

# AUERBACH BERTHOLD

JOSEPH IN THE SNOW,  
AND THE CLOCKMAKER.  
IN THREE VOLUMES.  
VOL. II.

Berthold Auerbach

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The Clockmaker. In  
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# **Berthold Auerbach**

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### **Introduction**

There is a house on the declivity of a hill, on which the morning sun long lingers, and the eyes of those who gaze on this house sparkle with pleasure, for they augur from that glance that its inhabitants are happy. They are so; but their happiness is of a peculiar nature, for they have striven long and hard, before they at last acquired it. They have stood on the very threshold of death, though eventually restored to the living.

The wife appears at the door – her face is fair, pretty, and youthful, but her hair is white as snow – she smiles at an old woman who is working in the garden, and calls to the children to be less noisy; a thriving young fir plantation forms a background to the house.

"Come in, Franzl, and you children also; 'Wilhelm is to set off to-day on his travels,'" says the young woman with white hair.

The old woman comes up to her slowly; her figure is bent, and she is already taking hold of her apron, in order to dry the tears that are fast rising to her eyes. In a short time the husband comes out of the house with a young lad, who has a knapsack on his shoulders.

"Wilhelm," says the father, "take leave of your mother here, and be sure you conduct yourself so that whatever you do, you may be able to think: – 'My father and mother may know this;' and then, please God! you will, one day, once more cross this threshold in peace."

The mother embraces the lad, and says, sobbing: —

"I have nothing more to say; your father has said all; but if you find a plant of Edelweiss on the Swiss mountains bring it home for me."

The youth walks on, and his brothers and sisters call after him, "Good bye, Wilhelm!" While the father, turning to his wife, says: – "Annette, I only mean to go as far as the boundary with Wilhelm and Lorenz. Pilgrim will go on with them to their first night's quarters. I shall return soon."

"Quite right, but don't hurry back, and above all, don't take the parting so to heart; and tell Lisle Faller, as you pass, that I wish her mother and her to dine here."

The father goes forward with his son, and the mother says to the old woman: —

"It is a great comfort to me, that young Faller goes with Wilhelm on his travels."

We can relate why the young mother with the white hair, begged her son to bring her home a plant of Edelweiss from his travels.

It is a hard, painful, almost cruel story, but the sun of love beams brightly, at last, through the clouds.

## CHAPTER I. A GOOD NAME

"She was an excellent woman."

"Few like her left."

"She was one of the good old-fashioned sort."

"Come when you would, she was always ready to bestow help and comfort."

"What trials she had gone through! she had buried four children and her husband, and yet she was always kind and cheerful."

"Lenz will miss her sadly; he will discover now what a mother he had."

"Oh, no! he knew that well enough during her life, and always strove to please her."

"He must marry soon, now."

"He can choose whoever he likes; any house he knocks at will gladly throw open the door to him, he is so good and steady."

"Besides, he must have a considerable sum of money."

"And he is heir to his rich uncle, Petrowitsch."

"How well the Choral Society sung at the funeral today! it quite went to the heart."

"How much it must have touched poor Lenz! he usually sings with them, and he has the best voice of them all."

"Very true – he did not shed a tear during the funeral service, but when his companions were singing, he cried and sobbed as if his heart would break."

"This is the first funeral that Petrowitsch did not leave the village to avoid: indeed, it would have been too bad if he had not shown this last mark of respect to his sister-in-law."

It was thus the men were conversing while going along, through the valley, and up the hill. They were all in black, for they were coming from a funeral. In the churchyard below, near which a few houses are clustered – the Inn of the Golden Lion parading itself in the centre – they had just buried the widow of the clockmaker, Lenz of the Morgenhalde, and all had a good word to say of the deceased, for each individual felt they had lost a kind friend when the good woman quitted the world.

The mourners seemed deeply affected, and sorrow was evident on every face, for just as some fresh grief revives former ones, so those who had just seen the earth scattered on the newly dug grave, had taken the opportunity of visiting the graves of their own relations, shedding tears over their silent resting place, and uttering fervent prayers.

We are in the district inhabited by the clockmakers of the Black Forest, a wooded and mountainous tract of country, where its streams on one side flow towards the Rhine, and on the other to the Donau, which has its source not far from this. The men have a pious, composed air; the number of women considerably exceeds that of the men, for a vast proportion of the latter are dispersed through the world, pursuing their traffic in clocks. Those who stay at home are generally pale, bearing traces of their sedentary occupation; the women, on the contrary, who work in the fields, are fresh coloured, and have a quaint, original appearance from the broad black ribbons tied under their chins, according to the fashion of the country.

The cultivation of land is however on a small scale, consisting chiefly, with the exception of a few large farms, of gardens and meadow land. In some spots, a narrow strip of plantation runs along the valley down to the stream, and at intervals may be seen a solitary fir, stripped of its branches to the crown, as if to show that both pasture and arable land have been gained from the wood. The village, or rather the district, is some miles in length, its cottages being scattered along the valley and on the adjacent hills. The houses are built of solid logs of wood, fitted together in cross beams – the windows are placed in front in regular succession, a very bright light being indispensable for the trade

of clockmaking. The backs of the houses are invariably sheltered from storms by a hill or a wood, and heavy thatched roofs project far in front, as an additional defence against wind and weather, harmonizing in colour with their background, – narrow footpaths leading through green meadows to the dwellings of man.

Here and there a woman branches off from the group passing along the valley, making a sign with her hymnbook towards her home, where her children are watching from the narrow rows of windows, or running hastily down the meadow to meet their mother; and when these good creatures take off their Sunday clothes, they sigh heavily, thinking of the mournful death of their kind friend, and yet they feel how good a thing it is, that those nearest and dearest to them are still left, to be loved and cherished. Indoor work, however, does not seem to prosper today. The attractions of the world without, still seem to absorb the villagers, who do not find it so easy to dismiss them from their thoughts.

The balancemaker from Kunslingen, celebrated for his superior brass and leaden weights, who accompanied the groups to the nearest cross road, said in a thoughtful tone: —

"What a senseless thing it does seem, after all, to die! Lenz's good mother had gathered such a vast store of wisdom and experience, and now she is laid in the ground, and all her sagacity and good sense lost to the world for ever."

"At all events her son seems to have inherited her goodness," said a farmer.

"Yes; but experience and knowledge every man must acquire for himself," said a little old man, whose face was like a note of interrogation – he was nick-named the *Pröbler* (experimenter) though his real name was *Zacherer*, because, instead of applying steadily to the usual routine of clockmaking, he was constantly trying all kinds of new experiments, and consequently in very poor circumstances.

"The old customs were far better and more sensible," said an old man who lived on the other side of the valley, *Schilder-David* by name. "In those good old days, we had a substantial funeral feast, which was greatly needed as a restorative, after such a long journey and so much sorrow; for nothing makes a man more hungry and thirsty than the exhaustion of grief. At that time, too, it was the schoolmaster who pronounced the funeral exhortation, and if he was sometimes a little lengthy, what did it matter? Now this is all done away with, and I am so hungry, and so weary, that I can scarcely move from the spot."

"And I too!" "And I!" resounded on all sides; and *Schilder-David* continued: – "And what are we to do when we get home? our day is gone – of course we are glad to give it up, for the sake of paying proper respect to any one we liked; but in former times it was far better arranged, for we did not get home till night, and then we had no occasion to think about work."

"I suspect you had little capability of thinking at all," shrewdly observed young *Faller*, in his sonorous voice. He was the second bass singer in the choral society, and carried his music books under his arm. His mode of walking, and his general bearing, showed that he had been a soldier. "A funeral feast," he continued, "would have been quite contrary to the wishes of Lenz's mother. 'Everything in its due season – joy and mourning,' was her motto. I was apprenticed to old Lenz for five years and three quarters, and at school with young Lenz."

"I suppose you could have talked as glibly as the schoolmaster, and have given us the funeral oration;" said *Schilder-David*, muttering something of conceited singers, who imagined the world only began when they sang from notes.

"Indeed I could," rejoined the young man, who either did not hear these last words, or, at all events, affected not to do so. "I could have pronounced as great a eulogium on the deceased; and, when so good a person has just been laid in the grave, I think it is more fitting and congenial not so immediately to discuss other matters, and all kinds of worldly pleasures and occupations."

"My old master, Lenz, was a person, who if all men were like him, there would be no more need for either judges, soldiers, prisons, or houses of correction, in the world. Our old master was severe, and would allow no apprentice to exchange his file for the turning lathe, till he could polish

an octagon with a free hand, so that it looked as if it had been in the turning-machine; and we were all obliged to learn how to make small clocks, for a workman who can finish small things properly is sure not to fail in larger ones. No clocks or watches were ever sent out of his house in which there was the smallest defect, for he said, 'It is both for my honour and that of our district, that our good name should remain untarnished.' I will only give you one instance, to enable you to judge of the influence he exercised over us young people. When young Lenz and I became journeymen, we began to smoke. The old man said: 'Very well, if you choose to smoke I cannot prevent you, and I do not wish you to do it secretly. Unfortunately for me I also indulge in the bad habit of smoking, but I tell you fairly, that if you smoke I must give it up, whatever it may cost me; for it is not possible that we should all smoke.' After this, we, of course, gave up all idea of such a thing, for we would rather have had all our teeth drawn than caused our old master to give up his pipe.

"His excellent wife is now on the road to heaven, and her guardian angel is no doubt saying to her, 'You have been a worthy woman – few better in the world. Perhaps you have had your faults; you spoiled your son considerably, and prevented him travelling to other countries, which would have done him good, and made him less delicate; but your thousand good deeds, which no one knew but God, and your never listening to evil of others, making the best of everything, and reading the Bible to Petrowitsch, all that will not be forgotten now, and surely you will have your reward.' And if she is offered any recompense in heavens, I am sure she will say, 'Give it to my son; and, if there is any to spare, there is such and such a one who stands in grievous need of it – help them – I am weary of watching over others.' You could scarcely believe how little she ate; her husband often laughed at her for it, but it is sure and certain enough, that seeing others enjoy their food seemed to satisfy her, and the son is just as good hearted as the mother was. What a kind heart he has! I would gladly go to the death for him."

This was the way in which the clockmaker Faller talked, and his deep bass voice often trembled from emotion. The others, however, did not let him have all the praise of Lenz to himself. The Pröbler declared, that Lenz was the only one in the whole district, who understood something more than what had been known here from time immemorial, and Schilder-David added: "He passes no man without striving to serve him; every year he repairs the old organ of the blind man at Fuchsberg, and does it for nothing; he often spends an entire holiday mending it, and he has helped me too. He came one day to visit me, and saw how hard I was working to make my wheel revolve properly. He went straight to the miller, and talked to him, and settled it all, and then came and fetched me to an upper loft, where he arranged my workshop, and fastening my wheel to that of the mill, I found I could work three times as fast and with one half the trouble."

Every one was as eager to contribute his offering in praise of Lenz, as if he had been an almsbox.

The balancemaker said nothing for some time, but he nodded approvingly; but he is the wisest of them however, for at last he says, that all that has been stated is true, but that enough has not been said, and that he knows something more. "There is no workman better than Lenz to work for; everything must indeed be very neat and properly finished, but then you not only get your full wages, but kind and honest words into the bargain, which is best of all."

Faller now left the group, and turned along the mountain path to his house, and the others also dispersed in different directions, after each had taken a pinch out of the Pröbler's birch snuffbox. Schilder-David went on alone with his stout staff farther up the valley, for he lived a good way on the other side of the country, and was the only one of his parish who had crossed the valley to attend the funeral.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE MOURNER AND HIS COMPANION

A small footpath leads from the village to a solitary thatched house, which is not visible till after a good quarter of an hour's quick climbing. The path leads past the back of the church, at first between hedges, then through unenclosed green meadows, where the rustling of the fir plantation can be distinctly heard, that covers all the steep hill. Behind this hill – called Spannreute – others rise perpendicularly; the declivity is so steep, that, though cultivated, the crops on the table-land, even to this day, can only be conveyed down to the valley by means of sledges.

Two men were walking along singly on this footpath between the hedges: the one in front was a little old man, most respectably dressed; he had a staff in his hand, and, by way of precaution, had twisted the tassel of the handle round his wrist. The old man stepped along stoutly, and his face, which was a mass of wrinkles, moved up and down in a singular fashion, for he was chewing a lump of white sugar, and took a fresh piece from time to time out of his pocket. The sandy red eyebrows of the old man were coarse and bushy, and clear sharp blue eyes looked out from under them.

The young man walking behind his old companion was tall and slight; he wore a long blue coat, and had crape on his arm and his hat. He was looking down at the ground, and occasionally shaking his head mournfully. At last he raised his head, and a fresh coloured face, and a light beard became visible, but the eyelids of his blue eyes were red and swollen.

"Uncle," said he, standing still: his voice sounded hoarse.

The old man, still busily crunching sugar, turned round.

"Uncle, you have come far enough; I thank you much; the way is long, and I wish to go home alone."

"Why?"

"I don't know, but I feel that it must be so."

"No, you had far better, on the contrary, turn with me."

"I am sorry, uncle, that I cannot do so, but I cannot! I cannot go to the 'Golden Lion' today. I am neither hungry nor thirsty; indeed, at this moment, I feel as if I could never eat or drink again. I regret that you have had so long a walk on my account."

"No, no, I will go with you. I am not so hard hearted as your mother told you."

"My mother never said anything of the kind: all her life long she spoke well of her fellow creatures, and especially of relations; and she never could endure to hear illnatured gossip about them, from first one and then another: indeed she always quoted the proverb, 'Don't bite off your nose to spite your face.'"

"Yes, yes, she had a great store of proverbs; in the whole neighbourhood it is said – 'Marie Lenz said so-and-so;' we should always speak well of the dead, and I'm sure no one could possibly speak ill of her."

The young man looked sadly at his old uncle; even if he said a civil thing, it always left an impression as if he had given you a pinch.

"Yes, uncle," continued the young man, "how oft enduring the last few days of her life, did she say (and it went to my heart to hear her), 'Lenz, I ought to have died six years ago for your sake; at five and twenty you ought to have been married, and you will find it hard to marry, for you have become so accustomed to me, and now that must end.' I could not persuade her to the contrary, and that was the only thing that made her unwilling to die."

"And she was right," said the old man, still crunching his sugar, "she was good and kind, though somewhat self willed, but that is no one's business; but her kindness tended to ruin you; you are sadly spoiled. I did not intend to tell you of it just at this moment, there will be time enough for me to talk

to you further on the subject some other time, but I hope you will come with me now, and not be so childish; you really seem scarcely to know whether you are standing on your head or your heels. It is the law of nature that your mother should die before you, and at all events you have no cause to reproach yourself for ever having behaved unkindly to her."

"No, thank God! I have not."

"Very well, then, show that you are a man, and give over crying and sobbing. In all my life I never saw anything like the way you cried in the churchyard."

"Indeed, uncle, I really cannot say all I felt. I wept for my mother, but for myself also. When our choir sung those hymns, which I usually sung with them myself, and there was I, dumb and desolate, I felt as if I were also a corpse, and they were singing me into my grave, and that I could not raise my voice."

"You are – " said the old man, but he gulped down what he was on the point of saying, and strode on in front; his little dog, who trotted along before him, looked into the old man's face, and shook his head; he had never seen such an expression before in his master's face.

After a time the old man stopped of his own accord, and said: "I am going to turn here. I have only one thing to say to you: don't take any relation of your mother's to live with you, whom you must send away afterwards. They would forget all the kindness you have shown them, and only be indignant because they could not stay with you for ever. Above all, don't give away any of your property, come who may. If you intend to make any presents, wait till a few weeks are past. Take the keys into your own keeping when you go home; now God bless you, and be a man!"

"God bless you, uncle!" said the young man, and went on towards his own house. His eyes were still fixed on the ground, but at every step he took he knew where he was; he knew every stone on the path. When he came opposite the house, he felt as if he could not possibly cross the threshold. To think of all that has happened there, now past and gone – and what may the future have yet in store! But it must be borne.

The old maid was sitting in the kitchen beside the cold hearth, holding her apron to her eyes, and when the young man came up to the house, she said, sobbing: "Is that you, Lenz? God help you!"

The room seemed so empty, and yet everything was in it just as usual; the work bench, with five partitions for the five workmen, beside the straight rows of windows, and the materials for work hanging on the walls by hooks and straps; the clocks ticked, the turtle doves cooed, and yet everything looked so empty, and dead, and deserted. The easy chair stood there with outspread arms, waiting. Lenz leaned on it and wept bitterly; then he raised his head, and turned to the bedroom. "It cannot be that you are really no longer there, mother," said he, almost aloud: he shrunk from the sound of his own voice, and sunk down exhausted into the chair, where his mother had so often sat.

At last he summoned up courage to go into the next room. "I feel as if I must send something after you – as if you had forgotten something!" said he again, and with a cold shudder he opened his mother's press, into which he had never looked in his life. It seemed to him almost a crime to dare to do so, and yet he did it. Perhaps she had left him some sign or token. He found the godfathers' and godmothers' presents to his deceased brothers and sisters, all marked with their separate names, and his own also; some ancient coins, the Confirmation Certificate of his mother, her bridal wreath, dried and withered, but carefully preserved; her string of garnets, and, in a box by itself, in several folds of fine paper, a small white velvety looking plant, and a scrap of writing in his mother's hand. The son first read in a low voice, and then as if wishing to hear his mother's words, he read aloud: "This is a plant of Edelweiss."

"Dinner is ready," said a voice, suddenly, through the half open door.

Lenz started, as if he had heard the voice of a spirit, and yet it was only old Franzl calling to him.

"I will come immediately," answered Lenz, shutting the door, and bolting it. He then restored everything carefully to its place, and at last returned into the next room. He did not observe how ominously Franzl shook her head at such secret doings.

## CHAPTER III. WORK AND GOOD DEEDS

The nearest neighbour – and he was a good way off – the beadle, had sent up something to eat; for it is here the custom of the country for the nearest neighbour to prepare food, and to send it to the mourners after the funeral, under the idea that on such an occasion people are too much occupied to think of it themselves; indeed, during funeral obsequies, and for three hours afterwards, it is not customary to light any fires. The beadle's daughter brought the dinner herself. "Thank you, Kathrine, and thank your parents also from me. Take away the dinner, I will eat again when I am hungry; now, I really cannot."

"You must at all events try to do so, for that is the custom," said Franzl; "you must put it to your lips. Sit down, Kathrine; in the presence of a mourner you must always sit, and not stand. Young people now-a-days no longer know what is customary, and what is not. You must talk, Kathrine, too, for it is bad luck to be silent when a mourner is in the room, so say something."

The robust, cherry cheeked girl, blushing scarlet, stammered, "I really can't," and then burst out crying.

Lenz fixed his eyes on her, on which she threw her apron over her face.

"Compose yourself," said he kindly; "thank God, every day of your life, that you still have your parents. Now I have taken some of the soup."

"You must taste the other dishes also," urged Franzl.

Lenz did as she wished, though it was a painful effort; he then rose, and the girl did the same, saying: "Do not be angry with me, Lenz, I ought to have tried to comfort you, but – but –"

"I know; thank you. I can't speak much either, just now."

"May God preserve you! My father told me to say that he hoped you would come to us; he cannot leave the house, as he has a bad foot."

"I will see: when I feel able I will come."

The girl left the room, and Lenz paced up and down, stretching forth his hands, as if expecting some one to take hold of them, but no one did so; then his eyes rested on his tools, and more particularly on a certain file which hung on a nail by itself; he shivered as he laid hold of it, for something was now in contact with his hand.

This file was the most precious heritage he possessed. There was an indenture in its maple handle imprinted by his father's hand, for he had worked with this same tool for more than forty seven years, and liked to show it, and often said: "It seems scarcely credible that the wooden handle should, in the course of years, become indented in this way by the pressure of the fingers." Whenever a stranger came to call, his mother used to exhibit the singular looking tool.

The doctor, in the valley below, who had a collection of old fashioned clocks of the Black Forest, often begged to have the file, to hang it up in his cabinet, but the father never would consent to part with it, and still less the mother and son after his death. After his father's burial, when the son was sitting alone with his mother, she said: "Lenz, we must no longer grieve, we must bear our affliction with patience. Take your father's file, and set to work – 'Watch and pray,' say the Scriptures, 'for the night cometh when no man can work.' Be thankful that you have an honest trade already, and not one still to seek. A thousand times your father used to say: 'It is such a good thing to rise in the morning, and to know that your work is waiting for you; and while I am filing, I file away all useless splinters out of my head; and when I hammer, I knock on the head all sad thoughts, and away they fly!'"

These were his mother's words, and, in recalling them at this moment, she seemed to say them once more: "If I could only recall thus every word she ever said to me!"

So Lenz began to work busily.

Franzl was standing outside with Kathrine, saying: "I am so glad that you were the first person to bring food here, it is a good omen – for the person who gives you the first morsel of food in such a case, is sure to – , but I won't say it out; we must not forestall such matters. Come back in the evening, for it must be you who say good night to him; and you must say it three times over, and then it has effect. Hush! what is that? Our Heavenly Father in the Seventh Heaven above! I declare he is at work on the day of the funeral! No one knows that young man thoroughly, not even I, who have been with him from his childhood; he has singular ideas which no one can understand, but the kindest heart in the world. But don't tell any one that he is working to-day, for it might bring him into bad odour. Do you hear? Come back for the dishes to-night, and then take care to speak to him properly; you can talk well enough generally."

Franzl was interrupted by Lenz opening the door, and saying: "Franzl, if any visitor comes, say that I can see no one but Pilgrim. So, you are not gone yet, Kathrine?"

"I am just going," said she, and ran hastily down the hill. Lenz went back into the room, and worked on busily, while Franzl was in a state of incessant perplexity at the strange young man, who had been first crying, as if his heart would break, and was now hard at work. It was certainly not from hardheartedness, nor from avarice, so what could be the reason?

"My old head is not wise enough to find out," said Franzl, turning to ask her old mistress what she was to think about it; but she clasped her hands in sorrow, on suddenly remembering that the mother was dead.

Franzl's heart sunk when she saw visitors arrive; the schoolmaster, some of the choir, and various others. She dismissed them all, with a sorrowful face, and would gladly have stopped their ears if she could, that they might not hear Lenz at work. She looked out anxiously for Pilgrim, who had great influence over him, and would, no doubt, take the file out of his hand; but Pilgrim did not come. Franzl, however, had now a lucky thought: there was no necessity for her to stay at home, so she walked along the path far enough to prevent any one hearing the filing and hammering, and she dismissed those whom she met coming to the house.

Lenz, however, found that active employment produced calmness and composure, and he did not leave off till evening, when he went down into the valley, past the scattered houses, to his friend the painter, Pilgrim; but half way he turned round suddenly, as if he had heard some one calling him, and yet all was still around. No sound was heard but the waterwagtail – called by the country people here *Hockenock* – twittering incessantly in the reeds, and the yellow hammer, perched on the young green shoots, on the top of the fir trees, whistling its solitary note, and glancing round with its bright eyes. There are no larks here, either in the valley or in the meadows beyond; they only soar on the high land above, where cornfields are cultivated.

Mists were rising in the meadows, but these thin vapours are only visible in front and behind, and never in the small space which a person occupies standing, or walking.

Lenz went quickly along the valley, and did not stop till the sun had gone down behind the mountains, and then he said: "It is setting for the first time over her grave." The evening bell rung out; he took off his hat and proceeded on his way. He paused at a bend in the valley, and, concealed by a bush, looked up at a solitary cottage. On a bench before the door was seated a man with whom we are already acquainted – the clockmaker, Faller. He had a child on his knee, whom he was playing with, and his sister was seated behind him, whose husband had gone to foreign parts. She was nursing an infant, and fondly kissing its little hands.

"Good evening, Faller;" said Lenz in his usual clear tenor voice.

"Oh! is that really you?" replied a bass voice; "we were just speaking of you; Lisbeth said you would forget us in your grief, and I said, on the contrary, it is the very thing that would make him think of us."

"You are right, I come to you for that very reason; I remembered that Hurgel's house is to be sold to-morrow, I will be your security if you choose to buy it. You will then also be nearer me."

"Capital! famous! so you are going to stay where you are?"

"Why not?"

"People said that you were going to travel now, for a year or more."

"Who said so?"

"I think it was your uncle; but I am not quite sure."

"Really: well perhaps I may; if I go away, you must live in my house."

"You had far better stay at home, it is too late to travel – "

"And marry soon," added the young wife.

"Yes; for then all taste for travelling is at an end – a married man has too many links at home. There is no doubt you will prosper, Lenz, for thinking of me in all your sorrow; your mother in heaven will bless you for it; no single minute passes without my thinking of her; in all things her first thought was for others, and you take after her – God will bless you."

"Kindness brings its own blessing; my walk here, and what we have agreed on, has lightened my heart already. – Lisbeth, have you anything to eat in the house? I begin to feel hungry for the first time to-day."

"I will boil you a couple of eggs."

"That will be quite sufficient."

Lenz ate with a tolerable appetite, and his hosts were delighted to see him enjoy his meal.

Faller's mother, in spite of her son's remonstrances, persisted in asking Lenz to give her some of his mother's clothes.

Lenz promised to do so.

Faller would not be prevented walking a good part of the way home with him; but scarcely had he gone twenty steps, when he gave a shrill whistle. His sister asked what was the matter? He called out in answer, that he would not return home tonight.

"Where are you to be?" said Lenz.

"With you."

The two friends walked on together in silence; the moon shone brightly, the owls in the wood hooted, but strains of cheerful music proceeded from the village.

"It would never do if every one lamented for one person: " said Lenz, "God be praised that each one has his own joys and sorrows!"

"Your mother said that through you;" replied Faller.

"Stop;" said Lenz, "would you not like to tell your betrothed bride, that you can now buy the house?"

"Indeed I should – come with me – you will see a degree of joy seldom to be seen in this world."

"Climb up the hill alone to her cottage, for I am not in a mood for joy today, and I feel quite exhausted. I will wait here; now go quickly, and don't be long of returning."

Faller went up the hill hurriedly, and Lenz seated himself on a heap of stones beside the path, and, like the dew now softly sinking on the grass and the trees, making everything revive, so a sensation of pure, heavenly dew, seemed to refresh the soul of the solitary man.

Far up the hill, a light now sparkled through the window of the cottage which had been hitherto dark, and hope and joy passed into the hearts of the betrothed, who had so long felt desolate and hopeless. Lenz too was happy.

There is no greater felicity on earth than doing good to others. Faller ran back, panting for breath, and described all the joy with which his news was received; the old father and the bride threw open the window, and shouted down into the valley, "May a thousand blessings attend you, worthy man!" and the bride first cried, and then laughed.

The two friends now pursued their way for some time, each following his own train of thought. Faller went along with a firm step: in his whole bearing there was something vigorous and determined, and while Lenz walked beside him, he involuntarily held himself more upright.

At the spot where the hill shuts out the valley Lenz turned to take a last look at the churchyard, and sighed heavily.

"My father lies there also, and he was not spared to me so long as yours;" said Faller.

Lenz went first up the hill. What is that white figure moving on the summit of the hill? who can it be? is it possible? is it not true that his mother is dead? She must have left the cold grave.

The mourner gazed in awe and trembling.

"Good evening, Lenz;" exclaimed a voice. It is the beadle's daughter Kathrine.

"How is it that you are here again?"

"I have been with Franzl, for she asked our maid to sit with her, she was so sad and solitary. She is old, so she is nervous and timid. I would have no fear if your mother were really to come again. Good night, Lenz; good night; good night."

Kathrine had said good night three times, just as Franzl had desired her; this means something, and who knows what may come of it?

## CHAPTER IV. EACH ONE FOR HIMSELF

A mild evening after a hot day was refreshing every one, and families were assembled on benches outside their houses, but a considerable number were sitting on the stone balustrade of the bridge; for wherever a bridge is in or near a village, it is the place where people meet for their evening's rest, and their evening's talk. Not only must every one pass this way from whichever side they come, but the rippling of the water beneath chimes in well with a pleasant flow of talk. There were various kinds of wood lying to soak in the stream, in order that the sap of the timber might exude from the fibres, and the wood neither shrink nor warp when made into clock cases; the men on the bridge understood well how to soak the timber, though each had their own plan. They were still talking this evening – and that is saying a good deal – of Lenz's mother, but even more of the propriety of Lenz soon marrying. The women praised Lenz highly, and many of their panegyrics were also intended as a hint to the other men to act in as praiseworthy a manner; for where there is good conduct it is always thoroughly appreciated. But the men said: "Oh! no doubt he is a very worthy man, but – too soft hearted." The girls – with the exception of those who had already declared lovers – said nothing. Suddenly a report was circulated from door to door, no one knew whence it came, and also on the bridge, that Lenz had worked incessantly on this very day, when his mother had been buried. The women lamented the avarice shown by so good a man; the men on the contrary tried to defend him. The conversation, however, soon turned on the weather, and worldly matters, and these are fruitful subjects, for no man can tell the result of either the one or the other. They went on chatting pleasantly till they wished each other a quiet night, leaving the stars in the sky, and the affairs in the world, to follow their appointed course.

The most agreeable spot of all is far down the valley, in the pretty garden of a house newly built in the style of a railway station, where the aromatic fragrance of plants in the night air is wonderfully pleasant. This is not surprising, for all kinds of medical herbs grow and flourish here. We are in the Doctor's garden, who also keeps a dispensary. The Doctor is a child of the village, the son of a clockmaker; his wife is from the capital, but she, as well as her husband, who seems fairly to have taken root in his native valley, has become quite at home here, and the Doctor's old mother, who still lives with them, often says that she thinks her daughter-in-law must have existed long ago in the world, and been born in the Black Forest, she is so completely at home there, and so well acquainted with all the ways and customs of the district. The Doctor is also Mayor of the village, and his wife likes this title the best. He has four children. The eldest son, having no turn for what is called study, learned watchmaking, and is now working in French Switzerland. The three daughters are the most refined girls in the country, but not less industrious on that account. Amanda, the eldest, is her father's chief assistant in his dispensary, and it is also her office to keep in order the garden, where many healing herbs are growing. Bertha and Minna are active in the household, but also occupy themselves busily in preparing straw plaiting, which goes to Italy, and returns thence in the shape of the finest Leghorn bonnets.

A stranger is in the garden with the family this evening – a young engineer – called the Techniker in the village. He is brother to the two sons-in-law of the landlord of the "Golden Lion." One of his brothers is a rich wood merchant in a neighbouring town, the other resides on the south side of the Black Forest, and is proprietor of a Spa there, and also of a considerable property. It is said that the Technicker wishes to marry Annele, the only remaining daughter of the landlord of the "Lion."

"Quite right, Herr Starr, I like that," said the Doctor to the Techniker. The sound of the Doctor's voice shows that he is a corpulent man. "It is not fair," said he, "to enjoy the beauties of the mountains and valleys, and yet show no interest in the life and actions of those who inhabit them. The world

nowadays has far too many restless superficial tendencies towards incessant travelling. For my part I feel no inclination to knock about the world in distant countries; I feel happy and contented within my own narrow circle. I have been obliged to give up my old passion, that of collecting plants, and I did so cheerfully, for since then I know more of my fellow creatures. Each must take his own share in the division of labour; my countrymen will not comprehend this, yet it is the point in which our native industry fails."

"May I ask you to explain this more fully to me?"

"The subject is quite simple. Our clockmaking is, like all house labour, the natural result of the want of fruitfulness in our district, and the strict entail of property; the younger sons, and all who possess no capital but their industry, must find an equivalent for their labour, in order to gain their daily bread. Hence proceeds naturally the close and steady carefulness so universal among us. Our forest furnishes the best timber both for houses and for machinery, and so long as the old-fashioned *Jockele* clocks found a brisk sale, a clockmaker, in conjunction with his wife and children who painted the numbers on the dials, could finish a clock entirely at home. The more, however, that metal clocks are adopted, superseding the old *Jockele* clocks, the more are the profits shared by strangers. Indeed, in France and America, and more especially in Saxony, we have now a strong rival trade. We ought to adhere more to wooden clocks, which as you know do not work by weights, but by springs; for this purpose close union is necessary. The ancient engravers had a chief, whose office it was to keep them united, and such a man is sadly required here; all those who are now living scattered among the mountains, should unite in one close confederacy, and work into each other's hands. This, however, will not be easily effected here. In Switzerland a single watch passes through a hundred and twenty hands before it is completed. Even the very perseverance they display, which is undoubtedly a virtue in itself, prevents my worthy countrymen making much progress. It is only by frugality, and unparalleled industry, that our trade has been carried on. It is difficult to make any impression on our clockmakers, who have often shown a singular degree of susceptibility; they must be gently dealt with; a rude or careless grasp might injure their feelings, like the delicate works of a clock, and it is a serious matter when the mainspring snaps."

"I think," replied the young man, "that it would be profitable to give the clocks here a form more agreeable to the eye, and more calculated to ornament a room."

"It would be a great improvement," said Bertha, the second daughter. "I lived with my aunt for a year in the capital, and wherever I went I met my countrywoman, a Black Forest clock, banished like a Cinderella to the kitchen. French clocks in their gold and alabaster were paraded in every drawing-room; they were often not wound up, or else I was told they did not go well; whereas my countrywoman in the kitchen was steady and well regulated."

"This Cinderella ought to be rescued," said the young man, "but I hope she will retain her virtue in gay rooms, and go as correctly as ever."

The Doctor did not appear to enter into the scheme of the young people, for he began to relate to the Techniker the various singular peculiarities of the inhabitants of the district. He had been long enough in other countries to perceive the eccentricities of his own, and was yet so imbued with home feelings, that he knew how to value the hidden qualities of his countrymen; he spoke pure German, but with the accent of the dialect of the Black Forest.

"Good evening to you all," was the company greeted by a person passing by.

"Oh! is that you, Pilgrim? wait a minute," called out the Doctor. The man remained standing beside the hedge, and the Doctor asked, "How is Lenz?"

"I don't know. I have not seen him since the funeral to-day; I have just come from the 'Lion,' where I stupidly got into a rage on his account."

"Really! What was the matter?"

"They say there that Lenz has been working all day at home, and they abuse him and declare he is miserly. Lenz miserly! it is enough to make a man go distracted."



"Don't allow yourself to be annoyed; you and I, and many others besides, know that Lenz is an excellent man. Was Petrowitsch with Lenz to-day?"

"No; I thought he was, and therefore I did not go to him. Herr Doctor, if you have time to-morrow, may I beg of you to come to see me in passing? I want to show you something that I have made."

"Very well. I will come."

"Good night, all!"

"Good night, Pilgrim! a good night's rest to you."

The pedestrian went on his way.

"Send me my songs back to-morrow," called out Bertha to him.

"I won't fail to send them," answered Pilgrim, and soon he was heard in the distance whistling with sweetness and skill.

"There you have a strange enough person," said the Doctor to the Techniker. "He is a painter, and is Lenz's best friend, whose mother was interred today. This Pilgrim has talents, which have, however, never borne fruit. The history of his life is remarkable."

"I wish you would relate it to me."

"Another time, when we are alone."

"Oh, no! we should like to hear it again," exclaimed the wife and daughters; and so the Doctor began.

## CHAPTER V. PILGRIM'S ADVENTURES

"This Pilgrim is the son of a dial painter. Early left an orphan, he was educated by the old schoolmaster at the expense of the parish. He was, however, far more frequently with the clockmaker, Lenz of the Morgenhalde, than with the schoolmaster. Lenz's wife, who was buried today, was like a mother to the lad; and her only child, Lenz, was always like his brother. Pilgrim was considered quick and clever; whereas Lenz, with all his ability in his profession, has something vague and dreary in his nature; and who knows whether a great musical genius does not lie hidden in Lenz, and an equal talent for painting in Pilgrim! but it has not come to light yet in either of them. You really must hear Lenz sing some time: he sings the first tenor in the Choral Society, which has him chiefly to thank for having twice gained the Quartett Prize at a musical festival – once at Constance and another time at Freiberg. When the two lads were still half grown boys, Lenz became an apprentice to his father, and Pilgrim to a dial painter; but they still clung faithfully to their old companionship.

"In summer evenings, the two were to be seen together as certainly as the twin stars in the sky above us. They wandered together, singing and whistling, through the valley and over the hills; and in winter evenings, Pilgrim braved the snow and storm to go to Lenz; for the latter was obliged to stay at home, being somewhat spoiled by his mother – and no wonder, for he was the only child left out of five. The boys used to read together half the night; particularly books of travels. I have lent them many a book, for there was a great thirst for knowledge in both lads. When Pilgrim escaped the conscription – Lenz, as an only son, could not be drawn – they brought forward their plan to travel together through the world; for, with all their love of home, our people have an irrepressible desire to travel. On this occasion Lenz showed, for the first time, a degree of wilful obstinacy which no one had ever suspected. He refused positively to give up the journey, and his father was quite willing that he should go, but his mother was in despair; and as even the persuasions of the Pastor were fruitless, my aid was called in by the parents, and, if nothing else availed, I was to bring forward an array of medical experience to effect their purpose. I naturally sought some other resource.

"I had always enjoyed the entire confidence of the two inseparables, and they willingly imparted all their plans to me. Pilgrim was the prime mover. Lenz, with all his tenderness of feeling, is of a sound practical disposition – I mean, of course, within his own sphere – and, if not overpersuaded by others, he has sense and acuteness enough to know what is right, and a degree of perseverance in all he does which almost amounts to a virtue. Lenz was far from being as resolute to his parents, as he affected to be in Pilgrim's presence. Old Lenz wished that Pilgrim should regularly learn clockmaking, before beginning his travels with a stock to dispose of: for travelling merchants must of course be able to repair the clocks they may meet with, as well as those they dispose of. So Pilgrim learned clockmaking regularly. When, however, he had mastered what was absolutely indispensable, the project of the journey was all settled. Pilgrim had all sorts of plans in his head. At one time, his intention was to earn so much money in his travels, that he might enter the academy for painting as a pupil; then he proposed becoming an artist at once during his journey; and at last his grand purpose was to bring home a large sack of money, and to spend it freely among his own people; for, in fact, he had a great contempt for money, in so far as he was himself concerned. Moreover, at that time there was some love affair in his head. Greece – Athens, were the objects of his travels; and when he even named Athens, his eyes sparkled, and his cheeks flushed bright red. 'Athens!' said he often, 'does not the very sound of that name seem to transport us into lofty halls, where we ascend marble stairs?' He fancied that if he were to breathe this classical atmosphere, he would become another man, and, above all, a great artist. Of course I endeavoured to cure him of such wild delusions; and I so far succeeded, that he promised me to occupy himself solely in making money, and his other plans

could be fulfilled hereafter. Old Lenz and I became his securities, for the value of the goods that he was to take with him. He set out alone on the journey, for Lenz, by our advice, stayed at home. 'I am like the river in the Black Forest which runs into the Black Sea!' said Pilgrim often. He hoped to introduce our forest clocks into the East and into Greece, where they had not hitherto met with the same success as in northern lands, and in the New World, It is very amusing to hear Pilgrim relate his progress through various countries, and through cities and villages, all hung round with Black Forest clocks, making them strike in the streets, while he eagerly looked round on every side. But this was his great fault: he was too anxious to see everything – customs, manners, fine buildings, beautiful landscapes; and this is a disadvantage to a merchant. The works in a clock never vary, even when carried over sea and land, and just as little do our countrymen, who are to be seen wandering in every zone, change their natures. To earn, and to save, and to live economically until they return home with a well-filled purse, when they can make up for their privations, – these are the fixed purposes of their hearts, and they care little how the world goes on around them. This is both prudent and necessary – it is impossible to carry different objects in the head at the same time."

"Did Pilgrim really arrive in Athens at last?"

"Not a doubt of it; and he often told me that the Crusaders, when they first saw Jerusalem, could not have felt more piety and enthusiasm than he did, when he gazed for the first time at Athens. He rubbed his eyes, and could scarcely believe that he really saw Athens, where marble statues were to welcome and greet him. He went along the streets sounding his clocks, but he did not succeed in selling a single clock in Athens. He suffered great privations, and was at last only too glad when he got employment. But what employment it was! For fourteen long days, under the blue Grecian sky, he was engaged in painting the railing of a public-garden green, within sight of the Acropolis!"

"What is the Acropolis?" asked Bertha.

"Explain the word to her, Herr Starr," said the Doctor.

The Techniker described, in a lively manner, the former glories of this grand Athenian citadel, and the few fragments that still remain. He promised on his return, to bring a sketch of it with him, and then begged the Doctor to go on with his story.

"I have not much more to tell," resumed the Doctor. "Pilgrim contrived to realize sufficient, by the sale of the clocks, to prevent his being a burden on the parish. It required no little courage to return home even poorer than he went, and to be the derision of his neighbours; but as his artistic nature feels the most thorough contempt for *purse-pride*, as he calls it, he always seems quite contented and at his ease, and pays no attention to the jeers and gibes of his companions. He arrived naturally, first of all, at the Morgenhalde. The family there were all seated at dinner, and were in the act of saying grace, when Lenz uttered such a cry, that his mother often said if she were to hear it again it would be her death. The two friends embraced eagerly. Pilgrim was soon as merry as ever, and said that he had best luck at home, for he had arrived just as dinner was ready, and no one would make him so welcome as the parents and their son at the Morgenhalde. Old Lenz wished Pilgrim to live in his house altogether, but he is unusually jealous of his independence. He erected a neat workshop near us, at Don Bastian's. At first he took great trouble to introduce new patterns of clock dials. He has a very good idea of colour, but his drawing is sadly defective: his chief mistake, however, was endeavouring to alter the original form of our Black Forest dials – a square with an arch above. When he discovered that he made no progress with his novelties, he resumed making the old fashioned timepieces to order, and is now always cheerful and good humoured. You must know that different countries have peculiar tastes in the dials of clocks. France likes bright colours, and the dial painted all over; North Germany, Scandinavia, and England prefer more simple lines, something architectural, triangular figures, columns, or at most a wreath; America likes no ornamental painting, nothing but a wooden clock case with more or less carving, and the weights resting on pulleys at the sides of the clock – these are called American clocks; Hungary and Russia approve of painted fronts or a landscape. The style of decoration that art would sanction as beautiful has seldom good sale; on the contrary, spirals

and flourishes are generally most admired. If you could combine that style with the embellishment of our native clocks, you would find Pilgrim quick at executing a design; and you might, perhaps, thus give a fresh impulse to his life."

"I beg you will make me acquainted with the man."

"Certainly – you may accompany me tomorrow – you heard him invite me; but you must come quite early, and then you can cross the hills with me. I will show you some beautiful points of view, and many good honest men."

The Techniker wished them a cordial good night, and the Doctor went into the house with his family.

The moon shone bright in the sky – the flowers emitted their fragrance for themselves alone – and the stars gazed down on them. All was still around, save here and there, when, in passing a house, a clock was heard to strike.

## CHAPTER VI. THE WORLD STEPS IN

"Good morning, Lenz! – so you slept well? – you are still like a child, who sleeps sound after crying till he is worn out," said Faller, in his deep hollow bass voice, next morning. And Lenz replied – "Ah, my friend! to wake, and wake again, and to remember the events of yesterday, is only fresh misery! But I must take courage, I will first of all prepare the security for you: take it to the mayor before he rides out, and remember me to him. By the bye, it has just occurred to me that I dreamt of him. Go to Pilgrim, too, if you have time, and tell him I am waiting at home for him. May good luck attend you! I am so glad that you will now have a roof of your own."

Faller went with the security into the valley, and Lenz began his work; but he first wound up one of the clocks, and it played a hymn. He nodded in unison, while filing a wheel. "That clock plays well: it was her favourite air – my mother's," thought Lenz. The large clock, in a beautifully carved walnut-wood case, as tall as a clothes press, was called "The Magic Flute," for its principal piece was the overture to that opera of Mozart's, besides five other airs: it was already sold to a well-frequented tea-garden near Odessa. A small clock stood beside it, and Lenz was working at a third. He worked unremittingly till noon. He was very hungry, but when he sat down to table alone, all hunger seemed to leave him.

He begged the old maid to sit down with him. She affected great shyness and modesty; however she allowed her scruples at last to be overcome, and when the soup was finished, she even volunteered the remark – "I really see no reason why you should marry."

"Who says that I have any thoughts of marrying?"

"My opinion is that if you do marry you ought to marry the beadle's daughter, Kathrine: she is come of good people, and has a great respect for you – she can talk of nothing but you. Such a wife would be worth having. It would be a bad business if you got a wife to whom you would have to play second fiddle. Girls, now-a-days, are so stylish in their ideas, and think of nothing but dress and vanity."

"I have no thoughts of marriage, especially at this moment."

"And you are right: it is not at all necessary – you will never better yourself, believe me. And I know how you have been coddled all your life, and I will take care to manage every thing so that you may almost think your mother is still in the world. Tell me, don't you find the beans good? I learned how to dress them from your mother – they are the very same. She understood everything, from the greatest thing to the least. You shall see how well pleased you will be while we live together – as happy as the day is long."

"But, Franzl," said Lenz, "I don't think I shall be long as I am."

"Really? Have you any one in your eye already? Look there! – People had agreed that Lenz had nothing in his head but his mother and his clocks! I only hope she comes of a good family. As I told you, Kathrine would be a wife for Saturdays and Sundays; she can work both in the house and in the fields; and her spinning is so first-rate, that I do believe she could spin the very straw off the roof. She thinks more of you than any one, and all that you do and say is sacred in her eyes. She always says – 'All that Lenz does is right,' even when it appears otherwise, like his working yesterday;' and she will have a nice little nest egg of money, and a property besides from her mother, which will be an ample provision for one of your children."

"Franzl, there is no question of marriage at all. I have some idea – I have not yet quite made up my mind – of selling, or letting all my property, and going to foreign parts."

Franzl stared at Lenz in dismay, pausing halfway in lifting the spoon out of the plate to her mouth. Lenz continued – "I will take care to provide for you, Franzl – you shall never know want;

but I have never yet seen the world, and I should like to do so, and to see and learn something, and perhaps I may improve in my own calling; and who knows – "

"I have no right to give an opinion," interrupted Franzl, "I am only a foolish woman, though every one knows that we Kunslingers are far from being jackasses. What do I know of the world! but this I do know, that I have not served seven and twenty years in this house without some profit. I came to this house when you were only four years old: you were the youngest child, and the pet of all the family. As for your brothers and sisters – now lying under the green turf; – however, don't let us talk about them just now. I have been seven and twenty years with your mother. I cannot say that I am as clever as she was – for who could you find, far or near, of whom we could say that? But we shall see her no more till the world is at an end. And how often she said – 'Franzl,' said she, 'men rush out into the world just as if in other lands, beyond the Rhine or across the seas, Fortune ran about the streets welcoming all comers – "Good morning, Hans, Michel, and Christoph; I am so glad to see you," said Fortune to Hans, Michel, and Christoph.' 'My good Franzl,' said your mother, 'he who can't get on at home, will do just as little elsewhere; and wherever you go you will find plenty of men; and if it was to rain gold they would take good care to snap it up, and not wait for strangers to come and take their share; and after all, what great good fortune do you get by going out into the world? No one can do more than eat, and drink, and sleep. Franzl,' said she, 'my Lenz, too,' – forgive me, but it was your mother said so – I don't say it of myself, – 'my Lenz also has got some silly nonsense in his head about travel; but where could he be better off than at home; and he is not a man to strive with the wide world.' A man must be a pirate like Petrowitsch, an audacious, niggardly, miserly, hardhearted creature to get on in the world. But, to tell the truth, she said nothing of the kind, for she never said an ill word of any one; but I think it and I say it – and she often appealed to my good feelings, saying – 'Franzl, if my Lenz were to leave home, he would give away the shirt off his back if he saw some poor creature in want of one: he is so tenderhearted, that any one who chooses can impose upon him. Franzl,' said she, 'when I am no longer in the world, and this longing for travel again comes across him, Franzl,' said she, 'cling to his coat-tails, and don't let him go;' only, good gracious! I can't possibly do that – how could I? But I must say my say, and I will, for she charged me to look after you. Just look round you: here you have a comfortable house and the best of food – you are respected and loved; and if you go out into the world, who knows anything about you? – who knows that you are Lenz of the Morgenhalde? And when you have no shelter, and must lie all night in the woods, how often would you think – 'Bless me! to think that I had once a house, and seven feather-beds, and plenty of good crockery, and a small cask of good wine in the cellar.' By the bye, shall I fetch you a pint of it now? just wait, I'll bring it in a minute. Those who are sad should drink wine. A thousand times have I heard your mother say – 'Wine cheers the heart, and brings another train of thought.'"

Franzl hurried out of the room, and soon returned from the cellar with a pint of wine. Lenz insisted on her having a glass herself. He poured it out himself for her, and made his glass ring against hers. She only put it to her lips coyly; but when she cleared the table, she did not forget to take the glass of wine with her to the kitchen.

Lenz again worked hard till evening. Whether it was the wine or some other cause, he was very restless at his work, and often on the point of laying aside his tools to go out and visit some one; but again he thought that it was better he should not leave the house, as no doubt some of his kind friends would come to comfort him in his solitude, and he wished they should find him at home. No one came, however, but the Pröbler. He was much attached to Lenz; for he was one of the few who did not turn him into ridicule, and scoff at him for refusing to sell any of his ingenious devices – he only pawned them until he could no longer redeem them; and it was said that the landlord of the "Lion," who carried on a brisk trade as a *packer* (which in this district means a wholesale dealer and agent), and had an extensive business, made a good profit out of Pröbler, who had pledged his chief works to him.

Lenz always listened with serious attention to old Pröbler, even when he told him that he was constructing no less a piece of mechanism than the *perpetuum mobile*; and, in order to complete it, there was nothing wanting but forty two diamonds, on which the works must revolve.

On this occasion, however, Pröbler did not come on account of any new discovery, nor to discuss the *perpetuum mobile*; but when Lenz had taken the usual pinch of snuff from his box, he proposed himself as his negociator, if he wished to marry. He brought forward a whole array of marriageable girls, those of the Doctor included; and concluded by saying – "All houses are open to you – but you are shy. Tell me honestly whither your thoughts turn, and I will take care that you are met half way."

Lenz scarcely made any answer, and Pröbler went away. That he should be supposed to aspire to one of the Doctor's daughters, occupied Lenz for some time. They were three excellent and charming girls. The eldest was very prudent, and considerate beyond her years; and the second played the piano and sung admirably. How often had Lenz stood opposite the house listening to her! Music was, in fact, his sole passion, and his eager longing for it was like that of a thirsty man for a clear spring of water. How would it be if he could get a wife who could play the piano? He would ask her to play over to him all the airs that he put in his musical timepieces, and then they would sound very differently. But after all, a wife from so superior a family would not be very fitting for him; for it was not likely that, when she could play the piano, she could undertake the management of the house, the garden, and the stables, as all clockmakers' wives must do; – besides, he will wait patiently yet awhile. When twilight began to fall, Lenz dressed and went down into the valley. "All houses will be open to you," Pröbler had said. All houses? That was saying a great deal; in fact, so much that it meant nothing. To feel at home in entering a house, its inhabitants must go on calmly with their various pursuits; you must form so entirely a part of the family, that neither look nor gesture asks, – "Why do you come here? – what do you want? – what is the matter?" If you are not quite at home, then the house is not really open to you at any moment; and as Lenz's thoughts travel from house to house in the village for a couple of miles round, he knows he will be joyfully welcomed by all – but he is nowhere really at home; and yet he has one friend with whom he is thoroughly at home, just as much so as in his own room. The painter Pilgrim wished to go home with him yesterday after the funeral, but as his uncle Petrowitsch joined him, Pilgrim remained behind, for Petrowitsch had a hearty contempt for Pilgrim, because he was a poor devil – and Pilgrim had an equally hearty contempt for Petrowitsch because he was a rich devil – so Lenz resolved to go to see Pilgrim.

Pilgrim lodged far up the valley, with Don Bastian, as Pilgrim called him. He had been originally a clockmaker, who had acquired a considerable sum of money during a twelve years' residence in Spain. After his return to his native country he purchased a farm, resumed his peasant's dress, and retained nothing of his Spanish journey except his money, and a few Spanish phrases which he brought forth ostentatiously from time to time, especially in summer, when those who had wandered from their homes again returned to their own district.

## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

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