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Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science, Volume 12, No. 29, August, 1873

THE NEW HYPERION

FROM PARIS TO MARLY BY WAY OF THE RHINE.
II.—THE TWO CHICKENS

"Thou art no less a man because thou wearest no hauberk nor mail sark, and goest not on horseback after foolish adventures."

So I said, reassuring myself, thirty years ago, when, as Paul Flemming the Blond, I was meditating the courageous change of cutting off my soap-locks, burning my edition of Bulwer and giving my satin stocks to my shoemaker: I mean, when I was growing up—or, in the more beauteous language of that day, when Flemming was passing into the age of bronze, and the flowers of Paradise were turning to a sword in his hands.

Well, I say it again, and I say it with boldness, you can wear a tin botany-box as bravely as a hauberk, and foolish adventures can be pursued equally well on foot.

Stout, grizzled and short winded, I am just as nimble as ever in the pretty exercise of running down an illusion. Yet I must confess, as I passed the abattoirs of La Villette, whence blue-smocked butcher-boys were hauling loads of dirty sheepskins, I could not but compare myself to the honest man mentioned in one of Sardou's comedies: "The good soul escaped out of a novel of Paul de Kock's, lost in the throng on the Boulevard Malesherbes, and asking the way to the woods of Romainville."

Romainville! And hereabouts its tufts of chestnuts should be, or were wont to be of old. I am in the grimy quarter of Belleville. Scene of factories, of steam-works and tall bleak mansions as it is to-day, Belleville was once a jolly country village, separated on its hilltop from Paris, which basked at its feet like a city millionaire sprawling before the check apron and leather shoes of a rustic beauty. Inhabited by its little circle of a few thousand souls, it looked around itself on its eminence, seeing the vast diorama of the city on one side, and on the other the Près-Saint-Gervais, and the woods of Romainville waving off to the horizon their diminishing crests of green. A jolly old tavern, the Ile d'Amour, hung out its colored lamps among the trees, and the orchestra sounded, and the feet of gay young lovers, who now are skeletons, beat the floor. The street was a bower of lilacs, and opposite the Ile d'Amour was the village church.

Then the workmen of the Paris suburbs were invaders: they besieged the village on Sundays in daring swarms, to be beaten back successfully by the duties of every successive Monday. Now they are fixed there. They are the colorless inhabitants of these many-storied houses. The town's long holiday is over. Where the odorous avenues of lilacs stretched along, affording bouquets for maman and the children and toothpicks for ferocious young warriors from the garrisons, are odious lengths of wall. Everything is changed, and from the gardens the grisettes of Alfred de Musset are with sighing sent. Their haunts are laboratories now, and the Ile d'Amour is a mayor's office.

I, to whom the beer-scandals of the Rhine and the students' holidays of the Seine were among the Childe-Harold enormities of a not over-sinful youth, was sadly disappointed. Thinking of the groves of an Eden, I ran against the furnaces of a Pandemonium. For a stroll back toward my adolescence, Belleville was a bad beginning. I determined to console myself with the green meadows

of Saint-Gervais and the pretty woods of Romainville. Attaining the latter was half an hour's affair among long walls and melancholy houses: at Saint-Gervais, a double file of walls and houses—at Romainville, houses and walls again. In the latter, where formerly there were scarcely three watches distributed amongst the whole village, I was incensed to find the shop of a clockmaker: it was somewhat consoling, though, to find it a clockmaker's of the most pronounced suburban kind, with pairs of wooden shoes amongst the guard-chains in the window, and pots of golden mustard ranged alternately with the antiquated silver turnips.

Before the church I found yet standing a knotty little elder tree, a bewitched-looking vegetable. A beadle in a blouse, engaged in washing one of the large altar-candles with soap and water at the public pump, gave me the following history of the elder tree. I am passionately fond of legends, and this is one quite hot and fresh, only a hundred years old. Hear the tale of the elder of Romainville.

The excellent curé of Romainville in the last century was a man of such a charitable nature that his all was in the hands of the poor. The grocer of the village, a potentate of terrific powers and inexorable temper, finally refused to trust him with the supply of oil necessary for the lamp in the sanctuary. Soon the sacred flame sputtered, palpitated, flapped miserably over the crusted wick: the curé, responsible before Heaven for the life of his lamp, tottered away from the altar with groans of anguish. Arrived in the garden, he threw himself on his knees, crying *Meâ culpâ*, and beating his bosom. The garden contained only medicinal plants, shaded by a linden and an elder: completely desperate, the unhappy priest fixed his moist eyes on the latter, when lo! the bark opened, the trunk parted, and a jet of clear aromatic liquid spouted forth, quite different from any sap yielded by elder before. It was oil. A miracle!

The report spread. The grocer came and humbly visited the priest in his garden, his haughty hat, crammed with bills enough to have spread agony through all the cottages of Romainville, humbly carried between his legs. He came proposing a little speculation. In exchange for a single spigot to be inserted in the tree, and the hydraulic rights going with the same, he offered all the bounties dearest to the priestly heart—unlimited milk and honey, livers of fat geese and pies lined with rabbit. The priest, though hungry—hungry with the demoniac hunger of a fat and paunchy man—turned his back on the tempter.

One day a salad, the abstemious relish yielded by his garden herbs, was set on the table by Jeanneton. At the first mouthful the good curé made a terrible face—the salad tasted of lamp-oil. The unhappy girl had filled a cruet with the sacred fluid. From that day the bark closed and the flow ceased.

There is one of the best oil-stories you ever heard, and one of the most recent of attested miracles. For my part, I am half sorry it is so well attested, and that I have the authority of that beadle in the blouse, who took my little two-franc piece with an expression of much intelligence. I love the Legend.

The environs of Paris are but chary of Legend. I treasure this specimen, then, as if it had been a rare flower for my botany-box.

But the botany-box indeed, how heavy it was growing! The umbrella, how awkward! The sun, how vigorous and ardent! Who ever supposed it could become so hot by half-past eight in the morning?

Certainly the ruthless box, which seemed to have taken root on my back, was heavier than it used to be. Had its rotundity developed, like its master's? I stopped and gathered a flower, meaning to analyze it at my next resting-place. I opened my box: then indeed I perceived the secret of its weightiness. It revealed three small rolls of oatmeal toasted, a little roast chicken, a bit of ham, some mustard in a cleaned-out inkstand! This now was the treachery of Josephine. Josephine, who never had the least sympathy for my botanical researches, and who had small comprehension of the nobler hungers and thirsts of the scientific soul, had taken it on her to convert my box into a portable meat-safe!

Bless the old meddler, how I thanked her for her treason! The aspect of the chicken, in its blistered and varnished brown skin, reminded me that I was clamorously hungry. Shade of Apicius! is it lawful for civilized mortals to be so hungry as I was at eight or nine in the morning?

At last I saw the end of that dusty, featureless street which stretches from the barrier to the extremity of Romainville. I saw spreading before me a broad plain, a kind of desert, where, by carefully keeping my eyes straight ahead, I could avoid the sight of all houses, walls, human constructions whatever.

My favorite traveler, the celebrated Le Vaillant, to whom I am indebted for so many facts and data toward my great theory of Comparative Geography, says that in first reaching the solitudes of Caffraria he felt himself elated with an unknown joy. No traced road was before him to dictate his pathway—no city shaded him with its towers: his fortune depended on his own unaided instincts.

I felt the same delight, the same liberty. Something like the heavy strap of a slave seemed to break behind me as I found myself quite clear of the metropolis. Mad schemes of unanticipated journeys danced through my head; I might amble on to Villemonble, Montfermeil, Raincy, or even to the Forest of Bondy, so dear to the experimental botanist. Had I not two days before me ere my compact with Hohenfels at Marly? And in two days you can go from Paris to Florence. Meantime, from the effects of famine, my ribs were sinking down upon the pelvic basin of my frame.

The walk, the open air, the sight of the fowl, whose beak now burned into my bosom's core, had sharpened my appetite beyond bearing. Yet how could I eat without some drop of cider or soft white wine to drink? Besides, slave of convention that I have grown, I no longer understand the business of eating without its concomitants—a shelter and something to sit on.

The plain became wearisome. There are two things the American-born, however long a resident abroad, never forgives the lack of in Europe. The first I miss when I am in Paris: it is the perpetual street-mending of an American town. Here the boulevards, smeared with asphaltum or bedded with crunched macadam, attain smoothness without life: you travel on scum. But in the dear old American streets the epidermis is vital: what strength and mutual reliance in the cobbles as they stand together in serried ranks, like so many eye-teeth! How they are perpetually sinking into prodigious ruts, along which the ponderous drays are forced to dance on one wheel in a paroxysm of agony and critical equipoise! But the perpetual state of street-mending, that is the crowning interest. What would I not sometimes give to exchange the Swiss sweeping-girls, plying their long brooms desolately in the mud, for the paviors' hammers of America, which play upon the pebbles like a carillon of muffled bells? As for the other lack, it is the want of wooden bridges. Far away in my native meadows gleams the silver Charles: the tramp of horses' hoofs comes to my ear from the timbers of the bridge. *Here*, with a pelt and a scramble your bridge is crossed: nothing addresses the heart from its stony causeway. But the low, arched tubes of wood that span the streams of my native land are so many bass-viols, sending out mellow thunders with every passing wagon to blend with the rustling stream and the sighing woods. Shall I never hear them again?

A reminiscence more than ten years old came to give precision to my ramblings in the past. Beyond the rustic pathway I was now following I could perceive the hills of Trou-Vassou. Hereabouts, if memory served me, I might find a welcome, almost a home, and the clasp of cordial if humble hands. Here I might find folks who would laugh when I arrived, and would be glad to share their luncheon with me But—ten years gone by!

This computation chilled my hopes. What family remains ten years in a spot—above all, a spot on that fluctuating periphery of Paris, where the mighty capital, year after year, bursts belt after belt? Where might they have gone? Francine!—Francine must be twenty-two. Married, of course. Her husband, no doubt, has dragged her off to some other department. Her parents have followed. March, volunteer, and disentangle yourself from these profitless speculations!

Ten minutes farther on, in the shade of the fort at Noisy-le-Sec, I saw a red gable and the sign of a tavern. As a tourist I have a passion for a cabaret: in practice, I find Véfours to unite perhaps a greater number of advantages.

Some soldiers of the Fortieth were drinking and laughing in a corner. I took a table not far off, and drew my cold victuals out of my box of japanned tin, which they doubtless took for a new form of canteen. The red-fisted garçon, without waiting for orders, set up before me, like ten-pins, a castor in wood with two enormous bottles, and a litre of that rinsing of the vats which, under the name "wine of the country," is so distressingly similar in every neighborhood. Resigned to anything, I was about drawing out my slice of ham, the chicken seeming to me just there somewhat too proud a bird and out of harmony with the local color, when my glance met two gray eyes regarding my own in the highest state of expansion. The lashes, the brows, the hair and the necklace of short beard were all very thick and quite gray. The face they garnished was that of the tavern-keeper.

"Why, it is you, after all, Father Joliet!" I said, after a rapid inspection of his figure.

"Ah, it is Monsieur Flemming, the Américain-flamand!" cried the host, striking one hand into the other at the imminent risk of breaking his pipe. In a trice he trundled off my bottle of rinsings, and replaced it by one of claret with an orange seal, set another glass, and posted himself in front of me.

I asked the waiter for two plates, and with a slight blush evoked the chicken from my box. The soldiers of the Fortieth opened a battery of staring and hungry eyes.

"And how came you here?" asked I of Joliet.

"It is I who am at the head of the hotel," he replied, proudly pointing out the dimensions of the place by spreading his hands. "My old establishment has sunk into the fosses of the fort: it was a transaction between the government and myself."

"And was the transaction a good one for you?"

"Not so bad, not so bad," said he, winking his honest gray eyes with a world of simple cunning. "It cannot be so very bad, since I owe nothing on the hotel, and the cellar is full, and I am selling wholesale and retail."

The vanity which a minute since had expanded his hands now got into his legs, and set them upright under his body. He stood upon them, his eyes proudly lowered upon the seal of the claret. A pang of envy actually crossed my mind. I, simple *rentier*, with my two little establishments pressing more closely upon my resources with every year's increase of house-rates, how could I look at this glorious small freeholder without comparisons?

"So, then, Father Joliet," said I, "you are rich?"

"At least I depend no longer on my horse, and that thanks to you and the government."

"To me! What do you mean?"

"Why, have you forgotten the two chickens?"

At the allusion to the chickens we caught each other's eye, and laughed like a pair of augurs. But the mysterious fowls shall be explained to the reader.

I need not explain that I have cast my lot with the Colonial Americans of Paris, and taken their color. It is a sweet and luxurious mode of life. The cooks send round our dinners quite hot, or we have faultless servants, recommended from one colonist to another: these capital creatures sometimes become so thoroughly translated into American that I have known them shift around from flat to flat in colonized households of the second and third stories without ever touching French soil for the best part of a lifetime. At our receptions, dancing-teas and so on we pass our time in not giving offence. Federals and Confederates, rich cotton-spinners from Rhode Island and farmers from thousand-acre granges in the West, are obliged to mingle and please each other. Naturally, we can have no more political opinions than a looking-glass. We entertain just such views as *Galignani* gives us every morning, harmonized with paste from a dozen newspapers. Our grand national effort, I may say, the common principle that binds us together as a Colony, is to forget that we are Americans. We accordingly give our whole intellects to the task of appearing like Europeans: our women succeed in

this particularly well. Miss Yuba Sequoia Smith, whose father made a fortune in water-rights, is now afraid to walk a single block without the attendance of a chambermaid in a white cap, though she came up from California quite alone by the old Panama route. Everybody agrees that our ladies dress well. Shall I soon forget how proud Mrs. Aquila Jones was when a gentleman of the emperor's body-guard took her for Marguerite Bellanger in the Bois? Our men, not having the culture of costume to attend to, are perhaps a little in want of a stand-point. Still, we can play billiards in the Grand Hôtel and buy fans at the Palais Royal. We go out to Saint-Cloud on horseback, we meet at the minister's; and I contend that there was something conciliatory and national in a Southern colonel offering to take Bigelow to see Menken at the Gaîté, or when I saw some West Pointers and a nephew of Beauregard's lighting the pipe of peace at a handsome tobacconist's in the Rue Saint-Honoré. The consciousness that we have no longer a nationality, and that nobody respects us, adds a singular calm, an elevation, to our views. Composed as our cherished little society is of crumbs from every table under heaven, we have succeeded in forming a way of life where the crusty fortitude and integrity of patriotism is unnecessary. Our circle is like the green palace of the magpies in Musset's *Merle Blanc*, and like them we live "de plaisir, d'honneur, de bavardage, de gloire et de chiffons."

I confess that there was a period, between the fresh alacrity of a stranger's reception in the Colony and the settled habits I have now fallen into, when I was rather uneasy. A society of migrators, a system woven upon shooting particles, like a rainbow on the rain, was odd. Residents of some permanency, like myself, were constantly forming eternal friendships with people who wrote to them in a month or two from Egypt. In this way a quantity of my friendships were miserably lacerated, until I learned by practice just how much friendship to give. At this period I was much occupied with vain conciliations, concessions and the reconciling of inconsistencies. A brave American from the South, an ardent disciple of Calhoun, was a powerful advocate of State Rights, and advocated them so well that I was almost convinced; when it appeared one day that the right of States to individual action was to cease in cases where a living chattel was to escape from the South to the North.

In this case the State, in violation of its own laws unrecognizant of that kind of ownership, was to account for the property and give it back, in obedience to general Congressional order and to the most advanced principles of Centralization. Before I had digested this pill another was administered to me in that small English section of our circle which gave us much pride and an occasional son-in-law. This was by no less a person than my dear old friend Berkley, now grown a ruddy sexagenarian, but still given to eating breakfast in his bath-tub. The wealthy Englishman, who had got rich by exporting china ware, was sound on the subject of free commerce between nations. That any industry, no matter how young might be the nation practicing it, or how peculiar the difficulties of its prosecution, should ever be the subject of home protection, he stamped as a fallacy too absurd to be argued. The journals venturing such an opinion were childish drivelers, putting forth views long since exploded before the whole world. He was still loud in this opinion when his little book of epigrams, *The Raven of Zurich and Other Rhymes*, came out, and being bright and saucy was reprinted in America. The knowledge that he could not tax on a foreign soil his own ideas, the plastic pottery of his brain, was quite too much for his mental balance, and he took to inveighing against free trade in literary manufactures without the slightest perception of inconsistency, and with all the warmth, if not the eloquence, of Mr. Dickens on the same theme. The gradual accumulation of subjects like these—subjects *taboo* in gentle society—soon made it apparent that in a Colony of such diverse colors, where every man had a sore spot or a grievance, and even the Cinderellas had corns in their little slippers, harmony could only be obtained by keeping to general considerations of honor, nobility, glory, and the politics of Beloochistan; on which points we all could agree, and where Mr. Berkley's witty eloquence was a wonder.

It is to my uneasy period, when I was sick with private griefs and giddy with striving to reconcile incompatibilities, that the episode of the Chickens belongs. I was looking dissatisfied out of one of my windows. Hohenfels, disappointed of a promenade by an afternoon shower, was looking dissatisfied

out of the other. Two or three people, waiting for four o'clock lunch, were lounging about. I had just remarked, I believe, that I was a melancholy man, for ever drinking "the sweet wormwood of my sorrows." A dark phantom, like that of Adamastor, stood up between me and the stars.

"Nonsense, you ingrate!" responded the baron from his niche, "you are only too happy. You are now in the precise position to define my old conception of the Lucky Dog. The Lucky Dog, you know, in my vocabulary, is he who, free from all domestic cares, saunters up and down his room in gown and slippers, drums on the window of a rainy afternoon, and, as he stirs his evening fire, snaps his fingers at the world, saying, 'I have no nor children, good or bad, to provide for.'"

I replied that I did not willingly give way to grief, but that the main-spring of my life was broken.

"Did you ever try," spoke up a buxom lady from a sofa—it was the Frau Kranich, widow of the Frankfort banker, the same who used to give balls while her husband was drugged to sleep with opium, and now for a long time in Paris for some interminable settlement with Nathan Rothschild —"Did you ever try the tonic of a good action? *I* never did, but they actually say it rejuvenates one considerably."

I avowed that I had more faith in the study of Geography. Nevertheless, to oblige her, I would follow any suggestion.

"Benefit the next person who applies to you."

"Madame, I will obey."

At this moment a wagon of singular appearance drew up before my windows. I knew it well enough: it was the vehicle of a handy, convenient man who came along every other morning to pick up odd jobs from me and my neighbors. He could tinker, carpenter, mend harness: his wife, seated in the wagon by his side, was good at a button, or could descend and help Josephine with her ironing. A visit at this hour, however, was unprecedented.

As Charles was beginning a conversation under the hood of the wagon, I opened the window. "Come into the room," I said.

Hohenfels maliciously opened his. "Come in," he added "Monsieur Flemming is especially anxious to do you a benefit."

The man, uncovering, was now standing in the little garden before the house—a man with a face at once intelligent and candid, which is unfortunately rare among the poor rascals of his grade. Although still young, he was growing gray: his blouse, patched and re-sewed at all the seams, was clean and whole. Poverty had tested him, but had as yet picked no flaws in him. By this time my windows were alive with faces.

The man, humble but not awkward, made two or three respectful bows. "Monsieur," he said to me, "I hope you are fond of chickens. I am desirous to sell you a fine pair."

Chickens for me! and what was it supposed I should do with them? At this point the voice of the Frau Kranich was heard, clear and malicious: "It is a bargain: bring them in."

At the same time the canvas cover of the wagon puffed outward, giving issue to a heavy sigh.

The man went to a sort of great cage in lattice-work occupying the back of the vehicle. Then he backed his wagon up to the sidewalk, and we saw, sitting on the cage and framed by the oval of the wagon-cover, a young woman of excellent features, but sadly pale. She now held the two chickens in her lap, caressing them, laying their heads against her cheek, and enwreathing them in the folds of her great shawl. I could only close the bargain with the utmost speed, to be safe from ridicule.

"Your price?" I asked.

"Fix it yourself, sir," said the man, determined to confuse me. "You are doubtless thoroughly acquainted with poultry."

"The nankeen—colored one," spoke up again the bell-like and inexorable voice from the other window, "is a yellow Crèvecoeur, very well formed and lively-looking: the slate-colored one is a Cochin-China, with only a few of the white feathers lacking from the head. They are chef-d'oeuvres, and are worth fully forty francs apiece."

"Only look, sir, at their claws and bills, see their tongues, and observe under their wings: they are young, wholesome and of fine strain—"

He was running on when I stopped him: "Here are a hundred francs for you, brave man."

The patchwork blouse cut a caper, a look of lively joy shot from the man's eyes, where a tear was gathering, and the wagon, from its bursting cover, gave utterance to a sob.

"Why sell them," I asked, touched in spite of myself, "if you are so attached to them? Is the money indispensable to you? I might possibly make an advance."

"Ah, you are a real Christian—you are now," said the honest Joliet, polishing his eyeball with his coat-cuff. "The good woman holds by them, it is true. Holy Virgin! it's she that has raised them, and I may say brooded over them in the coop. The eggs were for our salad when we had nothing better than nettles and sorrel. But, day in and night in, we have no other lodging than our wagon, and the wife is promising to give me a dolly; and if we don't take out the cage, where will the cradle go, sir?"

The calculation appeared reasonable. I received the birds, and they were the heroes, in their boudoir under the piano, of that night's conversazione.

How hard it is for a life cast upon the crowded shores of the Old World to regain the place once lost is shown by the history of my honest friend Joliet. Born in 1812, of an excellent family living twenty miles from Versailles, the little fellow lost his mother before he could talk to her. When he was ten years old, his father, who had failed after some land speculations, and had turned all he had into money, tossed him up to the lintel of the doorway, kissed him, put a twenty-franc gold-piece into his little pocket, and went away to seek his fortune in Louisiana: the son never heard of him more. The lady-president of a charitable society, Mademoiselle Marx, took pity on the abandoned child: she fed him on bones and occasionally beat him. She was an ingenious and inventive creature, and made her own cat-o'-nine-tails: an inventor is for ever demonstrating the merits of his implement. Soon, discovering that he was thankless and unteachable, she made him enter, as youngest clerk, the law-office of her admirer and attorney, Constabule. This gentleman, not finding enough engrossing work to keep the lad out of mischief, allowed him to sweep his rooms and blacken his boots. Little Joliet, after giving a volatile air to a great many of his employer's briefs by making paper chickens of them, showed his imperfect sense of the favors done him by absconding. In fact, proud and independent, he was brooding over boyish schemes of an honorable living and a hasty fortune. He soon found that every profession required an apprenticeship, and that an apprenticeship could only be bought for money. He was obliged, then, to seek his grand fortune through somewhat obscure avenues. If I were to follow my poor Joliet through all his transmigrations and metempsychoses, as I have learned them by his hints, allusions and confessions, I should show him by turns working a rope ferry, where the stupid and indolent cattle, whose business it is to draw men, were drawn by him; then letter-carrier; supernumerary and call-boy in a village theatre; road-mender on a vicinal route; then a beadle, a bell-ringer, and a sub-teacher in an infant school, where he distributed his own ignorance impartially amongst his little patrons at the end of a stick; after this, big drum in the New Year's festivals, and ready at a moment's opportunity to throw down the drumstick and plunge among the dancers, for Joliet was a well-hinged lad, and the blood of nineteen years was tingling in his heels. After fluttering thus from branch to branch, like the poor birdling that cannot take its flight, discouraged by his wretched attempts at life, he plunged straight before him, hoping for nothing but a turn of luck, driving over the roads and fields, lending a hand to the farmers, sleeping in stables and garrets, or oftener in the open air; sometimes charitably sheltered in a kind man's barn, and perhaps—oh bliss!—honestly employed with him for a week or two; at others rudely repulsed as a good-for-nothing and vagabond. Vagabond! That truly was his profession now. He forgot the charms of a fixed abode. He came to like his gypsy freedom, the open air and complete independence. He laughed at his misery, provided it shifted its place occasionally.

One day, when Hazard, his ungenerous guardian, seemed to have quite forgotten him, he walked—on an empty stomach, as the doctors say—past the lofty walls of a château. A card was placed at

the gate calling for additional hands at a job of digging. Each workman, it was promised, had a right to a plate of soup before beginning. This article tempted him. At the gate a lackey, laughing in his face, told him the notice had been posted there six months: workmen were no longer wanted. "Wait, though," said the servant, and in another minute gave the applicant a horse!—a real, live horse in blood and bones, but in bones especially. "There," said the domestic, "set a beggar on horseback and see him ride to the devil!" And, laughing with that unalloyed enjoyment which one's own wit alone produces, he retired behind his wicket.

The horse thus vicariously fulfilling the functions of a plate of soup was a wretched glandered beast—not old, but shunned on account of the contagious nature of his disease. Having received the order to take him to be killed at the abattoir, monsieur the valet, having better things to do, gave the commission to Joliet, with all its perquisites.

Joliet did not kill the steed: he cured it. He tended it, he drenched it, he saved it. By what remedy? I cannot tell. I have never been a farrier, though Joliet himself made me perforce a poulterer. Many a bit of knowledge is picked up by those who travel the great roads. The sharp Bohemian, by playing at all trades, brushing against gentry of all sorts and scouring all neighborhoods, becomes at length a living cyclopaedia.

Joliet, like Democritus and Plato, saw everything with his own eyes, learned everything at first hand. He was a keen observer, and in our interviews subsequent to the affair of the chickens I was more than once surprised by the extent of his information and the subtlety of his insight. His wits were tacked on to a number of remote supports. In our day, when each science has become so complicated, so obese, that a man's lifetime may be spent in exercising round one of them, there are hardly any generalizers or observers fit to estimate their relativity, except among the two classes called by the world idlers and ignorants—the poets and the Bohemians.

Joliet, now having joined the ranks of the cavalry, found his account in his new dignity. He became an orderly, a messenger. He carried parcels, he transported straw and hay. If the burden was too heavy for the poor convalescent, the man took his own portion with a good grace, and the two mutually aided each other on the errand. Thanks to his horse, the void left by his failure to learn a trade was filled up by a daily and regular task: what was better, an affection had crept into his heart. He loved his charge, and his charge loved him.

This great hotel, the world, seemed to be promising entertainment then for both man and beast, when an epoch of disaster came along—a season of cholera. In the villages where Joliet's business lay the doors just beginning to be hospitable were promptly shut against him. Where the good townsmen had recognized Assistance in his person, they now saw Contagion.

If he had been a single man, he could have lain back and waited for better times. But he now had two mouths to feed. He kissed his horse and took a resolution.

He had never been a mendicant. "Beggars don't go as hungry as I have gone," said he. "But what will you have? Nobility obliges. My father was a gentleman. I have broken stones, but never the *devoirs* of my order."

He left the groups of villages among which his new industry had lain. The cholera was behind him: trouble, beggary perhaps, was before him. As night was coming on, Joliet, listlessly leading his horse, which he was too considerate to ride, saw upon the road a woman whom he took in the obscurity for a farmer's wife of the better class or a decent villager. For an introduction the opportunity was favorable enough. On her side, the *quasi* farmer's wife, seeing in the dusk an honest fellow dragging a horse, took him for a "gentleman's gentleman" at the least, and the two accosted each other with that easy facility of which the French people have the secret. Each presented the other with a hand and a frank smile.

Joliet, whom I have erred perhaps in comparing to Democritus, was nevertheless a laugher and a philosopher. But his grand ha-ha! usually infectious, was not shared on this occasion. The wanderer could not show much merriment. A sewing-woman with a capacity for embroidery, her needle had

given her support, but now a sudden warning of paralysis, and symptoms of cholera added to that, had driven her almost to despair. She was without home, friend or profession.

Joliet set her incontinently on horseback, and walked by her side to a good village curé's two miles off—the same who had assisted him to his first communion, and for whom he subsequently became a beadle. The kind priest opened his arms to the man, his heart to the woman, his stable to the horse. For his second patient my Bohemian set in motion all his stock of curative ideas. In a month she was well, and the curé no longer had three pensioners, for of two of them he made one.

Two poverties added may make a competence. Monsieur and Madame Joliet were good and willing. The man began to wear a strange not unbecoming air of solidity and good morals. The girls now saluted him respectfully when he passed through a village.

One thing, however, in the midst of his proud honeymoon perplexed him much. Hardly married, and over head and ears in love, he knew not how to invite his bride to some wretched garret, himself deserting her to resume his former life in the open air. To give up the latter seemed like losing existence itself.

One morning, as he asked himself the difficult question, a pair of old wheels at the door of a cartwright seemed of their own accord to resolve his perplexity. He bought them, the payment to be made in labor: for a week he blew the wheelwright's bellows. The wheels were his own: to make a wagon was now the affair of a few old boards and a gypsy's inventiveness.

Thus was conceived that famous establishment where, for several years, lived the independent monarch and his spouse, rolling over the roads, circulating through the whole belt of villages around Paris, and carrying in their ambulant home, like the Cossacks, their utensils, their bed, their oven, their all.

From town to town they carried packages, boxes and articles of barter. At dinner-time the van was rolled under a tree. The lady of the house kindled a fire in the portable stove behind a hedge or in a ditch. The hen-coop was opened, and the sage seraglio with their sultan prudently pecked about for food. At the first appeal they re-entered their cage.

At the same appeal came flying up the dog of the establishment, a most piteous-looking griffin, disheveled, moulted, staring out of one eye, lame and wild. For devotion and good sense his match could be found nowhere. Like his horse, his wife, his house and the pins in his sleeve, Joliet had picked the collie up on the road.

The arrival of a tiny visitor to the Bohemian's address made a change necessary. Little Francine's dowry was provided by my humorous acquisition of the yellow and slate-colored chickens.

With his savings and my banknote Joliet determined to have a fixed residence. He succeeded of course. The walls, the windows, the doors, everything but the garden-patch, he picked up along the roads.

Buried in eglantine and honeysuckle, soon no one would suspect the home-made character of Joliet's château. It became the centre of my botanizing excursions. Francine grew into a fair, slim girl, like the sweetest and most innocent of Gavarni's sketches, and sold flowers to the passers-by.

Such were the souvenirs I had of this brave tavern-keeper in his old capacity of roadster and tramp. Now, after an hiatus of years, I found him before me in a different character at the beginning of my roundabout trips to Marly.

But what had become of my favorite little rose-merchant?

"Francine?" asked Joliet briskly, as if he was wondering whom I could mean by such a name. "You mean my wife? Poor thing! She is dead."

"I am speaking of your daughter, Father Joliet."

"Oh, my daughter, my girl Francine? She went to live with her godmother. It was ten years ago."

"And you have not seen her since?"

"Yes—yes—two years back. She has gone again."

"To her godmother?"

"No."
"Why so?"
"Her godmother would not receive her. Don't wring my heart so, sir!"

EDWARD STRAHAN.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

OUR HOME IN THE TYROL

CHAPTER VII

We left the Hof one August Friday—we were not superstitious—a goodly company, sufficient to freight the rumbling old stage-wagon which jolted daily between Bruneck and Taufers, a distance of nine miles. At this village the sedater portion of the party were to settle down with books, pencils and drawing-paper until the Alpine visit should have been paid.

The valley of Taufers, running northward with a grand vista to the north-west of the vast Zillerthal snow-fields, suggests at a distance the idea of a stern, joyless district. When in the broader Pusterthal the sunshine floods upland plain and slope, this important but narrow tributary valley lies steeped in its gloomy shade, the dark sides of the Sambock frowning grimly on the opposite shadowy Tesselberg. Great, therefore, was the surprise of some of the party to find, as we drove along, instead of melancholy solitude, prosperous villages basking in sunshine, whilst little children skipped merrily, and men and women worked amongst the golden stooks as if enjoying the labor of their hands. Yes, strange to say, effulgent sunshine everywhere on acre and meadow, and slanting down upon a wayside cottage garden, where a freshly-painted Christ lay drying between tall sunflowers. This cottage seemed the only shadow in this unexpectedly bright picture, for, occupied by a religious image-maker, crucifixes and wooden saints peeped wholesale out of the windows. Is it a want of sensibility in these poor Tyrolese peasants which causes them to cling tenaciously to such frightful material forms of religion, making them give prominence to every conceivable sign of sacred sorrow and suffering? But the jolting stage-wagon allowed us no time to analyze this painful, ever-recurring feature of the Tyrol. When we next looked up we saw above us, on a wooded crag, a square gray tower, which, once a stronghold, appears, as if exhausted with old age, to be tottering into the midst of lesser ruins.

It was Neuhaus, once a fortress of the rigid old barons of Tuvers. Hugo, the sixth lord, died there in 1309, and in the chapel, which still stands, mass is said at stated periods for the salvation of his soul and the souls of his relations. The whole place would undoubtedly have been given over to the owls and the bats had not two adjacent springs—one of iron, the other of chalk and alum—been considered, a quarter of a century since, either as preventives or as cures for the cholera, then raging. A chalet was therefore planted on the rocks between the chapel and the castle, and a bath-house opened, which would probably be still much frequented on account of the beauty of the situation were the bath-owner only a little more attentive to the comfort of his humble guests.

The valley, apparently so gloomy, proved not only cheerful, but full of romance and old-world memories. Other castles there were, perched gracefully on their crags; and thus, much sooner than we had anticipated, we found ourselves stopping at the Post in Taufers. Rather Sand in Taufers, the single appellation being used chiefly for the parent church, which, with a mortuary chapel and a house for the "young and sick," stands apart. Sand and Moritz, two prosperous villages, cluster with this group of buildings at the head of the valley, gathering like fiefs at the foot of the fine old castle, still one of the grandest feudal remains in ruin-bestrewn Tyrol. A third village, Müklen, though quite distinct, lies sufficiently near to deserve being included in the circle.

The Post, in prospect of the increase of custom occasioned by the Pusterthal railway, had enlarged its borders during the past winter. Nor had it been deceived in the speculation, for, although only one up-and-down train in the day crawls along the valley, the news of the comfortable inn in the midst of beautiful scenery had already brought custom enough. Thus all our powers of persuasion were lost upon the handsome sister of the young wirth, a noted beauty of the neighborhood. "Their house

was full already. Nine guests, who had never sent word beforehand, were quite out of the question, but the Herrschaft could be accommodated at the Elephant opposite, which was related to the Post."

So, crossing over to the Elephant, the house being entirely empty, we found space and cleanliness, and might have found perfect comfort withal, had not the landlord and landlady proved in a perpetual state of somnolency, their few waking intervals being barely sufficient for the supply of the simplest wants. In spite of these and other unsatisfactory auspices, such as the tea being served in a soup-tureen, the stayers voted to remain at the Elephant in our absence, making up for all inward deficiencies by outdoor enjoyment.

A country clown with an honest face, Ignaz by name, agreed for a trifle to carry our bundles and ample provision of food to the Olm. He made a serious matter of it, however, when he pertinaciously insisted on four in the morning being the hour for starting. The dispute finally ended by the agreement to allow Ignaz to carry our belongings at the hour he chose, seeing that all the village was ready to take an affidavit as to his honesty, and we being allowed the same freedom of choice for ourselves. All having thus been comfortably arranged, we sallied forth for an evening stroll.

A turn in the quiet village street soon revealed the great massive castle on its plateau of rock—shattered towers, broken battlements, oriel and bay windows jutting out here and there, its bulwarks running down the precipice, but not, as formerly, shutting in the narrow gorge leading into the Ahrnthal, a busy, populous valley, closed in its turn by the snow-clad bulk of the Tauern, down which, on the farther side, the noted Kriml waterfall plunges. Remembering, from a visit paid to the castle in the former year, that an easy winding road, shaded by trees and commanding splendid mountain-views, led through the fortifications by the back of the castle to the great gateway, we chose it in preference to the steep, perpendicular path, which, always taken by the natives, led equally to the drawbridge and main entrance. To our extreme regret, however, we soon found our course impeded by the huge trunks of mighty pine trees lying in a perfect pell-mell above and on both sides of us. A glance up the hillside showed scores more of these slain giants. To proceed was almost hopeless, and we were forced to rest upon some timber and mark our future course between piles oozing with turpentine.

Whilst we were engaged in our calculations, an old crone, who had been groping about in the crevices for chips and sticks, stopped, and seeing us thus penned in by tree boles, eyed us with a compassionate look. "Ja, ja!" said she, "with fallen trees all jumbled together it is hard for the Herrschaft to move on; but it's harder for us poor folks, who have seen the trees growing here ever since we were born, to hear day and night the axe going hack, hack, and the trees come thudding down. Sixteen strong Welschers from a distance do the work: they knew well enough a Taufern would have looked long at the sixers (ten-kreuzer pieces) before he would have shorn the mighty forests. Look you!" and she pointed to the sky. "As far as you can see they are felling."

We looked, and sure enough the vast woods that clothed the lofty mountainsides were being ruthlessly cleared away. We suggested that a protest should be made.

"Oh, na, na! The woods are none of ours. The graf de Ferraris too has sold the estate to a gesellschaft from Vienna. They care nothing for the castle, but are hungry for timber. The count lives a long way off, and does not feel it, but it must eat the heart of his aged lady mother to the fibres—she lives in the village—to know that foreigners are sweeping down masses of trees by wholesale—trees that have always kept the poor man's noodles boiling. And where are the planks to come from for our houses, our barns, our stables? And how can the cattle be kept from straying without fences of wood? Then, too, avalanches of snow and of stones will fall, and maybe overwhelm the village. Thanks to the Mother of God! they will drop on my grave, but, Lord Jesus, the children and the children's children!"

Having given us these sad scraps of information, and heaving a big sigh, the poor old soul lifted up her bundle of chips and went fumbling forward over her stumbling-blocks.

Sad and true was the picture which she had drawn. Nor does it, alas! belong exclusively to Taufers, but to the whole Tyrol. In many instances the people are themselves eager for this reckless

clearing. They hope thereby to secure more pasturage, the feeding and rearing of cattle being the great idea of wealth to the Tyroler. So they make ready money of their timber, which now in the form of masts floats on the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal. The Venetians, requiring timber, have turned the once beautiful, richly-wooded Dalmatia into a dreary, barren land. In the Tyrol it is not generally foreigners, but the natives, who unhesitatingly sweep away woods, which, causing grass and plants to grow, have enabled human habitations to be erected on spots that would otherwise be but dreary wildernesses, the battle-fields of chilling winds and scorching sunshine. The precious timber, which like refuse they cart into the clumsy yawning craters called stoves, or else sell out of the country for economy so called, might not only supply the land for centuries with a proper amount of fuel, either as wood or charcoal, but bring prosperity to many a sequestered village if turned into tools and kitchen utensils, whilst still leaving thousands of trees for export. "The supply has never failed yet," say the Tyrolese: "why should we replant forests to have to cut them down again, when the ground, too, is good for grass or corn?" So the axe lies ruthlessly at the root of every tree, for a heavy reckoning hereafter to the Tyroler.

With a weighing and balancing over every step which we took worthy of a diplomatist, we finally stood upon the drawbridge of the castle. Here the savage customs of the rude days in which it was built immediately impress the beholder. Traces remain of the ponderous iron portcullis, heavy wooden bars, arrow-holes, and slits in the masonry for the pouring of boiling water or oil upon adverse knight or lordly freebooter. A steep path leads through two great entrance-gates into the large inner court, which is erected upon the virgin rock. A roof of old wooden shingles shelters the well, and ancient rotting timber mingles everywhere with the impervious stone in the massive buildings of the castle, conveying a sense of weakness and decay in the midst of the strongest durability.

Not only was the old castle dismantled, but apparently entirely abandoned this summer evening. We were preparing to return without seeing the interior when a little maiden arrived from the village, who with flushed face and timid mien drew the castle key from under a big stone, stood on tiptoe and turned the heavy lock, and the door creaking on its hinges we were left to wander at our will through old wainscoted rooms in the dreamy twilight. No spirit of modern restoration had ever reached them: they were allowed to remain just as inconvenient, but also just as quaint, as on the day of their erection. There were gloomy recesses enough, but there were likewise graceful carvings, mottoes, rare tracery and wood-work; while, strange to say, in several chambers grotesque wooden birds were suspended from the ceiling like malformed ducks, conveying at first no idea of the Holy Dove which the old lords had desired to symbolize, yet probably in those unquiet days their best conception of this emblem of peace.

The barons not only fought, squabbled and feasted, but prayed too in their fashion; so we came upon the chapel, disfigured by barbaric effigies, tawdry ornamentation and flimsy modern artificial flowers. It is still used for the weekly mass which, as at Neuhaus, is read here for the peace of the turbulent lords of Tuvers. Still, within the memory of man a hermit occupied some narrow chambers adjoining the chapel. He had retired amongst these ruins of transitory greatness to warn his fellow-creatures against carnal passions, prayed for the dead and shrived the living. The old anchorite has passed, we hope, into heavenly repose, but cinders, which may almost be called holy ashes, still lie scattered on his deserted little hearth.

The banqueting-hall, a fine though low room, supported on solid rounded arches, contains innumerable flour-and corn-bins, which, though dating from the Middle Ages, are still in perfect condition. Here knight and baron caroused, here mummers have played and bears have danced, whilst sword and spur clanked upon the rude stone floor. In the ladies' bower above many a minne-singer has struck his lyre. Nay, Oswald von Wolkenstein, a prince amongst troubadours, wearing his golden chain and brilliant orders, has brought tears from many a gentle eye as he sang to his harp his pathetic elegies, the cruelty of Sabina his lady, and his adventures in England, Spain and Persia. He was a noble, courtly knight, conversing in French, Moorish, Catalonian, Castilian, German, Latin,

Wendisch, Lombardic and Russian; and his bones lie in the great cloister of Neustift, not half a day's journey from Taufers.

How often, too, has the shrill sound of the bugle called to feats of arms in the court, to hawking and hunting in valley and mountain-forest! How many a crusader against Turk, infidel, *Prussian* and *Hussite* has crossed the wooden drawbridge upon his war-horse! Yes, and what an excitement in the noble Catholic household when in the adjoining Ahrnthal the peasants, becoming enamored of Lutheranism, rose in the peasant war of 1525! How darkly, too, must they have painted the fanatical bauer Barthlmä Duregger of St. Peter's in the Ahrnthal, who, after being taken prisoner, escaped near their postern gate to circulate threats of fire and murder throughout the neighborhood, vowing to reduce Bruneck to ashes! Reappearing with a band of twelve poachers and twenty-six laborers, and accompanied by Peter Baszler of Antholz, he robbed and plundered the clergy, stripping the worthy priest Andreas Spaat of all his worldly goods, so that he died in the utmost poverty. Although much blood was shed in their pursuit, this lawless, misguided man and his band were never taken. Great as their sin would naturally seem to the noble family at the castle, no less lamentable and equally worthy of torture and death would the heretics of Bruneck appear. About the same time the sacrilegious books, as they were called, of Zwingli and Luther were sold there openly, conventicle hymns were sung in the streets, and the priest Stephan Gobi preached against the holy doctrine of confession and the invocation of saints; whilst the schoolmaster Bartholomew Huber, though he could not find time to teach the children the catechism, puzzled their innocent minds with Virgil's *Georgics* and Cicero's *Letters*. Toward the end of the sixteenth century the heresy was suppressed, when the lords and ladies of Taufers Castle sang no doubt a triumphant Te Deum in their chapel. The inmates were not then barons of Tuvers proper, for the title having early become extinct the castle passed into many noble hands, sometimes reaching those of royalty. Such a booty never remained unoccupied, until, coming into the possession of Hieronymus, count of Ferraris, in 1685, his descendants gradually permitted it to fall into ruin, its evil days culminating under the present count, who sold the estate a few years since to a speculating company, who merely value it for the timber. The rooms which still remain habitable are tenanted by peasants and by the sixteen pitiless wood-cutters.

Seven o'clock the next morning found Frau Anna, E–, the two Margarets and our good Moidel bound full of life and spirits for the Eder Olm. We had soon left the village of Moritz behind us, and were climbing a shady wood-path, when we met a peasant-woman with her daughter, and she exclaimed, "What! Herrschaft going to Rein! What big eyes they will make over the stones!"

Sure enough, very big eyes were made by some of the Herrschaft. After ascending to a meadow amphitheatre, then resting in a sunny wood, redolent of pine odors, near the foundations of a ruined stronghold, the Burgkofel, we came upon a realm of gigantic boulders. Some, in the shape of huge granite slabs, formed a rude, continuous broadway; others, scarred and furrowed, but softened and beautified by golden and silver lichen, torn by storms and snow from the cyclopean mountain-walls, were scattered topsy-turvy on either hand; many had become lodged in the river, where they carried on a steady defence against the tumultuous Giessbach, which, having its rise in mountains ten thousand feet high, leapt, foaming milky white, over and between them, forming a long series of bold cascades for a distance of half a dozen miles. The road continued by the boisterous rapids, hemmed in on the other hand by woods and threatening mountain-walls. The thunder of the waters prevented continuous conversation: we therefore admired in silence the grandeur of the scene and the magnificent glimpses which slight curves in the road afforded ever and anon of neighboring mountain-peaks and wooded valleys below.

No carriage of any kind can ascend this road. It would be difficult indeed for horses; nevertheless, the herds of cattle traverse it in the journey to and from the Olm, their hoofs being able to find foothold on the rock. Moidel said that the cattle were so delighted to go to the Alps for the summer after the winter's confinement in the stall that they made the journey with a kind of joyful impatience, going on still more eagerly as they approached the end. "Not so, however," added

Moidel, "with the pigs. I have often sat and cried on these rocks at their perverse ways when I have had to bring them up. They would only stand still and grunt while I begged and prayed and pushed. When they reached the top a new spirit soon seized them: they were here, there and everywhere—in a week's time leaping like goats, as if they had taken to wine."

We made the climb slowly, and noon was long passed when we reached the saw-mills, the first houses in the mountain parish of St. Wolfgang or Rein. The busy, purring mills stood on the edge of the Sarine at the extremity of a flat mountain-valley intersected by innumerable brooks, which, continually overflowing, turn it constantly into a lake. The grass had been under water a week previously, but was now sufficiently dry for us to sit and rest. Whilst we were so doing, Ignaz, our *träger*, stood before us, his empty basket on his back.

"The barn is swept and garnished in readiness for the Herrschaft, and their bundles and parcels are arranged there in beautiful order—many bundles, and far heavier than they looked last night." Ignaz, however, was of opinion that though the pay was small the gentry meant well by him, and therefore he had not scrupled to take the food the worthy farmer's wife had offered him, leaving the Christian soul to be repaid by the gentlefolks when they came. And, moreover, he had advised the landlord at Rein that the gentry were passing through, so that they should not fail to find eatables ready, seeing hunger and weariness were best consoled by food.

After which communication we regarded Ignaz as much less a clown than he looked. Pushing forward, we soon saw the little inn shining forth a mile farther up the valley—a small white chalet, with the pink-checked feather beds hanging to air in the upper gallery.

Moidel looked grave over the dinner which the interposition of Ignaz had prepared for us. "The place is called Rein (clean)," she said, "but it is none of the cleanest. A Graf once reached Rein, and he thought it so pastoral that he asked at the inn for a drink of new milk, but the landlord shook his head and asked for other orders, seeing there was none in the house. Then the Graf said he would take cream, but the landlord shook his head and asked for other orders. Fresh eggs? Yes, the landlord said there were eggs, and begged him to step into the zechstube until they were boiled. When they came they made the very room smell, and the Graf in disgust ordered wine. This was speedily forthcoming, but with so dirty a glass that the Graf, making a long face, angrily called for the reckoning and departed."

After Moidel's tale, and certain recollections of our own concerning the little hostel last year, we all approached the house with very humble expectations. The wirth, already on the lookout, received Moidel and two of the party as old friends, and hearing no nay he marshaled us up stairs, and flinging open a bed-room door, looked proudly triumphant as even Moidel uttered an exclamation of surprise.

Whether constant reminders from his neighbors of the Graf's unfortunate visit, or a wave of civilization from the Pusterthal had reached this secluded mountain-inn, certain it is that twelve months had wrought a marvelous change here. Whilst the rest of the house remained rough, dirty and primitive, the landlord had devoted all his powers of taste and judgment upon this upper chamber. Leaning complacently against the door, he received our congratulations on the pretty ceiling and walls of carved deal wainscot, on the grand new bed, and the bouquet of fresh Edelweiss in a wash-basin, but showed surprise that the fiery tigers and gliding serpents which in a couple of gilt frames adorned the walls received no flattering comments from our lips. He next displayed a visitors' book, containing already some half dozen names, watching closely the astonishment it should produce in us as he prepared the table for our meal. But even the study of the names had to be interrupted, for he had purchased some steel knives and forks, which were, he considered, to bring him great credit and reputation; nor could he complete his work without hinting at the superiority of his table-cloth and napkins. Fortunately, a call from below that the pancakes were ready enabled us to have a little laugh to ourselves. Linen being used in all peasant houses, he had discarded it as vulgar, wearing himself an unbleached cotton shirt with an incipient frill, and supplying his guests with a table-cloth and napkins of the same material from an empty wash-basin.

We had already discussed two dishes of hot pancakes—really worthy of commendation—enjoyed an hour's rest, taken coffee, and were rising to depart, when the landlady appeared with a hop, skip and jump. She was a lively, voluble little woman, who, though she had attired herself for us in two enormous cloth petticoats, a stuff bodice and yards of Bohemian lace in frills and ruffles, by way of displaying the wealth of her wardrobe, bobbed and curtseyed as if set on wires. Great was the difficulty, between the amusing, friendly wife and the husband proud of her and his inn, either to pay our bill or get away. They declared there was no hurry about the reckoning, and pressed us still to stay. Seeing our resolution, the wirth with a sigh produced a brown painted board from under his arm, a piece of chalk from his pocket, made the bill, gave us change out of a tea-cup, and amidst reiterated invitations to return if not satisfied with the barn, we tore ourselves away, their friendly good-byes and good wishes floating after us.

CHAPTER VIII

We now left the Reinthal and turned into the side-valley of Bachernthal. It was the 17th of August, but the little plots of corn still waved long and green, giving a feeling of early summer. We were in a perfect paradise of an Alpine valley. Before us the great near-lying mountains, the princely Hoch Gall and the Gross Lengstein Glacier, shone like molten silver against the intense blue sky, whilst the Schnebige Nock rose pure and isolated across the narrow valley, suggesting to one of the party the simile of the swan-breasted maiden of Northern mythology.

After passing several chalets we came to that of the Eder Olm. It belonged to the Hofbauer, and was occupied by his *pächter* or bailiff the year round. Here, too, was the barn which we were to use as our night-quarters during our stay. It was a great wooden building, divided into three compartments, one being two-thirds filled with hay, on which we were intended to sleep. It was true that Josef the pächter had succeeded by means of sweeping and a little arrangement in making the barn really attractive; but, alas! alas! we had hardly begun preparing our beds when the horrible discovery was made that under the surface the hay was soaking wet. Josef could hardly be blamed for not telling us, as in the Tyrol the people regard lying on wet or dewy grass as a natural system of hydropathy.

We had not shawls and cloaks enough to construct beds upon the barn floor, and the pächter's house, though substantial, was but a dark den, already stuffed full with wife and children. Must we, then, really return to the inn at Rein with its ornamental snakes and lions?

It was dusk out of doors, but pitch dark within, save for the dim, uncertain light of a horn lantern, and, all regularly worn out with our ten miles' climb, we sighed for bed. It was futile, however, simply to exchange expressions of dismay; so, groping about, to our joy we alighted suddenly upon several bundles of clean, fresh straw stowed away in the farthest recess of the opposite division. In a trice a dangerous corn-chopping machine had been removed, the straw loosened and spread out, and, covered with shawls and water-proof, it formed as comfortable a great bed of Ware as ever weary bones could desire. Forming a row, the tired wanderers were soon sleeping the sleep of five just persons, the sound of several neighboring waterfalls soothing rather than disturbing slumber.

In the early morning it was put to the vote and carried that eider down and spring mattresses were useless innovations after luxurious straw, and that whilst some benighted people might regard us as having been in purgatory, we had been in paradise, and hoped to be there again within twenty-four hours. And the barn, too! How poor in comparison seemed a conventional house on this sweet Sunday morning! We had prudently filled all the large apertures in the eaves and wooden sides the night before with hay, but there were plenty of crevices for the sun to peep in by, whilst with wafts of mountain-air it entered freely by the folding barn door as Moidel gently passed in and out, on breakfast matters intent. Corn- and grain-bins, sieves, flails and ladders pleased us better for the nonce than formal furniture, although none the less convenient did we find the great square wooden table and the benches which the pächter had thoughtfully placed on the threshing-floor which formed the central division.

On one side of the barn a small room had been boarded off. It contained empty milk-pans, ox-bells, old ropes and cords, together with two chests and two pairs of men's strong leather boots. This, Moidel suggested, should be used as joint store-room and dressing-room. Fortunately, however, we had applied it to neither requirement, when a singular occurrence took place which might be classed as a ghost-story at night or an optical delusion by day. The great barn-door quietly opened, Moidel having gone out and shut it, and two figures—one in soiled homespun shirt and *loden* trousers, wooden clogs, with a little black leather skull-cap on his head and a pipe in his mouth; the other older, in leather breeches, brown knitted worsted jacket, and an old black silk handkerchief tied round his neck—glided in. We could have sworn that they were Jakob and the old senner Franz, but no response came to our exclamation of recognition, and in a second they had vanished into the said

little room, where all remained, however, as silent as before. Two of us now began even to doubt, but the other two were positive, that figures had floated in. Ten minutes later the mystery was solved by the identical Jakob, attended by Franz, reappearing from the chamber, not, however, in the hard-working dress in which they had entered, but in full Sunday array, the leather boots upon their feet and broad-brimmed, flower-bedecked beavers in their hands. Poor Jakob! sore must have been his perplexity when, in the hope of slinking into his wardrobe-room unobserved, we had come open-eyed upon him in his soiled array. At the cost of apparent rudeness, arising chiefly from shyness, he had silently disappeared, the old servant following his example. Now, however, they could both freely welcome us to the Olm, expressing the pleasure it would give them to accompany us to the senner huts on their return with Moidel at ten o'clock from church.

This was Jakob's first introduction to Frau Anna and E–. He eyed them closely and silently for some minutes; then said, "I like them: they look good!" and so they went to mass.

The barn and chalet called Eder formed part of the Hofbauer's lower Alp, where a little later in the season the cattle were brought down for several weeks of pasturage before they descended to their winter home. We were now bound in company with the returning church-goers for the group of senner huts belonging to the larger still more elevated tract, which the Hofbauer rented in company with five other bauers. Leaving the meadows very shortly after quitting our night-quarters, where we seemed already in the very bosom of the snow-mountains, we began again to ascend through a wood of primeval pines and fir trees, long gray moss hanging from their hoary branches like patriarchs' beards, whilst round their stems, amidst a chaos of rocks, were spread the softest carpets of moss and lichen. In the centre of the wood, where an opening covered with the finest turf afforded an agreeable resting-place, as usual a cross—that most familiar object in a Tyrolese landscape—had been erected. In this instance, more striking and melancholy than ever, for this general point of attraction to peasants seemed here, in the very heart of the mountains, to be forgotten and despised. Small in size, as if wood had been grudged in this land of wood, the writing on the cross erased by storms, the dissevered arms and limbs were painfully scattered on the sward below—type indeed as of a powerless Saviour unable to save or to bless. Indeed, so offensive and discordant did this pitiable emblem appear, and in such mocking contrast to the sublimity of the scene, that we spoke of it to Moidel, as, laden with our eatables, she came slowly up behind. "Ah," she replied, "it is not that the cross is left unregarded, nor is it age which has thus damaged it, but the wild storms and lasting snows. A new cross is often erected, but it has not long been exposed before it is again utterly defaced. The herdsmen and senners, however, see the meaning under it, and it keeps them straight, Fräulein."

Well-intentioned but slow of apprehension, these poor peasants cling to a carved Christ, and feel a horrible alarm, as if you were offering them a vacant creed, when you touch upon anything higher. Thus Moidel, though very intelligent, looked somewhat grave and quiet until the woods opened and she had to point out the senner huts. These were rude but very picturesque log cabins, built in a clearing amongst a steep chaos of rocks, with the glaciers and the majestic peak of the Hoch Gall shining above all. Five were dwelling-houses, the rest cattle-sheds and barns: our people's hut was the highest of the group, and we had a long climb over the boulders before we reached it.

Seeing us approaching, good old Franz, who had gone forward in advance, fastened on his apron and fried marvelous monograms and circles of cream batter, of which we, the guests, were soon partaking in the best room, otherwise the store-room and dairy. The hut was divided into two compartments, both entered by adjoining doors from the outside. Seated on milking-stools in somewhat dangerous proximity to pans of rich cream, balls of butter and cheeses, the salt and meal-bin served as our dining table. In the kitchen, Franz, resting from his successful culinary labors, sat with Moidel and Jakob by the hearth, where huge blocks of stone kept the fire in compass, the smoke curling out of the door, and enjoyed in return some of our ham, wine and almond cake.

The hut was close quarters, even for the two ordinary inmates: there were, however, innumerable contrivances for stowing away all kinds of useful things, besides notches in the thick

wooden partition for hands and feet when at night they crept to their burrow of hay under the low eaves. Everything with the exception of the old stone floor was scrupulously clean: without, the pigs dabbled in the mire between the rugged rocks, and nettles grew, but beyond, mountains, woods and illimitable space were spread in uninterrupted fullness.

Resting after dinner at a little distance from the huts, we learned from Jakob, who was full of excitement on the subject, that shortly after we left the inn at Rein the preceding evening a gentleman from Bohemia arrived. He immediately communicated to the wirth his intention of ascending one of the three great mountains rising from the Bachernthal, either the Hoch Gall (11,283 feet high), the Wild Gall or the Schnebige Nock, both some thousand feet lower, but perhaps even more attractive, as still possessing the charm of untrodden summits. The wirth consequently sent for a fine, clever young fellow, Johann Ausserkofer, a friend of Jakob's, and whose home we had passed on the previous night before reaching the Eder Olm. He had ascended the Hoch Gall with two gentlemen in the August of the former year, and now recommended an attempt at the still virgin Wild Gall. The arrangement being speedily made, for extra help and security Johann fetched his younger brother, Josef, as a companion, and the little party started by torchlight at two o'clock in the morning.

Jakob now produced a telescope, through which he hoped we might detect moving figures amongst the snow of the Wild Gall. In vain we strained our eyes through the greasy old telescope, for neither moving figures nor stationary black dots were visible. Even Jakob with his eagle eye confessed to seeing no trace of man either amongst the irregular ash-colored rocks or upon the snowy curves of the Wild Gall, which, like a huge white-crested breaker at sea, upheaved itself in the air as in the very act of turning. Quite as solitary and untrodden did it look as its still more stately sister, the Hoch Gall, a mountain deservedly the especial pride of the district, its lofty pinnacle piercing the sky, whilst a vast sheet of thick, pure snow hung straight and smooth down its concave sides, a huge mountain-buttress linking the lower portion of this snow pyramid to the white, glittering expanse of the Gross Lengstein Glacier—a buttress of many thousand feet, standing prominently forth like an antediluvian monster, on whose gigantic pachydermatous flanks the shattered, blasted stems of dead uniform fir trees shone out a silvery gray, mingling in color with the loose, glittering débris which had slidden into the upland valley just below. Two silver threads descending from the glaciers of the Hoch Gall wound through these fallen stones into the green turf of the Bachernthal, but whether formed of snow or water it would have been difficult to decide, had not ever and anon a sound as of a distant train been borne upon the breeze, proving them to be brooks, which helped to swell the roaring, tumbling Giessbach, whose boisterous acquaintance we had already made.

The Hoch Gall, which has been twice ascended, was first attempted in 1869 by a very adventurous, clever young Alpine climber, Karl Hofmann, the only son of a well-known physician of Munich—a youth of whom it is said that no study was too difficult, no danger too great, no peak too high for him. Innumerable were the mountains which he scaled between 1866 and 1870, and of which he wrote excellent, accurate descriptions: then laying down his young life—he was but twenty-three—on September 2, 1870, in the fierce battle of Sedan, his spirit passed away to mightier slopes, to more delectable mountains.

Again, in the August of 1871, after our first visit to the Olm, the ascent was repeated by two other members of the Tyrolese Alpine Club, Herr Richter and Herr Strüdl. They brought with them two experienced men—one the chief guide of the Gross Glockner, the other of the Venediger Spitze—and, except for Hofmann's written description, had to plan and calculate for themselves, there being no local knowledge of the mountain attainable, as the two guides who accompanied the young explorer were also dead.

Although well provided with their own guides, they thought it right to take some active young man of the neighborhood with them, in order that he in his turn might help future climbers. At the recommendation of the landlord of Rein—who on this important occasion commenced his visitors' book—they chose for the purpose Jakob's friend, Johann Ausserkofer. They started by torchlight one

Monday morning, and after a steep climb through a wild mountain-forest on the opposite side of the Bachernthal, crossing a vast glacier and the crevasse between the Hoch Gall and the Wild Gall, began the real ascent, which proved so perpendicular as to be achieved principally with the aid of ropes. After a toilsome nine hours and a quarter they had the good fortune to reach the summit in safety. The weather was favorable, and the view, in Richter's opinion, far surpassed the much-vaunted panorama from the Kriml Tauern. A long rest, and raising a cromlech in memory of their bold achievement, and then the steep descent over snow and glaciers was effected, and St. Wolfgang reached after fourteen hours of toil and great danger.

At half-past four, Jakob, having crossed the valley in search of his oxen, came upon the Bohemian gentleman—whose name afterward proved to be Dr. Hecht—with the two Ausserkofers, and learned their adventures in the ascent of the Wild Gall. After clambering over steep, slippery glaciers they had begun the climb proper at five o'clock in the morning, Dr. Hecht pushing forward in order to be the first human being who had ever placed his foot upon the summit of the mountain. He had indeed almost reached the highest point when a dark, terrific chasm suddenly yawned beneath him, entirely cutting off all farther progress. The three explorers, although considerably dejected by the disagreeable check and the waste of labor and time which it had involved, determining not to be baffled, resolved to make a considerable détour. After having, with much trouble, reached a lower plateau, they attacked the precipitous, almost invincible mountain from another side, the still early hour of the day alone permitting the renewal of the attempt. Leaving their telescope and provisions to await their return, they boldly scrambled, crept and worked their way up the scaly side, and finally reached the summit in safety. The view thence they declared to be magnificent. They too raised a cromlech, and then a giddy descent followed. However, all three were full of spirits when Jakob met them, and the Ausserkofers declared that they were ready henceforth to pilot any other tourist to the summit for a moderate four or five gulden apiece.

Jakob, as herdsman, had left us at three o'clock to look after the cattle, we strolling with him as far as a wild old wood which formed a strange contrast to this Sunday afternoon, as lovely an August day as ever rejoiced the earth. The near yet unattainable Hoch Gall glittered coldly white between the stems and branches of gigantic pines, which, scathed and bleached by lightning and storm, rose in the form of ruined towers or lay tumbled about in the wildest, dreariest confusion amongst the rugged enormous rocks, fit emblems of the forest in the Inferno inhabited by the souls of the lost. Nor was this stern, forbidding scene enlivened when a melancholy man, carrying the dead body of a goat across his shoulders, crossed the torrent on a fallen tree and advanced slowly up the craggy path, followed by a little boy timidly picking his way behind.

"Ach, Mathies, in God's name, another goat!" said Moidel, lifting her eyes from a little book, the life of the odd, humane Joseph II., which, bought for a few kreuzers at a fair, was worth as many guldens in the pleasure which it gave her.

The man glanced from under his eyebrows, and answered with a sigh, "*Gott hat's so wölln, Diendl*" ("God would have it so, maiden"); and then he added in dialect, "It was a beautiful creature. I missed it in the reckoning last night. After mass I strode far and wide searching it, until an hour since I found the body hanging by a hind hoof from a cleft in the Auvogl Nock. See, it has broken its leg in its struggles. Ah, poor beast! A solitary, cruel death, *und hast ma g'nomma mei Ruah*" ("and it has taken my rest from me").

"Poor Mathies! his half dozen goats are all that he has in the world. He rents one of father's huts, but since he has brought them to the Olm two or three are already dead." This Moidel explained to us as he moved dejectedly forward. "Father, however, told him that our Olm was bad for goats. They not only slip from the rocks, but grow thin and weakly. Just the reverse of the cattle. Onkel Johann—there is no one so deep as he in cattle—says that every blade of grass on our Olm is worth half a pint of milk. And it's not the air, nor the water, nor the winds that make it wholesome, but some law that he cannot understand. Who can? There is Jagdhaus, a wonderfully fertile *sennerei* an hour

beyond Rein. It is far finer than our Olm, which is so mountainous that timid new-comers amongst the cattle must first teach themselves to walk about; but at Jagdhaus, which is as large as a village, all the land is smooth, fat pasturage for miles. Yet a curse rests on the place for which neither priests nor farmers can account. Some seasons, it is true, all goes well, but in others the cattle are suddenly bitten, fall dead, and their flesh then turns black and rustles like paper. Some say that it is an insect or animal that attacks them; others, that it is caused by the grass which they eat; and there are again others who are sure that it is a phantom which, touching them, blasts them. And there seems reason in the idea, because when the priest of Taufers, who has an Olm there, goes and says mass and prays for the cattle, or when the *Sterniwitz* (landlord of the Stern), who has acres of pasturage and many heads of cattle at Jagdhaus, pays a Capuchin to go thither and pray, the murrain ceases."

In Moidel's tale we had almost forgotten our long walk back to the barn and the arrangement for supper previously at the huts. Now, it curiously happened that whilst waiting for the tea-pan—rather than tea-kettle—to boil, I accidentally alighted upon a people's calendar, published at Brixen for the current year, protruding its somewhat greasy pages from behind a churn; and after turning over long black-and red-lettered lists of fasts and feasts, came upon some pertinent advice to the Tyrolese farmers by Adolph Trientl, concerning *Milzbrand*. He described it as a dreadful pestilence, the scourge of many a mountain-pasture. Hundreds of cattle, he tells them, are sacrificed to it yearly. Even the deer and lesser game die from the contagion, as well as human beings; death in the latter case being occasioned either by eating the meat of diseased animals or by having cuts or wounds which have come in contact with the victims. Even the bite of a fly which has fed on the contaminated meat will propagate the malady. Hides or reins made of the skins are known years after to reproduce Milzbrand. Where the body of an affected animal has been buried the ground becomes contagious for a long run of years, the cattle pasturing there being attacked. The only remedy consists in burning the contaminated body, and then keeping the live-stock from the place where the victim fell. When Milzbrand appears the farmer feels he has no option between sacrificing his cattle and abandoning for a season his rich pastures. And yet a little attention might soon cause a remedy, the evil often arising from the water of a particular pool or brook, which if carefully guarded against makes the rest of the Alp perfectly secure.

When I ventured to quote from the calendar to Moidel, suggesting that at Jagdhaus it might certainly be the water, she remained impervious to any new views on the subject. "There was Milzbrand, and that might arise from the water, for all she knew, but at Jagdhaus it was a rod of God, which only prayer averted."

Adolf Trientl appears to be a Tyrolese priest, who travels annually through his native land watching closely the agriculture and domestic economy, and trying, countenanced by government, to help his country people to an easier working life, healthier houses and more profitable land. To the credit of the clergy of Brixen, his practical often pithy remarks are published in their church calendar. He and his colleagues must, however, use almost supernatural patience and energy before they can move a Tyroler one jot from the beaten path which his ancestors have taken for a thousand years before him. The people are perfectly content, it is pleaded, with the existing state of things: why should they change their sowing or ploughing any more than the sun his course or the mountains their position? Changes, like bad weather, breed discontent.

We had brought no books with us for our five days at the Olm, and in the pauses of our out-door enjoyment the calendar, greasy rather from contact with butter and milk than with fingers, afforded amusing, profitable reading: a lecture may often be pleasant to hear when not addressed to one's self.

Moidel, Jakob and Franz, though they had looked with blind eyes on the print, did not turn deaf ears when we spoke; only we had to manage that all we said and thought did not come as a quoted sermon, but as suggestions and inquiries from us, who did not know half as much about a dairy and farm-life as they did. First of all, we tried to make them believe that the staff of life need not of

necessity be rye bread of so hard and flinty a nature as to require in every house a square wooden board and iron chopper to cut it.

"Yes," said Moidel, "it is very hard for old people, who must needs sop it, but while one's teeth are good the crunching is a pleasure. And then it must needs be dry, because the oven can only be heated once in three months. I wish it could come round oftener, for there is no going to bed on baking nights, with some three hundred loaves to pop into the oven."

"How could the poor bake often," suggested Jakob, "when there is only one oven amongst them in the village?"

"Why," said we, looking very learned, "you have a common schoolmaster, and a common swineherd, and a common goose-boy: why not have a common baker, who knew how to make good, light dough, and could bake a good batch of bread for each family weekly?"

To Franz, eating good bread only a few days old appeared woeful extravagance. "Bread," he said, "should be like rocks to last, not like snow to melt away. The rye meal would fly before the wind at that rate, and where would the poor man then be?"

Butter and cheese-making, however, involved hours of deep discussion. You would indeed have thought that man merely came into the world to make butter and cheese. Personal experience after two summers in the Tyrol had made us reflect very much upon the butter and cheese question. Whether regarded as a luxury or a necessity, the Swiss Gruyère and Emmenthal cheese and the fresh dainty pats of butter made the contrast striking in the Tyrol. The milk and cream were rich and delicious, but became simply loathsome when transformed into butter or cheese. We wondered how and why it was that we could never obtain perfectly palatable butter, until we discovered the universal practice of churning it, without salt, into huge oblong balls, large as the nave of a wheel, which naturally soon turn rancid. It does not on this account lose its value to the natives, who use very little butter, melting it down into a clarified dripping called Schmalz for their endless fryings and frizzlings. This badly made butter is, however, often adorned with the emblems of the Passion, such as the cross, ladder, crown of thorns and nails. It was so at the Hofbauer's Olm. It is considered to enhance the value of the butter *Kugel* or ball, especially when given to the priest in payment for masses said for dead relations. The Ursuline Sisters were paid for Moidel's education in butter.

And the native cheese!—meagre cheese, as it is justly called—a poor, insipid, not overclean curd cheese. The curds are often merely squeezed in a cloth, then turned out and placed upon an upper shelf to dry, where they look like the back portions of gigantic skulls until damp and mould somewhat destroy the resemblance. The kind called fat cheese is not much better. It is, however, made with greater care, and dried in bands of pine bark in the Alpine kitchen. This distasteful butter and cheese, the sole result of gallons of rich milk and cream and many a long summer week upon the lofty Alp, becomes still more distasteful when the milk and cream are kept in the one hot, over-crowded sleeping-room, or in a dairy where the goatherd sleeps amongst the milk-dishes. The mountain dwellings are dark and badly constructed, and if furnished with a proper dairy, the prejudiced housewife often refuses to use it, believing that cream will not set unless the milk is warm; thus, much becomes sour, and is either thrown away or turned into a still more inferior cheese. Or she purposely lets the cream become rancid before she churns, that the children may not take too great a fancy to the Schmalz, and thus it may last longer!

We had tasted already too much of this milky tree of knowledge not to learn with pleasure from the Brixen calendar that in different parts of the Tyrol co-operative *sennereien* had been started with the greatest success. A manager was employed in each who understood perfectly the Swiss mode of cheese-making and the best manner of churning. Thus, the most excellent produce was gained from the same, or rather from a smaller, quantity of milk, when the reckless waste was deducted. Each shareholder had the right of skimming the milk from his own cows, taking what he required for his personal use, or he might send his entire share of butter, cheese, whey and goats' milk with the common stock to market, where such co-operative wares already brought the highest price. Thus, the

farmer gained both ways, not only receiving more money, but saving in dairy utensils, house room and fuel, and his wife in labor.

Great was our glee over these enlightened and successful efforts; but a friendly dispute immediately arose when one amongst us expressed a surprise that the half dozen bauers who shared the Olm in common did not manage matters on this improved principle. They would find themselves richer, more care-free men. Moidel declared her inability to form an opinion. Old Franz, however, had much to say. He thought it would be foolish. Why need the Hofbauer mix himself up with others, when he only wanted to make meagre cheese for family use, while if there were any over it always brought its worth in kreuzers at the market? And then the pounds and pounds of butter were all wanted for Schmalz. It might be sweeter, it is true, if they could melt it down at the hut, but then there was the fear of setting the place on fire, and the home-melted Schmalz went fast enough, as Moidel knew. And as for the artificial Schmalz which was being sold in the towns now, it was made of palm-oil, fresh suet and butter, and colored with the yellow dye called Orleans; and people praised this machine-made Schmalz and talked of progress! But he hoped, so long as he handled a frying-pan, to stick to good old Schmalz and good old ways.

MARGARET HOWITT.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

ON THE CHURCH STEPS

CHAPTER I

What a picture she was as she sat there, my own Bessie! and what a strange place it was to rest on, those church steps! Behind us lay the Woolsey woods, with their wooing fragrance of pine and soft rushes of scented air; and the lakes were in the distance, lying very calm in the cloud-shadows and seeming to wait for us to come. But to-day Bessie would nothing of lakes or ledges: she would sit on the church steps.

In front of us, straight to the gate, ran a stiff little walk of white pebbles, hard and harsh as some bygone creed.

"Think of little bare feet coming up here, Bessie!" I said with a shiver. "It is too hard. And every carriage that comes up the hill sees us."

"And why shouldn't they see us?" said my lady, turning full upon me. "I am not ashamed to be here."

"Churches should always have soft walks of turf; and lovers," I would fain have added, "should have naught but whispering leaves about them."

But Bessie cut me short in her imperious way: "But we are not lovers this morning: at least," with a half-relenting look at my rueful face, "we are very good friends, and I choose to sit here to show people that we are."

"What do you care for *people*—the Bartons or the Meyricks?" as I noticed a familiar family carriage toiling up the hill, followed by a lighter phaeton. I recognized already in the latter vehicle the crimson feather of Fanny Meyrick, and "the whip that was a parasol."

"Shall I step out into the road this minute, and stop those ladies like a peaceable highwayman, and tell them you have promised to marry me, and that their anxiety as to our intimacy may be at rest? Give me but leave and I will do it. It will make Mrs. Barton comfortable. Then you and I can walk away into those beckoning woods, and I can have you all to myself."

Indeed she was worth having. With the witchery that some girls know, she had made a very picture of herself that morning, as I have said. Some soft blue muslin stuff was caught up around her in airy draperies—nothing stiff or frilled about her: all was soft and flowing, from the falling sleeve that showed the fair curve of her arm to the fold of her dress, the ruffle under which her little foot was tapping, impatiently now. A little white hat with a curling blue feather shaded her face—a face I won't trust myself to describe, save by saying that it was the brightest and truest, as I then thought, in all the world.

She said something rapidly in Italian—she is always artificial when she uses a foreign tongue—and this I caught but imperfectly, but it had a proverbial air about it of the error of too hasty assumptions.

"Well, now I'll tell you something," she said as the carriages disappeared over the top of the hill. "Fanny Meyrick is going abroad in October, and we shall not see her for ever so long."

Going abroad? Good gracious! That was the very thing I had to tell her that morning—that I too was ordered abroad. An estate to be settled—some bothering old claim that had been handed down from generation to generation, and now springing into life again by the lapsing of two lives on the other side. But how to tell her as she looked up into my face with the half-pleading, half-imperious smile that I knew so well? How to tell her *now*?

So I said nothing, but foolishly pushed the little pebbles aside with my stick, fatuously waiting for the subject to pass. Of course my silence brought an instant criticism: "Why, Charlie, what ails you?"

"Nothing. And really, Bessie, what is it to us whether Fanny Meyrick go or stay?"

"I shouldn't have thought it *was* anything. But your silence, your confusion—Charlie, you do care a little for her, after all."

Two years ago, before Bessie and I had ever met, I had fluttered around Fanny Meyrick for a season, attracted by her bright brown eyes and the gypsy flush on her cheek. But there were other moths fluttering around that adamantine candle too; and I was not long in discovering that the brown eyes were bright for each and all, and that the gypsy flush was never stirred by feeling or by thought. It was merely a fixed ensign of health and good spirits. Consequently the charm had waned, for me at least; and in my confessions to Bessie since our near intimacy it was she, not I, who had magnified it into the shadow even of a serious thought.

"Care for her? Nonsense, Bessie! Do you want me to call her a mere doll, a hard, waxen—no, for wax will melt—a Parian creature, such as you may see by the dozens in Schwartz's window any day? It doesn't gratify you, surely, to hear me say that of any woman."

And then—what possessed me?—I was so angry at myself that I took a mental *résumé* of all the good that could be said of Fanny Meyrick—her generosity, her constant cheerfulness; and in somewhat headlong fashion I expressed myself: "I won't call her a dolt and an idiot, even to please you. I have seen her do generous things, and she is never out of temper."

"Thanks!" said Bessie, nodding her head till the blue feather trembled. "It is as well, as Aunt Sloman says, to keep my shortcomings before you."

"When did Aunt Sloman say that?" I interrupted, hoping for a diversion of the subject.

"This morning only. I was late at breakfast. You know, Charlie, I was *so* tired with that long horseback ride, and of course everything waited. Dear aunty never *will* begin until I come down, but sits beside the urn like the forlornest of martyrs, and reads last night's papers over and over again."

"Well? And was she sorry that she had not invited me to wait with her?"

"Yes," said Bessie. "She said all sorts of things, and," flushing slightly, "that it was a pity you shouldn't know beforehand what you were to expect."

"I wish devoutly that I had been there," seizing the little hand that was mournfully tapping the weatherbeaten stone, and forcing the downcast eyes to look at me. "I think, both together, we could have pacified Aunt Sloman."

It *was* a diversion, and after a little while Bessie professed she had had enough of the church steps.

"How those people do stare! Is it the W–s, do you think, Charlie? I heard yesterday they were coming."

From our lofty position on the hillside we commanded the road leading out of the village—the road that was all alive with carriages on this beautiful September morning. The W– carriage had half halted to reconnoitre, and had only not hailed us because we had sedulously looked another way.

"Let's get away," I said, "for the next carnage will not only stop, but come over;" and Bessie suffered herself to be led through the little tangle of brier and fern, past the gray old gravestones with "Miss Faith" and "Miss Mehitable" carved upon them, and into the leafy shadow of the waiting woods.

Other lovers have been there before us, but the trees whisper no secrets save their own. The subject of our previous discussion was not resumed, nor was Fanny Meyrick mentioned, until on our homeward road we paused a moment on the hilltop, as we always did.

It is indeed a hill of vision, that church hill at Lenox. Sparkling far to the south, the blue Dome lay, softened and shining in the September sun. There was ineffable peace in the faint blue sky, and, stealing up from the valley, a shimmering haze that seemed to veil the bustling village and soften all the rural sounds.

Bessie drew nearer to me, shading her eyes as she looked down into the valley: "Charlie dear, let us stay here always. We shall be happier, better here than to go back to New York."

"And the law-business?" I asked like a brutal bear, bringing the realities of life into my darling's girlish dream.

"Can't you practice law in Foxcroft, and drive over there every morning? People do."

"And because they do, and there are enough of them, I must plod along in the ways that are made for me already. We can make pilgrimages here, you know."

"I suppose so," said Bessie with a sigh.

Just then Fanny Kemble's clock in the tower above us struck the hour—one, two, three.

"Bless me! so late? And there's that phaeton coming back over the hill again. Hurry, Charlie! don't let them see us. They'll think that we've been here all the time." And Bessie plunged madly down the hill, and struck off into the side-path that leads into the Lebanon road. The last vibrations of the bell were still trembling on the air as I caught up with her again.

But again the teasing mood of the morning had come over her. Quite out of breath with the run, as we sat down to rest on the little porch of Mrs. Sloman's cottage she said, very earnestly, "But you haven't once said it."

"Said what, my darling?"

"That you are glad that Fanny is going abroad."

"Nonsense! Why should I be glad?"

"Are you sorry, then?"

If I had but followed my impulse then, and said frankly that I was, and why I was! But Mrs. Sloman was coming through the little hall: I heard her step. Small time for explanation, no time for reproaches. And I could not leave Bessie, on that morning of all others, hurt or angry, or only half convinced.

"No, I am not sorry," I said, pulling down a branch of honeysuckle, and making a loop of it to draw around her neck. "It is nothing, either way."

"Then say after me if it is nothing—feel as I feel for one minute, won't you?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Say, after me, then, word for word, 'I am glad, *very* glad, that Fanny Meyrick is to sail in October. I would not have her stay on this side for *worlds*!"

And like a fool, a baby, I said it, word for word, from those sweet smiling lips: "I am glad, *very* glad, that Fanny Meyrick is to sail in October. I would not have her stay on this side for *worlds*!"

CHAPTER II

The next day was Sunday, and I was on duty at an early hour, prepared to walk with Bessie to church. My darling was peculiar among women in this: her church-going dress was sober-suited; like a little gray nun, almost, she came down to me that morning. Her dress, of some soft gray stuff, fell around her in the simplest folds, a knot of brown ribbon at her throat, and in her hat a gray gull's wing.

I had praised the Italian women for the simplicity of their church-attire: their black dresses and lace veils make a picturesque contrast with the gorgeous ceremonials of the high altar. But there was something in this quiet toilet, so fresh and simple and girl-like, that struck me as the one touch of grace that the American woman can give to the best even of foreign taste. Not the dramatic abnegation indicated by the black dress, but the quiet harmony of a life atune.

Mrs. Sloman was ready even before Bessie came down. She was a great invalid, although her prim and rigid countenance forbore any expression save of severity. She had no pathos about her, not a touch. Whatever her bodily sufferings may have been—and Bessie dimly hinted that they were severe to agony at times—they were resolutely shut within her chamber door; and when she came out in the early morning, her cold brown hair drawn smoothly over those impassive cheeks, she looked like a lady abbess—as cold, as unyielding and as hard.

There was small sympathy between the aunt and niece, but a great deal of painstaking duty on the one side, and on the other the habit of affection which young girls have for the faces they have always known.

Mrs. Sloman had been at pains to tell me, when my frequent visits to her cottage made it necessary that I should in some fashion explain to her as to what I wanted there, that her niece, Bessie Stewart, was in nowise dependent on her, not even for a home. "This cottage we rent in common. It was her father's desire that her property should not accumulate, and that she should have nothing at my hands but companionship, and"—with a set and sickly smile—"advice when it was called for. We are partners in our expenses, and the arrangement can be broken up at any moment."

Was this all? No word of love or praise for the fair young thing that had brightened all her household in these two years that Bessie had been fatherless?

I believe there was love and appreciation, but it was not Mrs. Sloman's method to be demonstrative or expansive. She approved of the engagement, and in her grim way had opened an immediate battery of household ledgers and ways and means. Some idea, too, of making me feel easy about taking Bessie away from her, I think, inclined her to this business-like manner. I tried to show her, by my own manner, that I understood her without words, and I think she was very grateful to be spared the expression of feeling. Poor soul! repression had become such a necessity to her!

So we talked on gravely of the weather, and of the celebrated Doctor McQ–, who was expected to give us an argumentative sermon that morning, until *my* argument came floating in at the door like a calm little bit of thistledown, to which our previous conversation had been as the thistle's self.

The plain little church was gay that morning. Carriage after carriage drove up with much prancing and champing, and group after group of city folk came rustling along the aisles. It was a bit of Fifth Avenue let into Lenox calm. The World and the Flesh were there, at least.

In the hush of expectancy that preceded the minister's arrival there was much waving of scented fans, while the well-bred city glances took in everything without seeming to see. I felt that Bessie and I were being mentally discussed and ticketed. And as it was our first appearance at church since—well, *since*—perhaps there was just a little consciousness of our relations that made Bessie seem to retire absolutely within herself, and be no more a part of the silken crowd than was the grave, plain man who rose up in the pulpit.

I hope the sermon was satisfactory. I am sure it was convincing to a brown-handed farmer who sat beside us, and who could with difficulty restrain his applauding comment. But I was lost in a

dream of a near heaven, and could not follow the spoken word. It was just a quiet little opportunity to contemplate my darling, to tell over her sweetness and her charm, and to say over and again, like a blundering school-boy, "It's all mine! mine!"

The congregation might have been dismissed for aught I knew, and left me sitting there with her beside me. But I was startled into the proprieties as we stood up to sing the concluding hymn. I was standing stock-still beside her, not listening to the words at all, but with a pleasant sense of everything being very comfortable, and an old-fashioned swell of harmony on the air, when suddenly the book dropped from Bessie's hand and fell heavily to the floor. I should have said she flung it down had it been on any other occasion, so rapid and vehement was the action.

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