the fair sex, nor to be judged by them. But at this point I would fain put to all my lady readers (and most particularly to *one* of them), two rather weighty and important questions.

"Would *you* not bend down from your judge's seat, and hand my hero, if not a *flower*-wreath, an *oak*-wreath, at all events, for his good and kind behaviour to this feminine couple? Or (inasmuch as there are four female hands playing a duet sonata on his heart), a bouquet for his button-hole at the very least?" Dearest lady readers, you could not possibly have given a better verdict—although my surprise at it is not

so great as my gratification. My second question nobody shall put to you but yourselves. Let each of you ask herself, "Suppose *you* had this fourth book of my story put into your hands, and *were* Lenette her very self, and consequently knew to a hair all about the whole business from beginning to end; what would you *think* of your husband Siebenkæs' proceedings? What would you *do*?"

I will answer the question for you: "Weep, storm,[80] chide, be very angry, not speak a word, break things, &c." So terribly does selfishness falsify, corrupt and degrade the most delicate moral feelings, coercing them into the giving of two totally diverse verdicts upon one and the same case. Whenever I am wavering, or in any hesitation, concerning the worth of a character, or conclusion, I always find it helps me to come to a decision in a moment if I represent it to my mind's-eye as coming wet from the press in a novel or biography. If it seems right *then*, it is certain to *be* right.

It was far better, and more becoming, for Graces to dwell hidden in the Satyrs of old, and in Socrates, than to reverse the process, so that Satyrs should dwell hidden within Graces. The Satyr who *possessed* Lenette butted about him in all directions with horns of very considerable sharpness. Her unreciprocated anger began to take the shape of sneering banter, for her husband's present meekness and gentleness were so strikingly in contrast with his former Job's-disputations, that she came to the conclusion that his heart was frozen altogether. In old times he had wanted to be served by mutes (like a Sultan), until his satirical fœtus, his book, should be brought to the light of day by help of the Roonhuysian lever and Cæsarian operation of the penknife; even as Zacharias was dumb until the child ceased to be so, and was born, and cried simultaneously with him. Formerly, their married life had been like most other people's; for the majority of wedded pairs are like those twin-daughters,[81] grown together as to their backs, but continually quarrelling (though they could never look each other in the face), and always trying to go towards opposite quarters of the globe, till the one succeeded in forcing the other in the direction in which she wanted to go. Now, on the contrary, Firmian allowed all Lenette's discords to jar on as long as they pleased, without the slightest trace of irritation. A soft, peaceful light now fell upon all her angles, upon her works of supererogation in washing, on the water-sproutlings of her tongue; and the tint of the shadow which her heart (made of dark earth, like everybody else's) cast, as a matter of course, was very much lost in the blue of heaven, as shadows cast in starlight are (according to Mariette) as blue as the sky overhead. And was there not always a grand, blue, starry sky spread out above his soul, in the shape of death? Every morning, every evening, he said to himself, "Why should I not go on always forgiving everything! We have such a very little while to be together now." Every opportunity of forgiving did something to sweeten the bitterness of his voluntary farewell; and, as those who are going away, or going to die, are eager to pardon,—the deep, warm spring and fount of love in his heart was never chilled from morning till night. He was fain to pass along the brief, dark, alley of weeping willows, which led from his home to his empty grave (a *full* one, alas! as regarded his love), leaning only on beloved arms; and to rest on the mossy banks by its side, between his friend and his wife, with a beloved hand in each of his own. Thus it is that death not only beautifies our bodies when the soul has fled (as Lavater points out), but even in life the thought of death gives new beauty to our

[80] The white-flowering sort would weep—the red-flowering sort would storm, as the pale moon indicates rainy weather, and the red moon high wind. (*Pallida luna pluit, rubicunda fiat*.)
[81] In the neighbourhood of Comorn (Windisch's 'Geography of Hungary'). Buchan mentions a similar twin-birth in Scotland.

lineaments, and new strength to the heart, as rosemary both winds as a garland about the dead, and revives the fainting by its cordial essence.

"There is nothing surprising to me in this," quoth the reader. "Everybody in Firmian's position would have felt just as he did; at all events, *I* should." But, dear reader, *are* we not *all* in Firmian's position? Does the nearness or the remoteness of our everlasting good-bye make any difference? Ah! inasmuch as, here below, we are nothing but images, delusively firm, and red of colour, standing on the edges of our holes, into which (like the ancient princes) we totter, crumbling to dust, when the unknown hand gives the mouldering images a shake—why do we not say (like Firmian), "Why should I not forgive? We have so short a time to be together." We should have four better fast-days, and prayer- and penitence-days, than we usually have if we had but four days of bitter, hopeless sickness to go through, one after the other, every year; because we should look down from our sick bed (that ice-region of life beside the crater) with loftier and sublimer glance upon the pleasure-gardens and pleasure-forests of life as they shrunk and shrivelled away; because *there* our wretched racecourses would seem shorter, and only the *people* larger, and we should *there* love nothing but *hearts*, magnify and detect no other faults but our own, and because we leave our sick beds with better resolutions than we take to them with. For the first day of convalescence of the body, after its winter of sickness, is the blossoming time of a lovelier soul, which issues forth as if transfigured from the earth's cold crust into a mild warm Eden; longing to press all things to her breast (feeble yet, and short of breath)—mankind, and flowers, and spring breezes, and every other bosom which has sighed for her upon her bed of pain. Like all the newly risen from death, she longs to love *all things* throughout an eternity; and the whole heart is a warm and dewy spring-time, rich in buds, beneath a youthful sun.

How Firmian would have loved his Lenette, had she not constrained him to be always pardoning, instead of petting and caressing her! Ah! she would have rendered his approaching death a terribly difficult task for him if she had been like what she was in their honeymoon days!

But their byegone Paradise was now yielding a harvest of ripe *Grains* of Paradise (the old name for peppercorns). Lenette piled fuel on the fire of her hell's ante-chamber of jealousy, brewing there, for him, the draught of the coming heaven of Vaduz. A jealous woman can be cured by no kind of speech or treatment; she is like the kettledrums, which are the most difficult of all instruments to tune, and the quickest to get out of tune when tuned. A loving, tender look was, to Lenette, a blister; for he had looked at Nathalie with one like it. If he seemed happy and glad, it was evident he was thinking of the past. If he looked *un*happy and sad, he was thinking of the past too, but with longing. He had to consider his face in the light of an open warrant of caption, or billposter and placard, of the thoughts which were behind it. In short, her husband merely served her as fiddle rosin to roughen her horse-hair with, in order to bow her *viole d'amour* with it from morning till night. He dare not allow himself more than an occasional word about Bayreuth, scarce so much as the name of it; for if he did, she knew whom he was thinking of. Nay, he could not say anything at all strong in disparagement of Kuhschnappel without raising a suspicion that he was comparing it with Bayreuth, and thinking the latter much the better place (for reasons well known to *her*). Wherefore (and whether in earnest, or from consideration for her, I really do not know) he restricted his laudations of Bayreuth merely to the *buildings* there, not venturing to extend them to their inhabitants.

There was only one object of praise concerning the praising, whereof he ignored every idea of difficulty and miscomprehension, and this was Leibgeber, his friend. But—thanks to Rosa's calumnies, and the fact of his having aided and abetted in affairs at Fantaisie—it so chanced that Leibgeber had come to be more unendurable by her now than he had been in the old days, by reason of his indecorous conduct, and his great dog. She knew, moreover, that Stiefel had several times expressed grave disapproval of him and his doings.

"My dear Henry will be here very soon now, Lenette," said Firmian.

"And that horrible brute with him, I suppose, of course?" she asked.

"I do think," he answered, "you might like my friend a little better than you do; if not because he is so very like myself, at any rate, on account of the faithfulness of his friendship. If you did, you wouldn't be so terribly set against his dog; you used not to mind mine when I had one. He *must* have *some* faithful creature to follow him about on his everlasting journeys; through thick and thin, through good times and bad, as Saufinder does. And he looks upon *me* as just such another faithful creature, and is every bit as fond of me. But for that matter, the whole faithful trio of us are not likely to trouble Kuhschnappel very long."

Meanwhile, no amount of love enabled him to gain his *suit* for love. It here strikes me that this was only a most natural matter, and that the recent warm proximity of the Schulrath had raised Lenette's temperature (of love) to such a point that *her husband's* felt like a blast of cold wind by comparison. The jealousy of hatred proceeds just like the jealousy of love. There is but one sign for the cypher of nothing and the circle of infinity.

The time had arrived when Siebenkæs had to pave the way, and give a colour to, his sham death, by a feigned sickness of some sort; but this voluntary bending over the grave, and drooping towards it, gave his conscience a pretext for trying to win back Lenette's embittered heart. Thus it is that deceived, and deceiving, man always magnifies and elevates his false shows, his cheateries, and deceptions either into *less* ones than they really are, or into beneficently intended ones.

The Greek and Roman lawgivers invented dreams and prophecies, which contained the ground-plans and elevations of their projects, as well as the building-conditions, and building-materials of them. For instance, Alcibiades lied forth a prophecy of the conquest of Sicily. Firmian imitated this process, with alterations suitable to the circumstances of his case. He often said, in Stiefel's presence (for Stiefel took a deep and tender interest in everything, and, consequently, so did *she*), that he should soon be going away for ever—that he should soon be playing in a game at hide-and-seek, and hide himself so effectually that no friendly eye should be able to find him again—that he would soon slip behind the bed-curtain of the coffin-pall, and vanish. He told them a dream (which, perhaps, was no invention). He said, "The Schulrath and Lenette were looking at a room in which a scythe was moving of its own accord;[82] then, in a while, Firmian's *clothes* were walking about in the room, empty, without any *body* in them. 'He must have *other* clothes on,' they both said. Then all at once the churchyard passed along the street, with a fresh grave in it, no grass on it as yet. But a voice cried, 'Seek him not there; it is over and past now.' And a second (softer) voice cried, Rest—rest—thou art worn and weary. And a third said, 'Weep not, if ye

[82] There was a superstition that the Headsman's sword moved, of itself, before cutting off somebody's head.

love him.' But a fourth cried out, in terrible tones, 'Jest—jest—all human life and death.'" Firmian was the first to shed tears; his friend was the next, and his angry spouse wept, *with the latter*.

But now he looked with eager longing for the coming of Leibgeber, whose hand would lead him quicker and more pleasantly through the dark foreground, and the hot, reeking, sultry, breathless, fore*hell* of his artificial death. For he himself was now too feeble and too tender to pass through them alone.

And upon one particular, unusually lovely, August evening he was so, more than ever before. There played and rested on his face that glorified and celestial bliss of self-devotion—that tearless depth of emotion and smiling gentleness, which sometimes come to us when pain and sorrow are—*weary* for the time, rather than over and past—something like the blue sky when the brightness of the rainbow falls in light athwart its radiant beauty. He resolved to bid good-bye, in solitude, that day to all the beautiful country which lay around the town.

The face of Nature was veiled (but not for his eyes, for his soul only), in a thin, soft mist, which went hovering before the breeze in ever-changing wreaths, like the tender vapouriness—not amounting to a shrouding—which Berghem's and Wouvermanns' pencils have cast upon their landscapes. As though to say farewell, he went and touched, and gazed upon, every leafy tree beneath whose branches he had been wont to read—each little darkling brooklet, purling on its way beneath its thickets of forest-roots, laved bare of earth by its ripples—each rocky crag, all green and sweet of scent with moss and flowers—each stair-way of rising hillocks which, in the days gone by, he had climbed to see the sun set (or gone down to watch his risings) many times instead of once—and every spot where wide creation had brought tears of rapture from his happy heart. But everywhere—amid the long harvest corn-ears, amid Creation's oft-repeated tale in Nature's brooding-oven with all its swarming life, in the seed-nursery of the ripe and endless garden—a hollow, broken voice cried out, in long-drawn tones which mingled with, and sounded clear above, the bright, rejoicing, trumpet-clang of Nature's 'Alexander's Feast,' "What are these dead men's bones that move about amid this life of mine, defiling all my blossoms?" And to him it seemed as if, from out the glory of the red West sky, a something sang to him, "Wandering skeleton! with strings of nerves clasped in thy bony hand, thou playest not on thyself. The breath of endless life is breathing on the Æolian harp, which answers back in music, and thou art played *upon*." But soon this mournful error fell away from him, and he thought thus: "I am both playing and answering back in music. I both *think* and *am thought*. It is not the green bark that holds *my* Dryad, my *spiritus rector* (the soul). The latter holds the former. The life of the body depends as intimately on the life of the soul, as that of the latter on that of the former. Life and force are at work, with power, everywhere. The grave hillock and the mouldering body are each a *world* of powers at work. We *change* our stage, but do not *retire* from it."

When he got home, he found the following letter from Leibgeber for him:—

"I am on *my* way; set out on *yours*.—L."

Chapter XIX

THE APPARITION—HOMECOMING OF THE STORMS IN AUGUST, OR THE LAST QUARREL—THE RAIMENT OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

One night, at about eleven o'clock, a tremendous blow was heard to strike the roof-tree, as if two or three hundredweights of Alps had come down upon it. Lenette went upstairs with Sophia to see whether it was the devil, or only a cat. They came back with wintry faces, the colour of flour, and as long as one's arm; and Sophia cried out, "Oh! it's the Poor's Advocate (may the Lord have a care of him!) he's lying up yonder on the camp-bed, like a corpse." The *live* Poor's Advocate, to whom this tale was being told, was sitting in his room. He said it could not be true, or *he* would have heard the noise as well as the others. From this deafness of his, all the women at once inferred what the occurrence really portended—to wit, his death. The cobbler Fecht (who, by right of royal succession, was night-watchman regnant that night), glad of an opportunity of showing the pluck that was in him, armed himself with the watchman's spear-staff (his entire artillery-park), but, when nobody was looking, stuck a black leather hymn-book in his pocket—by way of a species of saintly host—in case it *should* turn out that it *was* the devil that was upstairs. On his way up he repeated a good many fragments of the Evening Service, which was more than could, perhaps, have been required of him on that evening when, as Archon of the Watch, his calling of the hours was, in fact, a species of *expanded* Evening Prayer, distributed in small modicums about the streets. He was marching bravely up to the camp-bed, when, alas! *he too* saw the white powdery face before him, and, behind the bed, a hell-hound with eyes of fire, watching the corpse in a grim and ferocious fashion. He stood still instantaneously, as if petrified—like a watchman carved out of alabaster, *hard boiled* (so to speak), in a perspiration of terror, with his weapon held out before him. He foresaw, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the moment he turned his back to go flying down the stairs, *the thing* would clasp its arms about him from behind, saddle him, and ride him down. By the greatest good luck, a voice from downstairs here fell into his heart like a cordial or courage-water, and he heaved up his boar-spear with the view of striking *the thing* dead, or, at all events, gauging the cubic contents of it. But when, at this juncture, the snowy-looking thing began to rise slowly up, as if growing—his head began to feel as if he had on a bonnet of pitch, and somebody were screwing this cap, and the hair inside it, tighter and tighter every moment; and he could not keep hold of his eel-spear because the top of it felt as heavy as if his biggest journeyman was hanging to it. So he let his sticking-iron go, and flew bravely from the topmost, three-ledger-lined octave of the stair, like a flash of lightning, down to the double-bass key or step.

When he got down, he swore, in presence of the master of the house and all the lodgers assembled, that he was going to do his watchman's duty without his halberd, for the ghost had got hold of that; and in fact, he quivered like an aspen-leaf and his blood ran cold in his veins, every time his eye so much as rested for a moment on the Advocate's face. Firmian was the only one of the company who had the courage to go upstairs for the weapon. When he got upstairs he found what he had expected to find, namely, his friend Leibgeber, who had whitened himself with the powder out of an old wig by way of gradually paving the way and preparing people's minds for Siebenkæs's artificial death. They quietly embraced, and Henry said he would come upstairs, in an orthodox fashion, next day.

When Firmian returned to his room, he said there was nothing upstairs but an old wig; here was the swift-footed spearman's spear, and he counted here before him two timid hares of the female sex and one of the male. But the entire conventicle knew as well as possible what all this *meant*. Nobody, with as many brains as a turnip in his head, would give a halfpenny for Siebenkæs' life; and these ghost-seers thanked Heaven most devoutly that they *were* thus frightened to death, since it was a proof that their own lives were in no immediate danger. Lenette could not bring herself to sit up in bed all night, for fear she should see her husband's likeness.

When morning came, Henry mounted the stair (with his dog), in dusty boots. Siebenkæs felt as though his hat and his pockets must be full of flowers from the Bayreuth Eden; he was like a garden statue from the lost garden. To Lenette, just for this very reason, this palm-tree from Firmian's East India possessions at Bayreuth (we shall say nothing of Saufinder), was nothing but a prickly holly-bush, and never less than now could she take any pleasure in such a gooseberry-bush, such a thistle-head—beautiful as if fresh from Hamilton's pencil.[83] I must admit, however (and I say it right out, without going about the bush), that his affection for Firmian made his mode of treating Lenette (who was in the wrong and in the right in about equal proportions) a little too reserved and cool. We never hate a woman so heartily as when she is torturing somebody who is very dear to us; just as, on the other hand, a woman is so grim to nobody as to the tormentor of her pet female friend.

The scene which I have now got to describe in a minute or two makes me feel, in the keenest degree, sensible of the depth of the chasm which lies between the novel-writer (who can skip annoying matters, and sugar up anything he wishes for himself, his hero, or his readers) and the mere biographer, or writer of actual history, like myself, who has to dish up everything in a strictly historical form, without asking whether it has got to be sugared or salted. If I formerly, then, excised and omitted the scene in question altogether, I was perhaps to blame: but there was nothing surprising in my doing so, seeing that in these days I preferred delighting my readers to instructing them, and thought more about pretty colouring than truthful drawing.

Leibgeber (and all belonging to him) had for some time been wholly unendurable in Lenette's eyes, chiefly for this reason (amongst others) that he, a man without anything in the shape of an official title or appointment of any sort, should be on such very familiar and intimate terms with her husband—a man who had held the post of "Poor's Advocate" of Kuhschnappel for a considerable time. Also that, like her said husband (by him misled and perverted), he went about without a pigtail, so that people pointed at the pair of them, and cried, "Ey! look at that nice couple!" or "*Par nobile fratrum*." These sayings, and worse besides, Lenette could draw from the most authentic of all sources of history. Of course, it is true that, *now-a-days*, it requires about as much courage to *put on* a tail as it then did to *take it off*. A canon of a cathedral does not, now-a-days (as he did in bygone times), find it incumbent on him to make himself a pigtail, and pleasant society by help of it; consequently he has not got to *cast* it twice a year (as peacocks do their tails) that he may legally earn his salary of two thousand florins by appearing in the choir at vespers with close-cropped hair; the latter he wears at the card-table now, us well as in the pulpit. In the few countries where the pigtail still obtains, it is more in the nature of a duty-pendulum and state-perpendicular than anything else; and long hair (which formed part of the royal insignia of the Frank kings) is a badge of servitude in the case of soldiers, so long as it is worn tied up with a pigtail-ribbon, and not flying unbound

[83] Who distinguished himself by *painting* thistles as much as Swift by *writing* them.

and loose. The Frieslanders were long in the habit of taking hold of the pigtail when swearing an oath—calling this "the Bœdel Oath;" and to this day in many countries the military or standard oath presupposes the existence of a queue. And as among the ancient Germans a pigtail carried on a pole represented a parish, of course a company or regiment (of which each soldier has his own tail at the back of his head) must be considered to represent a company-queue of patriotic union and of German nationality.

Lenette now made little secret of it to her husband (and Stiefel stood by her in the background), that she was very little pleased, on the whole, with Leibgeber and his on-goings. "My dear poor father" (she said, in Leibgeber's presence), "was copyist to the Council, but he was always just like other people in his dress, and everything else."

"Well, dear!" Siebenkæs answered, "as he was a copyist, of course he had always to *be* copying, with pens, or coats, as the case might be. But *my* father loaded guns for princes, and did not trouble his head about what else might happen or not happen." Ere this, when opportunity had offered, she had held up and measured the copying clerk as against the gun-charger, distantly suggesting, as it were, that Siebenkæs had not had anything like so great and distinguished a father as she had, and, as a consequence, had not received the sort of superior education which teaches people manners, and how they ought to behave. This preposterous and ludicrous looking down upon his genealogical tree so annoyed him always that he often laughed at himself. At the same time, the little by-blow at Leibgeber did not surprise him so much as her remarkable *bodily* repugnance and antipathy to him. Nothing would induce her to shake hands with him: "And I'm sure," she said, "if he were ever to *kiss* me, it would be my death." With all his laborious urgency and questions as to the reason of this, he could get no answer out of her but that she "would tell him after Leibgeber was gone." Unfortunately, by that time *he* would be gone himself, too, and in his coffin, *i. e*. on the road to Vaduz.

And even this extraordinary obstinacy (as of an unyielding bonnet-block) he could endure at a time when one of his eyes warmed itself at his friend, while the other cooled itself at his grave.

At last something was superadded; and as I am sure that nobody can narrate it more faithfully than I, I beg that I may be believed. It was in the evening, before Leibgeber went back to his hotel (the Lizard, if I remember), and the deep black, half-orb of a thunder-cloud had gathered silently in the West, shrouding the sun, and mounting higher, and hanging more and more threateningly over the expectant world. The two friends were talking of what a glorious thing a thunderstorm was, and of the espousals of heaven and earth—the highest with the lowest—of the "descent of heaven to earth" (as Leibgeber put it); and Siebenkæs remarked how, properly speaking, it was only one's "Fantasy" which pictured the storm, and "Fantasy" only which brought about the union of the highest and the lowest. I wish he had followed the advice of Campe and Kolbe, and used the home-grown word "Fancy" (or "Imagination"), instead of the foreign word "Fantasy;" for that word-purist Lenette pricked up her ears as soon as ever it passed his lips. She who had nothing in her breast but jealousy, and nothing in her head but the "Fantaisie" (at Bayreuth), put down to the score of the latter every word that the two men were saying in eulogy of "Fantasy" in man; for instance, how *it* (namely, "the Markgrave's Fantaisie," thought Lenette) blessed us through the beauty of its sublime creations—how, but for the enjoyment of its lovelinesses, a Kuhschnappel could not be borne with for a moment

(of course, because he thinks of that Nathalie of his, thought she); how it clothes and adorns the bare spots of life with its beautiful flowers "two or three silk forget-me-nots," said Lenette to herself; and how it (the Bayreuth Fantaisie) gilds, not only the pills of life, but also the nuts, nay, the Paris apples of beauty themselves.

Heavens! what double meanings in every corner, and on every side! For how triumphantly Siebenkæs could have refuted the error of confounding Fantasy with Fantaisie, if he had merely shown how little of the poetic Fantasy there was in the Fantaisie at Bayreuth, and how (in the latter) French "taste" had trimmed, behung, and begarlanded the lovely, romantic hills and valleys of Nature's inventing with rhetoric edifices of flowers, periods, and antithesis; and that what Leibgeber said about Fantasy's gilding the Paris apples of life, applied in quite another sense to the Bayreuth Fantaisie, because there the French Christmas silver-foil would have to be scraped off from Nature's apples before they could be bitten.

Scarce was Leibgeber gone out from the house, and off into the storm (which, according to his custom, he enjoyed in the open air), when *Lenette's* storm broke, ere the atmospherical one did. "There, you see, I heard with my very own ears," she said, "how that Unbeliever and Kill-joy there goes about coupling and marrying you in the Fantaisie at Bayreuth; and *this* is the fellow an honest woman is expected to shake hands with, or touch with the tip of one of her fingers." She let a few more peals of thunder roll—but it is my duty to the poor woman (turned into a fermenting vat by the addition to her of such a quantity of mash) not to give too accurate a record of all her frothings. Meantime, all the acid matter in her husband began to effervesce in its turn. To find fault with his friend to his face, no matter *what* misunderstanding this might arise from (and he did not trouble himself to ask what the misunderstanding was, inasmuch as *none* could be any excuse)—was, in his eyes, a sin against the Holy Ghost of his friendship. Accordingly, he thundered most roundly in reply. It is some excuse for the husband, and for the wife, too, for that matter, that the storm in the air fanned the fuel in his head into a brighter blaze, so that he strode up and down the room like a man demented, and instantly, and on the spot, blew to the four winds of heaven his resolve not to be put out with anything Lenette might do till after he was dead; for he would not, and could not, suffer that "his last friend in life and death should be wrongfully accused by the inheritress of his name, either in his sayings or in his doings." It will give some idea of the violence of his volcanic eruptions (all of which, for his sake, I mean to pass by in silence), if I say that, vieing in loudness of thundering with the sky itself, he shouted—

"Such a man as *he*!" and with the words, "*you* are a female head, too, curse you!" administered a ringing box on the ear to a bonnet-block, which had a grand hat, with feathers upon it. As this head was Lenette's favourite Sultana of all the blocks—one which she often fondled—nothing was to be *expected* but an outbreak as violent as if he had given the box to her very self, just as Siebenkæs stormed at the insult to *his* friend. Nothing came, however, but a gentle shower of bitter tears. "Oh! good heavens! don't you hear what a terrible storm?" was all she said. "Thunder here, thunder there!" cried Siebenkæs (who, once set rolling down from the lofty peak where he had been reposing, went on, according to both the moral and the physical laws of falling bodies, increasing in velocity and momentum, until he reached the bottom). "I wish the lightning would shatter all the rag-tag and bob-tail in Kuhschnappel that dare to say a syllable against my Henry."

As the storm grew fiercer she spoke more and more gently, saying, "Ah! gracious, what a peal! Oh, please repent! Suppose it were to strike you in your sin?" "My Henry

is out in it," he said. "Oh that the lightning would strike us both dead, him and me, with the same flash! I should be spared all this miserable business of dying, and we should always be together then."

His wife had never seen him so angry, or so contemptuous of life and religion, and consequently, could only expect the lightning to fall on the Merbitzer's house, and strike both him and her dead, by way of an "example."

And at this moment, a flash of such brilliance illumined the heavens, and such a shattering peal of thunder followed close upon it, that, stretching out her hand to him, she said, "I will do anything and everything you wish me to do; only, for Heaven's sake, be a God-fearing man again! I will even give Leibgeber my hand; yes, and a kiss too, if I must—no matter whether he has washed his face after the dog's licking it, or not—and I shall neither listen, nor mind, when you say what a delightful, beautiful place the silvery, flowery Bayreuth Fantaisie is."

Heavens! how this lightning-flash illumined the depths of two of Lenette's labyrinths for him, letting him see her innocent confounding of Fantasy and Fantaisie (already noticed), and *his own* confounding of her strong, personal, idiosyncratic repugnance to (what she considered) uncleanness, with real dislike. The latter was on this wise. Inasmuch as her feminine proclivity for excessive cleanness and beautifying and polishing were more akin to the feline race than to the canine (which cares little about either, or about the feline race, for that matter), Leibgeber's hand, after Saufinder's tongue had touched it, was to her as a thumbscrew, and Esau's hand all Chiragra. Her sense of cleanliness shrunk from touching it; and as for Henry's lips! though ten days had elapsed since the dog had jumped up to them with his, they would have been considered the most fearful bugbears, and scarecrows, which abhorrence could set up for her. Even time itself was no lipsalve in her eyes.[84]

This time, however, the discovery of the error did not bring about peace (as it used to do in former times), but only a renewal of the decree of separation. Tears came to his eyes, indeed, and he gave her his hand, saying, "Forgive me! It is the last time! As the proverb says, 'The storms come home in August.'" But he could neither offer nor receive a kiss of reconciliation. This, his latest falling away from his warm resolves to be patient, irrevocably proclaimed *how wide* their inner separation had become. What is the use of *seeing* one's errors, when the *causes* of them are still in force? What is the good of clipping a ripple or two away from the ocean, when there are still clouds and billows? The crime against the bonnet-block was what rankled most in his breast; it became a Gorgon's head to him, continually threatening and avenging.

He sought his friend with a renewal of affection, for he had suffered for him; and with new eagerness, that he might arrange the place for his death with him.

"Of what dangerous malady do you think you would prefer to give up the ghost," said Henry, commencing the medical consultation. "Would inflammation of the lungs be to your taste? or inflammation of the bowels, or of the uvula; or would phrenitis be

[84] There is nothing more unreasonable, uncontrollable, and inexplicable, than this feeling of repugnance to the unclean—this inconsistent alliance between the will and the coats of the stomach. Cicero says, "the modest do not willingly use the word 'modesty'" (a transcendental form of disgust with the impure)—and those who feel the repugnance in question deal with it in a similar manner, particularly as bodily and moral purity are neighbours (which the chaste and cleanly Swift exemplified in his own person). Even physical loathing (of which the subject-matter is mental, more than physical), affects the moral sense more than is supposed. Cross the street with undigested food, or antimonial wine, in your stomach, and you will feel a stronger distaste to a score of faces (and for more books when you come home) than at ordinary times.

more in your line, or bronchitis; or would you prefer a quinsy, a colic, the devil and his grandmother? We have got all the requisite *miasmata* and *materia epidemica* ready to our hands; and when we throw in the month of August—harvest-month of reapers and doctors—by way of poison-powder, you certainly never can get over it all." Firmian answered: "You are a sort of master-beggar with all kinds of ailments for sale;[85] blindness, palsy, and the rest. But for my part, I am for apoplexy, that *volti subito*, that extra post of death. I have had more than my share of legal prolixities, verbosities, and delays of *all* sorts." "Well," said Leibgeber, "apoplexy probably *is* the *summarissimum* of death. At the same time, we must be guided by the best pathological works, and make up our minds for *three* attacks of it. We can't go by Nature here, we must be guided by the laws of medicine; and by them, death has to forward a set of *three* bills of exchange before one of them is accepted and honoured in the next world. He knocks three times with his auctioneer's hammer. I know too well, the doctors are not the men to listen to reason on this point; you will have to make up your mind to the three apoplectic strokes." "But what the deuce!" said Siebenkæs, with comic warmth, "If apoplexy gives me *two* pretty powerful strokes, what more can a doctor desire? The only thing is, I can't be attacked for the next three or four days, because I must wait for a cheaper coffin-builder." The right of coffin-building (it should perhaps be explained) goes its round in a migratory manner among the carpenters, and one has got to pay these shipwrights of our last ark whatever they demand, because the property we leave behind us at death has to be given over as plunder by our executors and administrators, to the undertaker, (that excise officer of death) like the palace of a dead doge or pope.

"There may be another advantage in this short reprieve, too," said Leibgeber. "I have an old collection of family sermons here, which I bought for somewhere about half the amount of a police-court fine. I do not know anywhere else but in this work where such impressive sermons are delivered—it is more especially in the *binding* that they are preached. The binding is wood, you perceive, and there is a live preacher in there, preaching as finely as any preacher that can be found in a pulpit." This preacher in the wooden boards of the old book in question, was the beetle which goes by the name of the death-watch, wood-borer, or *Ptinus pertinax*, because when he is touched he keeps up the appearance of a sham death, torture him as you will—and because the little blows he strikes, which are nothing but knocks at his sweetheart's door, are supposed to be Death's knocks at ours. For which reason any piece of furniture in which he was wont to knock used to be thought a valuable article of commerce, or heirloom.

Leibgeber added that, as there was nothing he so detested as a man who tried to outwit God and the Devil (from fear of death) by a sudden repentance, he was fond of hiding this sermon-book amongst the furniture of a hell-fearing individual of this description, so as to give him a good sound terrifying with the beetle's funeral sermons (although the insect, for his part, was, in fact, thinking solely of mundane matters during his preaching—like many other preachers). "So, could I not put the sermon-book, with its funeral preacher, in amongst *your* books, that your wife might hear him, and think of death—of yours, that is to say—and so get more used to the idea of it?"

[85] A beggar in England who keeps a shop full of crutches, eye-plaster, false legs, &c., which every one who wants to be lame, blind, &c., must be supplied with. 'Britt. Annal.'

“No, no,” said Firmian, “she shall not suffer so much for me before her time. She has suffered quite enough already.”

“Just as you please,” said Henry; “but my beetle and you would have gone together capitally. You are going to simulate death, just as the *Ptinus pertinax* does.”

For the rest, he was delighted that everything had worked together so well, and that it was just a year since he had stamped upon Blaise’s glass periwig, and insulted, or blackguarded, him. Because (as we have seen) libels of this sort are not actionable after the lapse of a year, except libels by a *critic*—which (like the Rector in Ragusa) only reign for a month—that is to say, the time during which the journal in which they appear circulates in the reading society. And a book—which may be said to hold the rank of dictator in the realm of letters—cannot reign, with all its influence, more than a Roman dictator, namely, six months—that is to say, from its birth-fair to its death-fair—and, like Grub Street scribblers, it dies either in spring or in autumn.

They went back into a new-dressed, freshly-arranged room. Lenette did what she could to paint the cracks of her housekeeping over with flowers (like the flaws in porcelain), and always opened pieces of music in which that particular string (of an article of furniture), which chanced to be broken, did not require to be touched. Firmian, on this occasion, sacrificed a greater number of the good and entertaining ideas (which struck him) than usual to her efforts to place Spanish screens between the company and the steppes and fallow-fields of her poverty; and more than Henry did even then. All women—even those without brains—are the sharpest and most delicately-observant of augurs and *clairvoyante* prophetesses concerning matters which closely concern themselves. Lenette was an instance. Stiefel was there in the evening—a good deal of argument was going on, and Stiefel openly declared that he (with Salvian and other able theologians) was of opinion that the children of Israel (whose garments never wore into the minutest hole during all the forty years they passed in the wilderness) always continued of exactly the same *size* (so as always to fit their clothes exactly) with the exception of children, in whose cases the clothes, which had been cut to fit them out of the wardrobes of the dead, grew with their bodies in length and breadth. “In this way,” he added, “all the difficulties of the great miracle are got over easily, by means of lesser accessory-miracles.”

Leibgeber answered (with sparkling eyes), “I knew *that* while I was yet in my mother’s womb. There was not a hole in all the hosts of Israel, except those which they brought with them out of Egypt—and *these* never got any bigger. Even suppose anybody made a hole in his cheek, or in his coat, when he was mourning—these holes stitched themselves together in a trice, of their own accord. What a shameful and deplorable thing it is, though, that the host of Israel should have been the first, and the last, army whose uniform was a sort of delightful over-body, which grew with the soul it enveloped—and where the frock-coat developed into an electoral mantle, and from a *Microvestis* to a *Macrovestis*! I see that eating was cloth manufacturing (in the wilderness), manna was English wool, and the stomach the loom. An Israelite who fed himself up to the proper pitch was, by so doing, yielding the produce of the land, and of the wilderness. If I had been in the recruiting-service in those days, I should simply have hung the recruit’s jackets on to the recruit’s measure. But how go matters in *our* wilderness here—which leads to Egypt, not to the promised land? In *our* regiments, the *privates* grow every year, but the coats do not. Nay, the uniforms are made for dry seasons only, and for lean men—in wet years the clothes contract like hygrometers, and perspiration steals more cloth than the tailor does, or even the contractor. A commanding officer who should expect his uniforms to stretch—who

should reckon upon a *Periphrasis* of them—going by the example, not only of the Israelites, but likewise of the clothes-moths, and the snails (who do not expand to suit their shells, but whose shells expand to suit *them*)—this commanding officer, I say, would go out of his mind—for his men would be fighting in the condition of the athletes of old—and the men themselves would be in a nice frame of mind on the subject."

This innocuous sermon (wholly addressed to the account of Stiefel's piece of exegetic absurdity) Lenette supposed was directed against her wardrobe. She was like the Germans in general, who search after some *special* satiric kernel hidden in every rocket and firework serpent of humour. Wherefore Siebenkæs begged him to pardon this poor wife of his (over whose heart so many a sharp sorrow besides was strewn) the inevitable and invincible ignorance of her exegesis—or rather, to spare her the knowledge of it altogether.

At length a Kuhschnappel bath-keeper departed this life, and fell under the plane of the costly carpenter. "I have not a minute to waste over my apoplexy now," said Firmian, in Latin; "who is to be my warrant that nobody shall die before I do, and so the cheap carpenter slip through my fingers?" So it was arranged that he should be taken ill the following evening.

Chapter XX

APOPLEXY—THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH—THE NOTARY-PUBLIC—THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT—THE KNIGHT'S MOVE—REVEL, THE MORNING PREACHER—THE SECOND APOPLECTIC ATTACK.

In the evening Henry drew up the curtain upon this tragedy (full of comic gravedigger business), and discovered Firmian lying on his bed speechless, with apoplectic head, and all his right side paralysed. The only mode in which the patient could bring himself to endure the torture of the deception, and of the pain he was causing Lenette, was by making a mental vow to send her the half of his yearly income as inspector at Vaduz, anonymously, and by remembering that by his death she would obtain happiness, freedom, and her lover. The occupants of the house formed a circle about the apoplectic patient, but Leibgeber drove them out of the room, saying, "the sufferer must have quietness and rest." It delighted him beyond expression to be able to go on uttering humourous lies without cessation. He assumed the office of Imperial Hereditary Doorkeeper, and shut the door in the doctor's face (whom people insisted upon prescribing). "I am going to prescribe a little prescription for the patient myself," he said, "but, little as it is, it will restore his speech for a time. These cursed death-rivers, doctors' potions, Mr. Schulrath," (for that gentleman had been fetched immediately) "are like those rivers which demand a dead body every year." So he wrote a recipe for a simple sedative powder, as follows, reading aloud as he wrote;—

Rx Conch: Citratæ Sirup: j.
Nitri Crystallisatæ gr. x.

D.S. "The Sedative Powder."

"But above all things," he added, in the most imperative tones, "we must place the patient's feet in warm water."

However, everybody in the house knew well enough that nothing would be of the slightest avail, as his death had been but too unmistakably foretold by the floury face; and Fecht felt a kind of sympathising satisfaction that he had hit the mark.

Scarcely had the sick man swallowed the powder, than, to the astonishment of the Death-Assurance Association in his bedroom, he found himself able to speak, intelligibly, if not very loud. The domestic Vehmgericht was *not*, perhaps, altogether pleased with this. But our good Henry had a pretext now for resuming his cheerful mien. He comforted Lenette by reminding her that "here below pain was but an initiation ceremony to something higher—the box-on-the-ear, or sword-accolade whereby a man is dubbed a knight."

The patient had a very fair night after his sedative powder, and began to have some slight hopes of himself. Henry would not allow Lenette (whose eyes were heavy with tears and sleep) to sit up by his bed during the night. He said he would prefer to be at hand himself, in case there should be any danger; of which, however, there was no great risk, as they made their agreement together (doing so in Latin, like princes) that Death, the fifth act of this tragic interlude, (only one of the *scenes* of the tragedy of Life,) should take place on the evening of the following day. "Even till to-morrow," said Firmian, "is too long to wait. I am so unspeakably grieved for my poor Lenette's

sorrow. Like David, alas! I have to make a melancholy choice between famine, war, and pestilence, and have no way out of it but his. You, dear brother, are my Cain, and send me on my journey, and believe in the world to which you despatch me not a bit more than he did.[86] Before you prescribed the sedative power which obliged me to talk, I was really wishing, in my silent gloom, that the jest might become earnest. For I *must* one day pass through that underground portal which opens into the fortress of futurity, in which we shall be safe. Ah! it is not the *dying* that is painful, it is the *parting*—I mean from those we love." Henry said, in reply, "Nature holds a broad Achilles-shield before us to protect us from that final bayonet-thrust of life. On our death-beds we grow cold morally before we do so physically, a strange courtier-like indifference towards all we are leaving creeps frostily through the dying nerves. Sapient spectators say, 'See, nobody but a Christian can die with such resignation and trust.' Never mind, dear Firmian; the two or three painful burning minutes which you have to bear till to-morrow arrives are a capital warm bath of Aix water for the sick spirit. It has an infernal smell of rotten eggs *now*, no doubt, but that will go away completely as the bath grows cool."

Next day Henry eulogised him as follows. "As Cato the younger slept quietly the night before his death, (history heard him snore,) so you appear to have afforded these debilitated, unnerved, and degenerate days a fresh example of a similar magnanimity. If I were your Plutarch I should record the circumstance."

"In sober seriousness, though," answered Firmian, "I should be rather pleased if, several years hence, when Death has presented his *second* of exchange, some literary West, the historical painter, should honour this odd *first* death of mine by describing it for the press." This, we see a biographical West has now actually done, but I beg to be permitted to confess, without hesitation, that it has afforded me sincere gratification to find among the documents this death-bed speech and wish, which I am so completely carrying out. Leibgeber answered, "The Jesuits in Löwen once published a little book in which the terrible end of Luther was minutely described in Latin. Old Luther got hold of the book and translated it, as he did the Bible, merely adding at the end, 'I, Dr. M. Luther, have read and translated this narrative myself.' If I were you, when I translated my death into English, I should write that at the end of it too." Do please write it, dear Siebenkæs, as you are still in life—but translate me, at all events.

Morning brings refreshing to the laid corn of humanity, whether it be laid upon the hard bed of sickness, or on the softer mattress of ordinary health; its breezes lift the bowed heads of both flowers and men: but *our* sick man remained prostrate. Things seemed distinctly worse with him—he could not disguise from himself that he was losing ground; at all events he resolved to "set his house in order." This first quarter of the hour of death which the death bell tolled, smote like a sharp and heavy bell-hammer upon Lenette's heart, whence the warm stream of the old love burst forth in bitter tears. Firmian could not bear the sight of this disconsolate weeping; he stretched his arms beseechingly, and the suffering creature laid herself between them in gentle obedience, on to his breast, their tears, their sighs, and their hearts mingled in the warmest affection, and thus they rested in happiness (though only upon wounds) at this brief distance from the boundary-hill of parting.

[86] The Rabbis maintain that Cain killed his brother because the latter disagreed with him when he (Cain) denied the immortality of the soul. So that the first murder was an *auto-da-fe*, and the first war a religious one.

For this poor soul's sake, then, he grew visibly better. Another improvement in his condition was necessary, moreover, to account for the happy frame of mind in which he executed his last will and testament. Leibgeber expressed satisfaction that the patient was able to take some dinner on the table-cloth of the bed-quilt, and swallow the contents of a sick man's soup-dish about the size of a pond. "The good spirits," said Leibgeber to Peltzstiefel, "which our invalid is beginning to exhibit again, give me very considerable hopes indeed; though it was evidently only to please his wife that he took the soup."

Nobody was fonder of lying, or lied oftener, *out of satire* or humour, than Leibgeber and no one more utterly detested serious untruthfulness than he. He could tell a thousand lies in fun, but not two in a case of serious necessity. For the former he had at his finger's end every possible deceptive trick of face and language; for the latter not one.

In the forenoon the Schulrath and Merbitzer, the landlord, were summoned to the bedside. "Gentlemen," began the sick man, "I am thinking of having my last will this afternoon—of declaring, at Nature's place of execution, the three things which I desire—as the condemned in Athens were allowed to do; but what I wish to do at the present moment is to open one of my testaments before I make my second, or (to speak more accurately) the codicil of my first. I wish my friend Leibgeber to pack up, and keep possession of, all my scribblings as soon as I myself am stuck into my last addressed envelope. Further (and in this I follow the precedent of the Danish Kings, the old Dukes of Austria, and the noble Spaniards—of whom the first were interred in their armour, the second in lion's skins, the third in miserable Capuchins' gowns)—I will and ordain that there shall be no hesitation about planting me in the bed of the next world in the very self-same old pod and shell in which I have vegetated in *this*; in brief, exactly as I am while now testating. This injunction necessitates my making my third that the woman who comes to lay me out shall be paid, and at once sent about her business, because all my life through I have had a most special antipathy to two women—the woman who washes us *into* life, and the woman who washes us *out* of it (though in a bigger bath-tub)—the midwife and the woman who lays out the corpse. She is not to lay a finger upon me, nor is anybody except my Henry there." His hatred of these servants of life and death may probably have proceeded from the same causes as my own, namely the imperious and rapacious nature of the controlling power which these she-planters and caterers for the cradle and the bier exercise in squeezing us just in the two unarmed and weaponless hours of our deepest gladness and our deepest sorrow.

"I further will that as soon as my face has made the signal of adieu, Henry shall roof it over and shield it for ever with our long-necked mask, which I brought down from the box upstairs. I also desire that, when I take my departure from all the fields and plains of my youthful days, and hear nothing behind me but the rustle of the haycocks of the aftermath, I may, at all events, have my wife's silken garland laid upon my breast, by way of game-counter to mark the joys I have lost. A man can't go more suitably than with mock insignia, such as that, out of a life which has dished him up such a number of pasteboard pasties full of nothing but wind. Lastly, I will that, when I am gone on my journey, nobody shall clang after me from the church-steeple (like the people of Carlsbad), for we sick and transient watering-place visitors of life (like those of Carlsbad) are received and sent on our way with music from the steeples, especially as the Church's servants are more expensive than the Carlsbad steeple-man, who only asks three pieces for blowing people in and out."

At this point he asked that Lenette's profile-portrait might be given him in bed, and he said, in a faltering voice, "I should like my dear Henry and the landlord to leave the room for a minute, and let me be alone with the Schulrath and my wife."

When this was done he gazed fondly, a long while, in silence, upon the little likeness. His eyes ran over with sorrow like a broken river-bank. He gave the picture to the Schulrath, paused, overcome by emotion, and said at length: "To you, my faithful friend, and to you alone, can I give this beloved portrait: you are *her* friend, as well as mine. Oh God! there is not a soul in the great, wide world that will take care of my dear Lenette if *you* forsake her. Don't cry so bitterly, my darling; he will be everything to you. Ah! dearest of friends, this helpless, innocent heart will break in desolate loneliness of sorrow unless *you* protect it and console it. Oh! never abandon it, as I am doing!"

The Schulrath swore by the Almighty that he would never leave her, and he took her hand and pressed it (without looking at her) as she wept, and hung, with eyes raining down with tears, upon the face of his friend, whose voice was so soon to be mute for ever. But Lenette forced him away from her husband's breast, and liberated her hand, and sunk down upon the lips which had so deeply touched her heart. Firmian clasped her with his left arm, and stretched his right hand to his friend—thus holding to his oppressed bosom the two things on earth that are nearest heaven, friendship and love.

And it is even this very matter which is an endless source of comfort and delight to me in you deluded and disagreeing mortals—that you all love one another heartily and utterly when you only get a chance of *seeing* one another divested of coverings and fogs—that when we fear we are growing *blind* we are only growing *cold*—and that, as soon as ever Death has raised our brothers and sisters up clear of the clouds of our own errors, our hearts melt into bliss and love when we see them soaring as beautiful human creatures, no longer distorted by the mists and concave mirrors of this world, up in the translucent æther; and cannot but sigh forth, "Ah! I should *never* have misunderstood you if I had always seen you *thus*." This is why every loving soul stretches its arms out to those whom poets exhibit to our low-placed eyes, as geniuses, in their cloud-built heaven, though, could he let them sink down upon our breasts, they would lose their beauteous transfiguration in a few short days upon the dirty earth of our necessities and mistakes: as the crystal glacier-water which refreshes, without chilling, must be caught in the air as it drips from its ice-diamond, because it is made impure by the air the moment it touches the earth.[87]

The Schulrath went out, but only to the doctor. This distinguished Generalissimo of Friend Death (who did not bear the title of "Councillor of the Supreme Board of Health" for nothing, but for money) was very willing to come and see the patient: firstly, because the Schulrath was a man of means and consideration; and, secondly, because Siebenkæs in his capacity of a member of the Corpse Lottery (of which the doctor also was a corresponding member and *frère servant*), ought not to be allowed to die. For this burial-fund was, in one of its more important aspects, a species of Government Savings' Bank, or Imperial Treasury for members of the better classes. The sight of this Supreme Councillor of Health, advancing in battle-array, terrified Leibgeber to death. He could not but fear that the advent of the doctor might make matters take a more serious turn, so that Siebenkæs might transmit to posterity a celebrity like that of Molière, who died on the stage while performing the part of the

[87] According to de Luc, in the third volume of his 'Little Journeys for Amateur Travellers.'

‘Malade Imaginaire.’ The relation between doctor and patient seemed to him as indeterminate as that between woodpeckers, or bark-beetles, and trees; inasmuch as it is still a moot question whether the trees wither in consequence of these creatures boring into them, and laying their eggs in them, or if (on the contrary) it is because the bark is worm-eaten and the trunk dead, that the beetles come flying to the trees. My opinion as regards beetles and woodpeckers (and doctors as well) is that each is alternately cause and effect; and that there is no such thing as a living creature whose existence can possibly be taken as pre-supposing decay, because, if so, at the creation of the world there would have had to be a dead horse created for the bluebottles, and a rotten cheese for the mites.

Well, Dr. Œlhafen (of the Supreme Board of Health) marched straight up to the sick man (shooting past the one who was not sick, with angry rudeness), and instantly swooped upon life’s seconds’-hand, the medical divining-rod, the pulse. Leibgeber set the plough of satirical anger into the soil of his face, ploughed crooked furrows, and determined upon a course of deep subsoil-ploughing.

“This,” said the professor of the healing art, “is a case of genuine nervous apoplexy, supervening on an undue determination of blood to the head, and a plethora of the vessels. There ought to have been medical attendance at a much earlier stage of the case; the full, hard pulse threatens a repetition of the attack. An emetic powder, which I shall prescribe, will, in the circumstances, produce the best possible effect.” And with this he pulled out some emetic *billets-doux*, wrapped up like *bonbons*. This preparation was one which he kept for sale himself, hawking it about from house to house like a Jew pedlar. There were few diseases to which he did not apply these emetics of his by way of “means of grace,” screwjacks, pump handles, and purgatorial fire; but he worked them most assiduously of all in apoplexy chest-inflammation, headache, and bilious fever. What he said was that he “began by clearing the principal passages,” and in so doing he occasionally cleared the proprietor of said principal passages out of this world, so that he found himself passing through the final “passage” of all flesh.

Leibgeber kneaded his odd visage into a new form, and said, “There seems nothing, Doctor Œlhafen (my colleague and *protomedicus*), to prevent our holding our *concilium*, or *consilium*, or *collegium medicum*, here where we stand. I cannot but think that my sedative powder had a good effect, seeing that it restored *apoplectico* there the power of speech, yesterday.” The *protomedicus* took Leibgeber for some quack, and without so much as letting his eyes touch his colleague, said to Peltzstiefel, “Will you get them to bring some warm water, and I will give him the powder myself.” “He and I will take it both together,” burst in Leibgeber, in anger; “*both* our gall-bladders are acting at present; the *patient* shan’t, won’t, and mustn’t.”

“Are you a regular practitioner, Sir?” asked the Councillor of the Supreme Board of Health, with contempt.

“I am a Jubilee Doctor, or Doctor Jubilant, and have been so ever since I ceased being a fool. You no doubt remember in Haller the case of the fool who thought his head was off, until they cured him by putting a lead hat on to him. A head roofed and insulated with lead has about as distinct a sense of individuality as one cast in that metal. I was very nearly in the same boat with that fool myself, brother colleague. I had inflammation of the brain, and did not find out so soon as I should have done that it had been put out, and cured. To make a long tale short, I fancied that my head had peeled away (or shall I call it ‘exfoliated,’ or ‘desquamated’), just as one’s feet

moulder and drop off, like crab's claws, when one takes too much ergot. When the barber came in, and threw down his purple tool-bag, or quiver, I said, 'My dear Surgeon-General Spœrl, it may be perfectly true that flies, tortoises, and adders have been known to go on living after their heads were off, as I do, but there wasn't much on them to shave. A man of your sense must see that it is as impossible to shave *me* as to shave the Torso at Rome—where were you thinking of *soaping* me, Mr. Spœrl? Scarce was he out of the door when in came the wig-maker. 'Another time, Mr. Peisser,' said I, 'unless you propose to curl the circumambient air around me, or the hair on my chest, you can put your combs back into your waistcoat pocket. Since twelve o'clock last night I have been carrying on existence without either frieze or cornice, and, like the tower of Babel, I have no cupola. But if you will go and see whether you can find my head in the next room there, and put a *queue* and a *toupée* on to that *caput mortuum* of mine, I should have no objection to that, and I don't mind wearing the head by a way of a *queue*-wig.' By good luck in came the Rector Magnificus. He was a doctor, and saw what distress I was in, when I smote my hands together and cried, 'Where are my four brain chambers and my *corpus callosum*, my *anus cerebri*, and my uniform *centrum* (which, according to Gläser, is the seat of the imagination)? How can a Rump Parliament wear spectacles, or use ear trumpets? The reasons are obvious. Is it come to this with the monæcius head of the world, that it has *no* head left for a seed-vessel?' But the Rector Magnificus sent to the University wardrobe for an old, tight-fitting, doctor's hat; he put it on me with a gentle push, and said, 'The faculty never places a doctor's hat on anything but a head; it could not possibly put it on to a nothing.' And this hat made a new head grow on to my imagination, like a decapitated snail's. And ever since I was cured myself. I have taken to curing other people."

The Board of Health councillor turned a basilisk's eyeball away from Leibgeber, and lowered himself downstairs by the ribbon of his cane like a bale of merchandize, omitting to pocket his emetic permit for the world to come, which the patient had, consequently, to pay for.

But our good Henry had another war to wage with Stiefel and Lenette, until Firmian threw himself between them as mediator, with the assurance that he would have sent the powder packing in any case, because it would have been anything but good for an old pain in his heart (alas! he spoke figuratively), and two or three Gordian knots in his lungs (the "knots of the plot of his earthly drama").

But all this time, however good a face he might put on matters, there was no concealing the fact that he was steadily growing worse. The *ricochet* of the apoplectic shot was clearly imminent, and to be looked for at any moment. "It is time I made my will," he said. "I long ardently for the Notary Public." This functionary, as is well known, has the drawing up of all last wills and testaments, according to the laws of Kuhschnappel. At length he arrived, Bærstel by name, a shrivelled and dried-up snail of a man, with a round, shy, listening button-face, all hunger, anxiety, and attention. Many people thought his flesh was merely smeared over his bones, like the new Swedish *carton pierre*. "What is it your pleasure to have written to-day, Sir?" began Bærstel. "One of my pretty little codicils," said Siebenkæs. "But before we begin hadn't you better try me with a catch-question or two, as is usually done with testators, to find out (without letting me know what you are at, you understand) whether I am all right in my head?" "Do you know who *I* am, Sir?" said Bærstel. "You are Mr. Bærstel, Notary Public," answered the patient. "Not only is that quite

correct," answered Bærstel, "but it renders it quite clear that you are wandering very little, if at all, and we may proceed at once to draw up your testament."

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF SIEBENKÆS,
POOR'S ADVOCATE.

"The undersigned, now yellowing and falling from the tree with the rest of the August apples, desires, being thus nigh to death, which looses the spirit from the thraldom of the body, to execute a few more merry back-steps, sidesteps, and Sir-Roger-de Coverleys, three minutes before the Basle dance of Death begins."

The notary paused, and asked in amazement, "Am I to put this stuff, and more like it, down upon paper?"

"*Imprimis*, I, Firmian Siebenkæs, alias Heinrich Leibgeber, do hereby will and ordain that my guardian the Heimlicher von Blaise shall (and must) pay over, within a year and day after my decease, to my friend, Mr. Leibgeber, inspector in Vaduz,[88] the 12,000 florins of trust money whereof he has godlessly defrauded me, his ward: the said Mr. Leibgeber making over the same hereafter faithfully to my beloved wife. In the event of the said Herr von Blaise declining so to do, I here lift up my hand and swear, upon my dying bed, that after I have departed this life I will pursue him, not legally, but spiritually, and will terrify him by appearing to him, either as the devil or as a tall white man, or by my voice merely, according as my circumstances, after my decease, may permit."

The notary's feathered arm hovered in air, and he ceased not to shrink and shudder with terror. "All I am afraid of," he said, "is that if I write down things of this kind, the Heimlicher will get hold of me." But Leibgeber, with face and body, barred his retreat through that hell-gate, the door of the room.

"Further, as reigning sovereign of the shooter's company, I will and ordain that no war of succession shall convert my testament into a powder of succession for innocent people. Further, that the republic of Kuhschnappel (into the office of Gonfaloniere and Doge whereof I was balloted with rifle bullets) shall wage no defensive war, seeing that it cannot defend itself if it does—but offensive wars only, with the object of enlarging the boundaries of its territories, they not being easy to protect. And that its members may, in their generation, be as wood-economising as their country and royal burgh's father has been in his. Now-a-days, when forests are burned to charcoal faster than they grow again, the only thing to be done is to warm *the climate* a good deal, and turn it into a great brooding-oven, kiln, and field-oven, so as to save the trouble, and obviate the necessity, of having stoves in the houses. And this has been in some measure attended to by careful Commissioners of Woods and Forests, who have cleared away the forests as much as they could, they being full of late winter. When one thinks how very beautifully modern Germany contrasts with that which Tacitus mapped, warmed as it is by the mere cutting down of the forests, we have little difficulty in feeling convinced that a time will come when, there being no more timber at all, we shall arrive at such a temperature that the atmosphere itself shall be our fur pelisse. The reason the present superfluity is burnt to ashes as rapidly as possible is, that the price of raft-wood may be raised, just as a million *livres*' worth

[88] That is, to himself. He wishes his inheritance to be paid to himself, and not to his wife, because she might have married a rich husband in the interval; besides, he would have less trouble in knowing whether or not the Heimlicher did what he told him, and could, if necessary, carry out the threat which he is about to make.

of nutmegs were publicly burnt at Amsterdam in 1760, to prevent the price from falling.

"Moreover, as King of the Kuhschnappelian Jerusalem, it is my desire that the senate and people thereof (senatus, populusque Kuhschnappeliensis) be not damned, but contrariwise blessed, particularly in this present world. Further, that the town magnates may not devour the Kuhschnappelian nests (houses) as they do the Indian ones, and that the taxes, though they have to pass through the four stomachs of the tax-gatherers,[89] may nevertheless issue thence converted from milky chyle into red blood (from silver into gold), and after circulating through the lacteals and the thoracic duct, be impelled in due course into the veins of the body politic. Further, I will and appoint that the greater and the lesser council——"

The notary would fain have stopped here, and shook his head most energetically, but Leibgeber was playing with the rifle with which the testator had elevated himself to the throne of the marksman (whereas it is upon leaping-poles consisting of *other men's* ramrods that thrones are usually attained to), and Bærstel wrote on in the sweat of his brow.

"That the mayor, the treasurer, the Heimlicher, the eight members of council, and the serjeant of court, may listen to reason, and reward no merit but that of other people. And that the rascal Blaise, and the scoundrel Meyern may daily lay castigatory hands upon each other, as relations, so that there may at all events always be one to punish the other."

Here the notary jumped up, declared it took his breath away, and went to the window to get a little air. And as he saw that there was a pile of tanner's bark within easy shot of the window-sill, his terror, shoving at him from behind, impelled him up on to the sill in question. Having taken this *first* step, before a testament witness could seize him by the coat-tails, he made a *second* (and long) one out into the open air, so as to be in a position to reach that modelling-table the heap of bark. Being thus a falling artist (not a rising one), he could do no better on his arrival there than make use of his face as a graving-tool, plastic "form," and copying machine, and execute therewith a faint bas-relief impression of himself upon the heap of tan. His fingers worked busily as graving-tools, making copies of themselves, whilst, as a matter of pure accident, he countersigned this, his report of the incident, with his notarial seal, which he had taken with him in his descent. So easy is it for one notary to create another, like a Count Palatine. But Bærstel left his co-notary and the entire *lusus naturæ* behind him, thinking on his homeward way of matters of a wholly different kind. Stiefel and Leibgeber, again, looked out of window, and (the notary having vanished, bag and baggage,) gazed upon his *second* outward man as it lay outstretched before them upon its anatomical theatre, smelling of Russia leather. Concerning which the author will not add another word of his own, but only these of Henry's.

"The notary wished to seal the testament with a larger seal than usual—one which nobody might forge—so he sealed it with his own body, and there we see the sphragistic impression all complete."

The will, such as it was, was duly subscribed by the witnesses and by the testator, and anything but a demi-military testament of this kind was scarcely to be expected in

[89] Here follow, in the original, puns on the (German) medical names of the four stomachs of the *Ruminantia*, for which I am unequal to finding equivalents.—Trans.

the circumstances. Evening was now drawing on,—the time when sick and sorry man turns him from the sun (as does the earth he dwells on), and *towards* the twilight evening star of the other world,—when the *sick* pass away to the latter, and the well gaze at the former—and when Firmian thought to give his wife the long kiss of parting, and then begin slowly sinking. But unfortunately Deacon Revel (the assistant preacher) came rustling in in an electrically stormy fashion. He came arrayed in his ecclesiastical armour, gorget, sash, and all, to administer a befitting rebuke to the invalid (round whose neck he had tied the band of matrimony in a double knot) for trying to evade payment of the confession fee—that toll for the communion of the sick and sound on the highway between heaven and hell. As (on the authority of Linnæus) the ancient botanists—a Croll, Porta, Helvetius, Fabricius—thought that certain plants which had more or less resemblance to particular illnesses were remedies for these complaints, prescribing yellow plants, such as saffron and turmeric, for jaundice, dragon's-blood and catechu for dysentery, cabbage-heads for headache (as well as prickly things, such as fish-bones, for stitches in the side), so, in the hands of able Gospel ministers, the spiritual *materia medica*, such as sermons and admonitions, assume the appearance of the spiritual maladies for whose cure they are administered—anger, pride, avarice, and so on. Thus there is often no difference, but one of condition, between the bed-ridden patient and his physician. This was the case with Revel. One of his great objects in life was, in an age when people are so prone to defame the Lutheran clergy by calling them mere Jesuits in disguise, or monks, to give the most unmistakable proof, more by deeds than by words, that he was, at all events, none of *the latter* (who call nothing their own, and are not allowed to possess property), and for that reason to be at all times on the hunt, and on the snatch, after worldly possessions. Hoseas Leibgeber did his best to make himself a barrier-rope and turnstile for the parson, and stopped him on the threshold, saying, "I fear it won't be of much use; I tried my own hand yesterday at converting and recoining him flying, (if I may use the expression,) post-haste, *volti subito citissime*, but all that came of it was that he threw it in my teeth that I wasn't converted *myself*—and no more I am. There are whole flocks of heretical singing-birds pecking away at the summer rape-seed of *my* opinions." Revel answered (vacillating between a major mode and a minor), "A servant of the Lord bides his time, keeps diligent watch, and does the duty of his sacred calling, striving to save souls—from atheism, as well as from other sin. The *event* concerns the sinner, and the sinner only."

So this black storm cloud, charged to the brim with Sinai-lightnings, rolled on into the dim-lit chamber; the parson waved his great, flapping gown-sleeve, like a standard of spiritual healing and rehabilitation, over the atheist (as *he* thought him) stretched on his bed, and told him in a "sick-bed exhortation" (which is generally the very antipodes of a funeral sermon)—in a "sick-bed exhortation" (I say) such as may one day overtake me and my reader under our last bed-cover, and which I shall therefore avoid sending all the way from Bayreuth to Heidelberg to be put in type, since it may be heard *en route* going on in any sick-chamber. At the same time he *told* him, in the said sick-bed exhortation to his face, like a plain-speaking, straight-forward man, that he was a roast for the devil's table, just done to a turn, and ready to be dished and served. The roast (thus pronounced to be done to a turn), closed his eyes, and endured it. But Henry, whom it pained to see the parson pinching the ears and the heart whom he loved with red-hot pincers, and who was furious at the thought that it was done solely to frighten the sick man into the Confessional—Henry seized his waving arm, and gently reminded him—

"I did not think it would have been very polite, Mr. Kevel, to mention it before—but the patient's hearing is a good deal impaired. You will find you will be obliged to scream. He has not heard a syllable you have said up to this point. Mr. Siebenkæs, do you know who this is? You see how little he hears. Set to work now at converting *me*, over a glass of beer—I should prefer that very much, and *I* hear a great deal better. I'm very much afraid he has a touch of delirium, and, if he sees you at all, thinks you are the devil—for it is with *him* that the dying have to fence their last bout. It's a pity he didn't know what you were saying. He would have been very angry and annoyed—(for confess he will *not*)—and on the authority of Haller, in the 8th volume of his 'Physiology, a proper amount of annoyance and vexation has often been known to add weeks to a dying person's life. But, after all, he *is* a *kind* of a true Christian, after a fashion, when all's said, although he no more dreams of *confessing* than any of the Apostles did, or the fathers either. When he is gone, you shall hear from my own lips how peacefully a true Christian passes away—no convulsions—no contortions—no agonies of death. He is as completely at home in the world of spirits as the screech-owl is in the village steeple—and just as the owl sits in the belfry while the bells are ringing, I will be bound that our Advocate will never stir when the death-bell tolls for him—for he has acquired, from your sermons, the conviction that he will go on living after he dies."

In the above speech there was some pretty hard hitting, in the shape of jest, at Firmian's mock death, as well as at his faith in immortality; such jests, in fact, as none but a Firmian could both understand and pardon. But Leibgeber was, at the same time, making an attack, in all seriousness, on those good people who believe accidental, physical tranquillity in dying to be tranquillity of soul, and bodily struggles to be storms of conscience.

Revel contented himself with replying, "You are of those who sit in the seat of the scorner—whom the Lord will find. I have washed my hands." But as he would have infinitely preferred *filling* them, and, moreover, could not succeed in transforming this child of the devil into a confessing penitent, he took his departure, red and silent, escorted downstairs by Lenette and Stiefel with many deferential curtseys and bows.

Let us not make out Henry's gall-bladder (which is likewise his swimming-bladder, and, alas! often his ascending *globus hystericus*) to be any bigger than it really is. Let us form a judgment, all the more favourable, of this natural foible of his from considering than Henry had, in the course of his previous career, seen spiritual *frères terribles*, and gallows preachers of this sort, strewing salt upon the faint, withered hearts on so many deathbeds; and because it was his belief (as it is mine) that of all the hours of a man's life his last must be the most indifferent as regards religion, inasmuch as it the most unfruitful, and no seed can sprout in it which will bear any fruit of action.

During the brief absence of the courteous couple, Firmian said, "Oh! I am sick, sick, and weary of it all. I *cannot* carry on the joke any longer. In ten minutes more I intend to lie my last lie, and die—and would to GOD it were not a lie. Don't let them bring in any lights, but cover me up at once with the mask, for I see very plainly that I shall not be able to control these eyes of mine, and when the mask is on, I shall, at all events, be able to let them weep as much as they like. Ah! Henry, my good, kind friend!"

The infusory chaos of Revel's exhortation had made this weary *figurant* and mimicker of Death tender and grave. Henry—out of his delicate and loving

solicitude—had undertaken all the lying parts of the *rôle*, and enacted those himself. He therefore (as the couple were coming back into the room), cried out, in a loud, anxious voice, “Firmian, how do you feel now?” “Better,” said Firmian, in a voice of emotion. “There are stars shining in this world’s night, though I, alas! am clamped to the dust, and cannot soar up to them. The bank of the lovely spring-time of eternity is steep, and, close as we day-flies are swimming to the shore of Life’s Dead Sea, we have not got our wings yet.” Yes! Death—sublime and glorious after sunset-sky of our St. Thomas’s Day—grand amen of our hope, spoken to our ears from the other world—would come to our beds in the likeness of a beautiful giant, with a garland on his brow, and lift us gently up into the æther, and rock us there to rest, were it not that we go to him only as maimed, stunned creatures, who are *thrown* into his giant arms. What robs Death of his glory is sickness; the pinions of the soul when it rises on its heavenward flight are heavy, and stained with blood, and tears, and mire. The only time when death is a flight—not a fall—is when some hero is smitten by one, single, mortal wound, when, as he stands like a spring-world, all new blossom, and old fruit, the next world suddenly flashes by him, like some comet, bearing him (miniature world as he is) all unwithered, along with it in its flight, to soar with it beyond the sun.

But this mental exaltation of Firmian’s would have been an indication of reviving strength and returning health to sharper eyes than Stiefel’s. It is upon the *looker-on* only—not upon the victim who is smitten down—that the battle-axe of Death casts a flash of light. It is with the death-bell as with other bells; it is those who are *at a distance* who hear the solemn, inspiring boom and music—not those who are *within* the sounding hemisphere. And as every bosom grows more sincere and more transparent in the hour of death—like the Siberian glass-apple, the kernel of which, when ripe, is covered only by a crystal case formed of sweet, transparent flesh—so Firmian, in this dithyrambic hour—near as he was to the bare edge of Death’s sickle—could have gladly sacrificed (that is, discovered) all the mystery and blossom of his future, but that by so doing he would have broken his word and grieved his friend. But nothing was left him now, save a patient heart, dumb lips, and weeping eyes.

Alas! and were not all his ostensible farewells *real* ones after all? As he drew his Henry and the Schulrath to his heart with trembling hands, was that heart not oppressed by the mournful certainty of losing the Schulrath on the morrow, and Henry in a week’s time, for ever? So that the following address which he made to them was nothing but the plain truth, mournful though it was. “Alas! we shall be scattered asunder by the four winds of heaven in a very, very little time. Ah! human arms are rotten bands. How short a time they hold! May all be well with you—and better than I ever deserved it might be with me. May the chaotic stone-heaps of your lives never come rolling down about your feet, or about your ears—may spring overspread the crags and cliffs around you with berries, and the freshest green! Good night for ever, dearly loved Schulrath, and you, my Henry!” He pressed the latter to his heart in silence, thinking how near the veritable parting was.

But he should have avoided stimulating his heart into feverish excitement by these pricks and stings of farewell, for he heard Lenette mourning out of sight behind the bed, and (with a deep death-wound in his overflowing heart) said, “Come, my beloved Lenette, and bid me good-bye;” and stretched out his arms in a wild manner to receive her. She came tottering, and sank into them, and on to his heart, while he was speechless under the crushing weight of his emotions; till at length, as she lay there trembling, he said, in a low voice, “Ah! poor, patient, faithful, tortured soul!

how constantly and unceasingly have I caused you sorrow! Will you forgive me? Will you forget me?" (A spasm of sorrow clasped her closer to him.) "Ah! do *but* forget me, and forget me *quite*; for heaven knows you have never been happy with me!" Their voices were lost in sobs, only their tears could flow. A drawing, thirsting grief was grinding at his weary heart, and he went on: "No, no; with *me* you have truly had nothing, nothing but tears; but there are happy days coming for you, when I shall be gone from you." He gave her his parting kiss, saying, "Live happy now, and let me be gone!" "But you are *not* going to die," she cried again and again, with a thousand tears. He put his arms about her, he gently raised her fainting form from his breast, and said, very solemnly, "It is over now. Fate has sundered us; it is over and past."

Henry gently led her weeping away; and he cried himself, too; and cursed his plot; and signed to the Schulrath, saying, "Firmian needs rest now." The latter turned his face, swollen and drawn with pain, to the wall. Lenette and Stiefel were mourning together in the other room. Henry waited till the greater billows had subsided somewhat, and then quietly put the question: "Now?" Firmian gave the signal, and Henry yelled out, "Oh! he is gone!" like a man beside himself; and threw himself down upon the motionless body (to prevent anybody from touching it), with genuine, bitter tears at the thought of the nearness of parting. An inconsolable couple came bursting from the next room. Lenette would have thrown herself upon her husband (whose face was turned away), and she cried, in agony, "I must see him; I must bid my husband good-bye once more." But Henry told the Schulrath (confidentially) to take hold of her, and support her, and get her away out of the room. The two former things he was able to accomplish (although his *own* self-control was only an artificial one, assumed with the view of demonstrating the victory of religion over philosophy), but get her out of the room he could not. When she saw Henry take up the mask of death, "No, no," she cried; "I insist upon being allowed to see my husband once more." But Henry took the mask, gently turned Firmian's face (on which the tears of parting were scarce yet dry), and covered it up, thus hiding it for ever from his wife's weeping eyes. This grand scene lifted up his heart; he gazed upon the mask and said, "Death lays a mask like this over all our faces; and a time will come when *I* shall stretch me out in death's midnight sleep as *he* has done, and grow longer and heavier. Ah! poor Firmian! has that war game of yours been worth the candles and the trouble? We are not the *players*, it is true; we are the things *played with*: and old Death sends our heads and hearts rolling like balls over the green billiard-table, and pockets them in his corpse-sack; and every time one of us is pocketed there, the death-bell gives a toll. It is true you go on living in a sense[90] (if the frescoes of ideas can be detached from the walls of the body), and oh! may you be happier in that postscript life than in this. But what is it, this postscript life, after all? *It* will go out too; every life, on every world-ball, will burn out one day. The planets are licensed only to retail liquor to be drunk on the premises. They can't board and lodge us; they merely pour us out a glass of quince-wine, currant-juice, spirits; but for the most part *gargles* of *good* wine (which we must not swallow), or else sympathetic ink (i. e. *liquor probatorius*), sleeping-draughts, and acids; and then, on we go, from one planet-inn to another; and so from millennium to millennium. Oh! thou kind heaven; and whither, whither, whither?

"However, this earth is the wretchedest village tap-room of the lot; a place where mostly beggars, rogues, and deserters turn in, and which we have always to go five

[90] Leibgeber means, at once, the second life (in which he does not believe), and Firmian's continuation of his *present* life in Vaduz.

steps *away* from to *enjoy* our best pleasures; that is to say, either into memory or into imagination.

“Ah! peaceful being there at rest, may it fare better with you in other taverns than here; and may some restaurateur of life open the door of a wine-cellar for you in *lieu* of this vinegar-cellar!”

Chapter XXI

DR. ŒLHAFEN AND MEDICAL BOOT AND SHOEMAKING—THE BURIAL SOCIETY—A DEATH'S HEAD IN THE SADDLE—FREDERICK II. AND HIS FUNERAL ORATION.

As a step preliminary to everything else, Leibgeber quartered the sorrowing widow down stairs with the hairdresser, with the view of rendering the intermediate state after death easier to the dead man. "You must emigrate," he told her, "and keep out of the sight of these sad memorials round us here, until *he* has been taken away." Superstitious terror made her consent, so that he had no difficulty in giving the dear departed his food and drink. He compared him to a walled-up vestal, finding in her cell a lamp, bread, water, milk, and oil (according to Plutarch, in 'Numa'); and added, "Unless you are more like the earwig, which, when cut in two, turns about and devours its own remains." By jokes like these he brightened (or, at all events, strove to brighten) the cloudy and autumnal soul of his dear friend, who could see nothing all around him save ruins of his bygone life, from the widowed Lenette's clothes to her work. The bonnet-block, which he had struck on the day of the thunder-storm, had to be put away in a corner out of his sight, because he said it made Gorgon faces at him.

Next day, our good corpse-watcher, Leibgeber, had to perform the labours of a Hercules, an Ixion, and a Sisyphus combined. Congress after congress, picket after picket, came to see the dead man and speak well of him—for it is not until they make their *exit* that we applaud men and actors, and we think people are *morally* beautified by death as Lavater thought they were physically. But Leibgeber drove everybody away from the death-chamber, saying it had been one of his friend's last requests that he should do so.

Then came the woman to lay out the corpse (Death's Abigail), and wanted to begin washing and dressing it. Henry tussled with her, paid her, and banished her. Then (in presence of the widow and Peltzstiefel), he had to pretend to *be* pretending to hide a bleeding heart behind outward resignation. "But I see through him," said Stiefel, "without the slightest trouble. It is because he is not a Christian that he is striving to play the Stoic and the Philosopher." Stiefel was here alluding to that specious, empty, and frivolous hardness which is exhibited by Zenos of the world and of the court, who are like those wooden figures which are made to look like stone statues and pillars by being smeared over with a coating of stone-dust. Also the share, or dividend, of the burial-fund was got together (by being collected on a plate from the members of that body), and this led to its coming to the knowledge of our old acquaintance Dr. Œlhafen, who was one of the paying members. He took occasion, on his morning round of visits, to drop in at the house of mourning, with the view of provoking his brother in science to as great an extent as he could. He therefore affected not to have heard a word about the death, and began by asking how the invalid was getting on. "According to the *latest* bulletins," said Henry, "he is not *getting* on at all—he has *got* on; in a word, Herr Protomedicus Œlhafen, he is gone. August, March, and December are months when Death sends out his pressgang and gathers in his vintage."

"That lowering powder of yours," said the vindictive Doctor, "seems to have lowered *his* temperature pretty effectively; he's cool enough *now*, eh?" This pained Leibgeber,

and he answered, “I am sorry to say, he is. However, we did our best with him. We got your emetic down his throat, but the only thing he got rid of was that most terribly morbific of all matters in man—his soul. You, Mr. Protomedicus, are judge in a criminal court, having the power of life and death; whereas, you see, I am only an advocate, and possessed of a jurisdiction so far inferior that *I* didn’t dare meddle with anything, least of all the fellow’s *life*; a nice face he would have made if I had.”

“Well, so he *has* made a face at it, and a long face, too—the hippocratic face,” answered the Doctor, not wholly without wit. “I can’t but believe you,” answered Leibgeber, in a gentle manners “I have not the least doubt you are perfectly right. We laymen, you see, have so few opportunities of seeing those faces, whereas doctors can study the hippocratic countenance in their patients every day of their lives. And, of course, an experienced doctor is always distinguished by a quickness of eye which enables him to tell at a glance if a patient be going to die—which is an impossibility to other people, who, not being doctors in practice, have not many opportunities of seeing people depart this life.”

“A medical connoisseur of *your* cultivation and experience as a matter of course put mustard poultices to the patient’s feet? Only, I presume, it was too late for them to be of any use, was it?”

“I *did* manage to hit upon the notion of trying that trick of soling my poor friend’s feet with mustard and vinegar” (answered Leibgeber), “and paper-hanging the calves of his legs with blisters; but the patient (at all times rather fond of his joke, as you know), called that sort of thing ‘medical boot and shoemaking,’ and called us doctors ‘Death’s shoemakers,’ who, when Nature has cried to a poor fellow ‘Look out! Mind your head!’ go and put Spanish flies on to him by way of Spanish boots, mustard-plasters by way of *Cothurni*, and cupping-glasses by way of leg-irons: as if a man could not make his appearance in the next world without red heels consisting of mustard-blister marks, and red cardinal stockings of plaster blisters. And so saying, the deceased aimed a skilful kick at my face and the plaster, and said the connoisseurs were like stinging-flies, which always fasten upon the legs.”

“He wasn’t far wrong, I suspect, as regarded *you*. A ‘shoemaker of Death’ might perhaps put something on just under that *caput tribus insanabile* of yours which wouldn’t fit so badly,” said the Doctor, and made off as fast as he could.

I have already said a few words concerning those emetic powders of his, and I now wish to add what follows. If he *does* send people to their long homes by means of them, the chief difference between him and a fox[91] is that (according to the ancient naturalist), the latter imitates the distant sound of a man being sick to make the dogs run to him, that he may attack them. At the same time even those whose opinion of the members of the medical profession is the highest conceivable must admit that there are certain limits to their criminal jurisdiction. As by European International Law, no army can shoot down another with glass bullets, or poisoned ones, but only with leaden ones—further, as no nation may put poison into the enemies’ food, or wells, but only dirt—so, although the medical police allow a practising physician (of the higher jurisdiction) the utmost freedom in the administration of narcotics, drastics, emetics, diuretics, and the whole pharmacopœia, in a word (so that it would be a breach of the police regulations to attempt to prevent him), yet were the most celebrated of doctors, town or country, within the limits of his jurisdiction to set to work and give people poison-balls in place of pills, or ratsbane by way of a strong

[91] Plin. H. N., viii 30.

emetic, the upper courts of justice would take a pretty serious view of the matter—unless it were for ague that he prescribed the mouse-poison. Nay, I suspect that an entire medical *collegium* would scarce escape some judicial inquiry if it were to take a sword and run a man through with it (though it might open his veins with a lancet at any hour of the day or night if it pleased), or if it were to knock him down with a warlike but nonsurgical instrument. Thus we find in the criminal records that doctors who threw people into the water from bridges have by no means got clear off—that being a different affair altogether from putting them into a *smaller* bath, mineral or otherwise.

When the hairdresser heard that the corpse-lottery money had safely arrived in its harbour of refuge, he came upstairs and offered to curl his deceased lodger's hair, make him a pigtail, and let his comb and pomatum accompany him under the sod. Leibgeber was obliged to be economical on the poor widow's account, for more than half her feathers were plucked out of her already by the innumerable insect-feelers, vultures'-talons, and boars'-tusks of the domestics of death, and he said the most he could do was to buy the comb and put it in the deceased's waistcoat-pocket, so that he might do it himself after his own taste. He said the same to the barber, and added that, of course, as hair goes on growing in the grave, the whole secret society (and fruit-bearing society) therein is adorned with fine beards, like Swiss of the age of sixty. These two collaborateurs in hair (who revolve round the same central-sphere like two of the satellites of Uranus) went off with abbreviated hopes, and elongated faces and purses, the one wishing, in the excess of his gratitude, that he had at that moment the shaving of the undertaker Henry, the other wishing *he* had the cutting of his hair. On the stairs they grumbled out, "It would be no wonder if the dead man should not be able to rest in his grave, but went about frightening people."

Leibgeber thought of the risk there was of losing the reward of all this long process of deception, should anybody go to have a look at the deceased gentleman while he was in the next room (for whenever he was going further he locked the door). So he went to the churchyard, took a skull out of the charnel-house, and brought it home under his coat. He handed it to Siebenkæs, saying, "If we were to shove this head in beneath the green trellis-bed whereon *defunctus* is lying, and keep it connected with his hand by means of a green-silk thread, it might be brought into play (in the dark, at all events), as a species of Belidor's globe of compression, or jawbone of an ass as against Philistines, who have got to be frightened away if they come disturbing the repose of the warm dead." To be sure (had the most extreme necessity to do so arisen) Siebenkæs would have come to himself, revived out of his prolonged insensibility, and repeated his apoplectic seizure for the third time—much to the gratification of medical systems of theory. However, the death's head was better than the fit. The sight of this garret-lodging of a soul, this cold hatching-oven of a spirit, made Siebenkæs sad. He said, "No doubt the wall-creeper finds a quieter and safer nest here than did the bird-of-paradise,[92] which has flown away from it."

Leibgeber now chaffered with the servants of the Church and School, and (with whispered curses) paid the necessary surplice-fees and bridge-tolls, saying, "The day after tomorrow we will lay the deceased to rest as quietly as we may, without fuss or ceremony." It was a matter of indifference to them; all *they* cared about being the pocketing of the postage which franks people into the next world, which they were all glad enough to do—all except one old and poor School-servant, who said he thought

[92] Which, like a greater Psyche, makes its nest in skulls.

it a sin to take a farthing from the poor widow, for he knew what poverty was. But this was exactly what the rich could not know.

In the morning, Henry went down to the hairdresser and Lenette, leaving the key in the door—for, since the recent ghost story, the lodgers who lived upstairs were too frightened to put so much as their heads out of their own doors. The hairdresser, who was still annoyed that he had not been allowed to curl the deceased's hair, bethought him that it would at least be something if he were to slip upstairs, and cut and carry off the entire hair-forest. The demand for hair and firewood is in excess of the supply (now that the former is made into rings and twisted into letters), and we should never leave any dead person a coffin or a single hair. Even the ancients sheared off the latter for the altars of the subterranean gods; so Meerbitzer crept on tiptoe into the room, and opened his scissor-feelers. Siebenkæs could easily look askew into the room through the eye-holes of the mask, and from the scissors and general aspect of his landlord, he divined the impending misfortune and 'Rape of the Lock.' He saw that in his strait he could reckon more upon the bare head under the bed than upon his own. The landlord, who, in his timidity, had carefully left the door wide open behind him to secure his retreat, drew near to the plantation of human pot-plants, with intent to play the part of reaper in the harvest-month—to combine the *rôles* of beard-shearer and hair-curler, and avenge them both. Siebenkæs wound up the thread as well as he could upon his covered fingers, so as to roll out the skull; but as the latter came much too slowly, and Meerbitzer far too quickly, he was obliged to come to his own assistance in the meantime (and this because evil spirits so often *breathe* upon men, or *inspire* them) by breathing out of the mouth-hole of his mask a long night-breeze upon the landlord. Meerbitzer could not explain to himself this most suspicious blast, which blew real azote, and a deadly simoom-wind, upon him; and all his warm constituent principles began to shoot into icicles. But, unluckily, the dead man had soon shot all his breath away, and was obliged to re-load his air-gun slowly. This suspension of hostilities brought the lock-raper to himself, and to his legs again; so that he made fresh preparations to take hold of the nightcap-tassel, and remove that gossamer (said nightcap) from the field of hair. But just as he was in the act of taking hold of it, he became aware that a something was beginning to move under the bed; he paused, and waited quietly (for it might be a rat) to see what this noise would turn out to be caused by. But, as he thus waited, it was all of a sudden borne in upon his mind that *a round thing* was rolling up his legs, and coming higher and higher. In one instant he made a clutch at it with his empty hand (the other held the scissors), and, powerlessly as a pair of callipers, that hand rested on the ascending, slippery ball, which kept pressing it up and up. Meerbitzer grew visibly stiff in the legs, and his blood ran cold; but a fresh upward shove of his hand, and a glance at the ascending head, administered to him (ere he was felled to earth, wholly curdled to cheese), such a kick of terror that he flew like a feather across the floor, and out of the door like a cannonball shot straight at the bull's eye by the cannon-powder of fear. He landed in the room downstairs with the open scissors in his hand, his mouth and eyes wide open, and a pallid spot on his face, compared to which his hair-powder and his shirt were court-mourning. Nevertheless, in this novel situation (I am glad to say it to his honour) he had the presence of mind not to say a word about what had happened; partly because ghost-stories cannot be related till nine days are over without the greatest danger to the narrator, partly because he could not well talk about his hair-shearing and privateering on *any* day at all.

At one in the morning, Firmian told this tale to his friend with the same fidelity as I have endeavoured to observe in recounting it to the reader. This gave Leibgeber a

useful hint to set a trusty body-guard over the noble corpse; and to this office, in the absence of chamberlains and other court officials, he could appoint no other than Saufinder.

On the last morning, which was to give our Siebenkæs "Notice to quit," arrived the *casa santa* of mankind, our *chambre garnie*, our last *seed capsule*—the coffin for which we have to pay whatever is demanded. "This is the last building grant of life," said Henry, "the carpenter's final piece of cheatery."

At half an hour after midnight—when neither bat nor night-watchman, nor beer-guest from the public-house, nor night-light was any longer to be seen; and only a field-cricket here and there could be heard in the sheaves, and a mouse or two in the houses—Leibgeber said to his sad and anxious friend, "March, now! Since you shuffled off this mortal coil, and entered into eternity, you have not known a moment of happiness or peace. All the rest is my affair. Wait for me at Hof on the Saale. We must see each other yet once more after death." Firmian fell in silence on his burning face, and wept. In this twilight hour he once more revisited all the flowery places of the past, behind which he was sinking as into a grave. His softened heart took delight in depositing a parting tear upon every piece of dress belonging to his sorrowing, bereaved Lenette—on every piece of her work—on every trace of her housewifely hand. He pressed her betrothal wreath of roses and forget-me-nots hard to his burning bosom, and placed Nathalie's rosebuds in his pocket. And thus—mute, oppressed, with stifled sobs, and like one cast out by an earthquake from this earth on to the icy coasts of a strange world—he crept down the steps after his friend; pressed his helping hand once more at the door; and then night built the funeral vault of her gigantic shadow all over him. Leibgeber wept heartily as soon as he was lost to view. Tears fell on every stone which he pocketed, and upon the old block which he took in his arms, to imbed in the coffin-shell so as to give it the due weight of a corpse. He filled up that haven of our bodies, and closed that ark of the covenant, hanging the coffin-key, like a black cross, upon his breast. And now for the first time he slept in peace in the house of mourning. All was done.

In the morning he made no secret of it, before the bearers and Lenette, that he had placed the body in the coffin with his own two arms, and not without considerable effort. She sighed to see her departed husband once again, but Henry had thrown away the door-key of the painted house in the darkness. He helped most diligently in the search for it (he had it about him all the time), but it was in vain, and many of the bystanders soon guessed that Henry was only deceiving, anxious to spare the widow's weeping eyes any further sight of the cause of her sorrow. So they went forth, with the mock passenger in the quasi coffin, to the churchyard which lay glistening in dew beneath the fresh blue sky. An icy thrill crept to Henry's heart as he read the words on the gravestone. It had been lifted from off the flat, Moravian-like grave of Siebenkæs's great-grandfather, and turned over, and on the smooth side glittered the newly-graven inscription—

"STAN: FIRMIAN SIEBENKÆS, Departed this life, 24th August, 1786."

This name had once been Henry's own, and on the reverse side of the monument was his present name, Leibgeber. Henry reflected that in a few days *he* would fall (with his name cast away from him) as a little brook into the world's great ocean, and flow there without shores, and be lost amongst strange and unknown billows. He felt as though he himself with his old name, and his new, were going down to the grave. So strangely mingled were his feelings that he seemed to himself as if he were sticking

fast in the frozen stream of life, while overhead a burning sun was beating upon the ice-field, and he was lying between the glow and the frost. In addition to this, the Schulrath just then came running (with his handkerchief to his eyes and nose), and, in stammering accents of sorrow, imparted the news which had just reached the town—that the old King of Prussia had died on the 17th of the month.

The first thing that Leibgeber did was to look up to the morning sun, as though Frederick's eye was beaming morning fire from it over the earth. It is easier to be a great king than a just one; it is easier to be admired than justified. A king lays his little finger upon the long arm of the monstrous lever, and, like Archimedes, lifts ships and countries with the muscles of his fingers; but it is only the *machine* that is great—and the machinist, Fate—not he who works it. The voice of a king re-echoes like a peal of thunder amongst the numberless valleys around him; and every gentle ray he emits is reflected in the form of a burning beam condensed into a focus, from the countless plane-mirrors which are upon his throne. But Frederick could, at most, only be *lowered* by a throne, by having to *sit* upon it. His head would only have been *greater* without the close-binding crown (its crown of thorns) and magic circle. And happy, thou great spirit, couldst thou still less become! For, although thou hadst broken down within thee the Bastilles and the prison-walls of all ignoble passions—although thou hadst given thy spirit what Franklin gave to earth, namely, lightning-conductors, musical glasses, and freedom—although no kingdom was to thee so lovely as that of truth, and there was none which thou so lovedst to enlarge—although thou didst permit the emasculate philosophy of French encyclopædists to hide from thee eternity only, but not divinity, only the *belief* in virtue, but not thine own—yet did thy loving bosom accept nothing from friendship and humanity but the echoes of their sighs—the flute. And thy spirit, which, with its great roots like the mahogany-tree, often shivered the rocks it grew upon—thy spirit, in the fell battle of thy wishes with thy doubts, in the contest of thy ideal world with the real one, and the one in which thou didst believe, felt a painful discord which no mild faith in a *second* softened to harmony. And therefore there was upon thy throne no place of rest but that which thou hast now attained.

Some men bring all humanity before our eyes at a glance, as certain events bring our whole lives. There fell upon Henry's breast strong splinters of the fallen mountain whose crash he heard.

He placed himself before the open grave, and delivered this speech more to invisible than to visible hearers:—

"So, then, the epitaph on the tomb is *versio interlineario* of this small, small printed life of ours. The heart does not rest until, like the head, it is set in gold.[93] Thou hidden Infinite one! make, for me, the grave a prompter's tube, and tell me what I am to think of the whole theatre. Indeed, what *is* there in the grave? Some ashes, a few worms, coldness, and night—by Heaven! there is nothing better *above* it either, except that one *feels* it. Mr. Schulrath, Time sits behind us, and reads the calendar of life so cursorily, and turns over the page of month after month at such a rate, that I can fancy this grave—this moat here about our castles in the air—this fortress trench—lengthening out and extending till it reaches my bed, and I am shaken out of the bedclothes into this cooking-hole, like a heap of Spanish flies. 'Go on,' I would say, 'Go on. I shall come either to old Fritz, or to his worms—and therewith *Basta*!

[93] King's hearts are enshrined in golden cases.

‘By Heaven! one is ashamed of life when the greatest of men no longer possess it. And so *holla*!”

Chapter XXII

JOURNEY THROUGH FANTAISIE—RE-UNION ON THE BINDLOCHER MOUNTAIN—BERNECK—MAN-DOUBLING—GEFREES—EXCHANGE OF CLOTHES—MUNCHBERG—SOLO-WHISTLING—HOF—THE STONE OF GLADNESS AND DOUBLE-PARTING.

Henry now plied more wings than any seraph, that he might fly up with his friend as soon as possible. He packed up the latter's manuscripts in haste, and addressed them to Vaduz. The sealed will and testament was lodged with the proper authorities, from whom, also, the necessary certificate of death was obtained to show the Prussian Widows' Fund that it was not being defrauded. And then he got fairly afloat, and pushed off, having first bestowed some weighty grounds for consolation—as well as some weighty ducats—upon the downcast straw-widow, who mourned in the striped calico-dress, as was right and proper.

Let us now overtake and accompany his departed friend, even before he himself does so. During the first hour of his night-journey, vague and disordered pictures of the past and of the future struggled in Firmian's heart; and it seemed to him as if, *for him*, there were no such thing as a present, but that a wilderness stretched between the past and the future. But the fresh, rich harvest month of August soon gave him back the life he had (so to speak) played away; and when the gleaming morning was come in earnest, the earth was lying all lighted up with a new-fallen thunderstorm, now emitting lovely lightning only from drops hanging on the corn-ears, as if over-silvered by the moon. It was a new earth; he was a new creature, just burst, with ripened pinions, through the egg-shell of the coffin. Oh! a broad, marshy, overshadowed desert-waste, where a long, long troubled dream had kept driving him to and fro, had vanished *with* that dream, and he was awake, and gazing deep into Eden. The last week (and that last week especially) had stretched out to enormous length those twisted convolutions of suffering which give to our brief lives a false appearance of being much too long (as we make the short walks of a garden seem longer by laying them out in curves and sweeps). On the other hand, his lightened breast, now free from all its old burdens, was heaved by a great sigh, which was partly both sorrow and joy. He had been too far into the Trophonius cave of the tomb—had looked death too closely in the face—and it seemed to him that all our country mansions, our pleasure-castles and vineyards, were built and laid out upon the verge of the crater of the volcano of the grave-hillock, and that the next night they would be shaken into dust. He felt alone, upheaved, a dead man come back to life, but scarce alive; wherefore every human face he met beamed upon him like that of a new-found brother. "These are my brethren whom I left on earth," said his heart; and a fruit-bearing love, warm like the spring, expanded all its veins and fibres; and it crept and grew round every *other* heart with tender, clinging, ivy-like filaments. But the one he loved best was still—too long—away; and he went on as slowly as he could, that so Leibgeber (of whom he was in advance both in distance and time) might overtake him before he got to Hof. A hundred times, on his journey, he almost involuntarily looked round *for* this overtaking, as if it were already a thing to be actually seen.

At length he came to the Fantaisie of Bayreuth, on a morning when the whole world gleamed and glittered from the drops of dew up to the little silver cloudlets. But stillness was over all. The breezes were asleep; nor had August, in air or in thicket,

one single songster left. It seemed to him as though, having left this mortal life, he was wandering in a second, transfigured world, where the form of his Nathalie might move by his side, with love in her eyes—and, in words straight from the soul, no longer fettered by earthly bonds, say to him, "*Here* you looked up in gratitude to the starry night; *here* I gave you my wounded heart; here we spoke our earthly parting-vow; and here I came, often, alone, and thought of the brief, bright vision." "And this is the spot," he said to himself, when he came to the château, "where she wept her last tears when she said farewell to her lady-friend."

And now, again, it seemed that only *she* was the one transfigured. (*He* seemed to his fancy to be the one left behind.) He *felt* that he should never see her more on earth; "but" (he said) "people must be able to *love*, though they cannot meet or see each other." All his meagre future was to be illuminated by transfigured and glorified dream-pictures only. But as the tree (according to Bonnet) is planted as much in the air above it as it is in the earth beneath it, and derives nourishment quite as much from the one as from the other, so it is with every true human-creature. And thus Firmian lived in the future with more vivid life than in the past—only with fewer of his root-fibres in the visible ground. The whole tree, top-shoot, branches, and all, stood under the open sky, drinking the free breeze of heaven with its every blossom—where all he had to invigorate and cheer him were two invisible friends—the one a woman, the other a man.

At length the thin, beautiful vapour of his dreams thickened to a fog. Nathalie's sorrow for his death came hovering over him, and his lonesomeness struck heavy on his heart, which longed unutterably for some living being which should stand there and love him with all its heart. But this being was still behind him, doing its best to overtake him—Henry, to wit.

"Mr. Leibgeber," the voice of some one coming up after him suddenly cried, "stop a moment, please. Here is your handkerchief; I picked it up down below there."

He looked round, and there was the girl whom Nathalie had helped out of the water, coming running up with a white handkerchief. But as he had his own in his pocket, and the girl, gazing at him in astonishment, said he had dropped it near the basin about an hour before (though he had not then had so long a coat on)—a gush of gladness streamed into his heart. Leibgeber had arrived, and had been down by the basin.

He hastened to Bayreuth as fast as he could, all in a whirl, with the handkerchief in his hand. It was moist, as if his friend's weeping eyes had rested on it. He pressed it warmly to his own, but it would not dry them, for he thought how Henry passed his life in solitude, exemplifying the truth of his own saying, "He who spares his feelings, and puts armour upon them, keeps them most delicately sensitive—just as the skin under the nails is the easiest hurt of all." At the Sun Hotel, Firmian learned from John the waiter that Leibgeber had actually arrived, and was gone on about half-an-hour ago. Firmian ran off after him, up and down the streets of Hof, blind and deaf, in such tempestuous pursuit of his friend that he forgot all about the moist handkerchief.

After a long while, he caught sight of him climbing the long hill behind the village of Bindloch, a mountain-road, in the true sense of the words, not to be either ascended or descended at any great speed. Leibgeber was straining up it as fast as he could, however, with the view of unexpectedly overtaking Firmian before he got to Hof,

perhaps in Münchberg, or in Gefrees, if not in Berneck itself (which is at no very great distance from Bayreuth).

But was not everything destined to turn out ten times better? Did not Siebenkæs, at the bottom of the hill, at last catch sight of him near the level place on the summit, and call out his name—which he did not hear? Did not Siebenkæs then run at an extraordinary pace after his ascending friend (with the handkerchief in his hand), and did not the latter chance to turn round, by accident, to have a glance at the sunny landscape, and see all Bayreuth, and—at long and at last—his friend hastening after him? And finally, did they not rush together, the one down the hill, the other up (not like two hostile armies, however, but like two wreathed and foaming goblets of joy and friendship)?

Henry speedily perceived that in his friend's breast there was much of a powerful and dissolvent kind—belonging both to past and to future times—at work, wherefore he sought to appease and calm all the "Naiads of the rivers of tears."

"Everything went off divinely," he said, "and everybody is well. Now you are as free as I am. Your chains are off—the world is before you—so in you plunge into it, fresh and merry, like me, and begin to live your *real* life, for the first time *in* your life." "You are right," said Firmian, "this is like meeting you again after death. Heaven is above us, peaceful and quiet, gladsome, serene, and warm." For that very reason, he had not the courage to ask after those he had left behind, particularly his widow. Leibgeber expressed great joy that he had caught him up four post-stations on that side of Hof, and all the more that, this being so, they could be together for a good long while before they must part in Hof (which latter was the very point which he was anxious to establish and emphasise).

He now commenced a series of jokes on the subject of dying (with the view of preventing anything in the shape of an *expression* of the emotions which they both felt), and these jokes recurred like milestones, or stone-benches, all along the turnpike-road to Hof; we have no way of escaping them on the journey, unless we turn back. He asked him if the diet had been sufficient which he had given him, as the old Germans, Romans, and Egyptians did to their dead. He said that Firmian must be excessively pious, inasmuch as he had risen from the dead when he had barely shuffled off this mortal coil, confirming Lavater's doctrine that there are two resurrections, a first for the good, and a later one for the bad. He said, further, that he could not have had a better Archimimus[94] after his departure from this life than himself. Leibgeber's spirit and body *sprang* rather than walked. "I am always in high spirits, and free, while I am in the open air. Beneath the clouds, I have no clouds. When we are young, the raw north wind of life whistles only on our backs, and, by Heaven! I am younger than any reviewer."

They passed the night in Berneck, between the lofty bridge-piers of mountains, through which once streamed those seas which have overspread our globe with fields. Time and Nature—grand and almighty—were reposing side by side on the confines of two kingdoms—between the steep, lofty, memorial-pillars of creation—amongst firm mountains, empty castles crumbling into ruin, rock-barriers and stone-tumuli lying about the rounded green hills, like broken tables of the law of earth's first creation.

[94] The actor (among the Romans) who mimicked the deceased in all his gestures and movements at his funeral.

When they arrived here, Henry said, “The clergy between this and Vaduz must not find out that you have exchanged time for eternity, or they will ask you for the surplice fees which every corpse has to pay in each parish which it passes through. If we were in old Rome (and not in Berneck),” said he, before the inn, “the landlord would never let you into his house except down the chimney. And if we were in Athens, you would be obliged to creep through a hoop-petticoat just as if you were going into holy orders.”[95] On an occasion of this sort, he never could cease from his witticisms, in which he differed (to his disadvantage) from me; and he said that metaphors and similes were like gold pieces, of which Rousseau says that the first is harder to get than the next thousand.

Therefore it was beyond his power not to be struck with an idea when, in the evening, he saw Firmian paring his nails. “I can’t understand,” he said “(now that I see it in your case), why Katherine Bieri—whose nails had to be cut 250 years after she was dead—couldn’t have done it just as well herself as *you* do after having given tip the ghost.” And when he saw him turn over on his left side in bed, he simply observed that he made his bed-quilt rise and fall in the same manner as St. John the Evangelist does *his* earthen one—the grave—to the present hour.[96]

In the morning, it rained a little upon these flowers of humour. As Leibgeber was laving that lion’s breast of his with cold water, Firmian noticed that he pushed aside a little key, and asked what it opened. “It *un*fastens nothing,” he said; “but it *fastened* the leaden *cenotaphium*.”[97] Firmian was obliged to lean out of window with his eyes, and dry them unobserved. Then (with his head still outside) he said, “Give me the key. It is the wax-impression of a future one. I want to make it the music-key of my inner music. I shall hang it up, and look at it every day; and if ever my resolution to be better should run down, I shall wind it up again with this watch-key.” He got it. Then Leibgeber chanced to look into the mirror; and he cried, “I seem almost to see myself double, not to say triple. *One* of me must be dead, the one in there or the one out here. Which of us in this room is it that is the real dead man appearing to the other? Or are we only appearing to ourselves? Heh! you my three *me’s*, what say you to the fourth?”—he asked, and turned to the two-reflected images, then to Firmian—and said, “*Here I* am, too!”

There was something in these sayings calculated to cause a shudder for his future. Firmian, whose calmer reason made him dread a dangerous growth of this metamorphic self-reflecting during the solitude of Leibgeber’s wanderings, said, with tender anxiety, “My dear Henry, if you are going to be always so much alone upon your eternal journeys, I can’t help fearing it will do you harm. God himself is not alone. He beholds His universe.” “I can always triple myself, in the profoundest solitude, not excepting that of the universe itself,” answered Leibgeber, strangely moved by the coffin-key—and he went to the looking-glass, and pressed his eyeball sideways with his finger, so as to see his reflection double; “but *you* can’t see the third person there.” Then he went on in a merrier tone, with the view of cheering Firmian (who was *not* much cheered by what he said, nevertheless), leading him to the window. “But it is a far finer affair as regards the street. I have a much larger company there. I put my finger to my eye, and produce the twin of everybody, be he

[95] People who had been taken to be dead, and honoured with a funeral, had to go through these ceremonies.—Potter.

[96] Augustin, Commentar. ad Johann. xxi. 23.

[97] This name, or that of *Tumulus Honorarius*, was given to the *empty* monument which friends erected to a dead person whose body was not to be found.

who he may; double the landlord, as well as his chalk-score. Not a president on his way to his meeting but 'finds his fellow' and meets his match. I provide him with his Orang Utang, and the pair of them march past me, *tête-à-tête*. Does a genius want an imitator? I take my finger—and hey! presto!—a living facsimile of him on the spot. Every learned collaborator has a collaborator collaborating with him. Associates have associates associated with them. Only sons are made out in duplicate, because, as you see, I carry my plastic nature, author, and embossing-instrument—my finger to wit—always about with me. And I seldom let a solo-dancer caper with fewer than four legs; he has to hang in air as a *pair* of men. But it would amaze you to see how much I can make out of a single fellow and his limbs by this sort of grouping. Try to form some idea (by way of wind-up) of the crowds and masses of people I have when I double such things as funerals and other processions, with *doppelgänger*, and strengthen every regiment with an entire regiment of flügelmen, repeating and imitating everything. For (as we have been saying), like a grasshopper, I have my ovipositing instrument—my finger—always with me. From all which, Firmian, you may at all events draw the consolation that I enjoy more society than any of you—*just as much again*, in fact. And, moreover, it consists entirely of people who afford me endless amusement without trouble or inconvenience, by aping their own gestures and proceedings."

Hereupon they looked each other in the face, full of joyful affection, and wholly freed from any unpleasant traces of their recent wilder mode of jesting. A third person would have been almost terrified at their bodily resemblance in this hour, for each was a plaster-of-Paris cast of the other; but their affection for each other made their faces seem *un*like to themselves. Each saw in the other only that which he liked, because it was not in himself; and it was with their features, as with good deeds, which inspire us with, emotion and admiration in others, but not in ourselves.

When they were out in the air again, and on their way to Gefrees, and the coffin-key, as well as their recent conversation, continually brought to mind their parting (whose death sickle bent, closer around them with every milestone on their road), Henry endeavoured to cast a rosy beam or two into Firmian's mist by putting into his hands an accurate protocol of everything he had arranged and agreed upon with the Count von Vaduz concerning his duties. "The Count," he said, "would of course think you had merely forgotten the conversation; but it is better thus. Like a negro slave, you have killed yourself to obtain your freedom and reach the *Gold Coast* of your silver coast; and it *would* be damnable, indeed, if you were to be damned now after your decease." "I can never thank you enough, you dear friend," said Firmian; "but you should not make things harder for me than they are, and draw yourself back like a hand from the clouds the moment you have emptied yourself. *Why* is it that I am not to see you again after we have said good-bye? Tell me." "First," he answered, "because people—the Count, the Widow's Fund, your widow—might find out that I was extant in two editions, and that would be an accursed misfortune in a world where a fellow can hardly be allowed to sit and sleep in peace in his *first* original edition. Secondly, I intend to make my appearance in several of the broad comedy characters which there are so many of to be played on this ship of fools of an earth; and as long as not a single devil among the audience knows me, I shall not be ashamed of my parts. Ah! I could give you plenty more reasons into the bargain. Besides, it delights *me* to come down with a flop, as if out of the moon on to this earth; and in among mankind, unknown, uprooted, untrammelled; a *lusus naturæ*, a *diabolus ex machina*, a monstrous moon-*lithopædium*. Firmian, it is a settled thing. Perhaps in a few years' time I may send you a letter now and then, more particularly

as the Galatians[98] placed upon the funeral pyre letters directed to the dead, as they might have put them in a post-office. Hut it really is a settled thing now—positively." "I should not give in to all this so quietly," said Siebenkæs, "if I did not feel convinced that I shall very soon see you again. I am not like you. *I* look forward to *two* meetings with you—one here below, one there above. And would to God that I could bring you to die as you did me, and we met afterwards on a Bindloch hill, but were going to be longer together."

If these wishes chance to remind the readers of Schoppe in Titan, they may consider in what sense Fate often interprets and fulfils our wishes. Leibgeber merely answered, "People must love, though they may not be able to see each other; and, when all's done, it is only Love that we can love after all, and *that* we can each see in the other every day."

In Gefrees, Leibgeber proposed that, as there was such ample leisure (there being nothing to see in, or out of, the one street of the town), they should exchange clothes, and that particularly in order that the Count of Vaduz (who had not for years seen him in any other dress than the one he now wore) should not find anything to be struck with about Siebenkæs, but that everything about him should be exactly as it always had been, even to the nails on the heels of his shoes. The thought of being, in future, embraced (so to speak) by Henry's sleeves, and clasped and warmed by all his external *reliquia*, fell like a broad ray of warm February sun on Siebenkæs's breast. Leibgeber went into the next room, and, to begin with, threw his short green jacket through the half-open door, crying, "Come in, coat with skirts!" then followed up with necktie and waistcoat, and long trousers with leather stripes, saying, "Come in, breeches!" and ended up with his shirt, and the words, "Here with the winding-sheet!"

The shirt thus thrown in was, to Siebenkæs, as an astrologer (or interpreter of signs), with respect to Leibgeber. He saw that he had a higher motive in view in this bodily transmigration into clothes than mere dressing for a certain character at Vaduz; to wit, the taking up of his abode in the shell, or cocoon, which had contained his friend. Not in a whole volume of Gellert's or Klopstock's 'Letters on Friendship,' not in a whole week of Leibgeberian days of self-sacrifice, did there seem anything so beloved and delicious as in thus falling heir to his clothes. He would not profane this surmise which made him so happy by alluding to it in words, but he was confirmed in it when Leibgeber came out transformed into a Siebenkæs, looked at himself in a satisfied manner in the mirror, and then laid his three fingers, in silence, on Firmian's forehead. This was his highest token of love; wherefore, to my own and Firmian's great joy, I mention, that he repeated this sign more than three times during dinner (the conversation running on wholly indifferent subjects). What different and interminable jokes would he not have made upon this moulting at another time, and under the influence of other feelings! Merely to guess at a few. How much he would have made of the rebinding of their two folio volumes, so as to involve Herr Lochmüller (the landlord at Gefrees) in the deepest and most diverting embarrassment, which that polite gentleman could by no means have extricated himself from one minute before this, my fourth book, came to his aid, which at this moment is only in Bayreuth, and not even gone to press! But Leibgeber did nothing of all this; and even of witticisms he only delivered himself of a few weak ones; about their being changelings, about the sudden French transition of people *en longue robe* into people *en robe courts*. And he said he would no longer call Siebenkæs a

[98] Alexand. ab Alex. iii. 7.

transfigured being in boots, but one in shoes, which was more befitting, as well as sounding somewhat more sublime. It was with particular pleasure that he saw how his dog, Saufinder—between the old bodies and the new clothes, as if between two fires of love—could not properly make out the matter in the least degree, and often went from one to the other with a most uneasy face. The *concordat* between the two parties—the shortening of the one, and the lengthening of the other—puzzled the creature, and he could make neither head nor tail of it all. "I like him twice as much as I did," said Leibgeber; "believe me. If he is faithful to you, that is not being unfaithful to me." He could not possibly have said anything more complimentary than this.

All the bleak way from Gefrees to Muenchberg, Firmian, from gratitude, took the greatest pains to reflect back on Leibgeber that sunshine of cheerfulness into which Henry was continually trying to lead him. It was no easy matter, especially when he saw him striding after him in the long coat. He concentrated himself to an extreme effort in Muenchberg, the last post-station before Hof, where the corporeal arms with which they clasped each other were, so to speak, to be cut off by a long separation.

As they were going along the road to Hof, more silent than before, Leibgeber being first, and feeling refreshed by the pine-covered mountain on his right, began (as he usually did on his journeys) to whistle national airs, both merry and sad, for the most part in minor keys. He said he thought there were many worse town-and-street-fifers, and that he performed on the foot-passenger's post-horn which Nature had given him in a manner deserving of some applause. To Firmian, however (now that their parting was so near), these tones, which seemed to come echoing back from Henry's long journeys of the past, and forward from his coming lonely ones as well, were as a kind of Swiss *Ranz des Vaches*, which went to his very heart; and it was well he was walking last, for he could scarce restrain his tears. Ah! take music away when the heart is full and must not overflow!

At length he brought his voice sufficiently under command to be able to say, without any apparent emotion, "Are you fond of whistling as you go, and do you do it often?" In the tone of this question there was a something as if the fluting was not quite so much of an enjoyment to him as to the musician himself. "Always," answered Leibgeber. "I whistle[99] away life, and the world's stage, and all there is upon it—and all that sort of thing—a great many matters in the past; and, like a steeple-warder at Carlsbad, I *whistle in* the future. Do you dislike it? Is my fuguing incorrect, or my whistling a breach of the rules of pure composition?" "Oh! only too beautiful," answered Siebenkæs.

And then Leibgeber began again, but with tenfold power, and performed such a lovely and melting mouth-organ voluntary, that Siebenkæs came up to him with four long strides, and, putting his handkerchief to his eyes with his left hand, while he laid his right gently on Henry's lips, he said in broken accents, "Henry, spare me! I don't know why, but every note of music moves me too deeply to-day." The musician looked at him—Leibgeber's whole inner world was in his eyes—then nodded in a decided manner, and strode rapidly onwards in silence, without looking round or letting his face be seen. But his hands, perhaps involuntarily, went on making little movements, beating time in continuation of the melody.

[99] There is a pun here in the original, where this expression means also "to hiss off" (*e.g.* an actor from the stage).—Trans.

At length they arrived, oppressed and anxious, at the Grub-street or Mint-city where I am now seated, pasting and colouring these assignats—this paper-money for half the world—namely, Hof.[100] It is by no means in my favour, indeed, that at that time I knew nothing whatever of all these matters which half Europe is now being made acquainted with through me. I was a good deal younger then—sitting alone at home like a cabbage-lettuce, with the best will in the world to close to a head—which process of closing, in men as well as in lettuces, is hindered by nothing so much as by the contact of the neighbouring salad-plants. It is easier, pleasanter, and more advantageous, for a youngster to go from solitude into society (from the seed-bed into the garden), than the converse—from the market-place into the corner. Unmitigated solitude and unmitigated society are both bad: and, with the exception of their *order* of succession, nothing is so important *as* their succession.

In Hof, Siebenkæs engaged two rooms at the inn, thinking Leibgeber would not part from him till the morning. However, *he* (whom his own pre-determination to say good-bye, and his dread of saying it, had fretted and annoyed immensely for a considerable time) had taken a mental vow that their two spirits should be torn asunder that day, and that, immediately thereupon, he should be off into Saxony as hard as he could, though it should want but a quarter of an hour to midnight; but, at all events, before that particular day should come to a close. He went into his room, smiling and pleasant, and thought of the airs he had been whistling (which were still running in both their heads, if not in their hearts). But he soon enticed him out of that empty deaf-mute of a room into the diverting tumult and stir of the coffee-room—not remaining long there, however, either—but as the moon, in her first quarter, was standing like a lighted lamp just above a post in the market-place, he asked him to go for a cruise round the town with him. So they went, and climbed up the avenue, and looked down at the gardens in the city-moat (which, perhaps, deserve to take the *pas* over other artificial meadows, inasmuch as they are more specially sown for cattle than others). I presume this was the reason why Leibgeber (who had been in Switzerland) remarked late at night (when the country, adorned and adopted by Nature, but disinherited by Art, lay extended before him) that the people of Hof were like the Swiss, whose whole country was a garden, except the few gardens in it.

The pair went on drawing wider and wider parallels around the town. They crossed a bridge, from which they saw a gallows-hill overgrown with grass, which reminded them of that other ice-region, with its crater, where, exactly a year ago, they had bidden each other good-bye at night, but with the sweeter hope of an earlier meeting. Two friends such as they are always struck with the same ideas in the same circumstances. Each is—if not the unison—at all events the octave, fifth, or fourth to the other. Henry tried to rekindle a little light in his friend's dark house of sorrow and mourning by aid of the bird-pole, which stood like a commandant's flag-staff, or a burning stake, not far from the Supreme Criminal Court's place of judicature. He said, "A shooter-king has his Sinai, where he can both promulgate his laws and vindicate them, close at his hand here, in a delightful manner, beside his lever and leaping-pole, such as you heaved yourself up by to the dignity of Great Negus and Grand Mogul of Kuhschnappel. Button's law—that every elevation has another of equal height and similar composition opposite to it—applies to a great number of eminences which correspond to one another; gallows-hills and thrones, for instance,

[100] I speak of 1796.

in this case; the two sides of the choir in churches; the fifth story and Pindus: show-booths, and the Chairs of Professors Extraordinary."

As Firmian did not speak, but remained sunk in sadder similes, Henry, too, held his peace. He led him towards another stone (for he was intimately acquainted with the whole country), one with a prettier name, the "Stone of Joy." At last, while they were toiling up the hill towards this stone, Firmian took heart and said, "Tell me right out—I am quite prepared—tell me at once, on your honour, when are you going away from me for ever?" "Now," answered Henry. On the pretence of its being easier so to climb the hill-side, all flowers and perfumed mountain-plants, they were holding each other by the hand, and as they went they pressed hands sometimes, as if from accidents of mechanical motion. But pain struck great roots that waxed amain into Firmian's heart, roots that split it asunder as the roots of trees split rocks. Firmian laid himself down on the grey projecting rock, which divided the green slope like a boundary-stone, and he drew his departing friend down to his breast. "Sit down very close beside me this once more," he said. As the manner of friends is, each pointed out to the other everything he saw. Henry showed him the camp of the town pitched all about the foot of the hill, and looking as if fallen into a deep sleep, nothing moving in it but some flickering lights. The river went coiling along beneath the moon round the town like a great serpent with a sparkling back, then stretched itself out through two bridges. The half-shimmer of the moon, and the white transparent vapour of the night, lifted the hills, the woods, and the earth, up to the heavens; and the water on the earth was spangled with stars like the blue night above, and the Earth, like Uranus, had a doubled moon, as it wore a child in either hand.

"In reality," Leibgeber began, "we can both always see each other whenever we please. All we have to do is to look into a looking-glass. That is *our* moon-mirror."[101] "No," said Firmian, "we will fix on a time when we will think of each other—on our birthdays—and on the day of my pantomime death, and on *this*." "Very well," said Leibgeber, "these shall be our four quarter-days."

Of a sudden, the hand of the latter rested upon a dead lark, which had probably been shot. He clasped Firmian's shoulders, and, raising him from the ground, said, "Stand up; we are men. What is all this fuss about? Fare you well! If ever I let you out of my head, or out of my heart, may God dash me to atoms with a thousand thunderbolts. You are and shall be for ever in my bosom as warmly as my own living heart. And so, good-bye, and all good attend you; and in all the Berghem Seapiece of your life may there not be a single wave the size of a tear. Farewell!" They clung together, and wept heartily, and Firmian did not answer as yet. His fingers stroked and pressed his Henry's hair. At last he leaned his cheek against the beloved eyes; before his *own* eyes the wide abyss of night shimmered, and his lips uttered (but with no cadence in the tone), "'Fare you well,' do you say to me? Ah! *that* I *cannot*, when I have lost my truest, my oldest friend. The earth will always be as dark to me as it is now around us here. It will be hard for me when I am dying, and, in my feverish fancy, think I am only *pretending* to die again, and stretch out my hand in the darkness to feel for you, and say, 'Henry, close my eyes again, I cannot die without you!'" Henry whispered, "Tell me what else to say to you, and then may God punish me if I utter another syllable." Firmian stammered, "Will you always like me, and shall I see you soon

[101] Whatever Pythagoras wrote with bean-juice on a certain mirror could be read on the moon.—'Call. Rhodogin,' ix. 13. When Charles V. and Francis I. were fighting near Milan, everything that happened by day at Milan could be read at night on the moon in Paris by means of a mirror of this sort.—'Agrippa de Occ. Philos.' ii. 6.

again?" "Not soon; not for a long time," he answered, "and I shall never cease to love you." As he was starting to go, Firmian held him back. "We will look at each other once more," he said. And they bent back, their faces channelled by streams of emotion, and looked at each other for the last time, while the night-wind, like the arm of a stream, mingled with the deep river, and then rushed on united with it in deeper billows, while the great mountain-range of creation trembled before the tearful eyes. But Henry tore himself away, made a sign with his hand as if to say all was over, and took his flight down the hill.

After a little, Firmian was impelled after him—not knowing why—by the goad of pain and sorrow. His inner man, compressed by the tourniquet into insensibility, did not feel the amputation of his limb just then. They both hurried along the same road, though separated by hills and valleys. Whenever Henry stopped and looked back, so did Firmian. Alas! after a sultry storm, such as this, the waves all freeze to spikes of ice, and the heart lies upon them transfixed. As Firmian went on broken-hearted, by unknown, darkling paths, it seemed to him as if all the death-bells on earth were tolling behind him, as if the stream of life were running dry before him fast; and when he saw the blue of the sky cut across by a black storm-tree[102] which lay upon the stars like the bier of the future, a voice seemed to cry, "With this foot-rule of vapour, Fate is measuring you, your world, and your love, for your last coffin."

From the circumstance that the distance between him and the other figure kept always the same, Henry at last became aware that it was following him, and halted only when he halted. So he made up his mind that he would lie in wait in the next village for the coming up of this form which was creeping after him. In the next village then, Töpen (which lies deep in a valley), he awaited, in the broad shadow of a gleaming church, the arrival of this unknown being which was on his track. Firmian came hastening along the broad white street, dazed with sorrow—blind in the moonlight—and stopped, as if frozen, close by Henry from whom he had so recently been severed. There they stood facing each other, like two spirits above their corpses, each taking the other for a ghost (just as the superstitious think the noises made by the buried-alive are caused by spirits). Firmian trembled lest Leibgeber should be vexed with him, and opened his arms and stammered out, "It is I, Henry," and went to him. Henry gave a cry of pain, and threw himself upon the faithful breast; but his vow sealed his lips. And thus these two miserable, or blessed beings, speechless, blind and weeping, pressed their beating hearts close together once more. And when this moment—wordless, full of torture, full of bliss—was over and past, an iron, cold one, tore them asunder, and Fate seized them with two almighty arms, and hurled the one bleeding heart to the south, and the other to the north; while the dejected, bleeding corpses passed slowly and alone, along the widening path of parting, in the night.

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And why is it that *my* own heart breaks in twain with such a pang? Why should it be that, long ere I came to their parting, I could not keep my own tears back? Ah! my dear Christian, is it not because in this church those who once lay upon your heart and mine are mouldering into dust? No, no, I am used to it now; in the black magic of our lives to see skeletons suddenly start up in our friends' places; that of every two

[102] A long cloud, with branch-like streaks, which bodes a storm.

who put their arms about each other *one* has to die;[103] that an unknown breath blows the brittle glass which we call a human breast, and a cry, which we know not of, shatters it in a moment. It does not pain me now so much as of old, ye two brothers sleeping in the church, that the hard, cold hand of death struck you away so soon from the honey-dew of life, and that ye stretched your wings and have vanished away. Oh! either your sleep is sounder than ours, or your dreams are happier, or your awaking is blither. But what agonises us in every grave-hillock is this thought. "Alas! beloved heart, *how* I would have loved you had I known you were going to die!"

But, since none of us can take a corpse's hand and say, "Pale one! at all events I have sweetened thy transitory life a *little*; I have, at any rate, never given that faded heart of thine anything but love and happiness;" and as when time, sorrow, and the loveless winter of life have beautified our hearts, at length we must all go up, with unavailing sighs, to the overthrown forms which are lying beneath the landslip of the grave, and say to them, "Oh! that, now that I am better and gentler, I have thee with me no longer, and can no longer love thee! Oh! that the beloved breast is transparent and broken in, and no heart in it which I would love more fondly, and gladden as I never did before." What have we left but an unavailing sorrow, a dumb repentance, and never-ending bitter tears?

Yes, my Christian, we have something better left still—a warmer, truer, lovelier, love for every soul which we have not yet lost.

[103] There is a superstition that when two children kiss without being able to speak, one of them must die.

Chapter XXIII

DAYS IN VADUZ—NATHALIE'S LETTER—A NEW YEAR'S WISH—WILDERNESS OF DESTINY AND THE HEART.

We next meet our Firmian (promoted to higher rank on his retirement from the world, as officers are on theirs from the service, to that of Inspector, namely) in the Inspector's quarters at Vaduz. He found he had to twist his way through so many thickets of prickly-pear and impenetrable thorn-hedges, that, amid his labours, he almost forgot that he was alone—so utterly alone—in the world. No one could endure and overcome solitude, if it were not for the hope of companionship in the future, or for the belief in invisible companionship in the present.

With the Count he had only to seem to be what he really was, and then he was most like the unconventional Leibgeber. He found the Count to be an old man of the world, living alone, with neither wife, sons, nor female servants—a man who filled up and adorned his grey years with the arts and sciences, the last, and most lasting, enjoyments of a life enjoyed to the end—and who cared for nothing on earth (saving always the amusement of jesting upon it) except his daughter, who (as we are aware) had been Nathalie's greatest friend in the starry and flowery days of youth.

As he had devoted all his powers of body and soul, in early life, to climbing to the tops of all the slipperiest *mats de cocagne* of pleasure, and carrying off the prizes from them, he had come down to earth with both sides of his being a little wearied. His mental life was now a kind of nursing, and lying in a tepid bath, which it required a shower of cold water to make him raise himself from, and into which fresh warm water had to be constantly being poured. The point of honour of keeping his word, and the greatest possible happiness for his daughter, were the only unbroken reins by which moral laws had ever restrained him; for he looked upon all their other covenants more in the light of flower-chains, or strings of pearls—matters which a man of the world breaks and mends often enough in his career.

As it is easier to imitate lameness than straight walking, it was not difficult for Siebenkæs to enact the part of his beloved *Diable Boiteux*. The Count was somewhat struck with his white-painted face (which was natural to him), and with his melancholy, and a heap of nameless divergences (variations and aberrations) from Leibgeber. But the Inspector accounted for these to his patron by saying that he was so changed that he scarce recognised himself—that he seemed to have become the changeling of his former self since his illness, and since he had seen his college friend Siebenkæs depart this life in Kuhschnappel. In brief, the Count could not but believe what he was told; who would think of such an absurd story as the one I am telling here? And if the reader had been present in the room himself, I am sure he would have believed the Inspector in preference to me, if it were for no other reason than that he remembered more of his old conversations with the Count than the latter did himself. ('Tis true he got this knowledge out of Leibgeber's diary.)

At the same time, as he had to speak, and act, in the capacity of chargé-d'affaires, or resident consul, and proxy of his beloved Leibgeber, there were two things which he was, in a high degree, constrained to be—cheerful and kindly. Leibgeber's humour had a greater power of colour, a greater freedom of drawing, and a more poetic and

citizen-of-the-world-ish, and ideal compass and range, than Firmian's own[104] and this assumed brightness of temper by and by became genuine. Moreover, his delicacy of feeling, and his friendship, kept constantly before his mental vision, as on a Moses-cloudy-pillar on his path of life, a shining, magnified image of Henry with a glory, and a crown of laurel on his brow and every thought within him cried, "Be glorious, be godlike, be a Socrates, to do honour to the spirit whose ambassador you are." And which of us could assume the name of a beloved person, and go and act unworthily?

Nothing on earth is so often deceived—not even women or princes—as the conscience. Our Inspector tried to make *his* believe that his name had really *been* Leibgeber in early days—just as he signed it now—and that he really *was* helping the Count in his work. Moreover, who could be more ready than he to make a perfectly clean breast of the whole story to the Count as soon as ever the proper time came? It was easy to see that a humourous, juristic forgery, and pictorial illusion of this sort would please him better than any amount of truths founded upon reason, or *responsa prudentum*—to say nothing of his gratification at finding he could have his friend, humorist, and jurist, with two heads, two hearts, four legs and arms—in duplicate, in short. Besides, the fact must not be lost sight of that the lies he told were more *unavoidable* lies than lies for the amusement of the thing—inasmuch as he touched as seldom as he could upon Leibgeber's previous conversations and relations, and as much as possible on his own, which involved no breaches of truth.

Thus it is with—not our Inspector only—but man in general. He has an indescribable fondness for *halves*, perhaps because he is a colossus and demi-god standing, with out-stretched legs, upon two worlds. He particularly delights in half-romances, half-postage of selfishness, half-proofs, half-scholars (smatterers in knowledge), half-holidays, half-spheres—and (consequently) better halves.

Siebenkæs's new labours of various kinds concealed his own pains and sufferings from him for the first few weeks (at all events, when the sun was not shining). But what gave him his largest extra-ration of pleasure was the Count's satisfaction with his legal knowledge, and careful and accurate style of doing his work. Once, when the Count said to him, "Friend Leibgeber, you are keeping your promise like a man. Your ability and accuracy over your work are deserving of all praise, and I do not conceal from you that I felt just the slightest shade of a misgiving on this very head, notwithstanding my high opinion of your other talents. For, like your Frederick II., I consider talk and work to be two wholly distinct things; and as regards the latter, I look for the most accurate and methodical attention to all its details in every one I have to deal with." Firmian rejoiced within himself, as he thought, "At all events I have turned aside some little matter of blame from my dear Henry, and gained a little modicum of praise for him; though he could have done it all much better himself, if he had chosen."

[104] "Therefore I foresee that Leibgeber's Pastoral Letters in these 'Flower Pieces' will, for most of my readers, be insufferable letters of denunciation or defiance. Most Germans do understand a joke—it cannot be denied of them—but they do not all understand *badinage*—and few understand humour—least of all the Leibgeber sort. Therefore, at first—because it is easier to alter a book than a public—I thought of falsifying all his letters, and substituting pleasanter-flavoured ones. However it can always be arranged that, in the second edition, the falsified letters shall be inserted in the body of the work, and the genuine ones given at the end as an Appendix."
This has not been found necessary. Heavens! how can first editions make such mistakes, and misunderstand such a number of readers—to whom second editions afterwards offer the warmest and sincerest apologies.

After a pleasure of self-sacrifice such as this, one always wants to go on enjoying *fresh* pleasures of self-sacrifice, and making new sacrifices, just as children, who, whenever they are given anything, cannot cease giving. He brought out his 'Selections from the Devil's Papers,' gave them to the Count, and told him plainly and openly that they were his own work. "This is not a deception in the slightest," he thought; "though he supposes they are by Leibgeber; I have no other name now." The Count never wearied of reading and praising these papers, and what particularly pleased him was, that, in the path of satire, he followed the guidance of his own two compatriots, the British Castor and Pollux of humour, Swift and Sterne. Siebenkæs listened to the encomiums on his book with such delight that he seemed exactly like a conceited author—whereas, in reality, he *was* nothing but a *lover* of his Henry, who had managed to conjure a few extra laurel-crowns on to his image in the Count's mind.

This single enjoyment of his was, of a truth, necessary to him by way of consolation and cordial for a life which was flowing on, beshaded and chilled between two steep banks of legal business, week after week, month after month. Alas! with the exception of the good Count's talk (whose extraordinary kindness to him would have made his heart beat even more warmly than it did, could he have thanked him for it in another's name as well as his own),—he heard nothing better than an occasional murmur of the waves of his life. He found himself, every day, in his old, disagreeable post of a critic, compelled to read what he had to give judgment upon. Formerly it had been books—now it was lawyers. He saw into so many empty heads, into so many empty hearts—saw such darkness in the former, such blackness in the latter. He saw how very much the common-herd (when it comes to the Egeria-fountain of the juristic ink-bottle to benefit its *calculi*), is like Carlsbad bath-guests, in whose case the hot-springs bring all diseased matter to the surface of the skin. He saw that most of the oldest, and worst, members of the legal profession are, in only one beautiful respect, like poisonous plants—namely, that they are not half so poisonous, but more innocuous, while they are young. He saw that a just judgment often did as much harm as an unjust one, and that the one was appealed against just as much as the other. He saw that it was easier, and, at the same time, more distasteful, to be a judge than an advocate; although neither of them loses anything by an injustice—for a judge is paid for a judgment reversed on appeal, just as an advocate is for a case which he loses. He saw that, in dealing with defendants, the principle of grooms is applied (who look upon the currycomb as a good half of the forage). And, finally, he saw that nobody fares worse in the affair than he who *sees* it, and that the devil is the very last of all things that the devil *takes*.

Amid labours and views such as these, the tender fibres of the heart contract, and the open arms of the inner man are paralysed—the overweighted soul scarce has the *strength* to love, let alone the *time*. When we love, and seek after *things*, it must be at the expense of *persons*. If we *work* too much, we must *love* too little. There was but one place where poor Firmian gave vent, once in the twenty-four hours, to the longings and prayers of his tender soul—namely, his pillow; and its cover was the white handkerchief waiting for his weeping eyes. A deluge (made of tears) was over all his former world—nothing floating on its surface but the two withered funeral-garlands of departed days—the flowers which Lenette and Nathalie had worn on their breasts, like petrified medicine-flowers of his sick soul.

Living so far away, and so wholly outside the elliptical vault, he could hear as little of Kuhschnappel as of Schraplau—of Lenette and Nathalie not a word. He merely

learned, from the 'Messenger of the Gods and Advertiser of German Programmes,' that he was dead, and that the critical profession was thereby deprived of one of its ablest and most zealous members. Thus our Inspector was honoured by the necrologium sooner than any other German scholar ever was—as soon, in fact, as the Olympic conqueror Euthymus,[105] to whom, by a decree of the Delphic Oracle, sacrifice and divine worship was adjudged during his lifetime. I do not know which kind of ears—long ears or deaf—the German trump of fame prefers to blow to.

And yet, in the depths of this ice-month of his love-imploring heart, and in the wilderness of his loneliness, Firmian still had one living, resplendent flower—and that was Nathalie's parting-kiss. Ah! ye who waste and pine because of our insatiableness, did ye but know how a kiss, which is a first and a last, blossoms and blooms throughout a life—imperishable double-rose of speechless lips and burning souls—ye would search for bliss more enduring—aye, and find it too! That kiss sealed, in Firmian, and confirmed the spirit-bond immortalising and eternising love at its loveliest and brightest hour of bloom. The speechless lips were still eloquent, to *him*. The spirit breathed between them as of old; and often as he saw, by night, behind the veil of his closed, tearful eyelids, Nathalie going away from him, with all her sacred sorrows, and vanishing down the darkling path—he never had enough of the parting, the anguish, and the love.

At last, when six months had passed, one beautiful winter morning, when the white hills with their snow-crystal woods lay bathed in the rose-blood of the sun, and Aurora was stretching her pinions more widely as she gently laid them down upon the glittering earth—there flew a letter into Firmian's empty hand, as if borne upon the morning-breeze of a spring as yet among the things to be. It was from Nathalie, who, like the rest of the world, supposed him to be the Henry of former days.

"Dear Leibgeber,—I can restrain or control my heart no longer. Every day it longs to break in pieces before yours, and show you all its wounds. You were *once* my friend, I know; am I quite forgotten? Have I lost *you* too? Ah! surely not; it is only that you cannot speak to me for sorrow, since your Firmian died upon your breast, and still rests, vanishing into the frost of death, upon the aching spot. Ah! why did you persuade me to accept the fruit that grows upon his grave—and, as it were, open that grave anew every year?[106] The first day I received this fruit was bitter—bitterer than any other. You will see from a little New Year's Greeting, which I addressed to myself (and which I enclose), how I sometimes feel. One passage in it refers to a white rose in my room, from which I managed to gather a flower or two in December. My friend, now grant me a request, the making of which is really my object in writing this letter—my most earnest prayer for sorrow, a bitterer sorrow than is mine even now—for this will give me consolation. Tell me—for there is no one else who can—and I know no other—tell me everything about our dear one's last hours and moments; what he said and what he suffered; how his eyes closed, and how his life ended? All this, everything, though it will pierce my heart, I *must* be told. What can it cost you and me but tears?—and tears soothe suffering eyes.

"I remain, your friend,

"NATHALIE A.

[105] Plin. H. N. vii. 48.
[106] She refers to the widow's pension.

"P.S. If there were not so many causes to prevent me, I would go myself to his resting-place and gather relics for my soul; but, if *you* keep silence, I do not answer for anything. I send you my congratulations on your new appointment, and I hope I may be able to wish you joy some day by word of mouth; my heart may become so far whole once more that I shall be able to come and pay my dear friend a visit at her father's, and see *you* without dying of sorrow, at the likeness you bear to your buried friend, *un*like you now."

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I venture to translate[107] the pretty poem as follows:

"MY NEW YEAR'S GREETING TO MYSELF.

"The New Year's gates are open, and Fate, standing between the sun and the burning morning clouds upon the mound of ashes of the year which has fallen to dust, deals out the days according to their lot. What dost thou pray for, Nathalie?

"Not for joy. Alas! all the joys which have been in my heart have left but black thorns there; their rose-juice soon, was gone. The heavy thunder-cloud grows as the sun-gleam brightens—and what shines upon us is the ray reflected from the sword which the coming day will hold to our happy hearts. No, no; I pray not for joys; they make the thirsting heart so void. It is but sorrow that can fill it full.

"Fate deals the days according to their lot. What dost thou long for, Nathalie?

"Not love. Oh! those who press the thorny white rose of love to their hearts draw blood from out them; the warm tears of bliss which fall into the blossom soon grow chill, and are dried up amain. Love, all gleam and bloom, hangs on the morning sky of life, like some great rose-red Aurora in the heavens. Ah! do not enter that bright glittering cloud—it is but mist and tears. No, no; long not for love; die of a lovelier sorrow. Sink into the chill of death under a nobler poison-tree than is the lovely myrtle.

"Thou art kneeling at the feet of Destiny, Nathalie; tell him thy desire!

"Neither do I desire more friends. No; we stand all, side by side, on undermined graves—and when we have *so* long held each other so fondly by the hand, and *so* long suffered together, our friend's empty mound breaks in, and he turns pale, and sinks—and I am left alone, my life all frozen, beside the filled-up grave. No, no: but when at last there comes the hour when the heart will die no more, but has put on immortal being—and when friends stand side by side in the eternal world—then let the firmer breast beat warm and high, then let the eye, which is to beam for ever, weep blissful tears, then let the lips, which never more grow pale, murmur in rapture, '*Now* come to me, beloved soul, we will love *now*, for we shall never have to part, again.'

"Oh! thou bereaved and widowed Nathalie! what would'st thou have on earth?

"A grave, and patience; nothing else beside. But these deny me not, thou silence-keeping Fate! Dry thou mine eyes, then close them! Still my heart, then break it!—Yes, *one* day, when the free spirit spreads her wings in a fairer heaven, and when the New Year breaks upon a purer world—when we *all* meet, and love, again—*then* shall I lay my longings, prayers, and wishes at thy feet. But none for *me*; for *I* shall be too blest."

[107] Because it was supposed to be in English verse.—Trans.

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In what words could I depict the *inward* speechlessness and motionlessness of her friend, when he had read the paper, and still held and gazed at it, although he could no longer either see or think. Oh! the ice-floes of the glacier of death spread wider and wider, and filled up one warm Tempè valley after another. The only bond by which our solitary Firmian now held to humanity was the cord of his death-bell and coffin—his bed was but a broader bier—and every joy seemed a theft from the withered, leaf-stripped heart of another. And thus the stem of his life, like that of many flowers,[108] went deeper and deeper down, its top becoming its hidden root.

The abyss of a difficulty yawned on every side, and to do *anything* was just as perilous as to do *nothing*. I shall lay the difficulties, or resolutions, in their order as they struck his mind, before the reader. In man, the devil flies up always sooner than the angel,—the evil intention comes before the good one.[109] *His* first was non-moral, namely, that he should answer Nathalie, and tell her what she wished to hear—that is, should *lie* to her. We find the black mourning coat as becoming, when others wear it for *us*, as warm when *we* wear it for *others*. "But I shall melt her heart" (said *his*) "into fresh anguish with a continuation of wound and lie; ah! not *even* my actual death would be worth such pain and sorrow. Therefore I shall keep utter silence." But *then*, she must think Henry annoyed, and that she has lost *this* friend too; nay, she might, in this case, travel to Kuhschnappel, and go to his grave, and bear it as an additional burden upon her oppressed and trembling soul. In both these cases there was the risk of the *third* danger—that she should come to Vaduz, and that he should then have to convert the written lies, which he had spared her, into spoken ones. There was but one way of escape that he could see—the most virtuous, but the steepest—he could tell her the truth. But with what danger to every relation of his life this confession was fraught, even if Nathalie kept counsel—also, a yellow, cross light would fall upon Henry in Nathalie's eyes, especially as she had no means of knowing anything as to the nobleness and generosity of his aims and deceptions. On the whole, there was least for his heart to suffer on the precarious path of truth, and ultimately he resolved to go by it.

[108] In the ranunculus, brown wort, the lower part of the stalk sinks deeper into the ground every year, to replace the root as it rots away.

[109] In enthusiasm, the converse order of things prevails. To learn to know what your firmly established principles of morality are, with more certainty than you can from your resolves and actions, you have only to notice the joy or the sorrow which a moral claim, a piece of news, a disappointment, calls up in you with lightning speed, but which disappears again at once under the influence of reflection and self-control. What great, rotting pieces of the old Adam one finds about one still, now and then!

Chapter XXIV

NEWS FROM KUHSCHNAPPEL—WOMAN'S ANTICLIMAX—OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL.

It is a matter which often quite puts me beyond myself that, although we *do*, in the end, duly accept and honour the bills which Virtue draws upon us, we only *pay* them after such a vast number of days of grace and double-usances—although neither the devil nor Constantinople will hear of either the one or the other. Firmian urged no further pleas of objection, except for delay. He merely *postponed* his confession, thinking that as Apollo is the best consoler (Paraclete) of man, and as Nathalie had shown the basilisk of sorrow its own image in the mirror of poetry, the sight of *itself* would be sufficient to kill it, Thus it is that all virtuous motions in us are weakened by the friction of time and of our inclinations.

One single letter, however, sent all the scenery of his theatre into confusion again. It came from Schulrath Stiefel:—

"Honoured Sir,—You doubtless remember more than too well the testamentary instruction which our mutual friend, the late lamented Poor's Advocate, Siebenkæs, left behind him, to the effect that Herr von Blaise should make payment of the trust-funds in his hands—and, indeed (as you are aware), to your respected self in order that you, might remit it to the widow—which failing, it was the testator's avowed intention to appear as a ghost. Be this as it may, thus much is matter of notoriety in this town and neighbourhood, that, for some weeks past, a ghost, in the likeness of our lamented friend, has pursued the Herr Heimlicher everywhere, who has, in consequence, become so ill and bedridden, that he has taken the Holy Sacrament, and made up his mind to pay over the above-mentioned moneys in good earnest. I now beg to inquire of you whether you would wish to receive them in the first instance, or whether (as would be almost more natural) they shall be paid at once to the widow. I have yet to mention that—in accordance with the desire of the testator—I sometime since married the former Mrs. Siebenkæs, and that I expect very soon to be the happiest of fathers. She is a most admirable wife and housekeeper. She is by no means a Thalæa,[110] and would lay down her life for her husband as gladly as he would lay down his for her; and I often have nothing left to desire, but that my predecessor, her good, never-to-be-forgotten first husband Siebenkæs (who *had* his little whims and eccentricities at times), could be a spectator of the happiness in which his beloved Lenette is now bathed. She weeps for him every Sunday as she goes through the churchyard, but at the same time she confesses that she is happier now than in former times. It grieves me much that it is only now that I have learnt, from my wife, in what miserable circumstances the dear departed found himself, as regarded his purse. How eagerly, had I been aware of this, I should have taken him and his wife by the arms, and assisted them as becomes a Christian! If the deceased, who *now* possesses more than any, or all, of us, can, in his glory, look down upon us, I am sure he will forgive me. I would respectfully beg for an early reply to this letter. One cause of the restitution of the trust-funds may also be, that the Heimlicher (who

[110] The wife of Pinarius, under the government of Tarquinius Superbus, was the first woman to quarrel with her mother-in-law (Plut. in Numa). German history will, perhaps, some day make honourable mention of the first married woman who did *not* quarrel with her mother-in-law; at least a German Plutarch should set about hunting her out.

is an honest enough man upon the whole) is now no longer influenced by Herr von Meyern. They have completely fallen out, as all the town knows, and the latter has broken off engagements with five ladies in Bayreuth, and is about to enter into the state of holy matrimony with a native of Kuhschnappel.

"My wife is as bitter against him as Christian love permits, and says that when she meets him she feels like a hunter who encounters an old woman in his path of a morning; for he was the cause of much needless vexation between her and her husband, and she often tells me with pleasure how cleverly you, esteemed Mr. Inspector, often set this dangerous fellow down, and kept him in his place. However, he does not dare to set foot in *my* house. I defer, for the present, a more detailed request—as to whether you would not feel inclined to fill our departed friend's vacant place as Collaborateur in the 'GOD'S Messenger of German Programmes,' which (I may say without undue boasting) is taken in, and looked upon with approval in Gymnasia and Lycæa, from Swabia as far as Nürnberg, Bayreuth, and Hof. There is rather a superfluity than a lack of miserable Programme-scribblers; and (let me say it without flattery) *you* are the very man to wield the satiric scourge over the heads of these frog-spawn in the Castalian springs, as few others *could*. But of this more on another occasion. My wife desires to add *her* most cordial remembrances to her departed husband's highly-esteemed friend; and, hoping for a speedy answer,

"I remain, your most obedient humble servant,

"S. R. Stiefel, Schulrath."

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The human heart is shielded by *great* sorrows from the impact of *small* ones—by the waterfall from the rain.[111] Firmian forgot everything in remembering, suffering, and crying out to himself, "Thus I have lost thee for ever, wholly. Oh! *thou* wert good always, it was *I* who was not. Be happier than thy solitary friend whom thou mournest justly every Sunday." He now cast all the blame of his bygone matrimonial lawsuits upon his own satirical whimsies, and ascribed the failure of his crop of happiness to his own ungenial climate.

But in this he was doing himself greater injustice than he had formerly done Lenette. I mean to make the world a present of my thoughts on this subject, on the spot. Love is the Perihelion of the fair sex; nay, it is the transit of every one of those Venuses over the sun of the ideal world. At the epoch of this "higher style" of their souls, they love *everything* that *we* love, even the sciences, and the whole *best* world within the breast—and they despise what *we* despise, even clothes and news. In this spring of theirs these nightingales go on singing until the summer solstice; the wedding-day is their longest day. Then the devil runs away with—not exactly everything, but something every day. The bast-band of wedlock binds the poetic wings, and the bridal-bed is (for the imagination, the phantasy), an Engelsburg, and prison-cell, with bread and water. During the honeymoon I have often followed these poor birds of paradise, or peacocks of Psyche, and in this moulting-season of theirs picked up the glorious wing and tail-feathers which they have dropped; and then, when a husband has fancied he has married a naked crow, I have held out the bunch of feathers to him. Why is this? For this reason: marriage overlays the poetical world with the rind of the actual; as (according to Descartes) our earthly sphere is a sun

[111] Allusion to a certain waterfall which dashes from its rock with a sweep so wide that one can walk under it, and thus be protected front rain.—'*An Artist's Journey in the Alps*.'

covered over with a dirty crust, or bark. The hands of everyday labour are unwieldy, hard, and full of indurations, and find much difficulty in going on holding, or drawing the delicate threads of the woof of the ideal. Hence it is that among the upper classes (where, instead of work-*rooms* there are only little work-*baskets*, and where the little spinning-wheels are turned on the lap with the finger, and where love still endures after marriage—often even for the husband) the wedding-ring is not so often, as among the lower orders, a Gyges-ring, which renders books and the arts of music, poetry, painting, and dancing—invisible. Upon high places plants of all sorts, and particularly female plants, have more vigour and aroma. A woman has not, as a man has, the power of protecting the outer side of her inner air-and-magic-castles against rough weather. What then is she to hold to? Her husband. He ought always to stand beside the liquid silver of the female spirit with a spoon, and keep skimming off the scum which gathers on it, that the silver-glittering sheen of the ideal may always keep bright and shining. But then there are two sorts of husbands—Arcadians, or lyric-poets of life, who love for ever, like Rousseau, when their hair is grey—and these are not to be controlled or comforted when they can no longer see any gold on the feminine anthology (bound with gilt edges) because they have turned the leaves of the little book over one by one, (as is the case with all gilt-edged books). Secondly, there are shepherd-hinds and sheep-smearers, I mean master-singers by profession, men-of-business, who thank God when the *enchantress* turns, at last, like other witches, into a grumbling *house*-cat, keeping down the vermin.

Nobody has to suffer more anxiety and alarm, combined with tedium and ennui (and therefore I intend some day to awaken the pity of my readers for this very condition, in a comic biography) than a portly, energetic, pushing, pompous, ponderous *Basso* of a "business-man," who finds himself (like the elephants in Rome of old) constrained to dance on the slack-rope of love; and whose deportment and play of feature, in the circumstances, *I* think more like those of a marmot than anything else, when the warmth of a room has awakened him from his winter's sleep, and he finds he can't get properly into the knack of moving. It is only with widows (who wish less to be loved than to be married) that a weighty office-holder of this sort can begin his romance at the place where all the novel-writers leave theirs off—namely, at the altar-steps. A man, built after this simplest of styles, would find a great weight lifted from his heart if anybody would only love his shepherdess *for* him till such time as he should have nothing to do but go and be married; and no one would have greater pleasure in taking up this burden, or cross, from them than myself. I have often thought of announcing in the public newspapers (except that I was afraid it would be looked upon as a joke) that I was prepared to swear Platonic, eternal love to any number of endurable girls (whom men of business might not even have *time* to love), and make them all the necessary love-declarations as plenipotentiary of the bridegroom-elect—in a word, to lead them on my arm, as *substitutus sine spe succedendi*, or *cavalier de société*, athwart the whole of the unlevel land of love, till, on the frontier, I should hand over my charge, duly prepared, to the bridegroom; which would be lovemaking, rather than marrying, by ambassador. If, according to this *systema assistantiæ*, there should be any one who would care to employ the writer even during the honeymoon (when a certain amount of love may still be expected to crop up), he must take care to establish all the necessary conditions in good time, beforehand.

In Siebenkæs's Lenette (from no fault of his) the ideal isle of the blest had sunk away, miles deep, in an instant, at the very marriage altar. The husband could in nowise either help or hinder this. On the whole, dear Mr. Education-Counsellor Campe, you

really should not strike so hard upon your writing-desk with your school birch-rod whenever a solitary she-frog croaks out something or other out of the nearest marsh, which is capable of being sent to an almanack. Ah me! don't tear away from the good creatures (who *do* put the loveliest dreams, all full of fantasy-flowers, into this empty life of ours) the terribly short dream of a delicate, sentimental love. They will be awakened to reality only too soon without that, and neither you nor I will be able to put them to sleep again, let us write as much as we choose.

Siebenkæs wrote off that day a brief and hurried reply to the Schulrath, saying "he was extremely glad that he had stood to the will, and the laws, and enclosed him a power of attorney to enable him to draw the money. Only he entreated him, as a great scholar and man of letters (one of a class who of ten, perhaps, suppose they understand matters of business better than they really do), to put the whole affair into a lawyer's hands to be transacted, inasmuch as *Jus* is of little use without jurists—nay, often not of very much even *with* them. To *review* 'Programmes' he had no time, let alone to *read* them; and he sent his kind regards to his wife."

It is not displeasing to me that (as I perceive) my readers have all discovered of themselves that the ghost, or supernatural bow-wow, and mumbo-jumbo,[112] who had got the trust money out of the Heimlicher's clutches more effectually than the whole *posse-comitatus* of the Court of Exchequer, was none other than Heinrich Leibgeber, who had availed himself of his resemblance to the departed Siebenkæs to play the part of *Revenant*. I need not, therefore, tell the reader what he knows already.

When one has at last managed to creep up a steep Alp with the hands of a tree-frog, one very often finds that, what one looks down at from the summit is a fresh yawning abyss. Firmian saw a new one under his feet; he had to abandon the resolution he had taken. I mean, he did not now dare to say a word to Nathalie about his resurrection from the charnel-house—his immortality after death. Alas! the happiness of his Lenette, who (in the utmost innocence) had two husbands, would then be hanging on the tip of a tongue. The blame would be his, the misery Lenette's. No, no (he said); Time will, by slow degrees, lay dust upon my pale image in Nathalie's kind heart, and draw the colours out of it.

In brief, he kept silence. The proud Nathalie kept silence also. In this terrible position of matters, face to face with the hard, eternal *knot* of the drama, he passed his anxious hours upon the stage. The raven-flight of cares and sorrows cast their flitting shadows over every charm and beauty of the spring, and poisonous dreams fell upon his sleep like mildew. Every dream-night cut the falling planetary-knot, and his heart along with it. How would Fate rescue and recover him from this poison-vapour, this azote-gas, of anguish and anxiety? How would it cure the finger-worm in his ring finger? By taking his arm off. One evening, to wit, shortly before bedtime, the Count was as confidential with him as a man of the world can ever be. He had something very pleasant to tell him, he said; only he must be allowed to say something beforehand, by way of a preface or introduction. It struck him—he went on to say, that, now that his Inspector had entered upon his duties, he was no longer quite so gay and full of humour as he had found him to be of old, but rather (if he might speak openly) downcast at times, and over-sentimental. Yet he had formerly said himself (but this was the *other* Leibgeber) that he would rather hear a man swear at a mischance than lament over it; and that one might have his feet sticking in the

[112] A bugbear, nine feet high, made of bark and straw, with which the Mandingoes terrify and better their wives.

winter, and his nose in the spring, and smell a flower, though in the midst of snow. “I forgive it, at once, for perhaps I guess the reason of it,” he added. But his forgiveness was really not quite genuine. For, like all the great, to him strength of feeling, even of a loving sort—but still more, of a sorrowful—was an annoyance; and a strong handclasp of friendship was almost as bad as a crunch on the toes. He demanded of pain that it should pass before him with a smile—of wickedness and evil, that they should pass him by laughing, or, at all events, laughed *at*—as, indeed, the coldest men of the world are like the physical man, whose highest temperature is about the region of the diaphragm.[113] Consequently, the previous Leibgeber—that storm-windy, but, at the same time, serene blue sky—naturally suited the Count better than this so-called Leibgeber. But how differently from us who *read* this little reproach quietly, did Siebenkæs listen to it! These *solar eclipses* of his Leibgeber (which really were not even so much as *sun spots* belonging to *him*, but merely *apparent* shadows cast on him by Siebenkæs, by reason of the position he chanced to occupy) the latter reproached himself with as so many deadly sins against his friend, which he felt it absolutely necessary to confess and do penance for.

As the Count now went on to say, “This melancholy of yours can scarcely be caused altogether by grief at the loss of your friend Siebenkæs, because since his death you have never spoken to me of him with such warmth as when he was alive. Pardon me this frankness,”—a fresh pang at this shadowing of Leibgeber cut across his brow, and it was with difficulty that he could allow his patron to finish his explanation. “But this is not a shortcoming in *my* eyes, dear Leibgeber: on the contrary, it is an excellence. We ought not to go on eternally mourning for the dead; if we grieve at all, it should be for the living. And even the latter species of grief may come to an end with you next week, for then I expect my daughter, and” (he spoke here very deliberately) “her friend Nathalie with her. They have met *en route*.” Siebenkæs sprang hastily up, stood speechless and motionless, held his hand before his eyes, not to hide them, but to keep the light out of them, so that he might look through, and follow the course of, the cloud-masses of thought which were piled one over another and rolling in all directions, ere he should give his answer.

But the Count—misconstruing him (as Leibgeber) in all points, and ascribing his sentimental metamorphosis to Nathalie’s account, and the fact of his being deprived of her—begged him merely to hear him out before speaking, and to accept his assurance that he would be delighted to do everything in his power to retain his daughter’s lovely friend always in the neighbourhood. Heavens! what thousandfold entanglement the Count made of a matter so wholly simple!

Here Siebenkæs, stormed at from fresh points of the compass, had to beg for a moment to think—for there were now *three* souls at stake—but he had scarcely taken one or two hasty steps across the room, when he stood firm again, and said to the Count, and to himself, “Yes, I shall do what is right.” Then he begged the Count to give his word of honour that he would keep inviolate a secret which he would confide to him, and which neither related to, nor would injure, himself or his daughter in the slightest degree. “In that case why should I not?” answered the Count, to whom the discovery of a secret was as the clearing away of a thick woodland before a fine view.

Then Firmian opened his heart, his life, and everything, like a stream let loose and dashing into a new channel, not yet to be measured with a glance. The Count several times detained him by fresh misunderstandings, because he had only preassumed,

[113] Walter’s ‘Physiology.’

out of his own imagination, a love on Nathalie's part for the real Leibgeber, and had never heard from any one of her real love for Siebenkæs.

And now the astonished Count, in his turn, astonished the Advocate; and, of all the many faces which in such a case he might have put on—faces offended, angry, startled, embarrassed, delighted, cold—he only showed the Inspector an exceedingly contented one. It only particularly pleased him, he said, that he *had* observed so many little matters which rather vexed him, and that in certain points he had *not* thought over-highly of Leibgeber; but what delighted him most was his good fortune at possessing, in this manner, a *double* Leibgeber, and the knowledge that the absent one was not sorrowing for a dead friend.

Let no one be surprised at the Count's maintaining his good-humour and serenity who has seen a bright order-star sparkle on an aged, and extinguished, breast. When our old man of the world beheld the little shuttle of this chain of friends flying to and fro between love and sacrifice on either side; when he held in his hand the bright Raphael-tapestry of friendship which it wove, and looked at it closely, there came to him the enjoyment of *something new*, for the first time for many years. So that, up to this point, he had been sitting in his front box before a living comic-historical drama, of which he himself unravelled the plot, and which could be performed all over again in his head at any given moment. Moreover, his Inspector had become a new being for him, full of fresh entertainment, inasmuch as he had gone off the stage, changed his dress and re-entered as the pseudo-deceased Siebenkæs; and could, in the future, tell him as much as he pleased of the narrator. In this way both the friends had become flatteringly-precious to him, by reason of the dependent interest in him with which they had interwoven the bond which bound their souls.

He who has tasted the bliss of sticking to the truth can understand the new delight with which Siebenkæs could now pour himself out unrestrained concerning everything—himself and Henry and Nathalie—inasmuch as it was not till now that he felt the full weight of the burden he had got relieved of—that of working the light, jest-falsehood of a moment into a yearly comedy, in 365 acts. With what ease he explained to the Count that, before Nathalie's arrival (whom he could neither undeceive, nor go on deceiving), he must fly, and that straight to Kuhschnappel. As the Count listened, he told him all the reasons urging him to go; longing to see his tombstone, and unhallowed grave, so as to do penitence and expiation; longing to see Lenette, unseen, from afar, perhaps her child near; longing to hear from eye-witnesses a minute account of her happy married life with Stiefel (for Stiefel's letter had wafted the flower ashes of bygone days into his eyes, and opened the leaves of the sleeping-flower of his conjugal love); longing to wander, romantically (erect now, and with his burden off), about the scenes of his old oppressed life; longing to hear, in the market-town, something of his Leibgeber, who had been there so recently; longing to celebrate August, the month of his death, in solitude—the month when it had been with him as with the vine, whose leaves are taken off in August, that the sun may shine more warmly on the grapes.

In three words, for why give many reasons—since when once there is a *will*, there can never be any lack of *reasons*—he set off.

Chapter XXV., And Last

THE JOURNEY—THE CHURCHYARD—THE SPECTRE—THE END OF THE TROUBLE, AND OF THE BOOK.

I see more clearly every day that I and the other 999,999,999 human beings,[114] are nothing but so much skin-and-bone stuffed (like cooked chickens), full of a mass of incongruities, contradictions, inconsistencies, irremediable insufficiencies, and resolves, of which every one has its antagonist muscle (*musc. antagonista*). We do not contradict other people half as often as ourselves. This last Chapter is a fresh proof of it. Up to this point, the reader and I have been labouring together with the sole object of finishing this Book, and now that we see the shore, and have all but reached it, we are both sorry for it. I shall, at all events, be doing something—the most that I can—if I conceal, and hide away (so to speak) the end of it, as we do the end of a garden, and say several things which will help to lengthen out the work a little.

The Inspector sprang out into the open country, among the corn-ears, fortified with a muscular, full breast—the Alp of silence and deception no longer weighed upon him as it had done. The avalanche which had overwhelmed his life had melted to a third of its original size Tinder the sun of his present fair fortune. His electric Leyden-jar coating with a better income, and even the fact of his having a great deal more to do, had charged him with fire and courage. His appointment was a mountain permeated by so many veins of silver and gold, that even in this first year of it he had found he was enabled to send sundry anonymous contributions to the Prussian Widows' Fund, so as to make amends for a good half of his fraud upon it, and see his way to finally clearing it off altogether. I should not lay this act of duty before the public gaze were it not that Kritter, in Göttingen—who reckons that this fund will be exhausted in the year 1804—or even calculators more moderate in their results, who think its extreme unction will be received in 1825, might take occasion, from these Flower-pieces of mine, to lay its death wholly at the Inspector's door. If this should prove to be the case, I should very deeply regret having alluded to the subject, in the remotest manner, in my Flower-pieces.

He did not take his way by Hof or Bayreuth, or any of the old romantic journey-roads. He dreaded lest the hand of Fate (which sows behind the clouds) might bring his phantom-body before Nathalie's eyes. And yet he hoped a little that this said hand might bring him just the least bit in contact with his Leibgeber, since *he* had been so recently cruising in these waters. As a matter of course, he had embodied himself, *en route*, in the said Leibgeber's shirt, jacket, and complete exterior—the same which he had swopped with him in the inn at Gefrees and this costume was a mirror which continually showed him the absent one's image. A "Saufinder," like Leibgeber's, who lifted his head up to him in a forest-cottage, sent a throb of joy through his heart; but the dog's nose knew him as little as did the dog's master.

And yet, the nearer he drew to the hills and woods, behind whose Chinese churchyard-wall stood his two empty houses—his grave and his old lodging—the tighter did Anxiety draw her drag-net about his heart. It was not the fear of being recognised; this, by reason of his resemblance to Leibgeber (particularly in his

[114] There are one thousand millions of us crawling on this sphere.

present dress), was an impossibility. Nay, people would sooner have taken him for his own wraith and Prophet Samuel than for Siebenkæs still in the body. But, besides love and anticipation, there was a something which made him anxious—a something which once hemmed in and oppressed myself when I came back among the Herculanean antiquities of my own childhood. There clasped themselves once more around my breast the iron bands and rings which had crushed it in my childhood—a time when the little human creature is still tremblingly helpless and comfortless in presence of the sorrows and sufferings of life and death—when we stand between the footstool we have cast away, the handcuffs and ankle-chains which we have burst asunder, and the great sighing and singing tree of philosophy which is to guide us to the free, open battle-arena and coronation city of this earth. In every thicket round which Firmian had wandered in his poverty-stricken, miserable winter-autumn, he saw the cast-off skins of the snakes sticking, which in former days had twined themselves about his feet. Remembrance (that after-winter of his hard, cruel days) fell into this lovelier time of his life, and the combination of these dissimilar feelings—the clasp of the old fetters, and the breeze of freedom of the present—generated a third sensation, which was bitter-sweet, as well as anxious and uneasy.

When it was twilight, he walked slowly and observantly through the streets, which were strewn with scattered ears of corn. Every child he met going home with the supper-beer, every familiar dog, and every well-remembered cling of a bell, was full of fossil-impressions of joy-roses and passion-flowers, the originals of which were all fallen to dust. As he passed the house where he used to live, he heard two stocking-looms clattering and rattling there.

He took up his quarters in the Lizard Inn, which cannot have been the grandest hotel in the town, inasmuch as the Advocate ate his beef on a pewter-platter, which (to judge by the marks and *stigmata* of a facsimile of his own knife which it bore), seemed to have once been enrolled as a soldier of his own pawned-plate-militia regiment. However, the inn had this advantage—that Firmian could occupy the little room, number seven, on the third story, and there establish a star-observatory, or mast-head crow's-nest, which commanded Stiefel's study just opposite, at a somewhat lower elevation. But his Lenette never came to the window. Ah! if he had seen her, he would have knelt on the floor for sheer sorrow. Not till it was quite dark did he see his old friend Stiefel, who came and held a printed sheet—probably a proof of the 'German Programme Advertiser'—against the red western sky, it being too dark to see it inside. He was surprised to see the Schulrath look so worn and bowed—and he had a crape on his arm too. "Can my Lenette's poor baby be dead?" he thought.

When it was quite late he crept, all trembling, to that garden, whence we do not all return, and which is bounded by the hanging Eden-Garden of the second life. In the churchyard he was safe from the approach of spectators, thanks to the ghost-stories by means of which Leibgeber had forced his inheritance out of his guardian's clutches. On his way to his own vacant, subterranean bed, he passed by the grave on which (while it was black, it was grass-grown now) he had placed the flower-garland which he had *meant* to give Lenette a pleasant surprise with, though it *did* only cause her an unexpected sorrow. At last he came to the bed-curtains of that grave-siesta, his own tombstone, and he read the inscription with a cold shudder. "Suppose this stone trap-door were lying upon your face," he said to himself, "building you in from the wide heavens!"—and he thought what clouds, what coldness, and night, reign around the two poles of life, as about the poles of our earth—about the beginning and

the end of man. He considered it a very wicked thing to have aped the last hour—the crape-streamer of a long, dark cloud was over the moon, his heart was tender and anxious; when suddenly a something with colour in it, near his grave, seized his attention, and caused a revulsion in his soul.

For there, close beside it, was a fresh grave, quite recently covered in, surrounded by a painted wooden-frame, not unlike a bedstead. And upon these painted boards Firmian (as long as his streaming eyes allowed him) read what follows:—

"Here reposes in God, Wendeline Lenette Stiefel, born Engelkraut of Augspurg. Her first husband was the lamented Poor's Advocate, F. St. Siebenkæs. On the 20th of October, 1786, she entered, for the second time, into holy matrimony with the Schulrath Stiefel, of this place, and after three-quarters of a year of a peaceful union with him, she fell asleep in childbed, on the 22nd of July, 1787, and lies here, with her little still-born daughter, awaiting a joyful resurrection."

"Oh! poor creature, poor creature!" More he could not *think*. Now—now that her day of life was better and warmer, the earth must swallow her, and she take nothing with her but a hand roughened by labour, a face furrowed with the death-bed sickness, and a contented, but empty heart, which, hemmed down among the hollow-ways and mine-shafts of this world, had seen scarcely any stars or flowery meadows. Her troubles had gradually clouded over her life so thickly and darkly, that no picturing fancy could brighten and purify them by the colour-play of poesy, just as no rainbow is possible when the whole sky is black with rain. "Why did I vex you so often, and pain you, even by my death, and be so unforgiving to all your little innocent crotchets?" he said, weeping bitterly. An earth-worm came twining out of the grave, and he threw it forcibly away, as though it had come straight from the beloved cold heart; although that which satiates this creature is what satiates *us* also at last—EARTH. He thought of the child (mouldering to dust) which laid its thin, withered arms about his soul, as if it had been his own, and to which Death had given as much as a God gave to Endymion—sleep, eternal youth, and immortality. At length he tottered away from this place of mourning with his heart wearied, not lightened, by his tears.

When he went back to the inn, a woman with a harp was singing in the public room (a boy accompanying her on a flute) a song, of which the *ritournelle* was, "dead is dead, and gone is gone." It was the same woman who had been playing and singing on the New Year's eve when his Lenette, now departed and at peace, had buried her face in the handkerchief, weeping and desolate. Oh! the burning arrows of these music-tones went hissing through his heart—the poor soul had no shield. "I tortured her terribly in these days" (he went on constantly saying). "*How* she sighed! *How* she kept silence! Ah! if you could but see me now from on high, now that you are happier! If you could but behold this bleeding soul of mine—not that you should forgive me, no, only that I might have the consolation of suffering something for your sake! Oh! how different would I be to you *now*!"

And this is what we all say when we bury some one whom we have tortured; but on that very same evening of mourning we go and dart the javelin deep into some other breast which is still warm. Oh! weaklings that we are, strong only in resolves! If that form, now resolved into its elements, whose mouldering wounds (which we ourselves inflicted) we expiate with tears of penitence and warm resolves to do better, were to come back to us to-day, new-created, and in the brightest bloom of youth, it would be but for the first week that we should clasp the newfound soul, more fondly loved than

ever, to our hearts; and then we should apply the old martyrdom instruments to it again, just as of old. That we should do this, even to our beloved dead, I deduce from the fact (to say nothing of our rude unkindness to the living) that, in our dreams, when those whom we have lost revisit us again, we act over again everything which we now repent. I do not say this to deprive any mourner of the consolation of repentance, or of the thought, that his love for the lost one is purer and fonder than before, but to lessen the pride which may be grounded upon the repentance and the data of feelings.

Later in the night, when Firmian saw the face (gnawed and sunken with sorrow) of his old friend (who had now so little left to him), looking up to heaven, as if seeking there among the stars his friend of whom he was bereaved, sorrow pressed the last tear from his anguished heart, and in the madness of grief he cast the blame upon himself of his friend's sorrow; jut as if the latter had not a great deal to thank him for in the first instance, before setting about pardoning him.

He awoke in all the exhaustion of sorrow, i.e. in that *bled-away* condition of the feelings which at last resolves itself into a sweet melting-away and longing for death. For he had lost everything—even what was *not* buried. He dared not go to the Schulrath for fear of being recognised, or, at the very lowest, staking upon a most dangerous chance the peace of mind of that most innocent creature, who would never be able to reconcile it to either his conscience or his sense of honour, that he had married a woman whose husband was still alive.

But he could go and see Meerbitzer, the hairdresser, with, less danger of discovering himself, and could carry away from him a great dowry of news. Moreover, the sickle of Death had cut through all his *other* chains and knots, together with his bonds of love. He would be doing no injury to any one but himself if he took off his mask of death, and showed himself unmouldered to other people, nay, even to the sorrowing Nathalie; particularly as on very beautiful evenings, and whenever he did any good action, his conscience claimed the arrear-interest of the unpaid debt of truth, refusing to grant any further letters of respite. Also his soul swore, as a God swears to his own self, that he would only stay there this one day, and then never come back.

The Friseur knew in a moment, from the lameness, that he could be nobody but the Vaduz Inspector, Leibgeber. Like posterity, he decked his own lodger, Siebenkæs, with the richest of rosemary-garlands, and declared that these ragamuffins of stocking-weavers whom he had got upstairs now were not to be spoken of in the same day with poor lamented Mr. Siebenkæs. The whole house creaked when they rattled and stamped in their upstairs-room. He then called attention to the circumstance that the departed had taken his wife away to him within the space of a year and day; and dwelt on the fact that she had never forgotten the Meerbitzer's house, but had often looked in of an evening in her widow's weeds (which she had been buried in according to her desire), and spoken with them about all her various vicissitudes, and about her new life. "They lived together just like two children," the hairdresser said, "Stiefel and she." This conversation, the house, and his old rooms, so noisy now, were all so many waste places of his ruined Jerusalem. A stocking-loom now stood where his writing-table used to be, and so on. All his questions about the past were so many conflagration-relics, collected for the fresh building of his burnt-down pleasure-chateaux from out their Phœnix ashes. Hope is the morning Aurora of joy, and memory its red evening sky; but the latter is terribly apt to drop down in grey dew or rain, with no colour left in it. The blue day, which the red sky gives promise of, *does*, indeed, break in brightness; but it is in another world, where

there is another sun. Meerbitzer unknowingly cleft, deep and wide, the split into which he grafted the sundered flower-twigs of the bygone days on to Firmian's heart; and when, finally, his wife related how, when Lenette had taken the Communion of the Sick, she said to the evening preacher, "I *shall* go to my Firmian when I am dead, shall I not?" Firmian averted his breast from this blind dagger-thrust, and hurried out into the open air, that he might not encounter any one to whom he should be constrained to lie.

Yet he could not but long for some human creature, even were one to be found nowhere else but beneath his lowliest roof of all—in the churchyard. The electrically-charged atmosphere of the evening brooded and hatched melancholy longings of every kind; the sky was overspread with scattered unripe fragments of a thunder-cloud, and in the west horizon a muttering storm had begun, scattering its lighted pitch-rings and full-charged clouds down upon unknown lands. He went home; but as he passed by the tall railings of Blaise's garden, he fancied he saw a figure like Nathalie, dressed in black, glide into the arbour. And then, for the first time, he turned his mind to something which Meerbitzer had said about a lady in mourning, who had come a few days before, and wished to be shown all over the house, lingering particularly in Siebenkæs's old rooms, and making a great many inquiries. That she should have come out of her road on her way to Vaduz was by no means unlikely; indeed, it was very consistent with her romantic turn of mind, particularly as she had never seen Siebenkæs's former home, and the Inspector had not answered her letter—as Rosa was married, and Blaise reconciled to her (since he had seen the ghost)—and the month of Firmian's death would naturally suggest to her a visit to his last resting-place.

So that her friend could not but dwell all this evening with feelings of painful fondness upon her memory—the one unclouded star which beamed on him from the overcast heaven of his bygone days. It was deep in the gloaming now, a cooler air was stirring. A storm had spent its force in other regions, and there remained only some broken, lurid clouds, piled in the sky like glowing, half-burned firebrands. He betook himself, for a last time, to the place where death had planted the red carnation, with its little buds snapped so untimely from its stem. But within his soul, as without him, the air breathed less sultrily now, and fresher; tears had blunted the sharp edge of the first bitterness of his sorrow. He felt, with far more of gentleness, that the earth is only our CARPENTER'S YARD, not our BUILDING-GROUND. In the East, where the stars were rising, a long blue streak shone above the sunken thunder-clouds. The moon (light-magnet of the sky) was lying, like a fount of light, upon the foil of a cleft cloud, and the wide vaporous veil was melting motionlessly away.

When Firmian, approaching the beloved grave, raised up his downcast head, he saw a dark form resting there. He stopped short, and gazed more piercingly. The form was a woman's. Her face, frozen into the ice of death, was fixed on him. As he drew nearer, he saw his dearest Nathalie leaning overpowered against the painted railing of the grave. The autumnal breath of death had tinted her lips and cheeks with white; her wide eyes were sightless, and nothing but the tear-drops which hung on her lashes gave proof that she was in life, and had taken him for the apparition of which she had heard so much. In the excess of her romantic sorrow at his grave she had longed, in the strength and loneliness of her heart, that his spirit might appear to her; and when she saw him approaching, she thought Heaven had granted her prayer. And then the iron hand of chill terror turned this red rose to a white one. But ah, her friend was the more wretched of the two. His tender, unshielded heart was

crushed motionless between the impact of two worlds which rushed crashing together. In tones of utter distress he cried out, “Nathalie! Nathalie!” Her lips quivered spasmodically, and a breath of life gave back a shade of brightness to her glance; but the spirit was still there before her, and she closed her eyes again, and said, with a shudder, “Oh God!” It was in vain that his voice called her back to life; when she looked up at the apparition her heart failed her again, and she could only cry “Oh God!” Firmian seizing her hand, cried, “Angel of heaven, I am not dead! only look at me! Nathalie, don’t you know me? Oh! merciful God, don’t punish me so terribly, don’t let me be the cause of her death!” At length she slowly lifted her heavy eyelids, and saw her old friend trembling beside her, with tears of anxiety and terror. His tears were happier, but more abundant, and he smiled sorrowfully upon her as she still kept her eyes open, and said, “Nathalie, I am still upon this earth, in very truth, and suffer as you do yourself; don’t you see how I tremble on your account? Take my warm, living hand. Are you still afraid?” “No,” she answered faintly; but she still looked at him in an awe-stricken fashion, as at a super-earthly being, and had not courage to ask for an explanation of the riddle. He helped her to rise (gently weeping), and said, “But, dear innocent one, come away from this place of sorrow, where so many tears have been shed already. For *your* heart mine has no secrets now. Ah! I can tell *you* everything, and I *will* tell you everything.” He led her out, above the quiet dead, through the back gate of the churchyard. She leaned on his arm heavily and languidly, shuddering again often as they climbed the little height, and only the tears which joy, relief from terror, grief, and exhaustion combined, had brought to her eyes, fell like warm balsam upon her chilled and wounded heart.

When they reached the top of the height she sat down to rest, and the black night-woods, railed round by white harvests, and cut across by the moon’s silent sea of light, lay before them. Nature had drawn out the “pianissimo lute” organ-stop of midnight, and by Nathalie’s side stood one of her beloved dead, new-risen from the grave. He told her now all about Leibgeber’s entreaties; the short story of his mock-death; his residence with the Count; all the longings and tears of his long solitude; his firm determination rather to fly from her than to deceive or wound her beloved heart, either by speech or in writing; and the disclosures he had made to her friend’s father. She sobbed at the account of his last moments and parting from Lenette, as if it had all been real. She thought on many things as she merely said, “Ah! it was only for other people’s happiness that you sacrificed yourself. But you will be able to have done with all this deception *now*, and to make amends for it, will you not?” “I shall,” he said, “to the very utmost of my power; and my heart and my conscience shall be free and clear once more. Have I not even kept the vow I made to *you*—that I should not see you again till after my death?” She smiled gently.

They both sunk into a dreamy and blissful silence. At last, seeing her lay a mourning-cloak butterfly[115] (disabled by the night-dew) down upon her lap, the fact that she was in mourning herself struck him for the first time, and he hastily asked, “*You* are not in mourning for any one, are you?” Alas! she had put it on for *him*. “Not *now*,” Nathalie answered, and, looking at the butterfly, she said pityingly, “a few *drops* and a little *chilliness* have benumbed the poor thing.” Her friend reflected how easily Fate might have punished *his* temerity by benumbing the even more beautiful, black-attired creature by his side, who had, moreover, had her full share already of shivering in the night-frosts of life and the night-dew of tears. But he could not answer her for love and pain.

[115] *Vanessa Antiopa* gets this name in Germany.—Trans.

They kept silence now, reading each other's thoughts, lost, half in their hearts, half in the grandeur of night. The wide æther had absorbed all the clouds (only those of the sky, alas!); Luna bent down, with her saintly halo, like a glorified Madonna, from the tranquil blue, to greet her pale sister of the earth. The voice of the stream was heard, as it flowed on its course unseen, hidden by a light mist—like the stream of time, hidden from sight by the haze of countries and nations. Behind them the night-breeze had laid itself to rest upon a swelling, rushing bed of corn, bestreaked with blue corn-flowers; and before them lay the reaped harvest of the world to come—precious stones (as it were) in their coffin-settings, cold and heavy in death.[116] The pious and humble ones (forming an antithesis to the sunflower and the mote in the sunbeam) turned as moon-flowers to the moon, and played as moonbeam-motes in her cool rays, feeling that there is nothing under the starry sky so great as hope.

Nathalie leant on Firmian's hand, that he might help her to rise, and said, "I feel quite able to go home now." He kept hold of her hand, but did not rise nor speak. He was gazing at the dry, prickly stalk of the old rose-twig which she had given him. Unwittingly, and without feeling what he was doing, he pressed the thorns into his fingers. His laden bosom heaved with deeper, warmer sighs; burning tears stood in his eyes, and the moon's light trembled before them like a shower of falling light. A whole universe lay upon his soul and upon his tongue, and kept both motionless.

"Firmian," said Nathalie, "what would you have?" He bent his fixed eyes widely opened upon her gentle form, and pointed down to his grave in the valley. "My house down there," he answered, "which has been empty so long. For the bed on which we dream this dream of life is terribly hard."

He lost command of himself, for she wept so terribly—and her face, all heavenly kindness, was so near—and he burst forth, with the bitterest and strongest emotion, "Are not all my loved ones gone, and are not *you* going too? Ah! why has torturing destiny laid the waxen image of an angel upon all our breasts,[117] and lowered us into the chill life? Oh! the soft image melts away, and there is no angel. Yes, *you* HAVE appeared to me, it is true, but you disappear, and time will crush to atoms your image on my heart, ay, and my heart with it. For when I have lost *you*, I *shall* be alone in earnest. But, fare you well! I *shall* actually die one day, and *then* I shall appear to you; but not as I have done to-night. Ah! nowhere but in eternity, and then I shall say to you, 'Oh! Nathalie, I loved you there below with infinite, unending grief and sorrow; make amends to me *here*!'" She strove to answer, but her voice broke and failed her. She raised her great eyes to the starry sky, but they were full of tears. She tried to rise, but her friend held her, with his hand all thorns and blood, and said, "*Can* you leave me, Nathalie?"

She arose here, sublime and grand, bent her head back, looking upward to the sky, rapidly swept away the tears from her eyes; her soaring soul found words, and, clasping her hands in prayer, she said, "Oh! THOU who art all love, and lovest ALL, he has been lost to me, I have found him again; eternity is here on earth; make THOU him happy through me!" And her head sank down on his, tenderly and languidly, and she said,

"*We are going to be always* TOGETHER."

[116] The purer precious stones are colder and heavier than the less perfect.
[117] Waxen angels used to be put into the grave with the dead.

“Oh God!” stammered Firmian; “Oh angel! you are going to be always *with* me—in this world and the next!”

“For ever, Firmian!” said Nathalie, softly. And our friend’s troubles were over and past.

THE END

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