

AUERBACH BERTHOLD

VILLA EDEN: THE
COUNTRY-HOUSE ON
THE RHINE

Berthold Auerbach

**Villa Eden: The Country-
House on the Rhine**

«Public Domain»

Auerbach B.

Villa Eden: The Country-House on the Rhine / B. Auerbach —
«Public Domain»,

Содержание

BOOK I	7
CHAPTER I.	7
CHAPTER II.	12
CHAPTER III.	14
CHAPTER IV.	18
CHAPTER V.	21
CHAPTER VI.	23
CHAPTER VII.	28
CHAPTER VIII.	31
CHAPTER IX.	33
CHAPTER X.	37
CHAPTER XI.	42
CHAPTER XII.	45
BOOK II	49
CHAPTER I.	49
CHAPTER II.	54
CHAPTER III.	56
CHAPTER IV.	59
CHAPTER V.	64
CHAPTER VI.	69
CHAPTER VII.	73
CHAPTER VIII.	77
CHAPTER IX.	79
CHAPTER X.	81
CHAPTER XI.	85
CHAPTER XII.	87
CHAPTER XIII.	91
CHAPTER XIV.	96
BOOK III	99
CHAPTER I.	99
CHAPTER II.	102
CHAPTER III.	107
CHAPTER IV.	111
CHAPTER V.	118
CHAPTER VI.	124
CHAPTER VII.	128
CHAPTER VIII.	131
CHAPTER IX.	134
CHAPTER X.	138
CHAPTER XI.	142
CHAPTER XII.	145
CHAPTER XIII.	148
BOOK IV	151
CHAPTER I.	151
CHAPTER II.	154
CHAPTER III.	158

CHAPTER IV.	161
CHAPTER V.	167
CHAPTER VI.	170
CHAPTER VII.	172
CHAPTER VIII.	174
CHAPTER IX.	177
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	179

Berthold Auerbach

Villa Eden: The Country-House on the Rhine

*"Be patient a few minutes longer! There's a man beckoning to go with us,"
said the boatman to his passengers.*

– Villa Eden, Page 1.

BOOK I

CHAPTER I. THE APPARITION

"Be patient a few: minutes longer! There's a man beckoning to go with us," said the boatman to his passengers, two women and one man. The man was gray-haired, of slender form, rubicund face, and blue eyes of a kindly, but absent-minded and weary expression; a heavy moustache, wholly covering the upper lip, seemed out of keeping with this inoffensive face. He wore a new summer suit of that fashionable material which seems be-dashed and be-sprinkled with white, as if the wearer had purposely rolled himself in a feather bed. He had, moreover, a pretty wallet attached to a leather belt, and embroidered with blue and red beads.

Opposite the man sat a tall and stately woman, with restless eyes and sharp features, that might once have been attractive. She shook her head, vexed at the delay, like one not accustomed to be kept waiting, got up, and sat down again. She wore a pale-yellow silk dress, and the white veil on her gray round hat was wound about the rim like the band around a turban. Again she threw back her head with a quick movement, then looked straight down before her, as if not to show any interest in the stranger, and boring with the point of her large parasol into the side of the boat.

Near the man sat a smiling, fair maiden, in a blue summer suit, and holding in her hand, by the elastic string, a small blue hat ornamented with a bird's wing. Her head was rather large and heavy, and the broad forehead was made yet more massive by a rich abundance of braided hair; a large curl on each side rested upon her shoulder and breast. The girl's countenance was bright and clear as the clear day which shed its beams over the landscape. She put on her hat, and the mother gave it a little touch to adjust it properly. The girl exchanged quickly her coarse leather gauntlets for delicate, glossy ones which she took out of her pocket; and while drawing them on with great dexterity, she looked at the new-comer.

A tall and handsome young man, with a full brown beard, a sinewy frame, a gray shawl over his shoulder, and upon his head a broad-brimmed gray hat with black crape, came down the steep and zigzag path with a vigorous step to the shore. He stepped into the boat, and lifting his hat while bowing in silence, displayed a noble white forehead shaded by dark-brown hair. His countenance spoke courage and firmness, and, at the same time, had an expression that awakened confidence and trust.

The girl cast down her eyes, while her mother once more fastened and unfastened her hat-string, contriving at the same time, with seeming carelessness, to place one long curl in front, and the other upon the shoulder behind, so as to be becoming, and to look easy and natural.

The man in the mottled suit pressed the white head of his cane to his lips. The stranger, seating himself apart from the others, gazed into the stream, whilst the boat was moving rapidly through the water. They landed at an island on which was a large convent, now a boarding-school for girls.

"Oh, how beautiful! and are the lessons learned there?" asked the girl, pointing to a group of lofty trees on the shore, clustered so near together that they seemed to have grown out of one root, and with low seats inside the grove. "Go on!" said the mother with a reproving look to the girl, and immediately taking her husband's arm. The girl went on before, and the stranger followed them.

In the thickets sang the nightingales, the blackbirds, and the finches, as if they would proclaim, "Here is the peace and the rest of Paradise, and no one disturbs us." The dark fir-trees with their sheltering branches, and the long row of light-green larches stood motionless by the shore, and bees hummed in the blossoming chestnut-trees. They reached the convent. The building, without any

architectural peculiarity, had an extended prospect of the garden, the meadows on the island, the river, and the mountains. It was shut up, and no human being was to be seen. The old gentleman pulled the bell; a portress opened a small window, and asked what was wanted. Admission was demanded, but the portress replied that it could not possibly be granted that evening. "Take in my card, and say to the good mother that I am here with my wife and daughter," said the old gentleman. "Permit me to add also my card," said the stranger. The three looked round, struck by the pleasant tone of his voice. The stranger handed his card, and added, "Please say to the worthy Lady Superior, that I bring a message of greeting from my mother."

The portress closed the window quickly, while the four stood at the entrance. "I took you for a Frenchman," said the old gentleman with a kindly tone to the young man. "I am a German," he replied. "Have you then a relative in the convent, and are you acquainted with the good mother?" "No, I know no one here." The answers of the stranger were so short and direct, that he gave no opportunity to continue the conversation, and the old gentleman appeared to be a man of position and character, who was accustomed to be addressed, and not to make advances. He walked with the two ladies towards a beautiful flower-bed, and placed himself with his companions upon a seat. But the girl was restless, and walking up and down along the edge of the meadow, she gathered the hidden violets. The young man remained standing as if rooted to the spot, staring at the stone steps which led up to the cloister-door, as though he must find out what various destinies had already gone in and out over them.

Meanwhile, the old gentleman said to his wife, "That elegant young man appears to me to be a gambler, who has lost all his means at one of the neighboring baths. Who knows but that he wants to borrow money of the Lady Superior?" She laughed at her husband for being disposed to see now, for the third time during this journey, a criminal or a ruined man in the persons they chanced to meet.

"You may be right," said the old gentleman; "but that's the mischief of these showy, establishments, that one supposes everybody he meets has something to do with them. Besides, just as it happened with our daughter – "

"What happened with me?" asked the girl from the meadow. "Why," continued the father, "how often, when walking behind you at the baths, have I heard people say, 'What beautiful false hair!' no one now thinks that there is anything genuine."

The girl laughed merrily to herself, and then adding a violet to the nosegay on her bosom, called out, "And I believe the stranger is a poet." "Why?" asked the mother. "Because a poet must be handsome like him." The old gentleman laughed, and the mother said, "Child, you are manufacturing a poet out of your own imagination; but, silence! let us go, the portress is beckoning to us."

The convent door opened, and the visitors entered. Behind the second grated door stood two nuns in black garments with hempen cords about their waists. The taller nun, an old lady with an extraordinarily large nose, told them that the Lady Superior was sorry not to be able to receive any one; that it was the evening before her birth-day, and she always remained, on that day, alone until sunset; that there was a further difficulty in admitting strangers to-day, as the children – for so she called the pupils – had prepared a spectacle with which to greet the Superior after sun-down; that everything was in disorder to-day, as a stage had been erected in the great dining-hall; that the Superior, however, had ordered that they should be shown over the convent.

The two nuns led the way through the main passage. Their step was hard and noisy, for they wore wooden shoes fastened to the feet by leather straps over the stockings. The smaller and prettier nun, with her delicate features pinched up in the close-fitting cap, had kept herself timidly in the background, allowing the other to do the talking. But now she addressed the girl in the blue muslin dress, speaking in French. The mother gave a nod of satisfaction to the father, as much as to say, "There, now; you see it was worth while to let the child learn something; that was my doing, and you only reluctantly consented." The father could not refrain from informing the nun with the big nose that his daughter, Lina, had returned, only six months before, from the Convent of the "Sacred Heart"

at Aix-la-Chapelle. The stranger also spoke a few words in French to the pretty nun. But now, and as often as he addressed her, she drew herself shyly back, apparently not from timidity, but with a nervous involuntary shrinking into herself.

The breakfast-room, school-room, and music-room, and the large dormitories were shown to the strangers, and they admired the neatness and good order everywhere seen. Especially in the sleeping-rooms everything was arranged as prettily and neatly, as if not real human beings, much less careless children, inhabited them, but as if everything had been made ready for fairy visitants. In one little bed only was there any disturbance. Lina drew back the curtain, and a child with great brown eyes looked up. The young man had also come to the bedside. "What is the matter with the child?" asked Lina. "Only homesickness." "Only homesickness," said the stranger in a low tone to himself, while the lady asked, "How do you cure homesickness?" "The housekeeper has a sure method; a child complaining of homesickness is put on the sick-list, and must stay in bed; when she is allowed to get up, the homesickness is gone, and she feels at home." "Go away, all of you! go away! I want Manna, I want Manna," moaned the child. "She will come soon," said the nun, soothingly, adding in explanation, "No one but an American girl can pacify the child." "That must be our Manna," said Lina to her mother. The twilight was gathering, and through the galleries, in the golden evening light, strange forms rustled in long green, blue, and red garments, and then vanished within the cells.

The visitors went into the dining-room, at the farther end of which there was the representation of a forest scene with a hermitage; and there lay a doe bound with a red cord. The young creature fixed its great eyes on the strangers, and tugging at its cord, tried to get away.

The French nun said that the children, aided by one of the sisters who had a natural talent that way, had themselves arranged the decorations. Large choirs had been practicing, and one of the pupils, a very remarkable child, had composed the piece which represented a scene from the life of the Superior's patron saint.

The German nun regretted that no stranger could be present. A copy of the song to be introduced in the play was lying upon a chair. The lady, taking it up, read it and handed it over to the young man, who ran through the verses. "It's astonishing that a child should have composed them," said the lady. The young stranger felt obliged to make some reply, and observed in a somewhat careless tone, "Our German language, especially when used in rhyming, is an instrument that can easily be drummed upon, and thrummed upon, by any child."

"I told you so; he is a poet," said the triumphant look of the girl to her parents.

As they were leaving the dining-hall, now turned into a temporary theatre, Lina remarked to the pretty Frenchwoman how sorry she was not to be able to see her young friend, Hermanna Sonnenkamp; she herself was obliged to return that very evening with her parents, as they had been invited to attend, to-morrow afternoon, a reception at the Countess von Wolfsgarten's.

The girl said this with a proud emphasis, as if assured that every one must know what was the full significance of a reception at Count von Wolfsgarten's. The Frenchwoman must have noticed it, for she replied, "Here, on the contrary, we do not know each other by the names applied to us in the world outside; we here know only our convent names."

"May I know yours?" "Certainly; I am called sister Seraphia." The girl seemed now on more intimate terms with the French sister, since she could call her "sister Seraphia;" and she rejoiced at the thought of being able to tell at home, in her own little town, about the nun of high rank, at least a princess, whose acquaintance she had made. They walked back through the long gallery, and as they went down the steps, there came up a snow-white form with great wings on its shoulders, and a glittering diadem on its head, from which long black ringlets streamed down over bosom and neck. Deep, black eyes, with long lashes and thick brows, gleamed out of the pale countenance. "Manna!" cried Lina, and "Manna!" echoed the vaulted ceiling. The winged apparition grasped the hand of the speaker, and leading her aside down the stairs said, "Is it you, dear Lina? Ah, I have only been with a poor child pining with homesickness; to-day I cannot speak a word with any other living soul."

"O, how wonderful you look! how splendid! To the child you must be a real live angel! And how glad they will all be at home, when I tell them."

"Not a word about it. Excuse me to your parents for flitting by them, and – who, who is the young man here with you?"

The stranger seemed aware that they were talking about him, and looked from below up to the wonderful vision. He shaded his eyes with his hand, to take a better look, but he could see none of the features, nothing but the mysterious shape and the two gleaming eyes.

"We don't know who he is; he joined us first in the boat; but," she added, smiling at her own suggestion, "you can find out, for he sent a greeting from his mother to the Superior; ask her by and by. Don't you think him handsome?"

"O Lina! how you talk! May the Holy St. Genevieve intercede with the dear God to pardon you for saying that, and me" – covering her face with her hands – "for hearing it. Farewell, Lina, greet every one for me."

As the winged apparition swept along the corridor, she was unable to hear Lina calling out that she would, to-morrow, tell them at the Countess Wolfsgarten's all about her. The vision vanished. They left the convent, and at the door the old gentleman said to the young man, "It is a good thing for girls to be educated in a convent on an island, away from the rest of the world." "Girls at the convent, and boys at the barracks! fine world that!" answered the young man, in a sharp tone.

Without a word in reply, the old gentleman, turning away, drew off a few paces with the ladies as if he wished to have no further intercourse with a stranger of such revolutionary sentiments. The stranger hastened to the boat, and was speedily set across. The stream was like pure, molten gold, and the stranger dipping his fingers into it bathed his forehead and eyes. He sprang lightly ashore, and looking over to the island-convent, saw the man, with wife and daughter, just going down to the boat; he waved a distant farewell with his hat, and with a rapid step went up the hill behind the ruins of the castle, overlooking the convent. He continued sitting there for a long time, gazing fixedly at the convent on the island. He heard songs from maiden voices, saw the long row of windows brightly lighted up, and at last, looking up to the stars, he exclaimed, "O mother!" What did that mean? Perhaps his mother had said to him, that at some time or other a wonderful experience would come over him. The nightingale in the thicket sang on unceasingly, and the young man listened to the song, but would gladly have silenced it in order that he might hear more plainly the singing of the children in the convent, who with magic power had conjured up a dream of heaven into their actual life, and for one hour become choirs of singing angels. "Alone in the spring night, amidst the Castle-ruins with beating heart! Can it be I?" said the young man to himself.

He descended the hill, and as he reached the inn, met the man with the two women just ready to start for the rail-road station. He would have liked to ask the girl who that wonderful apparition was, but he restrained himself. What would be the use? Better that thou knowest her not; then the charm of the vision is pure and undisturbed. He went into the inn; he sat there and read the bill of fare without knowing what he was reading, and what he should select. He stared at the card until the waiter came and asked for it, in order to give it to another guest. He ordered what happened to meet his eye. "What wine would you like? We have 'Drachenblut' of a choice vintage." "Bring some Drachenblut."

He ate and drank without knowing what; he only knew that he must eat and drink something; absently he took up a newspaper lying upon the table. What are convents? what are ruined castles? what is the apparition of a girl with wings? Here is the world, the real, the stirring, the actual world of to-day. You come into an inn, weary after a wide survey from a mountain top, and involuntarily you lay hold of a newspaper, – why is this? It may be that the eye and the mind, tired out by the manifestations of unmoving nature, become refreshed by viewing what is perpetually changing in the world; you are alone, you need to hear some word spoken by one to many, and the newspaper tells you about the world which has kept on its way while you were dreaming, while you were losing yourself in the boundless prospect, and coming to yourself again.

Yes, it is so now! How it was in other times, when one could live on in undisturbed dreaminess, we can hardly imagine. At all times – whether in the pressure of heavy affliction, when our own life has become a burden, and the world indifferent, or in exalted feeling, when we are transported, as it were, out of all actual existence – the newspaper comes, and demands our attention, and calls to us as if we were to cöoperate everywhere in the various relations of the world.

What has America to do with the young man? and yet he has just read an account of matters there; the choice of a new President of the Republic was exciting all minds in the New World, and the name of a man who was a pattern of uprightness and worldwide views, Abraham Lincoln, seemed to penetrate everywhere, and to bring with it a great crisis in the history of humanity. Deeply interested, he looked up smiling, for he remembered that the Frenchwoman had said that an American girl could alone console the homesick child, and that she had also composed the play for the festival. Here a child plays with sacred stories, whilst all is in commotion in her Fatherland. The thoughts of the young man were again in the convent, and with the wonderful apparition.

Just as he was laying down the paper, his eye fell upon an advertisement. He knit his brows, looked around, and read again; then asking permission to keep the paper, he carried it with him to his chamber. "A handsome man," said the guests, after he had gone; "evidently a young widower, who wishes to find distraction from his grief in a Rhine-journey; he wears a weed on his hat."

CHAPTER II. "UP THE RIVER."

"Name: Eric Dournay. Title: Doctor of Philosophy, late Army-Captain. Place of departure: name of a small University city. Destination: – Object of Journey: – "

Such was the entry made by the young man in the register of the inn early the next morning; and he now first noticed written above his name, "Justice Vogt, Lady, née Landen, and Daughter, from" – a small town on the Upper Rhine. That was then the mottled gentleman of yesterday with the two ladies.

Eric, for so we shall hereafter call him, carrying his small valise, went down to the steamboat-landing. The morning was fresh and bright, life and song everywhere, and only one little cloud, like a slight streak of mist resting half way up the mountainside. Eric walked with a firm and erect step, taking in full draughts of the fresh morning air. He stood at the landing, and looked into the water, from which a streak of mist rose, and became dissolved in the air. Then he gazed long at the island, where the morning bell was ringing to wake up the children, who had been transformed the previous evening into legendary beings. How would that girl with long, black hair and glittering wings open her bright eyes? As if he must drive away this image, Eric took the paper out of his pocket, and read again the advertisement. On came the puffing steam-boat pressing her bow against the stream.

Eric had not noticed that two of the convent nuns, one of whom was the pretty Frenchwoman, had been also waiting for the approaching boat. He did not see them until after they had got on board. He gave them a salutation, but received no response except a look of surprise. They took their breviary, sat down upon the deck and said their prayers. On seeing them, Eric thought he would ask who the girl was with the wings; but he came to the conclusion not to do so, for no result could come from this occurrence, and he wished to concentrate all his energies upon the project he had in view. There were but few fellow passengers, and the morning hour does not encourage sociability, as if the solitude of sleep has yet an influence over human souls.

Eric stationed himself near the helmsman, who whistled incessantly in a low tone: and lost in thought he looked at the upheaved water and the shore. Pressing together his finely cut lips, he seemed determined silently to take in the full poetic beauty of this river and landscape that has never been adequately portrayed, and often shook his head as he heard two persons here and there wasting in so-called conversation the freshness of the morning and the quiet, inspiring influence of the scenery. We shall often have occasion as we proceed, to impart information about this youth. At present we will premise that Eric, the son of respectable parents, receiving a careful education, entered the military service, and then, voluntarily resigning his commission, devoted himself to study. He had just obtained his doctor's degree, working very hard to hasten this event, for only two months had elapsed since the death of his father. On the evening of the day he had taken his degree, his mother urged him to allow himself a few days' recreation. Stroking his pale, thin face, she said, "You will regain the fresh color of life; life and work are one's duty; that was always what your father said and did."

It was to be determined when Eric returned what plan of life they would adopt. The thought, which she could not keep down, was very painful to the mother, that they could no longer continue in their former mode of life without care and responsibility, but must make provision for the future, a state of things never contemplated by her. And with pain that she sought to repress, but could not wholly conceal, calling to mind a saying of Lessing, she saw her son standing in the marketplace and asking for work. Moreover, she hoped that her son would consent finally to receive some position through patronage; at any rate he must again recover his fresh, youthful looks. Had the mother seen him now, she would have been astonished to see how quickly that had taken place; for a brightness shone in his eye, and a color in his countenance more brilliant and glowing than in his best and most tranquil days.

For the sake of giving some special object to his journey, she had commissioned him to carry her greeting to the Superior of the convent. He was now on his return, for a simple newspaper advertisement had given an unexpected direction to his journey and his purposes.

Wonderful! thought Eric to himself, placing his hand upon the breast pocket containing the newspaper, wonderful, how the calls are given which send forth here and there the adventurous Ulysses!

Meanwhile he had sufficient youthful elasticity not to neglect, for the sake of the goal, the pleasures to be enjoyed by the way. He watched with an intelligent glance the machinery of the boat, and the life on the river and on the banks. At the second landing the two nuns were to stop, and the pretty Frenchwoman gave him a backward nod, as she descended the side ladder. When in the boat she sat looking down with folded hands; and on landing, she gave no further look behind.

The passengers changed at every landing. At one village came a band of pilgrims, chiefly women with white kerchiefs on their heads; and when they disembarked, a troop of Turners came on board, in their light gray uniform, and immediately struck up a song upon the deck, whilst the pilgrims sang upon the shore. In all the cities and villages they passed bells were ringing on that bright spring day full of blossoms and sweet sounds, and Eric felt all that intoxication which the Rhine-life brings over the spirit, – that exhilaration of every faculty, which comes no one knows whence, as no one can say what gives to the wine of these mountains its flavor and its life. It is the breath of the stream; it is the fragrance of the mountains; it is the virtue of the soil; it is the sunlight that glows in man as in the wine, and excites an ethereal gladness which no one can be free from, and which no one can explain.

Eric was often spoken to, but he held himself aloof from all companionship, wishing in the movement around him to be alone with the delightful landscape. There are words which become poles of thought in the meditation of the lonely. Eric heard one fellow traveller say to another,

"I prefer to go up the river, for one can look at everything longer and more closely, and it is a triumph of the human mind that we can make headway against the current."

Against the current! That was the word which that day stuck fast to Eric out of the thousand things he thought of and looked upon. Against the stream! That was also his life-course. He had left the trodden highway, and with bold self-determination he had marked out a path of his own. It is well, for one there learns more perfectly the world about him, and, above all, learns his own strength.

"Against the current!" said he, smiling to himself. "Let us see what will come of it." It was high noon when he disembarked at a little mediæval city.

A young man standing on the shore looked sharply at him, exclaiming, "Dournay!" "Herr von Pranken!" answered Eric. They grasped each other's hands.

CHAPTER III. DRINKING NEW WINE

"Before people have fairly done shaking hands, they say, 'Let us drink.' It must be the river there that makes you long so to quench your thirst."

So spoke Eric to the tall, fair youth of his own age, sitting opposite, who had placed his nicely gloved hand upon a brown spaniel whose head lay in his lap. The dog frequently looked up to Eric, whose deep, musical voice perhaps produced an impression upon the creature.

"Here is the list of wines. What year and what vintage do you prefer? Shall we take new wine, still lively and fermenting?" "Yes, new wine, and from the mountain here upon which the sun lies so cheerily, and where the cuckoo calls from the wood; – wine native to the soil, and blood-relation of this beautiful region."

Pranken in sharp, military accent gave the order to the waiter, – "A bottle of Anslese." The wine came, and was poured out golden into the sparkling glasses; the two men touched glasses and drank. They sat among the vines by the shore, where the refreshing landscape stretched itself out over green islands in the river, over gleaming habitations, over vineyards and mountains.

The boats by the shore were still, for the swell made by the steamboat had subsided; here and there the distant rumbling of a railway train was heard; on the smooth stream, in which the white clouds of heaven mirrored themselves, beams of the noonday sun sparkled, and in the foliage of the blossoming elder the nightingale sang.

"This is life!" said Eric, extending his arms. "After a day of loneliness amidst the confused whirl of thoughts and of people, to meet thus unexpectedly an old acquaintance is indeed like home; and let me tell you, moreover, that I look upon this meeting as a good omen."

Otto von Pranken nodded acquiescingly. In the first surprise, he had, perhaps, given Eric a warmer welcome than their acquaintance warranted; but now that Eric made no assumption of intimacy he nodded, well pleased. Eric has the tact to know his place; it's well. Pranken immediately drew off his glove, and reaching out his hand to Eric, asked, "Are you taking a pleasure-tour?"

"No, I am not in the situation, nor would this be the fitting time to do so. You probably do not know that my father died two months ago." "Indeed, indeed! and I shall be forever grateful to our good Professor; the little that I learned at the military school – and it is little enough – I owe altogether to him. Ah! what patience and what unremitting zeal your good father had! Let us pledge his memory." Their glasses clinked. "When I am dead," said Eric, and his voice had a tone of deep emotion, "I should like that my son should thus with a companion pledge my memory in the bright noonday."

"Ah! to die!" Pranken wished to turn the subject. "If I must die, that's enough, without knowing what is said of me afterwards. It is in a high degree offensive to me, that they have placed their burying ground in the midst of the vineyard yonder."

Eric made no reply, looking with fixed gaze before him, and listening to the cuckoo's voice calling at that moment from the churchyard. "Are you an agriculturist?" he asked, as if summoning together his scattered thoughts. "A sort of one; I have taken off, I don't know for how long it will be, my lieutenant's uniform, and mounted the high jack-boots; but I am bored by the one as much as by the other." He took his nail-cleaner out of his pocket, and worked away industriously at his nails; then with his pocket-brush he smoothed down again his carefully parted but thin hair, occasionally looking up to his companion opposite.

The two, sitting there for a little while without speaking, sharply inspected each other. Two awkward people, who are placed in a position of helpless antagonism, become mutually embarrassed; two clever people, who know each other's cleverness, are like two fencers, who, familiar with each other's ward and pass, will not risk a stroke or thrust. Pranken bent over his glass, inhaled the bouquet

of the wine, and said, at length, half smiling, "Perhaps you will now abandon your late Communistic views."

"Communistic! I had no idea that you, like so many others, cover up everything unpleasant with that convenient formula of excommunication, 'Communism.' I should like to be a Communist. I mean that I should like to see in Communism a form of organization adapted to the wants of society, which it is not, and never can be. We must take some other method than this, to get rid of the existing barbarism which compels our fellow human beings to be without the most common necessities of life. It is a bitter drop in my glass, that, while I can here at leisure drink this mountain-wine, yonder are poor hard-driven laborers who can never taste of it."

"To-day is a holiday, and no one labors then," said Pranken, with a laugh. Already, in this first meeting, the contrast of these two young men was plainly to be seen. Eric also laughed at this unexpected turn from his comrade; but he was mature enough not to make a personal matter out of a difference of theory. He therefore came back to neutral ground, and the conversation flowed on quietly in recollections of the past, and thoughts of the future.

In their carriage and gait, the military training of the two young men was plainly to be seen; but in Eric the stiffness was tempered by a sort of artistic grace. Pranken was elegant, Eric noble and refined; every tone and movement of Pranken bespoke attention; but his demeanor had that cool insolence, or – if that is too harsh a word – impertinence, which regards every one outside of one's circle as non-existent, or at least as having no right to exist.

Eric had an equally good figure, but he was more easy and dignified. Eric's voice was a fine, deep baritone, while Pranken's was a tenor. Their different characters could be seen also in their way of speaking. Eric pronounced every word and letter distinctly; Pranken, on the other hand, spoke with a lazy drawl, as if the vowels and consonants were too much for him, and as if he must avoid all straining of the organs of speech; the words dropped, as it were, out of his lips, and yet he liked to talk, and made excellent points. Pranken's remarks were forcible, and came out in jets, like the short canter peculiar to the Royal bodyguard. When talking upon the most ordinary occurrence, his manner was somewhat rattling and noisy, like one handling his shoulder-belt, and joining or leaving a convivial company. Eric had thought more than he had talked. A secluded student in the almost cloister-like retirement of home, this bearing was wholly novel and strange to him.

"Herr Baron," said the waiter, as he brought in a bottle of native, sparkling wine, "your coachman wishes to know if he shall unharness the horses."

"No," he replied; and while he was turning the bottle in the wine-cooler he added to Eric: "I dislike to interrupt the brief joy of this meeting with you. Ah! you have no idea what a terrible bore this extolled poetry of rural life is!" Pouring out a glass from the uncorked bottle, he said laughing, "Compost, and again compost, is the word. The compost-heap is an Olympus, and the God enthroned upon it is called Jupiter Ammonia." Pranken laughed aloud at his own witty outburst, then drank off his glass, and complacently twirled with both hands the ends of his moustache.

Eric led the conversation back to the beauty of the Rhine-life, but Pranken interrupted by saying, "If now somebody would only take off the paint from this lying Lorelei, with her song about the beauty of life on the Rhine! So the poets always speak of the dewy morning, and we had to-day a blast from the mountains, as if the angels in heaven had spilt all their milk into the fire."

Eric could not help laughing; sipping at his glass, he said, "But the joy of the wine!" "O, yes," replied Pranken, "the old toppers drink as a matter of business, but without any poetry. They sit together by the hour, always the same set, and the same half-dozen anecdotes on hand; or they interchange a superannuated jest, and then go home with red face, and staggering feet, bellowing forth a song; and that they call Rhine joyousness! The one really merry thing in this whole Rhine-delusion is the landlord's garland." "What's that?" "When the respectable godfather tailor or shoemaker has laid in a cask of choice vintage, more than he can or wishes to drink, he hangs upon his house a green garland; and the old German family room, with its hospitable Dutch stove covered with green

branches, and its gray cat under the bench, is turned into a bar-room. They first finish up Smith street, then Hare street, Church street, Salt street, and Capuchin street. They drink the health of their own wine; this is the only mistress."

"Let us, too, rejoice in our wine," said Eric. "See how the sun still glows in the noble juice which it has so joyfully smiled upon, and so diligently ripened. I drink to thee, O Sun, past and present." With a rapidity that seemed foreign from his ordinarily quiet mood, he emptied the glass.

"I have always thought," replied Pranken, "that you were a poet. Ah, I envy you; I should like to have the ability to write a satirical poem, so peppered that the whole world would burn its tongue with it." Eric smiled, saying that he had himself once thought that his vocation was to be a poet; but that he had perceived his mistake, and was now resolved to devote himself to some practical calling. "Yes," he said, taking the newspaper out of his pocket, "you can perhaps render me a service that will determine my whole life." "Gladly, if it is not against –"

"Don't be alarmed, for it has nothing to do with theories of right, or political matters at all. You can perhaps help me to an introduction."

"In love then? The handsome Eric Dournay, the Adonis of the garrison, wants some one to do his wooing?"

"Nothing of that kind. I only want a situation as private tutor. Look at this advertisement: 'I desire for my son, fifteen years of age, a tutor of scientific education and high-breeding, who will undertake to give him such training as shall fit him for a high station. Salary to be fixed by mutual agreement. A pension for life after the conclusion of the engagement. Address and references to be left at the railroad station at – , on the Rhine.'"

"I know about this advertisement, and even had a hand in writing it. I must confess that we hit upon something rather unusual in the choice of the expression 'high-breeding.'"

"Is a man of rank to be understood?"

"Certainly. I have no need of defending myself against the charge of what the newspaper hacks call *feudalism*. In this case the point insisted on is, that a tutor in a middle-class family, and especially for a self-willed boy, must be a man of unimpeachable position."

"Certainly, that is all right and proper. Perhaps, although I'm not a Baron, I have an unimpeachable position. I received the title of doctor a few days ago."

Pranken gave him a condescending nod of congratulation, then added quickly, – "And do you leave entirely out of sight that you quit the army with the rank of Captain? I should lay special stress on the military training. But no, you are not fit for a bear-trainer! The boy is as untameable and crafty as an American redskin, and he knows just where to lay hold upon the scalp-lock in every character, as he has already proved on half a dozen tutors." "That would only give an additional charm to the attempt." "And do you know that Massa Sonnenkamp is a millionaire, and the heir knows it?"

"That doesn't alarm me, but rather tempts me on." "Well; I will take you myself to the mysterious man. I have the good luck to stand high in his favor. But no. Still better, you shall go with me first to my brother-in-law's estate. You must remember my sister Bella." "Perfectly, and I accept your hospitality. But I would rather you should announce my visit to Herr Sonnenkamp – it seems to me I have heard that name before, but no matter – and let me go to him alone." Pranken threw a questioning glance upon Eric, who continued: "I know how to appreciate your ready friendliness; but a stranger can never quite do himself justice in presence of a third person."

Pranken smiled at Eric's quickness, feeling a sort of pride in having so cultivated a man under his patronage. He took out his pocket-book, and sat for a while with his silver pencil-case pressed against his lips; the doubt arose whether he were doing wisely to recommend Eric to the position; would it not be better to put him off, and bring forward a man who would be quite under his own influence? but as Eric would make the application for himself, and would, most probably, receive the appointment, it would be better to establish a claim to his gratitude. And in the midst of his hesitation

a certain kindly feeling made itself felt; it was pleasant to be able to be a benefactor, and he was for a moment happy in the thought.

He wrote directly on a card to Herr Sonnenkamp, begging him to make no engagement, as a highly educated gentleman, formerly an artillery officer, was about to apply in person for the situation. He carefully avoided speaking as a personal friend of the applicant, as he wished to take no decided step without his sister's approval.

The card was sent off immediately, and Pranken played for some minutes with the india-rubber strap of his pocket-book, before putting it back into his pocket.

CHAPTER IV. COMRADES WITHOUT COMRADESHIP

Seated in an open carriage, the two young men were soon winding along a road which led up the mountain. The air was full of dewy freshness, and high above the vineyards the nightingales in the leafy woods poured forth a constant flood of melody. The two men sat silent. Each knew that the other had come within the circle of his destiny, but could not anticipate what would be the consequence.

Eric took off his hat, and as Pranken looked at his handsome face with its commanding, self-reliant expression, it seemed to him that he had never really seen it before; a thrill of alarm passed through him, as he began to realize that he was forming ties whose results could not be foreseen. His face now darkened with anger and scorn, now brightened with benevolence and good-humored smiles; he murmured to himself some unintelligible words, and burst forth at intervals into an inexplicable fit of laughter.

"It is truly astonishing, most astonishing!" he said to himself. "I could hardly have believed it of you, my good Otto, that you could be so generous and self-forgetful, so wholly and completely a friend. People have always told you, and you have had the conceit yourself, that through all your whims you were better than you would own to yourself. Shame on you, that you would not recognize your innocence and virtue! Here you are showing yourself a friend, a brother, a most noble minister of destiny to another, who is a bit of humanity, nothing but pure humanity, in a full beard. All his thoughts are elevated and manly, but a good salary pleases even his noble manliness."

Pranken laid his head back on the cushions of the carriage, and looked smiling up to the sky. He resolved to take good care that this specimen of noble manhood, who was sitting by him in the carriage, should not thwart his plans, and that what he could not bring about himself, his sister Bella should accomplish. Pranken's whole bearing was forced and unnatural. His uniform, worn ever since childhood, had given him not only a feeling of exclusiveness, but also a definite, undisputed, and exceptional position, which separated him from the ordinary mass of men. Among his fellow-soldiers he was lively, and high-spirited; not specially remarkable for anything, but a good officer, knowing how to take care of and to drill his horses and his men. Now that he had laid aside his uniform, he felt in citizen's dress as if he were falling to pieces; but he held himself all the more proudly erect, in order to show by every movement that he did not belong to the common herd. In the regiment there were always strict rules to be followed; now he was under the command of duty and wearisome free-will. Left to himself, he became painfully aware that he was nothing without his comrades. Life appeared bare and dreary, and he had worked himself into a bitter and satirical mood, which gave him in his own eyes, a certain superiority to that blank, monotonous existence, without parade, or play, or ballet. He looked with a sort of envy at Eric, who, poorer and without advantages of social position, gazed around him so serenely and composedly, feasting on the beauty of the landscape. Eric was certainly the better off. Having become a soldier at a more mature age, he had never lost his own individuality in the '*esprit de corps*' of army life; and now that he was a civilian again, his whole appearance changed, and his nature developed itself under a new and interesting aspect.

"I envy you," said Pranken, after they had driven for sometime in silence.

"*You envy me?*"

"Yes! at first it vexed me and roused my pity, that a man like you should enter the service of a private individual, and in such a position! But perhaps it is fortunate for a man to be obliged to determine on some career in order to make a living."

"Just for that reason," replied Eric, "will the task of educating the young millionaire be a hard one. Two things only excite the powers of men to activity: an idea, and worldly gain."

"I don't quite understand you."

"Let me make my meaning clearer. He who uses his power for the sake of an idea enters the region of genius, however small and inconspicuous may be the sphere of his activity. He who works for the sake of profit, to supply the necessities, or the luxuries of life, is nothing but a common laborer. The common need is the compelling power which plants the vine on the steep mountain side, clears the forest, steers the ship, and drives the plough. Where this common need unites itself with the ideal, and this may be in every sphere of life, *there* is noble human activity. A nobleman, who busies himself in the world, has the good fortune to be the inheritor of an idea, – the idea of honor."

Pranken nodded approvingly, but with a slightly scornful expression, as much as to say, "This man to have the audacity to seek justification for the nobility! Nobility and faith need not be proved; they are facts of history not to be questioned!"

Again they were silent, and each asked himself what was to come of this unexpected blending of their paths in life. As fellow-soldiers they had been only remotely connected; it might be very different for the future.

The valleys already lay in shadow, though the sun shone brightly on the mountain-tops. They drove through a village where all was in joyous and tumultuous movement, – in the streets, maidens walking arm in arm; young men standing singly or in groups, exchanging merry greetings and jokes and laughing jests; the old people sitting at the doors; the fountain splashing, and along the high-road by the river, gay voices singing together.

"O how full of refreshment is our German life!" cried Eric; "the active, industrious people enjoy themselves in the evening, which brings coolness and shade to the treeless vineyards."

They continued their journey in silence, when suddenly Pranken started convulsively, for there came before him, as if in a dream, a vision of himself, pistol in hand, confronting in a duel the man now seated by his side. Whence came the vision? He could not tell. And yet, was it meant to be a prophetic warning?

He forced himself to talk. A prominent trait of his character, which belonged to him by nature and education was a social disposition, a desire to please all with whom he came in contact. To drive away the vision, and in obedience to this social impulse, he began to tell Eric where he had been. By the advice of his brother-in-law, Count Clodwig von Wolfsgarten, he had just paid a visit to a much respected landed proprietor in the neighborhood, in order to enter upon a course of instruction, if the arrangement should prove mutually agreeable.

The land-holder Weidmann, – who was often called the March-minister, because as a pioneer to help stem the revolutionary current in 1848 he was made minister for three days, – was considered, in all the surrounding region, as an authority upon agricultural as well as political matters.

Pranken talked on, and the more he talked the more he enjoyed his own witty sallies; and the more he indulged in them, the more pungent they became. He began: "I should like to know how this man will strike you; he has, like" – here he hesitated a little, but quickly added – "like all great reformers, a vast train of fine dogmas, enough to supply a whole Capuchin monastery."

Eric laughed, and Pranken, laughing also, continued: "Ah! the world is made up of nothing but humbug! The much-talked-of poetry of a landed proprietor's life is nothing but a constant desire for lucre, tricked out with paint from the glow of the morning and evening sky. This Herr Weidmann and his sons think of nothing but the everlasting dollar. He has six sons, five of whom I know, and all look impertinently well, with pretentiously white, faultless teeth, and full beards. These mountains, which travellers admire, are compelled to yield them wine from the surface, and slate, manganese, ore, and chemicals from the mines beneath. They have five different factories; one son is a miner, another a machinist, a third a chemist, and so they work into each others' hands and for their common interest. I have been told that they extract forty different substances from beechwood, and then send the exhausted residuum as charcoal to the Paris restaurants. Isn't that a pretty love of nature? Then, as to Father Weidmann, – you enjoy the song of the nightingales, I know. Well, Father Weidmann obtained from the government an edict of protection for them, because they eat insects and are very

useful to the fields and woods. Father Weidmann lives in a restored castle, but if a minstrel came there to-day he would get no hearing, unless he sang the noble love by which Nitrogen and Hydrogen are bound to Ammonia. I am almost crazed with super-phosphates and alkalies. Do you think, it is a destiny worth striving after, to be able to increase the food of mankind by a few sacks of potatoes?"

Before Eric could answer, Pranken added: "Ah, there is just nothing that one would like to turn to. The army is the one profession."

As they were ascending a steep hill overlooking the river with its islands, Pranken, pointing up the stream to a white house upon the bank, said, "Yonder is the Sonnenkamp villa, which bears the name of Eden. That great glass dome on which the evening sun is shining is the palm-house. Herr Sonnenkamp is an enthusiastic gardener; his conservatories and hot-houses excel those of princes."

Eric, standing upright in the carriage, looked back upon the landscape, and the house where was to be, probably, the turning-point of his life. As he sat down Pranken offered him a cigar. Eric declined, for he had given up smoking.

"He who does not smoke will not do for Herr Sonnenkamp;" and he emphasized the word Herr. "Next to his plants, he prides himself upon his great variety of genuine cigars; and he was specially grateful to me, when I once said to him that he possessed a seraglio of cigars. I don't know how he who refuses a cigar can get along with him."

"I can smoke, but I am no slave to the habit," replied Eric, taking the cigar.

"You seem to me not only a Doctor of Philosophy," said Pranken, "but also a real philosopher."

The two travellers drove on in silence. Eric looked down, his mind occupied with many and various thoughts.

O wonderful world! Invincible potencies hover in the air; a human soul is journeying there and does not imagine that another is pressing towards him, and that they both have one destiny. This is the greatness of the human spirit, that there is a preparation for taking up into itself, as if they had one life, some person whose name is not even known, whose countenance has not been seen, and of whose existence there has been no anticipation. He who has not lived for himself alone, he who has dreamed, thought, labored, striven for the common good, he is ready, each hour, to enter into the universal life, and utters the creative word. Be soul of my soul, and speaks the word of salvation, "Thou art thy brother's keeper."

CHAPTER V. THE OLD NOBLEMAN AND HIS BEAUTIFUL WIFE

"To Wolfsgarten," was the direction upon the guide-board at the edge of the well-kept forest where they were now driving, on the grounds and territory of the nobleman. Every stranger who asks the way, and makes inquiry concerning the large, plain mansion with steep gables beyond, receives the reply that two happy people live there, who have every blessing except that of children.

There are those who give satisfaction to the soul. Where two sit and talk about them, each feels gratified in being able to perceive and exhibit the pure and beautiful, and is grateful to the other for each new insight; but, strangely enough, people soon tire of talking about the purely beautiful. On the other hand, there are those who furnish an inexhaustible supply of material for conversation which dwells chiefly upon the unlovely features, whilst the attractive are mingled in and brought to the surface with great effort; at the close the speaker feels obliged to add, "But I am no hypocrite when I meet this person in a friendly way, for while there is much to condemn, there is also a great deal that is good." Clodwig was a character of the former, and his wife Bella, born Baroness von Pranken, of the latter sort.

Clodwig was a nobleman in the best sense of the word. He was not one of your affable people, on the same terms with every one. He had a gentlemanly reserve and repose. The independent proprietor, the manufacturer as well as the priest, the day-laborer, the official, and the city-merchant, each believed that he was particularly esteemed and beloved; and all considered him an ornament of the landscape, like some great tree upon the mountain-top, whose shade and whose majestic height were a joy, and a shelter from every storm.

The counsel and help of Clodwig von Wolfsgarten could be counted upon confidently in all exigencies. He had been abroad for a long period, and only since his second marriage, five years since, had he resided at his country-seat. Bella von Wolfsgarten was much more admired than beloved. She was beautiful, many said too beautiful for the old gentleman. She was more talkative than her husband; and when she drove out in a pony-carriage drawn by a span of dappled greys through the country and villages, herself holding the reins, while her husband sat by her side and the footman upon the back seat, everybody bowed and stared. Many old people, who always find some special reason for any new fashion, were inclined to see in this fact of Bella's holding the reins a proof that she had the rule. But this was not so, by any means. She was humble and entirely submissive to her husband. It was often displeasing to him that she so excessively praised, even in his presence, his goodness, his even disposition, and his noble views of life and the world.

Eric had only a dim recollection of the commotion excited in the capital by Bella's marriage, for it happened about the time that he resigned his commission. He had frequently seen Bella, but never the count. The count had been for many years ambassador from the small principality to the papal court, and there Eric's father had become acquainted with him.

Clodwig was known in the scientific world through a small archæological treatise with very expensive designs; for next to music, which he pursued with ardor, he was devoted to the science of antiquity with all that earnest fidelity which was a characteristic of his whole being. It was said in his praise, that there was no science and no art to which he did not give his fostering care. Returning from Rome to his native land, childless and a widower, he became an esteemed member of the assembly of the nobility favoring what is called moderate progress; and during the session, he associated much with the old Herr von Pranken, who was also a member. He soon became interested in Bella von Pranken, a woman of imposing manners, and a brilliant performer upon the piano. Bella was now, if one may be so ungallant as to say so, somewhat *passée*; but in her bloom she had been the beauty of that court circle, where a younger generation now flourished, to which she did not belong.

Bella had travelled over a good part of the world. In the company of two Englishwomen she had visited Italy, Greece, and Egypt. She had hired an experienced courier, who relieved her from all care. On her return to the court where her father was grand-equerry, she mingled in society with that indifferent air which passes itself off as a higher nature brought into contact with the common-places of daily life. She conversed much with Clodwig von Wolfsgarten, who supposed that the insignificant trifles of social life were considered by her as unworthy of notice, and she gained the credit with him of possessing a refined nature occupied only with higher interests. She constantly and actively participated in Clodwig's fondness for archaeological pursuits. It was a matter of course that they should find themselves in each other's society, and if the one or the other was not present, Bella or Clodwig was asked if the absent one was sick, or had an engagement. Bella had no porcelain figures and nick-nacks of that kind upon her table, but only choice copies from the antique; and she wore a large amber chain taken from the tomb of some noble Roman lady. She possessed a large photographic album, containing views of her journey, and was happy to look over them again and again with Clodwig, and to receive instruction from him. She also played frequently for him, although no longer exhibiting her musical talent in society.

The entire circle for once did something novel: they carried from Bella to Clodwig, and from him to Bella, the enthusiastic speeches of the one about the other; and even personages of the highest rank took part in furthering their intimacy. This became necessary from the timidity they both experienced, when they became conscious of the possibility of a different relation between them. Meanwhile success crowned the attempt, and the betrothal was celebrated in the most select circle of the court.

Mischievous tongues now repeated – for it was but fair that there should be some compensation for the previous excessive good-nature – that two interesting points of discussion had arisen. Bella, they said, had made it a condition of the betrothal, that he should never speak of his deceased wife, and the old Pranken had asked of the physician how long the count might be expected to live. He must have smiled in a peculiar way when the physician assured him that such old gentlemen, who live so regularly, quietly, and without passion, might count upon an indefinite number of years.

In the meanwhile, the conduct of Bella gave the lie to the malicious report that she hoped soon to be a rich young widow. Clodwig had had an attack of vertigo shortly before the wedding; and always after that Bella contrived that he should be, without his knowledge, attended by a servant. She devoted herself with the most affectionate care to the old gentleman, who now seemed to enjoy a new life, and to gain fresh vigor on returning to his paternal estate. At the baths, where they went every summer, Clodwig and Bella were highly esteemed personages. She was admired not only for her beauty, but also for her stainless fidelity, and for her solicitous attention to her aged husband.

CHAPTER VI. THE RECEPTION DAY

It was yet bright daylight here upon the mountain-height, when they approached the Wolfsgarten mansion. As they were making the last ascent through the park, a beautiful girl in a figured blue summer-suit stood in the path between the green trees. Getting sight of the carriage, she quickly turned back again. Two light-blue ribbons, tied behind, according to the fashion, floated in the evening wind. Her step was firm and yet graceful.

"Ah," said Pranken, "to-day we have hit upon my sister's collation-day. That pretty girl who turned about so quickly is the daughter of the Justice, freshly baked out of the oven of the convent of the 'Sacred Heart' at Aix. You will find her a genuine child of the Rhine, and my sister has given her the appropriate name Musselina; there is in her something of perpetual summer. Through this warm-hearted child we are now already announced to the company."

While he was arranging his hair with his pocket-comb, he continued, —

"The family is very respectable and highly esteemed; the little one is too good to be trifled with; one must have an inferior kind to smoke in the open air."

Pranken suddenly became aware whom he was talking to, and immediately added, — "So would our comrade, Don John Nipper, who was everlastingly betting, express himself. Do you know that the wild fellow has now an affection of the spine, and is wheeled about at Wiesbaden in a chair?"

Pranken's whole manner changed; and springing with joyful elasticity out of the carriage, he reached out his hand to Eric, saying, "Welcome to Wolfsgarten!" Many carriages were standing in the court-yard, and in the garden they found the ladies, who with fans and parasols sat upon handsome chairs around a bed of luxuriantly-growing forget-me-nots, in the centre of which was a red rhododendron in full bloom.

"We are no peace-breakers; don't let us disturb you, good ladies," cried out Pranken from a distance, in a jesting tone. Bella greeted her brother, and then Eric, whom she recognised at once. The wife of the Justice and Fräulein Lina were very happy to renew the acquaintance of yesterday; then were introduced the district physician's wife and sister, the head-forester's wife and her mother, the apothecary's wife, the burgomaster's wife, the school-director's wife, and the wives of the two manufacturers. In fact, all the notabilities of the place seemed to have assembled. The gentlemen had gone, it was said, to view some prospect not very far off, and would soon be back.

The conversation was not very lively, and Eric's appearance awakened interest. The director's wife, a large striking figure — Bella called her the lay figure, for she knew how to dress well, and everything became her — raised her opera-glass and looked round upon the landscape, but took advantage of this survey to get a nearer look at Eric's face. The manner in which she then balanced the glass in her hand seemed to say that she was not altogether displeased with the view.

After the first question, how long it was since Eric had seen the Rhine, and after he had informed them how everything had appeared under a new aspect, and had affected him almost to intoxication, he said it was very pleasant to see the young ladies wearing wreaths of fresh flowers and leaves upon their heads. To this he added the remark, that though it was natural and fitting for ladies to wear wreaths on their heads, it was very comical when men, even on some rural excursion, allowed the black cylinder hat to be ornamented with a wreath by some fair hand.

Insignificant as was the observation, the tone in which Eric uttered it gave peculiar pleasure, and the whole circle smiled in a friendly manner; they at once felt that here was a person of original and suggestive ideas.

Bella knew how to bring out a guest in conversation. "Did not the Greeks and Romans, Captain," she asked, "wear badges of distinction upon the head, while we, who plume ourselves so much about our hearts, wear ours upon the breast?" Then she spoke of an ancient wreath of victory she had seen

at Rome, and asked Eric whether there were different classes of wreaths. Without intending it Eric described the various kinds of crowns given to victory, and it excited much merriment when he spoke of the wreath made of grass, which a general received who had relieved a besieged city.

The girls, who stood in groups at one side, made a pretence of calling out to a handsome boy playing at the fountain below, and sprang down the little hill with flying garments. On reaching the fountain, they troubled themselves no further about the little boy they had called to, but talked with one another about the stranger, and how interesting he was.

"He is handsomer than the architect," said the apothecary's daughter.

"And he is even handsomer than Herr von Pranken," added Hildegard, the school-director's daughter.

Lina enjoyed the enviable advantage of being able to relate that she had met him yesterday at the island convent; her father had rightly guessed that he was of French descent, for his father had belonged to the immigrating Huguenots, as his name indicated. The apothecary's daughter, who plumed herself highly upon her brother's being a lieutenant, promised to obtain from him more definite information about the captain.

In her free way, Lina proposed that they should weave a garland and place it unexpectedly on the bare head of the stranger. The wreath was speedily got ready, but no one of the girls, not even Lina, ventured to complete the strange proposal.

Meanwhile Eric was sitting amidst the circle of ladies, and he expressed his sincere envy of those persons who live among such beautiful natural scenery; they might not always be conscious of it, but it had a bracing influence upon the spirit, and there was a keen sense of loss when removed into less interesting scenes. No one ventured to make any reply, until Bella remarked, – "Praise of the landscape in which we live is a sort of flattery to us, as if we ourselves, our dress, our house, or anything belonging to us, should be praised."

All assented, although it was not evident whether Bella had expressed approval or disapproval. Then she asked Eric concerning his mother, and as if incidentally, but not without emphasis, alluded to the sudden death of her brother, Baron von Burgholz. Those present knew now that Eric was of partially noble descent. Bella spoke so easily that speaking seemed a wholly secondary matter to her, while seeing and being seen were the things of real importance. She hardly moved a feature in speaking, scarcely even the lips, and only in smiling exhibited a full row of small white teeth.

Bella knew that Eric was looking at her attentively while he spoke, and composedly as if she stood before a mirror, she offered her face to his gaze. She then introduced Eric, in the most friendly way, to the agreeable head-forester's wife, a fine singer, asking at the same time if he still kept up his singing; he replied that he had been for some years out of practice.

The evening was unusually sultry, and the air was close and hot over mountain and valley.

A thunder storm was coming up in the distance. They discussed whether they should wait for the storm at Wolfsgarten or return home immediately. "If the gentlemen were only here to decide." The pleasant forester's lady confessed that she was afraid of a thunder storm.

"Then you and your sister are in sympathy," said Eric.

"O," said the sister, "I am not at all afraid."

"Excuse me; I did not mean you, but the beautiful songstress dwelling here in the thicket. Do you not notice that Mrs. Nightingale, who sang so spiritedly a few moments since, is now suddenly dumb?" All were very merry over this remark, and now each told what she did with herself during a thunder storm.

"I think," said Eric, "that we can find out not so much the character, as the vegetative life of the brain, the nervous temperament, as it is called, by observing the effect which a thunder storm has upon us. We are so far removed from the life of nature, that when changes take place in the atmosphere that can be heard and seen, we are taken by surprise, as if a voice should suddenly call to us out of the still air, 'Attend! thou art walking and breathing in a world full of mystery!'"

"Ah, here come the gentlemen!" it was suddenly called out. Two handsome pointers springing into the garden went round and round Pranken's dog, who had been abroad, smelling at him inquiringly, as if they would get out of him the results of his experience. The men came immediately after the dogs.

Eric immediately recognised Count Clodwig, before his name was mentioned. His fine, well-preserved person, the constant friendliness of expression on his smoothly shaven, elderly face, as yet unwrinkled, – this could be no other than the Count Clodwig von Wolfsgarten; all the rest had grouped themselves around him as a centre, and exhibited a sort of deference, as if he were the prince of the land. He possessed two peculiar characteristics seldom found together: he attracted love, and at the same time commanded homage; and although he never exhibited any aristocratic haughtiness, and treated each one in a friendly and kindly manner, it seemed only a matter of course for him to take the lead.

When Eric was introduced to him, his countenance immediately lighted up, every feature beaming with happy thoughts. "You are welcome; as the son of my Roman friend you have inherited my friendship," he said, pressing more closely with his left hand the spectacles over his eyes.

His manner of speaking was so moderate and agreeable that he seemed to be no stranger; while there was in the accent something so calm and measured, that any striking novelty was received from him as something for which you were unconsciously prepared. He had always the same demeanor, a steady composure, and a certain deliberateness, never making haste, having always time enough, and preserving a straight-forward uprightness befitting an old man. When Eric expressed the happiness it gave him to inherit the count's friendship towards his father, and that of the countess towards his mother, a still warmer friendliness beamed from Clodwig's countenance.

"You have exactly your father's voice," he said. "It was a hard stroke to me when I heard of his death, for I had thought of writing to him for several years, but delayed until it was too late."

When Eric was introduced now by Clodwig to the rest of the gentlemen, it seemed as if this man invested him with his own dignity. "Here I make you acquainted with a good comrade," said Clodwig, with a significant smile, whilst he introduced him to an old gentleman, having a broad red face, and snow-white hair trimmed very close. "This is our major – Major Grassler."

The major nodded pleasantly, extending to Eric a hand to which the forefinger was wanting; but the old man could still press strongly the stranger's hand. He nodded again, but said nothing.

The other gentlemen were also introduced by the count; one of these, a handsome young man, with a dark-brown face and fine beard and moustache, the architect Erhardt, took his leave directly, as he had an appointment at the limestone quarry. The school-director informed Eric that he had been also a pupil of Professor Einsiedel.

The major was called out of the men's circle by the ladies; they took him to task, the wife of the Justice leading off, for having left them and gone off with the gentlemen, while always before he had been very attentive to the ladies, and their faithful knight. Now he was to make amends.

The major had just seated himself when the girls placed upon his white head the crown intended for Eric. He nodded merrily, and desired that a mirror should be brought, to see how he looked. He pointed the forefinger of his left hand to Lina, and asked her if that was one of the things she learned at the convent.

It soon became evident that the major was the target for shafts of wit, a position which some one in every society voluntarily must assume or submit to perforce. The major conferred upon his acquaintance more pleasure than he was aware of, for every one smiled in a friendly way when he was thought of or spoken about.

A gust of wind came down over the plain; the flag upon the mansion was lowered; the upholstered chairs were speedily put under the covering of the piazza; and all had a feeling of comfort, as they sat sociably together in the well-lighted drawing-room, while the storm raged outside.

For some time no other subject could be talked about than the storm. The major told of a slight skirmish in which he had been engaged in the midst of the most fearful thunder and lightning; he expressed himself clumsily, but they understood his meaning, how horrible it was for them to be murdering each other, while the heavens were speaking. The Justice told of a young fellow who was about to take a false oath, and had just raised up his hand, when a sudden thunder-clap caused him to drop it, crying out, "I am guilty." The forester added laughing, that a thunder storm was a very nice thing, as the wild game afterwards was very abundant. The school-director gave an exceedingly graphic description of the difficulty of keeping children in the school-room occupied, as one could not continue the ordinary instruction, and yet one did not know what should be done with them.

All eyes were turned upon Eric as if to inquire what he had to say, and he remarked in an easy tone, – "What here possesses the soul as a raging storm is down there, on the lower Rhine, and above there, in Alsace, a distant heat lightning which cools off the excessive heat of the daytime. People sit there enjoying themselves in gardens and balconies, breathing in the pure air in quiet contemplation. I might say that there are geographical boundaries and distinct zones of feeling."

Drawing out this idea at length, he was able to make them wholly forget the present. The forester's wife, who had been sitting in the dark in the adjoining room with her hand over her eyes, came into the drawing-room at these words of Eric, which she must have heard, and seemed relieved of all fear.

Eric spoke for a long time. Though his varied experience might have taught him a different lesson, he still believed that people always wished to get something in conversation, to gain clearer ideas, and not merely to while away the time. Hence, when he conversed, he gave out his whole soul, the very best he had, and did not fear that behind his back they would call his animated utterances pertness and vanity. He had a talent for society; even more than that, for he placed himself in the position of him whom he addressed, and this one soon felt that Eric saw farther than he himself did, and that he spoke not out of presumption, but out of benevolence.

There is something really imposing in a man who clearly and fluently expresses his ideas to other people; their own thought is brought to light, and they are thankful for the boon. But most persons are imposed upon by the "Sir Oracle" who gives them to understand, "I am speaking of things which you do not and cannot comprehend;" and the Sir Oracles carry so much the greater weight of influence.

The men, and more particularly the Justice and the school-director, shrugged their shoulders. Eric's enthusiasm and his unreserved unfolding of his own interior life had in it something odd, even wounding to some of the men. They felt that this strange manner, this extraordinary revelation of character, this pouring out of one's best, was attractive to the ladies, and that they, getting in a word incidentally and without being able to complete a thought, or round off a period, were wholly cast into the shade. The Justice, observing the beaming eyes of his daughter and of the forester's wife, whispered to the school-director, "This is a dangerous person."

The company broke up into groups. Eric stood with Clodwig in the bow-window, and they looked out upon the night. The lightning flashed over the distant mountains, sometimes lighting up a peak in the horizon, sometimes making a rift in the sky, as if behind it were another sky, while the thunder rolled, shaking the ceiling and tinkling the pendent prisms of the chandelier.

"There are circumstances and events which occur and repeat themselves as if they had already passed before us in a dream," Clodwig began. "Just as I now stand here with you, I stood with your father in the Roman Campagna. I know not how it chanced, but we spoke of that view in which the things of the world are regarded under the aspect of the infinite, and then your father said, – methinks I still hear his voice, – 'Only when we take in the life of humanity as a whole do we have, as thinkers, that rest which the believers receive from faith, for then the world lives to us as to them, in the oneness of God's thought. He who follows up only the individual and cannot comprehend its

zigzag track, or its fate as it suddenly falls into the hole of the ant-lion, who must also get a living. But he who regards the anthill as a whole – "'

Clodwig suddenly stopped. From the valley they heard the shrill whistle of the locomotive, and the hollow rumbling of the train of cars.

"But at that time," he continued after a pause, and his face was lighted up by a sudden flash of lightning, "at that time no locomotive's whistle broke in upon our quiet meditation."

"And yet," said Eric, "I do not like to regard this shrill tone as a discord."

"Go on, I am curious to hear why not."

"Is it not grand that human beings continue their ordinary pursuits in the midst of nature's disturbances? In our modern age an unalterable system of movements is seen to be continually operating upon our earth. May it not be said that all our doing is but a preparation of the way, a making straight the path, so that the eternal forces of nature may move in freedom? The man of this new age has the railroad to serve him."

Clodwig grasped Eric's hand. Bright flashes of lightning illumined the beaming face of the young man and the serene countenance of the old count. Clodwig pressed warmly Eric's hand, as if he would say, "Welcome again! now art thou truly mine." Love, suddenly taking possession of two hearts, is said to make them one; and is it not also true of friendship?

It was so here. The two confronted each other, not with any foreboding, or excitement of feeling, but with a clear and firm recognition that each had found his own choicest possession; they felt that they belonged to each other, and it was entirely forgotten that they had looked into each other's eyes for the first time only a few moments before. They had become united in the pure thought of the Eternal that has no measure of time; they may have stood there speechless for a long time after unclasping their hands; they were united, and they were one without the need of word, without external sign.

In a voice full of emotion, as if he had a secret to reveal, which he could hardly open his lips to utter, and yet which he must not withhold, Clodwig said, – "In such storms I have often thought of that former period when the whole land from here to the Odenwald was a great lake, out of which the mountain peaks towered as islands, until the water forced for itself a channel through the wall of rock. And have you, my young friend, ever entertained the thought that chaos may come again?"

"Yes, indeed; but we cannot transport ourselves into the pre-human or post-human period. We can only fill out, according to our strength, our allotted time of three score years and ten." The major now came and invited them to go into the inner saloon, where the company had assembled. Clodwig again stroked softly Eric's hand, saying, "Will you come?" Like two lovers who have just given a secret kiss and an embrace, they rejoined the company. No one suspected why their countenances were so radiant.

CHAPTER VII. AN ILLUMINATING FLASH

After the crisis of a storm has passed, a company of persons become very lively, and have an additional feeling of home. They had withdrawn into the inner music saloon, whose vaulted ceiling, brilliantly lighted up, had even a festive appearance. Half way up the walls of the room four balconies projected, and in the centre was the grand piano. On one side was a circular seat, upon an elevated platform, where Bella was sitting with the happy Justice's wife on the right, and the forester's wife on the left.

The young girls were promenading arm in arm through the saloon, and Pranken, full of his jokes, accompanied them; he carried in his hand a rose out of Lina's wreath; when Clodwig and Eric joined the circle, with the major, the young people came up to them.

Bella asked the major whether the work upon the castle, which Herr Sonnenkamp had begun to rebuild, was still continued. The major nodded; he always nodded several times before he spoke, as if carefully arranging beforehand what he should say.

He asserted very confidently that they would find a spring in the castle court-yard. Clodwig begged him to preserve carefully every relic of the middle ages and the Roman period, and promised soon to go himself, and superintend the excavations. The head-forester jestingly observed, "Herr Sonnenkamp," – everybody called him Herr, but with a peculiar accent, as if they wished no further acquaintance with him, – "Herr Sonnenkamp will probably now give his name to the restored castle."

When Herr Sonnenkamp's name was mentioned, it seemed as if a dam had been carried away, and the conversation rushed in headlong from all quarters.

"Herr Sonnenkamp has a deal of understanding," said the school-director, "but Molière maliciously observes, that the rich man's understanding is in his pocket."

The apothecary added, "Herr Sonnenkamp loves to represent himself as an incorrigible sinner, in the hope that nobody will believe him; but people do believe him."

Eric caught the names Herr Sonnenkamp, Frau Ceres, Manna, Roland, Frau Perini; it was like the chirping of birds in the woods, all sounds mingled together, and no one melody distinctly heard. The wife of the Justice, with a significant glance towards Pranken, said, "Men like the major and Herr von Pranken can take up at once such mysterious, interloping people from abroad, but ladies must be more reserved." Then she gave it to be understood that the old established families could not be too strict in receiving foreign intruders.

In a somewhat forced humor, Bella joked about the long nails of Frau Ceres; but her lips trembled when Clodwig said very sharply, "Among the Indians long nails take the place of family descent, and the one perhaps is as good as the other."

All were amazed when Clodwig spoke so disparagingly of the nobility. He seemed displeased at the detracting remarks upon the Sonnenkamp family; he was above all meanness, and everything small and invidious was as offensive to him as a disagreeable odor. Turning to Eric, he said, – "Herr Sonnenkamp, the present subject of the conversation, is the owner of many millions. To acquire such immense wealth is an evidence of strength; or, I should rather say, to acquire great wealth shows great vigor; to keep it requires great wisdom; and to use it well is a virtue and an art."

He paused, and as no one spoke, he continued, – "Riches have a certain title to respect; riches, especially one's own acquisition, are an evidence of activity and service. Far easier does it appear to me to be a prince, than to be a man of such excessive wealth. Such an accumulation of power is apt to make men arbitrary; a very wealthy man lives in an atmosphere saturated, as it were, with the consciousness of supreme power, and ceases to be an individual personality, and the whole world assumes to him the aspect of a price-current list. Have you ever met such a man?"

Before Eric could reply, Pranken roughly broke in, "Captain Dournay wishes to become the tutor of the young Sonnenkamp." All eyes were directed towards Eric; he was regarded as if he had been suddenly transformed, and clad in a beggar's garment. The men nodded to each other and shrugged their shoulders; a man engaging in a private employment, and such an employment too, had lost all title to consideration. The ladies looked at him compassionately. Eric saw nothing of all this. He did not know what Pranken meant by this surprising revelation; he felt that he must make some reply, but knew not what to say.

A painful pause followed Pranken's communication. Clodwig had placed his hands upon his lips, that had become very pale. At last he said, "Such an appointment will contribute to your honor, and to the honor and good fortune of Herr Sonnenkamp."

Eric felt a broad hand laid upon his shoulder, and on looking round he gazed into the smiling countenance of the major, who, pointing several times with his left hand to his heart, said at last, "The count has expressed what I wished to say, but it is better for him to have said it, and he has done it much better than I could. Carry out your purpose, comrade."

Pranken now came up, and said, in a very affable tone, that it was he who had advised and recommended Eric. Lina had opened a window, and called out in a clear voice, "The storm is over."

A fresh, fragrant air streaming into the saloon gave relief to their constraint, and every one breathed freely again. A gentle rain still pattered down, but the nightingales were again singing in the woods. They now urged the forester's wife to sing. She declined, but could not withstand the request of Bella, who very seldom played, that she would sing to her accompaniment.

The forester's wife sang some songs with so fresh and youthful a voice, so clear and simple, that the hearts of all the hearers were touched. Lina also was urged to sing. She insisted that she could not to-day, but, on receiving a reproving glance from her mother, she seated herself at the piano, sang some notes, and then gave up. Without embarrassment, as if nothing had happened, she said, "I have now proved to you that I can't sing to-day."

The wife of the Justice bit her lips, and breathed hard with quivering nostrils, at the foolish girl acting as if nothing was the matter. The forester's wife sang another song; and now Lina, placing herself at her side, said that she would sing a duet, but she could not sing alone. And she did sing, in a fresh soprano voice, somewhat timidly, but with clear and pure tone.

With unconscious simplicity, as if he were an old acquaintance, she now asked Eric to sing. The whole company united in the request, but Eric positively declined, and looked up surprised when Pranken joined in with the remark, "The captain is right in not exhibiting at once all his varied talents." It was said in the gentlest tone, but the sarcastic point was unmistakable.

"I thank you for standing by me like a good comrade," said Eric, looking round.

The sky was clear, only it still lightened over the Taunus mountains. The company took their leave, with many thanks for the delightful day they had spent, and the charming evening. Even the perpetually silent "Mrs. Lay-figure" now spoke, appearing in her fashionable new hood, which she had put on very becomingly. Just as they were departing, the physician made his appearance. He had been detained by the storm while visiting a patient in a neighboring village. He drove off with the rest, having scarcely had time to say good-evening to the Count Clodwig and Bella.

Bella drew a long breath when the reception was all over. There was much conversation in the different carriages, but in one there was weeping, for Lina received a sharp scolding for her behavior, in acting as if she were nothing but a stupid, simple country girl. Instead of being sprightly and making the most of herself, she behaved as if she had come, only an hour before, from keeping geese. Lina had for a long time been accustomed to these violent reproofs, but she seemed today to take them more feelingly to heart. She had been so happy, that now the severe lecture came doubly hard. She silently wept.

The Justice, who was no justice of the peace in his own family, took no part in this feminine outbreak. Not until he was ready to take a fresh cigar did he say, "This loquacious Dournay seems to me a dangerous man."

"I think him very agreeable."

"Woman's logic! as if the amiability, instead of excluding, did not rather include, the dangerous element. Don't you see through this very transparent intrigue?"

"No."

"Then put together these facts: we come across him at the convent, where the daughter of this exceedingly wealthy Herr Sonnenkamp is living, and he acts as if he knew no one, and had no special end in view. Now he wants to be the tutor of young Sonnenkamp. Ha! what a flash!"

A bright flash of lightning illumined not only the landscape, but the relation in which several people stood to each other. Especially the Eden villa was as clearly defined in every part as if it were only a few paces off.

"Just see," continued the Justice, "how this great pile of buildings and the park are lighted up, and no one knows what is brewing up here. Amazing world! Baron Pranken introduces this Dournay to his sister-in-law and his father-in-law as a friend, and yet these two men are sworn enemies."

The wife of the Justice was vexed with her husband. He was so animated, and made such keen observations, alone with her and at home, while in society he had hardly a word to say, and let others bear away all the honors.

"Who is the father-in-law you speak of?" she asked, for the sake of saying something.

"Why, Herr Sonnenkamp, of course; at least, he is to be. That inexhaustible wealth of his is guano for the Baron Pranken; he needs it, and why should he trouble himself about where it comes from?" Lina threw her veil over her face, and shut her eyes. The Justice now explained the special reasons why neither he, nor his wife, should become mixed up in these affairs.

"This captain-doctor is a dangerous man, dangerous in many respects." This was his last remark, and they were silent until they reached home.

CHAPTER VIII. CONFESSION OF TWO KINDS

Otto von Pranken walked with his sister Bella up and down the garden. Otto informed her that he had recommended Eric to Herr Sonnenkamp, but that he was already very sorry for it.

Bella, who was always out of humor after she had made herself a victim to the collation, turned now her ill humor against her brother, who had introduced to her as a fitting guest one who was, or wished to be, a menial, and above all, a menial of that Herr Sonnenkamp. With mischievous satisfaction she added thereto, that Otto must take delight in boldly leaping over difficulties, since he had recommended into the family such an attractive person as this doctor – she made use of that title as being inferior to that of captain. The natural consequence would be that the daughter of the house would fall in love with her brother's tutor.

"This Herr Dournay," she ended by saying, "is a very attractive person, not merely because he is extraordinarily handsome, but yet more because he possesses a romantic open-heartedness and honesty. Whether it is genuine or assumed, at any rate, it tells, and particularly with a girl of seventeen just out of a convent."

Otto answered good naturedly, that he had given his sister credit for a less commonplace imagination; moreover, that Eric was an acknowledged woman-hater, who would never love a real woman of flesh and blood. Yet Pranken declared his intention of calling the next morning at the villa, and telling Herr Sonnenkamp in confidence how very reluctant he was to give the recommendation; that he should beseech him to dismiss the applicant politely, for he might with propriety and justice say that Eric would inoculate the boy with radical ideas; yes, that it might further be said to Herr Sonnenkamp, that to receive Eric would be displeasing at court. This last reason, he thought, would carry all before it. Pranken had worked himself into the belief that to have a secure position in the court-circle was the highest that Herr Sonnenkamp could aim at.

Bella rejected this plan; she took pleasure in inciting her brother to gain the victory over such an opponent; that would inspire him with fresh animation. Moreover, that it might be well to offset the Lady Perini, whose ecclesiastical tendencies no one had thoroughly fathomed, by a man who was a representative of the world, and under obligations of gratitude to them. And further it was not to be doubted that a perpetual, secret war would exist between Donna Perini and this over-confident Dournay, so that, whatever might happen, they would have the regulation and disposal of matters in their own hands.

Bella forgot all her vexation, for a whole web of intrigue unfolded itself clearly to her sight, agreeable in the prosecution, and tending to one result. She was the confidante of Fräulein Perini, but she herself did not wholly trust her, and Otto must remain intimate with Eric; and in this way, they would hold the Sonnenkamp family in their hands, for Eric would undoubtedly acquire great influence.

Otto strenuously resisted the carrying out of the part assigned to him, but he was not let off. A cat sitting quiet and breathless before a mouse-hole will not be enticed away, for she knows that the mouse will come out; it is nibbling already; and then there is a successful spring. Bella had one means of inducing her brother to do as she wished; she need only repeat to him how irresistible he was, and how necessary it was for him to gain that self-confidence which had hitherto stood him in such good part. Otto was not fully convinced, but he was persuaded that he soon would be. And, moreover, this Dournay was a poor man whom one must help; he had taken today the sudden revelation of his position in life with a good grace, and behaved very well.

Whilst brother and sister promenaded in the garden, Eric sat in the study of Count Clodwig, that was lighted by a branching lamp. They sat opposite, in arm-chairs, at the long writing-table. "I

regret," Clodwig began, "that the physician came so late; he has a rough rind, but a sound heart. I think that you and he will be good friends."

Eric said nothing, and Clodwig continued: "I cannot understand why my brother-in-law, in his peculiar manner, informed the company so suddenly of your intention. Now it is a common topic of conversation, and your excellent project loses its first naïve charm."

Eric replied with great decision, that we must allow the deed resolved upon in meditation to come into the cold sharp air of the critical understanding.

Clodwig again gazed at him fixedly, apparently surprised that this man should be so well armed at all points; and placing his small hand upon a portfolio before him as if he were writing down something new, he resumed: —

"I have, to-day, been confirmed anew in an old opinion. People generally regard private employment as a degradation, regardless of the consideration that the important thing is, in what spirit one serves, and not whom he serves. 'I serve,' is the motto of my maternal ancestors."

The old man paused, and Eric did not know whether he was going on, or waited for a reply; but Clodwig continued: "It is regarded as highly honorable when a general officer, or a state official undertakes the education of a prince; but is it any the less honorable to engage in the work of educating thirty peasant lads, or to devote one's self, as you do, to the bringing up of this wealthy youth? And now I have one request to make of you."

"My only desire is to grant it."

"Will you tell me as exactly as possible how, you have so — I mean, how you have become what you are?"

"Most willingly; and I will deserve the honor of being allowed to speak so unreservedly, by not being too modest. I will speak to you as to myself."

Clodwig rang a bell that stood upon the table, and a servant entered. "Robert, what room is assigned to the doctor?" "The brown one directly over the count's chamber." "Let the captain have the balcony chamber." "If the count will pardon me, the luggage of Leonhard, Prince of Saxony, is still in that room." "No matter; and, one thing more, I desire not to be interrupted until I ring."

The servant departed, and Clodwig settled himself in the arm-chair, drawing a plush sofa-blanket over his knees; then he said, "If I shut my eyes, do not think that I am asleep."

In the manner with which Clodwig now bade Eric speak out frankly, there was a trustful kindness, very far removed from all patronizing condescension; it expressed, rather, an intimate sympathy and a most hearty confidence. Eric began.

CHAPTER IX. A SEEKER

"I am twenty-eight years old, and when I review my life, it seems to me so far to have been only a search. One occupation leaves so many faculties dormant, and yet the torture of making a choice must come to an end; and in every calling of life the entire manhood may be maintained and called forth into action.

"I am the child of a perfectly happy marriage, and you know what that means. I shared, from my third year, the education of the Prince Leonhard. There was a perpetual opposition between us, the reason of which I did not discover until later, when an open breach occurred. I then saw for the first time, that a sort of dissimulation, which does not agree with good comradeship, had made me outwardly deferential, and inwardly uneasy and irritated. Perhaps nothing is more opposed to the very nature of a child than a perpetual deference and compliant acquiescence.

"I entered the military school, where I received marked respect, because I had been the comrade of the prince. My father was there my special instructor, and there I lived two years with your brother-in-law. I was not distinguished as a scholar.

"One of the happiest days of my life was the one on which I wore my epaulets for the first time; and though the day on which I laid aside my uniform was not less happy, I am not yet free from inconsistency. I cannot to this day, see a battery of artillery pass by without feeling my heart beat quicker.

"I travel backwards and forwards, and I pray you to excuse disconnected narration. I have, to-day, been through such a various experience; but I will now endeavor to tell my story more directly and concisely.

"Soon after I became lieutenant, my parents removed to the university city; I was how left alone. I was, for a whole year, contented with myself and happy, like every one around me. I can remember now the very hour of a beautiful autumn afternoon, – I still see the tree, and hear the magpie in its branches, – when I suddenly reined in my horse, and something within me asked, 'What art thou doing in the world? training thyself and thy recruits to kill thy fellow-men in the most scientific manner?'"

"Allow me to ask one question," Clodwig mildly interrupted. "Did the military school never seem to you a school of men, and part of your profession?"

Eric was confused, and replied in the negative; then collecting his thoughts, he resumed: "I sought to drive away oppressive thoughts, but they would not leave me. I had fallen out with myself and my occupation. I cannot tell you how useless to myself and to the world I seemed to be, – all was empty, bare, desolate. There were days when I was ashamed of my dress, that I, a sound; strong man, should be loafing about so well dressed, my horse perhaps consuming the oats of some poor man."

"That is morbid," Clodwig struck in with vehemence.

"I see it is now; but then it was different in the first stress of feeling. The Crimean war broke out, and I asked for a furlough, in order to become acquainted with actual war. My commander, Prince Leonhard, at the rifle-practice, casually asked me which army I meant to join; and before I could reply, he added, in a caustic tone, 'Would you prefer to enlist with the light French or the heavy Englishman?' My tongue was tied, and I perceived clearly my own want of a clear understanding of my position. How mere a cipher was I, standing there without any knowledge of myself or the world! My outer relations shared in the total ruin of my inner being. Must I relate to you all these petty annoyances? I deserved to have them, for there was in me nothing but contradiction, and my whole life was one single great lie. A uniform had been given me; I was not myself, and I was a poor soldier, for I abandoned myself to the study of philosophy, and wished to solve the riddle of life. I am of a peculiarly companionable, sympathetic nature, and yet the continued life among my fellow-soldiers had become an impossibility.

"I bore it two years, then asked for my discharge; which I received, with the rank of Captain, out of respect to my parents, I think. I was free, at last, and yet, as I said before, it saddened me to break away from my life.

"I was free! It was strange to look out into the world and say. World, what do you want of me? What must I do for you? Here are a thousand employments; which shall I take? I was ready for anything. I had a fine voice, and many people thought that I might become a professional singer, and I received overtures to that effect. But my own inclination led in a very different direction. An earnest longing possessed me to make some sacrifice for my fellow-men. Had I been a devout believer, I think I should have become a monk."

Clodwig opened his eyes and met Eric's beaming glance. After a short pause, Clodwig nodded to Eric, then folded his arms again on his breast, laid his head back, nodded again, and closed his eyes. Eric continued: —

"When I first went through the streets in a civilian's dress, I felt as if I were walking naked before the eyes of men, as one sometimes seems to be in troubled dreams. In such a helpless, forlorn state of feeling, one grows superstitious, and is easily governed by the merest accidents; The first person who met me, and stared at me, as if doubting who I was, was my former captain, who had left the service, and was superintendent of a House of Correction for men. He had seen the notice of my discharge, and remembering some of my former attempts in that direction, asked whether I meant to devote myself entirely to poetry. I answered in the negative, and he told me that he was looking for an assistant. My decision was soon made; I would consecrate myself to the care and elevation of my fallen fellow-men. After entering on my new occupation I wrote to my parents. My father replied to me, that he appreciated my efforts, but foresaw with certainty that my natural love of beauty would make a life among criminals unbearable to me; he was right. I tried with all my might to keep in subjection a longing for the higher luxuries of life, but in vain. I was without that peculiar natural vein, or perhaps had not reached that elevated standpoint, which enables one to look upon and to treat all the aspects of life as so many natural phenomena. In my captain's uniform, I received more respect from the prisoners than in my citizen's dress. This experience was a sort of nightmare to me. Life among the convicts, who were either hardened brutes or cunning hypocrites, became a hell to me, and this hell had one peculiar torment. I fell into a mood of morbid self-criticism, because I could not forget the world, but was constantly trying to guess the thoughts of others. I tormented myself by imagining what men said of my course. In their eyes I seemed to myself now an idealistic vagabond, if you will allow the expression. This I was not, and would not be, and above all, I was determined that my enemies and deriders should not have the triumph of seeing me the wreck of a fickle and purposeless existence.

"Ah, I vexed myself unnecessarily; for who has time or inclination to look for a man who has disappeared! Men bury the dead, and go back to their every-day work, and so they bury the living too. I do not reproach them for it, it must be so.

"It became clear to me that I was not fitted for the calling I had chosen. I lived too much within myself, and tried in every event to study the foundation and growth of character of those around me, not willing to acknowledge that the nature and actions of men do not develop themselves so logically as I had thought. Besides, I was too impassioned, and possessed by a constant longing for the beautiful.

"I thought of emigrating to the New World, but what should I do there? Was it worth while to have borne such varied experiences and struggles in order to turn a bit of the primeval forest into a cornfield? Still, one consideration drew me toward America. My father's only brother, the proprietor of a manufactory of jewelry, lived there, but was quite lost to us. He had loved my mother's sister, but his suit was somewhat harshly rejected, and he left Europe for the New World. He cast off all connection with his home and family, and turned out of his house in New York a friend of my father's who guardedly mentioned us to him. He would hear nothing of us, nor even of Europe. I imagined that

I could reconcile my uncle, and you know that a man in desperate circumstances looks for salvation to the most adventurous undertakings.

"My good father helped me. What he had always recognized as my true vocation, from which I had turned blinded by the attractions of army life, I now saw plainly. A thirst for loneliness arose within me; I felt that I must find some spot of earth where no disturbing tone could penetrate the inner life, where I could immerse myself in solitude. This solitude which is inclusive of all true life, study, the world of letters, now offered to me. My father helped me, while showing me that my past life was not wasted, but must give me a new direction and a peculiar success. He brought me a birth-day gift which I had received in my cradle; the senate of the University; in which he had lectured before his appointment as tutor of the prince, had bestowed upon me soon after my birth its certificate of matriculation, as a new-born prince receives a military commission."

Clodwig laughed heartily, rubbed his eyes, leaned forward with both hands on his knees, looked kindly at Eric, and begged him to go on.

"I have little more to tell you. I soon schooled myself, or rather my father schooled me, to live for universal ends, and to put aside all personal aims as much as possible. I devoted myself to the study of ancient literature, and every aspiration for the beautiful, which had idealized the poet's vocation for me, found satisfaction in my introduction to the classic world. 'Every man may glory in his industry,' says the poet. I worked faithfully, and felt only in my father's house the happiness of a child, and in my youth the joy of mental growth. My father hoped that success would be granted me where he had failed; he made me heir of those ideas which he could neither establish as scientific truth, nor impart from his professor's chair, if there ever were a happy home, made holy by lofty aspiration, it was my parents' house. There my younger brother died, now very nearly a year ago; my father, who already was sorely sick at heart, with all his stoic fortitude could not bear this blow. It is two months since he also died. I kept down the anguish of my bereavement, finished my studies, and received my doctor's degree a few days ago. My mother and I formed various plans, but have not yet decided upon any. I made this excursion to the Rhine in compliance with my mother's advice, for I have been working very hard; on my return we meant to come to some decision. I met your brother-in-law, and I feel it my duty not to turn away from the opening which has offered. I am ready to enter into private service, knowing what I undertake, and believing that I am thoroughly equipped for it. There was a time when I thought I could find satisfaction only in working for some great public interest; now I should be content to educate a single human being, still more to co-operate in training to a fitness for his great duties one, who, by his future lordship over vast possessions, represents in himself manifold human interests.

"I have come to the end of my story. I do not wish that any one should think better of me than I deserve, but I also wish to pass for what I believe I am. I am neither modest nor conceited; I may be in dangerous ignorance, for I do not in the least know how I am regarded by others; I have shown only what I find in myself by honest self-examination. I mean to be a teacher. He who would live in the spirit, and has not the artist's creative power, must be a teacher; for the teacher is, so to speak, the artisan of the higher being, and, like every artisan, is so much the better workman, or teacher, the more of the artist spirit he has and uses. A thought is the best gift which man can bestow upon man, and what I give my pupil is no longer my own. But pardon me for having fallen into this vein of preaching. I have shown you my whole life, as well as I can; where I have left any gaps, pray question me."

"Nothing further is needed," said Clodwig, rising, and quietly laying aside the sofa-blanket. "Only one question. Have you never had the desire to marry, or has that not entered into your plans?"

"No, I shall not marry. I have heard so many men say, 'Yes, ideals, I had them too, but now I live in and for my family.' I will not sacrifice everything higher to the caprice of a pretty woman. I know that I am at variance with the world; I cannot dissemble, nor can I change my own way of thinking, nor bring others over to mine. I have set myself a difficult life-task, which can be best carried out alone."

Clodwig stepped quickly towards Eric and said: —

"I give you my hand again. This hand shall never be withdrawn from you, so long as it has life. I had something else in view for you, but now I cannot and need not speak of it; I will subdue my own wishes. Enough; press on quietly and firmly towards your goal; whatever I can do to help you reach it, you have a right to demand. Remember you have a claim upon me in every situation and condition of your life. You cannot yet estimate what you have given, and are still giving me. Good night, my dear young friend."

The count hastily withdrew, as if to avoid any further emotion. Eric stood still, looking at the empty chair and the sofa-blanket as if all were a dream, until a servant came, and, in a very respectful manner, conducted him to his room.

CHAPTER X. THE GOOD HOST

When a man has laid open his whole history to another, he often seems to himself emptied, hollow, and void, – what is left of him? how small and contemptible he appears! But it was quite otherwise with Eric. From a tower below in the valley rang clear a silver-toned midnight bell, hung there in ancient times by a noble lady, to guide the lost wanderer in the forest to a human dwelling. Eric heard it, and saw in fancy the confessional in the church, with its believers bending before it, or passing out into the world again made strong by its blessing. He had confessed to a man whose life was consecrated by a pure spirit, and felt himself not impoverished, but elevated and strengthened, armed with self-knowledge for every relation of life.

He opened the window, and inhaled the cool, fragrant air of night. Over the valley hung a thin mist; the clocks in the villages struck midnight, and the Wolfsgarten clock chimed in sweet and low. Eric resigned himself to the influence of nature's life and power as it presses upward in the tree-trunks, moves in the branches, and refreshes every bud. In the distance rolled a railway train. The nightingales sang loudly, then suddenly ceased as if overpowered by sleep.

In nebulous forms, familiar and strange figures gathered around Eric. How much he had experienced in this one day, though he had not yet crossed the threshold of the house where perhaps his future lot was cast! He had reviewed his past life, and had found a home of which he had not dreamed yesterday. Ah, how great and rich is the world, and true comrades live in it waiting only for our summons and the greeting of friendly eyes!

All the fulness of life in the immortality of nature and the human spirit flooded Eric's being. He felt a blessed elation; he had given up his life, it was taken from him; he was freed from self, and lived and soared in the infinite.

The moon rose over the mountains, a whispering thrill rustled through the wood, the nightingale sang loud again, the mists rose from the valley and vanished, and one broad beam glittered on a glass dome in the distance. There lay Villa Eden.

Only after a vigorous resistance Eric finally yielded to weariness and closed the window. A black trunk marked with the crest of Prince Leonhard first attracted his notice, and he smiled to see how Clodwig had shown his household in what honor he held his guest; this room had been occupied by the Prince a few days before. Eric then gazed long on a bust of Medusa, fascinated by the grand, powerful, beautiful face; on the head with its wildly disordered locks were two wide-spread wings; below the heavy frowning brow gleamed the great death-dealing eyes; the mouth was haughtily curved, and on the lips lay scornful, defiant words; under the chin two snakes were knotted together like a kerchief. The aspect of the head was at once repulsive and fascinating.

Opposite the Medusa stood a cast of the Victory of Rauch, that wonderful countenance recalling the face of Queen Louisa, the noble head with its garland of oak-leaves not raised, but bent as if in thought and self-control. A strange pair were those two busts! but there was no more time to dwell upon them. Eric was overcome by sleep, but woke again after a few hours, when day had scarcely dawned.

There are hours and days of joyous and buoyant feeling, as if we had found the key to all hearts; as if we held in our hands the magic wand which reveals all living springs, and brings us near to every soul as to a friend and a brother. The world is purified, the soul pervaded by the deep feeling of unalloyed blessedness, which is nothing but breathing, living, loving.

Encompassed by such an atmosphere, Eric stood at the window and looked out over the river to the mountains beyond, the castles, the towns, the villages, on the banks and on the heights. Everywhere thou art at home, thou art living in a beautiful world. He went at once into the open air, and strode on not as if he were walking, but as if borne onward by some ineffable power. Drops of rain from the last

night's storm hung upon the tender green of the foliage, on the grass and flowers; no breeze stirred the air, and frequent rain-drops, like a sudden shower, pattered down from the overhanging branches. A ray of sunlight now gleams upon every leaf and twig, and awakens an inexpressible movement; the blackbird sings in the copse, and with his clear, shrill tone is heard far above all the intermingling, chorus of melodies.

Eric stood motionless near a covered pavilion on the very ridge of the mountain, and gazed long at a kite hovering with outspread wings over the summit, and then letting itself down into the wood on the other side of the river. What made him think at that moment of Herr Sonnenkamp? Was it envy and dread of the little bird, whom evil tongues called a bird of prey; and has he not the right to live according to his might?

Eric's thoughts were wafted toward the boy, longing to mingle in his dreams, and whisper to him, I am coming to thee. He endeavored for a long time to get sight of the glass dome, but it was nowhere visible. He went away from the river to an elevated plain, from which there was again a view of valleys, heights, and mountains.

He stood in the midst of an extensive field, and for the first time saw a vineyard which was just being planted. The laborers held implements, like augurs, in their hands, and making with them holes in the loose earth, they set out the young shoots in rows.

He saluted the laborers, and they answered him cheerfully, feeling from the sound of his voice that he greeted every stranger as a brother. He inquired how long it would be before the first vintage, and when an old man answered clearly all his questions, he felt a new refreshment.

This conversation brought him back from his state of excitement, back from his wandering into the infinite, again to the earth. He went away expressing his thanks, and realising that he must bring this strain of lofty feeling into subjection to actual life. He met laborers who were going to a limestone quarry. He joined them, and learned that this also belonged to the count, who had leased all his lands, not retaining for himself even the management.

Receiving a friendly greeting from the overseer, he was shown a manufactory of cement near by, and saw paving-tiles from excellent patterns of the time of the Renaissance, which Clodwig had recommended, and which found a ready sale.

Eric returned to the Castle, refreshed by the breath of nature as well as by this glance into actual human life. A servant told him that the count was expecting him. Clodwig, already fully dressed for the day, took his guest by the hand, saying, "I shall ask you by and by many questions, but only one now: – did your father despair at the last, or – how shall I express it? – did he die in the belief of an orderly and progressive unfolding of the social and moral world?" Eric then depicted in vivid language derived from his own recollections, and under the inspiring influence of his morning's exhilaration, how his father, on the last night of his life, congratulated his son that he was born into the new age, which need no longer exhaust itself against opposing forms of violence. "My son," he said, "my heart thrills with joy, when I contemplate how in this century a beauty, a freedom, and a brotherly love unfold themselves which existed to us only in the germ. As one example, my son, see how the State now educates its children, and does it in a way that no Solon, no Socrates, ever could imagine. Thou wilt live in a time when it will hardly be conceived that there were slaves, serfs, bondmen, monopolies, and the whole trumpery of a false world."

Eric added how happy it made him, that his father had departed in such a cheerful mood, and that he, as a son, could so fully enter into his hopes, and carry them out into life. He spoke in such an excitable manner, that Clodwig placed his hand on his shoulder and said, "We will not, in the morning, take such a distant flight." He expressed also his satisfaction that he could enter so fully into the life of the coming generation, for he had always been troubled lest he might lose all hold upon the new time.

"We have had our morning devotions, now let us go to breakfast," he said, turning round easily as he got up from his seat. "Yet one more question: did your father never explain to you what occurred at his sudden – you know what I mean – loss of favor at court?"

"Certainly; my father told me the whole, circumstantially."

"And did he not forbid you to speak of it to any one?"

"To others, but not to you."

"Did he mention me by name?"

"No, but he expressly enjoined it upon me to inform those whom I honored with my whole soul, and so I can tell you."

"Speak rather low," Clodwig enjoined, and Eric went on.

"My father, in that last interview which no one knew anything about, was to have received from the hand of the sovereign a title of nobility, in order that he might be appointed to an office at court. He said to the sovereign, 'Your highness, you make null the blessing of the long years in which I have spent my best strength in the education of my youthful prince, if you think I accept this on my own account, or that I regard it as something belonging to the age in which we live.' 'I do not make a jest of such things,' the prince replied. 'Neither do I,' said my father.

"Years after, his lips trembled as he related this to me, and he said, that that moment, when he stood face to face with his pupil speechless, was the bitterest moment of his life."

A silent pause now ensued between Eric and Clodwig, until the latter said finally, "I understand, I understand; let us go."

They went into the breakfast-room on the ground floor, the doors of which were wide open. Bella soon appeared; she thought that Eric looked at her scrutinisingly, and quickly turning away, she went to a side table to prepare the coffee.

"My wife," said Clodwig, "has already sent a messenger, this morning, to Fräulein Perini, and I have added a message to Herr Sonnenkamp, that you, dear Dournay, would present yourself this evening, or, what would be better, early to-morrow morning."

"And I am to ask you to excuse my brother, who has set out, early this morning, in company with a young man whom they call here the Wine-chevalier, to the horse-market at Mannheim. Will you have coffee or tea?"

"If you please, coffee."

"That is fine, and on the strength of that we are good friends," said Bella, in a lively way. "It is an abominable excess of politeness, when people reply to such a question, 'It makes no difference to me.' If it makes no difference to you, dear polite soul, then give some decided answer, and don't put off the choice upon me."

A merry key was thus struck, and they seated themselves at table. Bella noticed that Eric observed her, and she knew that she looked better in her pretty morning-dress, than in full evening costume. Her movements were very elastic and graceful. She was a tall, noble, well-made person; her soft, dark-auburn hair, now partly loose, was confined by a fine point-lace kerchief, put on with apparent carelessness, as if one had not taken a second look in the mirror, and tied under the chin. Her complexion was fresh, as if she had just bathed her face in milk; and in fact she did wash her face in milk every morning and evening. The expression of her countenance was keen and bright. All was nobly formed, except that she had a thin, compressed upper-lip, which a malicious gentleman at court had once called the lip of a poisoner. It was very vexatious to Bella that her voice was so masculine.

Her personal charms, her cordial and at the same time arch manners, showed to great advantage in the light talk at the breakfast table; and when at intervals she keenly watched Eric, she was surprised at his appearance. Yesterday she had seen him first only in the evening twilight, and afterwards by candle-light. He was manifestly a person to be seen in full daylight; and in fact, there was now a brilliant lighting up of his countenance, for the happy excitement of his whole inner being showed itself in his mien, and he looked at Bella, as if he would say, 'I have become almost the son of thy husband; let the same noble union be formed between us.'

Bella was unusually friendly, perhaps because she had already used a little artifice. A note, written in Italian to Fräulein Perini, cautioned her in terms as decided in meaning, as they were carefully worded in expression, of the necessity of subjecting the new-comer to a sharp examination.

When Clodwig told the messenger that Eric would make his appearance in the evening, or the next morning, she felt herself justified and at rest in regard to her previous artifice; for Clodwig had never before detained a guest with such determination of his own, and no one could even boast of having made it appear that he was not sufficient for himself.

Clodwig and Bella had promised each other to live only to themselves, and until now they had faithfully kept the promise.

"I am a weary soul," Clodwig had said to Bella when he offered her his hand, and she had answered, that she would refresh the weary one. She had cut off every relation with the world, for she knew that friendly visits last only for a few hours or days, and make the solitude afterwards more keenly felt.

Bella was very amiable always, and to everybody, provided everybody always did according to her will, and lived to please her. She really had no love for people and no desire for their society; she wanted nothing from others, and wished only to be left alone. The manifold relations which Clodwig had formerly had with men and women were repugnant to her, and he accommodated himself to the wish of his wife, who lived wholly for him, so far as to reduce his extensive correspondence and his personal intercourse to the smallest possible limit. They kept up a periodical connection with only two social circles in the neighborhood: one of these was the so-called middle-class circle who were invited to collation, as it was named, which we made acquaintance with yesterday; the other was a select circle, of the noble families scattered around, who were invited twice a year. Was this renegade captain now to change all this?

In the triumphant thought that she had banished him, Bella became more and more talkative. Eric could not refrain from highly extolling that mirthful excitement, that exuberant humor which pervades the Rhineland, and takes possession of every one who comes within the sphere of its inhabitants. At last he led the conversation again to Sonnenkamp, by remarking that the manner in which the man was spoken about yesterday was very puzzling to him.

Bella in an off-hand manner declared, that she found the man very interesting, although this was going counter to the universal Philistinism; that she regarded him as a conqueror, a bold Berserkir, who had nothing to win for himself in this stock-jobbing age but gold.

There appeared to be a sympathetic attraction between Bella and Sonnenkamp's speculative and daring spirit. Clodwig considerably added, —

"I have often noticed, that so long as a man is accumulating wealth, his prosperity seems to give universal satisfaction; men feel pleased, as if they were accumulating too. But when he has attained his end, they turn round and find fault, where before they had commended. Do you understand anything of horticulture?"

"No."

"Herr Sonnenkamp is a very considerable horticulturist. Is it not strange that in the laying out of parks we have wholly supplanted the formal methods of French gardening, which now turn to the culture of fruit, and find encouragement in the pecuniary profit that governs all such operations? The English excel in swine-raising, their swine being fat sides of bacon with four feet attached; the French, on the other hand, having taken to fruit culture, have succeeded in producing fabulous crops.

"Yes!" he concluded, smiling, "Herr Sonnenkamp is a tree-tutor, and, moreover, a tyrannical tree-trimmer. To-day I can speak out more freely. Sonnenkamp has always been, and will always be, a stranger to me.

"Through all his external polish, and an increasing attention to the cultivation of good manners, a sort of brutishness appears in him, I mean brutishness in its original meaning of an uncultivated state of nature."

"Yes," Bella remarked, "you will have a difficult position, and especially with Roland."

"With Roland?" asked Eric.

"Yes, that is the boy's name. He would like to know much, and learn nothing."

Bella looked round pleased with her clever saying. The parrot in his great cage upon the veranda uttered shrill cries as if scolding. As she rose, Bella said, "There you see my tyrant; a scholar who tyrannises over his teacher in a most shocking manner."

She took the parrot out of his cage, placed him on her shoulder, fondled and caressed him, so that one almost grudged such wasteful prodigality; and her movements were all beautiful, especially the curving of the throat and shoulders.

CHAPTER XI. MEDUSA AND VICTORIA

Clodwig looked down for some time after Bella had gone. He nodded to Eric as if he would greet him anew. But Bella soon returned, bearing the parrot on her hand, and stroking it. She walked up and down the room, lingering when Eric related how he had to-day, tearing himself by force away from the view of the river, gone back into the country, and had conversed with many persons.

Clodwig dwelt at length upon his pet theory, that traces of the Roman Colonists were still preserved in the physiognomy and character of the people.

Bella, apparently unwilling to be obliged to hear this again, interrupted, with good-humored impertinence, – "When one turns himself away from the Rhine, he has the feeling, or at least I have, that some one, it may be Father Rhine himself, looks after me and calls out, 'Do turn round!'"

"We men do not always feel that we are looked at," replied Clodwig, and requested Eric to give his opinion about the earthen vase, a present the day before from the Justice, which was standing on a side-table in the breakfast-room. Eric readily complied, and they went into the adjoining room, filled with a great variety of articles found buried in the ground. Eric, fresh from the study of antiquities, showed himself so familiar with all the related topics, that Bella could not refrain from expressing her astonishment.

"You are a good teacher, and it must be a pleasure to be instructed by you." Eric thanked her, and Bella continued with friendly affability, – "Yes, indeed! many people give instruction in order to make a brilliant appearance, and many deal forth their knowledge reluctantly; but you, Doctor, teach like a beneficent friend who delights in being able to impart, but takes a yet greater pleasure in bestowing a benefit upon the recipient; and you impart in such a way that one is not only convinced you understand the matter, but believes that he himself does."

Clodwig looked up in amazement, for he had said the evening before precisely the same thing of Eric's father, while making mention of the fact that the only little treatise ever published by him had received the disinterested help of Professor Dournay.

Bella withdrew after having thus shown her friendliness and her admiring surprise. The two men sat together for a long time after this, and then went to Eric's room, where Eric handed to the count a copy of his Doctor's thesis; and it then first occurred to him how strangely it had happened that he had there discussed the apocryphal treatise of Plato, "Concerning Riches," and now he was to be called upon to educate one under conditions of wealth. Eric and Clodwig were greatly struck by this coincidence.

Clodwig requested Eric to translate the manuscript from Latin into German. He did so, and it was to them a time of real enjoyment.

When they arose, Clodwig observed to Eric how strange it must appear to him to find the Medusa and Victoria opposite each other; but he confessed to a heresy which met with his own approval, though not in accordance with the received scientific explanation. The Medusa was to him the expression of all-consuming passion, which stiffens with horror the sinning beholder who sees therein the image of himself; and it was very significant that the ancients represented this entire abandonment of all the higher spiritual nature through a womanly form, the unrestrained indulgence of passion being opposite to the truly feminine, and so the more unseemly. The Victoria of Rauch, on the other hand, appeared to him to be the embodiment of an eminently modern spiritual conception.

"This countenance is wonderfully like" – he did not finish the sentence, but, stammeringly beginning another, continued: "This is not that Goddess of Victory who wears proudly and loftily the crown upon her gleaming forehead; this is the representation of victory which is inwardly sad that there is a foe to be conquered. Yes, still further, this Victoria is to me the goddess of victory over self, which is always the grandest victory."

After Clodwig had made this remark, he said, "Now I leave you to yourself; you have already talked too much to-day and yesterday." Eric remained alone, and while he was writing to his mother, Clodwig sat with Bella and said to her: —

"This young man is a genius, and ought not to live in a dependent situation, bound to routine service; he ought to be free like a bird, singing, flying, as he will, without any fixed and unalterable limits of time and occupation, and especially he ought to be by himself. It is a joy to meet with such originality and depth."

"Is he not too well aware of his own worth?" asked Bella, a flash of displeasure gleaming in her eyes.

"Not at all. He does not wish to shine, and yet he is genuine light. I feel as if I stood in the clear sunshine of the spirit; he is a man of pure character, and I am at home with him in the inmost realities, as I am with myself." Bella said nothing, and Clodwig continued: — "I like especially in him, that he lets one who is talking with him complete his sentence; he does not interrupt by any movement or any change of feature; and in such an active and richly endowed mind this is doubly valuable, and something more than mere civility."

Bella still kept silence, bent over her embroidery, on which she was diligently intent. At last she looked up, and with a beaming countenance, said, "I rejoice in your joy."

"And I should like to perpetuate this joy," Clodwig replied.

"He is a handsome man," added Bella.

Clodwig answered, smiling, "Now, since you have called my attention to it, I am reminded how handsome he is. But he does not plume himself upon his good looks, and I think *that* to be genuine beauty, which, when present has nothing strikingly prominent, all being in harmonious combination, but which, when thought of afterwards, reveals new and beautiful attributes and forms. Most handsome men are forever looking into a mirror visible only to themselves. But why should I give up this man to somebody else, and above all to this Sonnencamp? I am situated so that I can offer him a home with me for years! Why not do it?"

"Why not?" said Bella, putting away her embroidery. "I need not assure you that I have no other joy in life than yours. So it is now with this brief happiness of yours, this childlike confidence you place in this noble-looking man. I see also that he has something elevated in his nature; he imparts much and gladly, is stimulating and quickening."

"Why not then?"

"Because we want to be alone! Clodwig, let us be by ourselves! It is my desire that even my brother should soon leave us; every third person, whether related by blood or by the most intimate spiritual ties, causes a separation, so that we do not have exclusive possession of each other."

While she was speaking, she had placed her hand on Clodwig's arm, and now she grasped his hand and stroked it. As Clodwig went away, Bella looked after him, shaking her head.

Bella came to the dinner-table handsomely dressed, and with a single rose in her hair. The men appeared weary, but she was extremely animated. She spoke a great deal of the happiness she had always had in being at the house of Eric's parents, where no ignoble word was ever uttered, for the mother cherished every high thought, like a priestess tending and feeding the smallest flame of the ideal on the household altar. Eric, who thought that he was proof against any further excitement, experienced a new and elevated emotion.

They drove out at noon, and Bella was silent during the ride. They visited a former Roman encampment. Bella sat alone under a tree, upon a covering spread upon the ground, and the men walked about.

When they came together around the evening lamp, Bella seemed like an entirely different person, having for the third time, that day, changed her dress. She was now very lively.

Bella had never been, during her whole life, dissatisfied with herself; she had never repented anything she had done, always saying. You were fully justified, at the moment when you acted. She

did not wish at this time to appear in a false light to her husband's favorite, or as a mere trifling appendage; Eric should know who she was, that she was not only Clodwig's wife, but over and above all, Bella von Pranken.

She was ready to play as soon as Clodwig expressed the wish to hear her. The quick and eager haste with which she took off her ringing and rattling bracelets, which Eric at once with marked attentiveness received from her hand and placed upon the marble table under the mirror, – the manner in which she poised her hands like two fluttering pinions, and then brought them down upon the keys, like a swimmer who is in his element, – all served to show how resolved she was to occupy no second place. And never, since she had been Clodwig's wife, had Bella played as she now did in the presence of a third person, reserving hitherto her masterly performance on the piano for Clodwig alone. To-day her execution displayed such zest and skill that Clodwig himself, who knew every peculiar excellence in her method of playing, received a new surprise and delight.

During a pause, Eric seemed to strike the right key by remarking, that, after such elevated enjoyment in the intercourse with noble persons and in the wide survey of unbounded nature, there is nothing for the soul but to let the feelings dissolve and die away in the unlimited and shoreless ethereal atmosphere of music. A realm of waking dreams is then opened to us, a feeling of the infinite is awakened, that creates a something beyond what any word or look can express, and which is never unfolded by any sight or sound of nature from the unfathomed and mysterious depths of the human soul. As in answer to the inquiry, what influence predominated in him before composing, Mozart said, 'nothing but music which *would* come out,' – the pure musical impulse without any definite conception, without any limiting idea, only a rhythmic, billowy undulation of tones, – so it is that we, after the tension of thought and observation, through music are admitted into that pure, undefined, yet all-encompassing realm, which is a chaos, but a chaos that is no longer formless and void.

Bella, who sat reclining far back in a large arm-chair, gazed at Eric in such rapt wonder, that he dropt his eyes, unconsciously fixed upon her. To the surprise of both the men she suddenly rose, and bade them good night. She first gave her hand to Clodwig, then to Eric, and then to Clodwig again, and quickly went out.

Clodwig remained only a short time with his guest, and then he also took his leave. Eric went, in a sort of ecstasy, to his chamber. How rich was the world! what a day this had been from the dawn in the dewy wood even until this moment! and human happiness was a reality! Here were two who had attained rest and blessedness, such as could hardly be believed to exist in the actual world.

While he was standing still upon the carpeted stairs, from unconscious thoughts of the rich house he was about to enter, and conscious thoughts of the full and rounded existence of his host and hostess, the question suddenly occurred to him, Is this beautiful life, this perfecting of the soul in an extended view of nature, and its saturation in all that is beautiful in science and art, possible to wealth only, to freedom from care and want, to emancipation from all labor and from common needs?

As, holding the light in his hand, he entered the balcony chamber, he remained standing terrified, as if a ghost had appeared to him, before the bust of the Medusa, which with open mouth fixed upon him its overpowering and paralyzing gaze.

How is this? how has this image so suddenly assumed this likeness? Did Clodwig have any suspicion of it? It was indeed terrible.

Eric turned about, and now, as if it were some trick played upon him by an evil spirit, the contrasted image also, the Victoria, has a likeness to Bella when, silent and quiet, she modestly and humbly bent down her head.

Had Clodwig any suspicion of this wonderful play of opposites, and did he not acknowledge this, this morning when he avowed his heresy to the received opinion?

The pulse in Eric's temples beat violently. He put out the light, looked for a long time out into the dark night, and sought to recall afresh to his recollection the bright plenitude of the day's experience.

CHAPTER XII. FRAU ADVENTURE

In the morning Eric put on his uniform, for so Clodwig had advised with cautious reference to a former experience. A horse had been placed at his disposal, and his portmanteau was to be sent after him.

Clodwig's contracted brow grew smooth as the handsome, noble-looking young man entered the parlor in his becoming uniform. After greeting him, he pointed to Eric's arm, saying: —

"Take off the crape before you go."

Eric looked at him surprised, and Clodwig explained himself.

"You are not to be sentimental, and you must agree with me that it is not well to enter, for the first time, a stranger's house, wearing a badge of mourning. People often desire a sympathy which they cannot expect to receive. You will be less disturbed in the end, if you impress it upon yourself at first that you are entering service, and moreover are to serve an extremely rich man, who would like to keep everything unpleasant out of sight. The more you keep to yourself your own personal feelings, the more free will you be."

Clodwig smiling quoted from Lucian's "Sale of the Philosophic Sects," where the Stoic as a slave cries out, "Even if I am sold, I am still free within myself!"

Eric good-humoredly took the crape from his sleeve.

Bella had excused herself from appearing at breakfast, and sent Eric a message of farewell till their next meeting.

The two men were now alone. Clodwig gave Eric a letter for Herr Sonnenkamp, but begged him not to make any positive engagement until he had seen him again, adding almost inaudibly, "Perhaps I shall keep you for myself."

As a mother crams all the pockets of her son going away from home, so Clodwig sought to give his young friend all sorts of instructions.

"I have but slight acquaintance with the boy," said he; "I only know that he is very handsome. Do you not agree with me that it is a great mistake to give a young soul the foundation principles which are to determine his life-course, before this young soul has collected the material of life or knows his own tendencies?"

"Certainly," replied Eric; "it is like building railroads in uncultivated or half-civilized countries, before roads have made possible the interchange of agricultural and manufactured products. The root of the disease of modern humanity, as my father often said, lies in the habit of teaching children dogmatically the laws which govern the universe; it is a superfluous labor based on ostentation, which is unfruitful, because it leaps over the first steps."

Clodwig nodded several times. This man might be trusted to sail out into the open sea; he would always have a compass with him.

The time of departure came; Clodwig said, —

"I will go a little way with you."

Eric took his horse by the bridle, and they walked on side by side. The old man often fixed an anxious, affectionate look upon his young friend. He repeated that he considered it a highly honorable task to train the young American for a useful life; then he advised him again to keep this one object in view, and to turn resolutely from all gossip concerning Herr Sonnenkamp, who had certainly left many rumors uncontradicted, either because he was too upright to trouble himself about them, or because he preferred to have some facts of his history hidden by false reports. It was undoubtedly singular, that though he was a German by birth, not a single relative had ever been seen at his house; probably, however, he was of low origin, and helped his relatives on condition that they should have no intercourse with him; Major Grassler had hinted at something of that kind.

"One thing more," said Clodwig, standing still, "say nothing to Herr Sonnenkamp of your having for a short time devoted yourself to the supervision of criminals. I would cast no slur upon him, but many men have an aversion to persons of such a calling."

Eric thanked him, seeing clearly his earnest desire to smooth the path before him. They went on in silence until Clodwig said, "Here I will turn back, and let me give you one warning."

"A warning?"

"Perhaps that isn't the right word; I only want to say to you, make up your mind to pass in the world for an enthusiast. A man who seeks anything in life except profit, pleasure, and honor, appears an enthusiast to many people who have no sympathy with such a predilection; the world cannot be just to such men, it must condemn them, because it sees its own strivings condemned by them. You will have to bear a martyrdom all your life long, if you remain true, – and I believe you will; bear it with a proud self-respect, and remember that a new, old friend understands you, and lives your life with you."

Suddenly the old man laid his hands on Eric's shoulders, kissed him, and walked hastily away, without once turning.

Eric mounted and rode on; as he turned the corner of the wood, he looked back and saw Clodwig standing still. Bella had watched the pair from the balcony, which commanded a view of their whole course; now she went to meet her husband, and was not a little surprised to observe in his face an emotion which she had never seen there before; he seemed to have been weeping.

"You were right," said Clodwig hastily, "it is better for us to remain by ourselves. But I rejoice in this new generation which differs from ours; it wavers no longer between the two poles of enthusiasm and despair; it has, if I may so express it, a sort of intellectual inspiration, and I believe it will bring more to pass than we have. I am glad that I am not too old to understand these young people born into an age of railroads. I admire and love this present age; never before has every man in every calling known so definitely what he wishes and ought to do, both in science and practical life."

Bella thought she must make some reply, and said that young Sonnenkamp would be fortunate to have such a guide.

"It pains me that he must enter that house."

"Yet you have recommended him."

"Yes, that's it exactly. One is punished sooner or later for undertaking anything with half-sincerity or against his real convictions. I have brought myself into closer relations with this Herr Sonnenkamp, without really wishing it. In his house I always have a feeling as if I were in a family where horse-flesh is eaten. But, good heavens! it may be prejudice, custom; horse-flesh is also one kind of meat. But now I am free from, anxiety for the excellent young man."

Clodwig seemed unable to cease talking of Eric; and as he recalled what had passed, he was astonished at all that he had learned from him in so short a time; pointing to an apple-tree in blossom, he exclaimed: "Look at that tree in bloom, which when shaken covers every one with blossoms, and yet its richness is unimpaired. Such is this Dournay."

Bella replied, that it must be a hard task for a man who was so spoken and thought of to live up to the standard expected of him.

"May not such pleasure in imparting," she asked doubtfully, "be an exaggerated self-esteem or pure vanity?"

"O no! this young man does not wish to make a show; he only wishes that no moment of existence may be utterly wasted. He lets his active spirit work, and he must take satisfaction in the notice and sympathy of others; without this satisfaction, the pleasure of imparting would be impossible. That is the faith which removes mountains of prejudice."

"Faith?" said Bella, smiling beforehand at her own nice distinction, "it seems to me rather like the permanent embalming of a want of faith." He very zealously endeavored to show how this was, rather, the difficult and painful transmission of one's life.

He spoke long and eagerly. Bella appeared to listen, but hardly heard what he said; she smiled to herself at the old diplomatist, who had something incomprehensibly child-like, almost childish, about him. She threw her head back proudly, conscious of her inflexible virtue, which was strongly armed even against her husband, who wished to bring her into constant intercourse with a young man so richly endowed.

In the mean time Eric had ridden on through the wood, filled with fresh animation by the happy chance which had befallen him. He took a firm hold of his horse's bridle, full of that confident spirit to which every undertaking seems sure of success, or, at least, of only short and temporary failure. He congratulated himself on the good fortune that had helped him to win so easily and entirely a man of refined character, who was evidently somewhat cautiously reserved towards most men.

He had left his past life on the mountain behind him, and a new one was beginning. Smiling, he thought, The heroes of old must have felt in my mood, when they knew that they were under the protection of one of the gods of Olympus.

At a turn in the wood he stopped, and, taking Clodwig's unsealed letter from his pocket, read as follows:

"A neighbor's greeting to Herr Sonnenkamp, at Villa Eden.

"Had Fate granted me a son, I should consider it as a completion of the great blessing, to be able to give him this man as a tutor.

"CLODWIG, COUNT VON WOLFSGARTEN. WOLFSGARTEN CASTLE, May 4, 186-."

Eric set spurs to his horse, and rode gaily on through the wood, where birds were singing amid the fresh young leaves. As he passed through the village, he saw at the window of the Rath-haus, behind blooming wall-flowers, a rosy, fair-haired maiden, who drew back quickly as he bowed to her. He would have liked to turn his head to see whether she was looking after him, but he did not venture to do so.

After a little while, it occurred to him that he was very vain to believe that this lingering behind the flowers concerned him at all; Lina had undoubtedly expected to see Baron von Pranken, when she heard his horse approaching.

Eric was now riding along the river-bank in the valley. He was so full of cheerfulness, that songs rose to his lips as they had not done for a long time; he did not give them voice, but sang them in his soul. The whole fulness and variety of thought, perception, and feeling were stirring in his heart. As he saw the sun shining on the glass dome of Villa Eden, it struck him like a lightning flash, —

Why is such a free, delightful existence denied me? why must I labor in the service of others? Then came the thought. But what should I do with such an indolent, selfish life? Then the riddle presented itself, How is one to educate a wealthy boy?

And so strangely are thoughts associated in the human mind that Eric felt, not that he could solve this riddle, but that he could understand how the ancients had represented the idea of enigmatical questioning and the riddle under the form of the Sphinx.

Then again came the inquiry, How can one educate a rich boy, who knows that an estate like that, and untold wealth, are to be his, and who sees no need for exertion in the life before him?

Eric had been looking down; now he threw back his head and smiled as he thought, Neither pupil nor tutor is a mere abstract idea; both are living, variously endowed beings. Such questions can receive no general answer, and all riddles are like stormy weather out of doors, that, seen through the dim atmosphere from the shelter of a house, seems intolerable, but once out in the midst of it, one feels refreshed.

All his puzzling doubts and speculations seemed cleared away, and he felt ready armed to wrestle with the problem. "Come on, riddle, I am ready for you," he said almost aloud, and rode on at a quick trot.

In the midst of his doubts and thoughts a pleasant smile suddenly spread over his face. He wondered whether he were not under some spell, and all the frolicsome humor of youth came over him as he uttered aloud a letter which he would write to his mother.

"DEAR MOTHER:

"You must let yourself be named Frau Adventure, for your son, Doctor Adventure, Captain Hero, in the midst of railway cars and telegraphs, has fallen upon Dream-land, where he is fed upon the sweet-bread of praise, and the sugared almonds of protection, by a pair of spirits who watch over the Holy Grail. He is now seated on a bay horse, and has the magic word sesame of a sage hermit in his pocket, and all things come at his bidding, and each says, 'Heart, what dost thou desire?' Dear mother, if you want a quiet little island, only say so; I have innumerable ones to dispose of.

"And there's a postscript, dear mother. Suppose the millionaire, towards whom I am riding, should be Uncle Adam? That would make the fairy tale complete."

At the thought that this fanciful conjecture might be a probability, Eric stopped short. Then he rode briskly along the broad road, on each side of which grew great nut-trees, dropping their caterpillar-like blossoms on the path. The horse trotted on bravely, his black mane flying in the wind as the rider lifted his cap to let the fresh air cool his hot brow.

BOOK II

CHAPTER I. A MORNING IN EDEN

The boats sail up and down the river, the railway trains move on this side and on that, and persons from all countries, and in every relation of life, get refreshment from the view.

There thou wouldst like to dwell, many a one thinks, and to pass away thy days in the regular and constant enjoyment of nature, and in voluntary labor, solitary, or in the society of congenial persons.

The banks of the Rhine have the appearance of being charming seats of repose, while they also furnish enough of stirring life. The high-road of intercourse with the world lies before the very threshold of the house; and from the midst of solitude, every hour can unite itself with the great world's varied and bustling activity.

Cheerful towns and villages along the banks, with their castles and vineyards, their beautiful and well-kept country-seats, are everywhere seen, forming an almost unbroken chain.

From town to town, and from house to house, stories are narrated of the narrow escapes of the inhabitants, who saved themselves with resolute strength from the ingulfing flood, or with the last energy of despair reached the shore, many being dashed with violence upon the bank.

He who comes an entire stranger from abroad, and makes his home here, can feel assured that it is at his option to cultivate an acquaintance with the old residents, or to remain by himself. The continual current of strangers, coming and going, allows him who remains to abide in complete isolation.

Whose is that beautiful country-house yonder, which looks to the passer-by, with its tower gleaming from a distance, like a white swan nestling in the green bank? Travellers on the boats passing up and down the river often ask this question, and receive the reply, that the villa is called Eden, and that it is a real Eden, as far as one can judge from the outside, for it is all shut up and guarded, with spring-guns and steel traps the whole length of the garden walls. The servants have permission to show the house and park only when the owner is away on a journey, and then they take in a great deal of money.

One praises the wonderful stables with marble mangers; another, the hot-houses all in bloom; a third, the beautiful arrangement of the interior of the house; a fourth, the fruit-garden and the park, each one according to his own peculiar taste. The owner is a rich American, who has built this house, laid out the shady park, and changed the half-swampy, ragged, and uneven meadow, extending down to the river, into a fruit-garden that bears fruits of a size and beauty never before seen in this region. He was rebuilding, too, the ruined castle there on the height.

And what is the name of this man?

Sonnenkamp. Almost all his servants are foreigners; he visits only a few persons in the vicinity, and seldom receives any one as a guest; no one knows, indeed, who he is, or what he is. He has the finest horses, but he, his wife, and a female companion drive and ride out together, only at some convenient point to turn back again on the public highway.

On the morning that Eric rode to the villa, a large, thick carpet was laid by servants in morning livery on the west side upon the extensive gravelled square. A round table with green damask covering was placed near a many-colored pyramid of fragrant flowers, and on the table was afterwards set a large, ground crystal vase, with artistically arranged flowers and bouquets, and plates for four persons.

A side-table was placed near a blossoming copse of laburnums and variegated lilacs, and on it a large silver tea-urn with lighted lamp. A thin vapor soon went up from the urn. Two great rocking-chairs were put in suitable places near by.

A young man who stood aside, taking no part in the arrangement, looked out upon the landscape, where one could enjoy a view extending over the fruit-garden and the fountain, in whose basin two pairs of swans were swimming, over the meadows; and now he turned away from the prospect, inspected the preparations, and with the words, "All right," withdrew with the servants. The tea-urn steamed, and the chairs and table seemed to be awaiting the company.

A pert finch alighted upon the back of one of the rocking-chairs, and whistled to his little mate in the trees: "that was a fine set-out, and he would like, if he could, to do the same for his little ones."

The forward, impudent young father was, however, soon scared away, for at the sound of approaching footsteps he started, and carelessly flew directly over the hissing urn, whose vapor seemed to scald him, and to change his course, so that he almost grazed the hat on the head of the man who now came in.

The man limped a little with his right leg, but he knew how to disguise it so that this limping toned down the formidable impression of his powerful, athletic frame.

He was a large, broad-shouldered man, in a well-fitted summer suit, and a white neck-cloth with a standing shirt-collar after the English fashion. The man of Herculean frame seemed to do all he could to reduce, lessen, and soften the effect of it; but the finest garments could do this only in a small degree. He wore a broad-brimmed straw hat, so that at a short distance but little could be seen of his shaded face. The young man who had superintended the arrangements a short time before, bearing a large portfolio, followed the strong man. The man in the straw hat had sat down in the rocking-chair, which, together with the portfolio, was made ready for him.

Removing the straw hat, which the valet Joseph at once took, he stroked his smoothly-shaven, prominent chin with his large, fleshy hand, on whose thumb, strange to say, was a ring like a single link of a chain, a golden hoop with iron in the middle.

The man is Herr Sonnenkamp. His reddish face had deeply marked lines, and over his broad brow a lock of gray hair was combed down. There was a more than ordinary breadth between the bristling eyebrows, giving to them the appearance of having been forcibly rent asunder. Whoever saw this countenance once could never forget it.

The deeply-set, light-blue eyes had an expression of determination and shrewdness; the shoulders were broad and somewhat round; the nose was large, but not without a character of nobleness; the mouth was somewhat curved with imperious disdain. The whole countenance was worn and anxious, but a domineering energy was visible in all its traits.

The impression at the first was, that one would not like to have this man for an enemy. "Hand here," he now said, taking out of his vest-pocket a ring on which were suspended some very small keys.

Joseph held the portfolio in the most convenient position for Sonnenkamp to unlock, and then took out the letters it contained. Sonnenkamp speedily arranged them, placing together those with a foreign stamp, and by the side of them a large pile having an inland postage mark. Joseph now laid down the hat and the portfolio upon the empty rocking-chair, and with his ready scissors cut every envelope.

Herr Sonnenkamp quickly ran over the opened letters, and put them aside. He only looked at the seal and address of some of the inland ones, and directed that they should be placed again in the portfolio; he put two of the foreign in his pocket, and, placing the rest back with his own hand, locked the portfolio.

The folding-doors of the terrace were opened, and Herr Sonnenkamp rose, taking from the chair his broad straw hat. Two female forms appeared on the terrace. One, tall, with a long, pale, sad face, wore a morning cap with deep-red ribbons; and a flaming red shawl; the other was a small, pretty figure, with sharp, bloodless features, piercing brown eyes, and coal-black hair lying flat upon

the head; she was one of those countenances that have plainly never been youthful, and to which advancing age can do no harm. Her dress was of black silk, and she had suspended from her neck a mother-of-pearl cross that glistened and shone upon her breast.

Herr Sonnenkamp had that American trait, including in itself so much that is good, of respectful courteousness and considerate care toward his own household and relatives; he went to meet the two ladies at the steps, nodded pleasantly to the lady in black, and extending his hand to the lady in the red shawl, asked in a kindly tone after her health, using the English language.

The lady, Frau Ceres, did not deem it necessary to make any reply. She went to her seat at the breakfast table, and a female attendant immediately placed a shawl over her lap, and a waiter pushed under her feet a cushioned footstool.

The lady in black, Signora Boromea Perini, went to the side-table, and took with a spoon from the tea-canister, which a servant held, the requisite measure of tea.

"Where is Roland?" inquired Frau Ceres, in a listless tone.

"He will soon be here," answered Sonnenkamp, and made a sign to have him sent for. Fräulein Perini brought the first cup to Frau Sonnenkamp, to whom it appeared too great an exertion to pour in a couple of drops of milk. In a very subdued tone, Herr Sonnenkamp asked, "Will you eat anything, dear child?"

Frau Ceres sipped a spoonful, then half a one, and looked about, as if spent with the effort. It seemed to be a burden to her to be obliged to sip the tea herself.

"Where is Roland?" she inquired again. "It is inexcusable that he is so irregular. Did you not say something, Madame Perini?"

"Nothing, my gracious lady."

Herr Sonnenkamp remarked in a very mild, pacifying tone, if she would endure it patiently a little longer, Roland would receive, it was to be hoped, a tutor at last who would bring him under the proper discipline. He then spoke of the letter which Otto von Pranken had written to him. At the mention of this name, Fräulein Perini let a biscuit fall into her cup, and busied herself in fishing it out again, while Sonnenkamp added that he should read no more applications, until he had become acquainted with the person recommended by Herr von Pranken.

"Is the man one of the nobility?" asked Frau Ceres.

"I do not know," replied Sonnenkamp, though he did know very well; "he is a captain."

Frau Ceres, without saying anything, determined within herself to wait until this question of nobility was settled.

Fräulein Perini, feeling that she must speak for Frau Ceres as if knowing what she thought, looked at her smilingly and observed, "One seldom meets with so perfect a chevalier as the Baron von Pranken, at least not in Germany; even more than the countess Bella he has—"

"I pray you," Herr Sonnenkamp here interposed, and his countenance had the expression of a bull-dog trying to be tender, "I pray you not to praise others at the expense of the countess; the ladies are bewitched with Herr von Pranken, and for my part, I am with the countess Bella."

Frau Ceres gave an almost imperceptible shrug of the shoulders, and held the gold spoon pressed to her lips. He boasts of being fascinated, she rightly thought, and it is only for the sake of making a complimentary speech.

"But where can Roland be?" she suddenly exclaimed, and pushed against the footstool so that the table shook, and everything upon it rattled.

The servant, entering, said that Roland would not come to breakfast, as he did not wish to eat anything to-day, but to remain with Nora, who had five puppies.

"Then tell him," rejoined Sonnenkamp, and his countenance flushed a dark red even to the roots of his thin hair, — "then tell him that if he does not instantly come, I will have all the five young ones immediately drowned in the Rhine."

The servant hastened out, and a beautiful youth, clothed in blue velvet, soon made his appearance; he was pale, and his finely cut lip quivered. He had evidently gone through a hard struggle.

The boy was tall and slender, and his features were strikingly beautiful, delicately regular as if chiselled. He took off his jockey-cap, and showed his dark brown hair, well arranged in thick curls about his forehead.

"Come to me," said his mother, "and kiss me, Roland, you look so pale; is anything the matter with you?"

The boy kissed his mother, and, shaking his head as if denying that anything ailed him, said in a voice hovering between a falsetto and a bass, "I am as well as my young dogs."

A deep color dyed his cheeks, and his lips became purple.

"I do not wish to punish you on the day that you receive your tutor," said Sonnenkamp, casting a glance toward his wife.

"I? a tutor again? no tutor for me," replied the boy; "and if you give me one, I will soon make him take his leave."

Sonnenkamp smiled. This bold, defiant attitude of the boy seemed specially to delight him. When Roland, who had just declined all food, ate now heartily, his mother followed his example; in the satisfaction of knowing that her son had so good an appetite, she also found one, so that Fräulein Perini could not refrain from remarking to Roland, —

"See, Master Roland, how on your dear mother's account you should come regularly at meal-time, for she can only taste food when you also partake of it."

The boy gave Fräulein Perini a peculiar look, but made no reply; there seemed to be no good understanding between the boy and the companion of his mother. Fräulein Perini, however, showed her friendliness toward the boy, promising to pay a visit with him to the young dogs after breakfast.

"Do you know why dogs are born blind?" asked Roland.

"Because God has so ordained it."

"But why has God ordained it?"

Fräulein Perini looked puzzled at this question, and Herr Sonnenkamp came to her help, saying that he who was continually asking the reason why would never accomplish anything, and that Roland had fallen into this way of constant questioning, because he was not willing to learn anything thoroughly.

The boy looked down. A certain sullenness or dulness, perhaps both, appeared in the expression of his face.

Frau Ceres left the breakfast table, seated herself in a rocking-chair, and contemplated her long, delicate, almond-shaped nails.

Herr Sonnenkamp told her what a number of letters in German, French, and English he had received in answer to his advertisement; the candidates had generally enclosed their photographs, and rightly, for personal appearance was significant.

Frau Ceres listened like one who is sleepy, sometimes closing her eyes. When Sonnenkamp remarked how much misery there was in the world, a constant looking for a perfect success, to which every man believes that money is the one thing needful, she threw upon him a sidelong glance of surprise, apparently not comprehending how any one could live, and be destitute of means.

Fräulein Perini, the companion, was a useful mediator; she knew how, while Frau Ceres remained apparently or really quite inattentive, to keep up the conversation with short questions, or remarks, as she occasionally looked up from her embroidery and cast a glance, the real convent glance, shy but benignant, upon Herr Sonnenkamp. In this way Frau Ceres could listen, without exerting herself to join in the conversation.

Fräulein Perini seemed to serve Herr Sonnenkamp as a person upon whom he could practice politeness; and they stood in the most courteous relation to each other. He would, in fact, have been

glad to dismiss her long before, but she was fastened upon him like the rheumatism-ring which he wore on his left thumb.

Frau Ceres was always carefully waited upon by Fräulein Perini; never alone, she had a constant companion and attendant, and when they drove out, Herr Sonnenkamp always left the seat next his wife to Fräulein Perini, riding backwards himself. He could not be rid of her, and it was best to treat her with polite consideration. Besides, she had many excellent qualities, and best of all, no whims; she was always even-tempered, never put herself forward, and always had an opinion, which generally was one that caused no discussion. She never appeared offended; if she was overlooked, she seemed not to notice it; or if drawn into conversation, she was agreeable, and even witty; she was always ready to help, to do for and to meet others, and never talked of herself.

Every morning, summer and winter, she went to church, and was always in order, as if ready for a journey at an hour's notice; she knew where everything was in the house, and was never in the way in travelling. She was always busy with embroidery, and there was no church for miles around which had not an altar-cloth, or some part of the decoration, of her work.

She spoke all the continental languages with ease, except German, which she said she never could learn. Sonnenkamp was convinced, however, that she understood it perfectly, and that her want of comprehension was only a mask whose object it was easy to see.

Her relations with Roland were peculiarly distant. She treated him as the young master of the house, but concerned herself no further about him, even declining his father's proposal that she should instruct him in the languages. She never stepped out of the circle that appeared marked out for her; after being Manna's governess, she became wholly and exclusively the companion of Frau Ceres; and this was a most safe and honorable position.

The more Herr Sonnenkamp spoke of the recommendation of Herr von Pranken, so much the more attentive Fräulein Perini seemed to become, but she did not utter a single word; but when Herr Sonnenkamp asked her what had been her feelings when she was first introduced to the family at Nice, she answered, "I had the happiness to be introduced to you by my noble guardian, the Dean."

Roland was impatient and beckoned to Fräulein Perini to go with him: but Sonnenkamp requested her to remain with the mother, and in order to manifest some sympathy in his son's joy, he himself accompanied him.

Roland was the only one whom the dog allowed to come near her; and when Herr Sonnenkamp ventured it, she growled, and snapped at him with her teeth. He was very angry, but he restrained himself and went away.

Roland brought his cross-bow and shot at the doves and sparrows in the courtyard. Suddenly the boy left off. A horseman, with horse well in hand, galloped up to the gate.

CHAPTER II. THE ARROW CAUGHT

"Shoot away, my boy, I'll catch the arrow!" the rider called from his horse, and the boy stood still, as if he had seen a miracle. Eric had heard much of Roland's beauty, but he was astonished at the charming grace of his figure. The boy's whole being seemed strained with amazement and excitement, like the bow which he held bent in his hand. The rider feasted his eyes on the picture. Roland's head was bare, his jockey-cap lay near him on a great dog resting at his feet, and just raising his head as if to ask whether he should start up and drive the stranger away.

"Shoot away! Fire!" cried the rider, in a commanding tone. "Have you no courage?"

The arrow whizzed from the bow, the rider bent sideways and caught it with a sure hand.

"Either you are a bad marksman, or you tried not to hit me!" he exclaimed.

Astounded and motionless, with his bow lowered, the boy gazed at him while he was approaching and dismounting, and then asked, —

"Can you be the hero Siegfried?"

"Ah! then you know about him," replied Eric, gaily. "No, my young friend." He offered his hand to Roland, who seized it.

"Hero Siegfried wore no uniform with a red collar. But now help me to dispose of my horse."

"It is like one of Count Wolfsgarten's horses."

"It is his."

"Ivan!" shouted the boy.

A groom appeared and led the horse to the stable. As Eric and Roland followed, they heard from behind a partition near by a whining, and a weak attempt at barking.

"You have some young St. Bernard dogs close by," said Eric.

"Yes; do you know them by their whimper?"

"I can't tell the particular breed in that way. I saw a St. Bernard dog out there in the court; but I know by the sound that these puppies are blind and not a week old."

The boy looked at Eric as if he were a magician; he opened a door, but begged him to go no nearer, because the mother was very savage, and was just then suckling all the five young ones. Eric did approach her, however, and she looked at him without growling, and again the boy gazed at the stranger in astonishment.

"*You* can certainly tell me why dogs are born blind," he began.

Eric smiled. A boy who asks questions is desirous of instruction and ready for it; it is only necessary to put things before him which will lead him to question.

"Not only dogs," replied Eric, "but cats, eagles, and hawks come into the world blind. It may be that those animals which need sharp eyes for their support and protection have a gradual development of the power of sight, so that they do not see the light, as the saying is, all at once. Man even, though he opens his eyes at his birth, has no real power of sight at first; he has to learn to see during his first year. Man, like the brute, learns to use his limbs in his earliest years, but one thing the brute wants, he can never acquire articulate speech."

A thrill passed over the boy as he listened to the stranger, whose words again had a tone of strangely magnetic power. In the excited state in which Eric had been for two days, and which reached its height at this moment, it seemed to him as if he were acting out a fairy tale, or one of those dreams in which one says to himself, in the wonder of the dream-life, "Wake up, you are certainly dreaming!" There was something which gave him a sense of being merely a spectator of his own life, though he knew that he was actually living it. He compelled himself to collect his thoughts, and said at last, —

"You are the son of Herr Sonnenkamp, are you not? and your name is Roland?"

"Roland Franklin Sonnenkamp; what is yours?"

"Eric Dournay."

The boy started; he thought he had heard the name within a few days, but was not quite sure.

"You are a Captain of Artillery, sir?" said he, pointing to the uniform.

"I have been. Then you know the different uniforms, my boy."

"Yes; but Herr von Pranken doesn't speak to me so familiarly."

"I think we had better both keep up the familiar manner that we began with," answered Eric, holding out his hand to the boy. Roland's hand was cold, all his blood had rushed to his head. The boy was surprised and taken captive in spite of himself.

"If you like," he began again, "you can have one of my puppies. Two I mean to keep; one I shall bring up for my sister Manna; Baron von Pranken is to have the fourth, and you may have the fifth."

His face beaming with satisfaction, Eric looked at the boy; this pleasure in giving showed that there was something good to build upon.

"Perhaps you know that in Homer the host does honor to a guest by bestowing some gift as a token of remembrance."

"I know nothing about Homer."

"Have none of your tutors told you anything of him?"

"All of them. They made a great talk about him, but it's stupid."

Eric led the conversation back, and asked, "Who helps you train the dogs?"

"One who knows all about it, the huntsman Klaus, whom they call the screamer; he will be pleased when I tell him that you knew how old the puppies were by their whimper."

Eric nodded. A boy like this might easily be guided to knowledge, if one could once get the lead.

Eric now asked Roland to conduct him to his father. As they were about to leave the stable, a snow-white pony with long mane turned his head quite round and neighed.

"That is my Puck," said Roland. He was evidently very happy in showing the stranger all his treasures, almost like a little child who displays a toy for the wonder of his playmate. Eric could not but praise the beautiful creature, which looked at him with great, wild, shy eyes.

He took the boy's hand, and they went together through the large botanical garden.

"Do you know about plants too?" asked Roland.

"No, I'm quite ignorant about them."

"So am I," said the boy, delighted; Eric's acknowledgment of an ignorance which coincided with his own seemed to bring them nearer to each other.

They passed over a plat where men were weeding and putting the ground in order. A little old man, with a shy but shrewd look, was at work; he took off his cap, and said good-morning. "Have you seen my father?" asked Roland. "He is over there," replied the little man, pointing toward the green-houses.

The long green-houses, constructed of pale-blue glass, came in sight. A door stood open, within which a fountain was to be seen, in whose gray marble basin lay blocks of stone with water plants growing in all their crevices. Some of the trees which needed protection from the winter were still here, and a few which did not thrive had thick wrappings on trunk and branches.

They heard a voice. "There he is in the cold-house," said Roland. Eric told him to turn back now, as he had something to say to his father alone.

The boy stood as if rooted to the spot. In Eric's manner of ordering him to go, there was an air of such irresistible authority that he did not know what to make of it.

As Eric went forward, the boy stood motionless, then turned, snapped his fingers, and whistled to himself.

Drawing a long breath, Eric stopped a moment to collect himself. What if this boy were related to him by blood, and he were to find here his missing uncle? Walking slowly and composedly, he entered the open door of the green-house.

CHAPTER III. THE FLAG IS HOISTED

"Who's there? what do you want?" was asked by a form as it raised itself up from a bed of black earth. A coarse, gray, sacklike linen garment covered the form from head to foot; it was like that worn by convicts, or rather, by the insane.

"What do you want? who are you? whom do you wish to see?" the man again asked.

"I wish to see Herr Sonnenkamp."

"What do you want of him?"

"I would like to introduce myself to him."

"I am he. Who are you?"

"My name is Eric Dournay. Herr von Pranken had the kindness, day before yesterday, to – "

"Ah! are you the man?" Sonnenkamp replied, drawing a long breath. With trembling hands he unfastened the linen sack which he wore over his coat, saying, with a forced smile, "You have surprised me in my working-garb."

Rolling the sack together, and tossing it away, he said, "Was no servant at hand? Do you always wear a uniform?"

It was the uniform then that gave him such a start, thought Eric. And, on looking at the man, he was sure that he could not be his uncle. The likeness of his missing uncle, which still hung in his father's study, was present to his mind; it represented him as a slim, delicate form, with a very prominent aquiline nose, and no trace of resemblance to this athletic personage before his eyes.

"I am very sorry for having disturbed you," Eric resumed, convinced that the first impression had been an unfavorable one. "I beg you indeed to excuse me," he stammered out; "the Count von Wolfsgarten, whose guest I have been, and from whom I bring to you a letter of recommendation, has – "

"A letter from Count Wolfsgarten? Very welcome. I am very glad to see you," replied Sonnenkamp, taking the letter.

"We have met very unexpectedly – there was no reason for suspecting – prejudice as men – I mean – constraint – "

Sonnenkamp's tone had wholly changed; it had become gentle, kind, almost tenderly beseeching.

He hastily ran his eye over the lines written by Clodwig, and then said in a low tone, —

"I am very glad, – very welcome."

Looking, up from the letter, he made a sort of bow to Eric, and, as if sure of acquiescence, remarked, "a nobleman – just what a nobleman ought to be – is the Count Wolfsgarten. Do you stand as high in favor with the Countess Bella?"

There was a touch of sarcasm in the tone of this last question.

Eric answered with an unmoved tone and look, "I am happy to enjoy equally the favor of husband and wife."

"Fine, very fine," Sonnenkamp resumed. "But let us go out into the open air. Are you a botanist too?"

Eric regretted that he had always neglected to extend his knowledge in this direction.

Out in the open air, Sonnenkamp again surveyed the new-comer from head to foot. Eric now for the first time noticed, that wholly forgetting his military attire, he had taken off his cap. And when he perceived the look with which he was surveyed, he realised what was the meaning of private service, to give up one's self with his whole personal being to the dominion of an individual.

In Sonnenkamp's survey there was something which made Eric feel as if he were in a slave-market; and when Sonnenkamp stretched out his hand with a peculiar gesture, it seemed as if he were about to take hold of his chin, open his lips, and examine whether his teeth were all sound.

Eric shook his head at this strange fancy, and proudly stood erect, feeling, that he must maintain his own ground steadily in the presence of this man.

Sonnenkamp immediately gave orders to a servant near by to get breakfast ready at the fountain.

"Did you come on horseback?" he asked.

"Count Wolfsgarten was kind enough to furnish me with a horse."

"You have already spoken with my son?"

"Yes."

"I am glad that you came in uniform," Sonnenkamp said, making no further inquiries of Eric what he thought of the boy.

As if Eric were only a distinguished, well-recommended visitor, Sonnenkamp now exhibited to him the object of his greatest pride. This was a perfect collection of heaths, such as is rarely to be found. He discoursed upon the nice distinctions in the different varieties, and added: "I have been where the greater part of these heaths originated, the table-land of the Cape of Good Hope."

"I am sorry," said Eric, "that my mother is not here, for she would take great delight in this magnificent display."

"Is your mother a botanist?"

"Our botanical professor used to boast of her proficiency; but she takes great pains to avoid every appearance of being a blue-stocking. It must be very difficult to keep together these productions of different climates."

"Very difficult indeed. These Ericas require, at the same time, a regular temperature and a uniform moisture. You may often have noticed how some little heath-plant with its delicate blooms, which is sent to a lady for a flowers-stand, becomes dry and brittle after a few days. This little plant will not endure the dry atmosphere of a room."

Sonnenkamp suddenly stopped, and smiled to himself. This stranger professed only an ordinary degree of knowledge in order to be agreeable, and to let the rich proprietor branch out and be eloquent about his darling hobby. I can't be taken by such coarse bait, thought Sonnenkamp. "Will you be so good as to put this tub from the stand upon the ground?" he said, pointing to a very large Erica.

A momentary glance made Sonnenkamp aware that Eric understood well enough that the motive was to find out whether he knew how to make himself serviceable, and how to keep a humble position.

Eric complied very readily with the request, but Sonnenkamp had immediately made up his mind, in spite of Clodwig's warm recommendation, not to receive this man into his house.

He had two reasons. The stranger had seen him, as no other person could ever boast, utterly thrown off his balance, and must therefore be removed from his sight; now it appeared that he must maintain a respectful demeanor, which was rather irksome.

He would, in the meanwhile, show to one so well-recommended every respectful attention. He took pleasure in thinking how he would test the man in all points, allow him to unfold himself in the consciousness of a certainty of being employed, and then dismiss him without assigning any reason for doing so.

All this passed through Sonnenkamp's thoughts while he was turning round to lock the greenhouse door. The thing was as surely and as firmly fixed in his mind as the door was surely and firmly looked.

"Do you speak English?" he asked, seeing his wife still sitting in the rocking-chair; she had taken off the red shawl, and as she sat there, her satin dress had a rich golden lustre.

"Captain, Doctor, I beg your pardon, what name?" said Sonnenkamp, in introducing him.

"Dournay."

Frau Ceres gave a hardly perceptible nod, and, as if there were no one else present, said in a peevish tone to her husband, that he paid no attention to her, and had not said a single word to her about her new dress. Sonnenkamp stood wholly at a loss to know what was the meaning of this unexpected sally of his wife. Did she think it was a mark of high-breeding to show the stranger such a degree of indifference? She was not diplomatic enough for that. He turned, and as if apologising, remarked to Eric that his wife loved gay colors.

In a tone of strict truth, Eric replied that he entirely coincided with the gracious lady; that gay colors were in keeping with external nature; and that people ought to be sunny and bright like the flowers.

Frau Ceres smiled at this friendly turn, and Eric continued in the same strain, that it was a lamentable effect of the style of conversation employed in society, that the expression even of a truth should be regarded as mere civility and flattery, whenever it struck pleasantly upon the ear; that words were deprived of their real meaning, and people accustomed themselves to advance ideas which neither the speaker nor the hearer actually believed; that our manner of talking in society was like a card of invitation to an evening party, in which eight o'clock was specified as the hour, when half past nine was meant; and he who went at eight only brought the hosts into a dilemma.

Frau Ceres looked from Eric to her husband, and from her husband to Eric, and as no one said anything, Eric continued, briefly pointing out how colors in dress harmonised with the natural environment. But he soon perceived that he was going too far in this exposition, and he added that the attire of ladies approached nearer to the ethereal bright plumage of the birds.

His mother now beckoned to Roland, who appeared in the distance. He pointed to the summit of the tower. The mother looked up and smiled; and the father also smiled when he saw the flag of the American Union floating from its top.

"Who did that?" asked Sonnenkamp.

"I," Roland answered, with a joyous smile.

"What is it for?"

The boy's visage changed, and he cast a side-glance toward Eric.

Sonnenkamp screwed his under lip between his thumb and fore-finger into a half-circle, and nodded silently.

Eric had noticed the boy's glance, and his heart beat for joy. He asked the boy.

"Are you very proud of being an American?"

"Yes."

Eric was introduced to Fräulein Perini as she came up to them; grasping the mother-of-pearl cross with her left hand, she made a very ceremonious courtesy. Frau Ceres requested her to go with her to the house. Sonnenkamp, Eric, and Roland remained by themselves.

CHAPTER IV. THE BUYER EXAMINES WHAT IS OFFERED

"Give me your hand, Roland," said Eric. The boy gave it, looking up trustingly and joyfully.

"My young friend," Eric added, "I thank you for that testimony of respect waving yonder; but now leave us, for your father wishes to speak with me."

Father and son looked in amazement at the man who was giving his orders in such a free and easy manner. The boy departed, Eric nodding to him again.

After the two men were left by themselves, for a while no word was spoken. Herr Sonnenkamp, who always carried his cigars loose in his pocket, offered Eric a large, black, broken one, which he accepted and lighted from the match Sonnenkamp held out to him, without taking it into his own hand.

After drawing a few whiffs, he said, – "You will certainly agree with me, that it is an impolite politeness for any one to insist on taking the lighted match into his own hand; between this giving and taking, one generally burns his fingers."

However insignificant this remark, it served for a beginning. Herr Sonnenkamp leaned back in his chair, held the cigar-smoke for a long time in his mouth, and then blew it out in perfect rings, which, as they floated in the air, grew larger and larger until they vanished.

"You have great influence over the boy," he said, after a while.

"I think that the attraction is mutual, and this makes me hope that I might succeed as the boy's tutor. Only love can educate, as love only can create and form. An artist who does not love his calling can never truly create. There are, indeed, many who love a child because they give him instruction; but I can instruct only one whom I love."

"Fine, very fine, – noble. But Roland needs a strict hand."

"Love does not exclude but rather includes strictness; he who loves requires perfection in himself, as well as in the object of his love, and makes the highest demands."

Sonnenkamp nodded in a very friendly, even kindly manner; but there was a sort of sneer upon his countenance, as looking down to the ground and placing both hands upon his knees, he said: —

"We will speak now about personal matters; for things of that sort we will find time by and by. You are a – ?"

"Philologist by profession; but I have devoted myself, by preference, to practical education."

"I know that, – I know that," Sonnenkamp said, still looking down as he spoke.

"I should like to know something about your personal history."

He did not look up, and Eric was deeply pained at the thought of being obliged again to become his own biographer. He felt like a man who speaks to a sober and cool listener after drinking with a set of boon companions. He had unfolded himself freely and spontaneously to Clodwig, the day before; and to-day he must do it in order to recommend himself to a purchaser. And so it is! The seller must always say more, and expatiate more upon his goods, than the buyer. Wealth was a tyrannical power exhibiting itself under an entirely new form.

Eric, looking at the back of the man's head, and at his broad neck, – for not a glance was vouchsafed him, – very soon lost all sensitiveness as to his position of being a seeker after employment. He was not the receiver, but the giver. A tone of self-respect breathed in the words which he now uttered: —

"I offer you my free labor."

On hearing this, Sonnenkamp threw up his head quickly without changing his position, cast a rapid glance upon the speaker, and let his head immediately drop again.

"I mean," continued Eric, "that I offer to you and to your son all that I am, and all the knowledge and science that I have made my own hitherto. I look for no other reward than the free unfolding of

my own activity; and I have the feeling of freedom in doing this, since whatever I may accomplish I accomplish also for myself, in bringing that actually to pass which I have striven after, and which I have laid down as a theoretical demand."

"I know what free labor is," Sonnenkamp said, looking towards the ground. Then sitting upright, he added with a smiling countenance: —

"You are not dealing with a man of learning. I think we shall come sooner to terms, if you will regard me as a common-sense man who only wants to know the plain matter-of-fact."

"I had hoped," Eric replied, "that the introduction of Count von Wolfsgarten —"

"I esteem highly the Count von Wolfsgarten, more highly than I do any one else; but —"

"You are right; I will give you a personal explanation," Eric interrupted.

Was it the cigar, or was it the painful position in which he felt himself placed, that caused the sweat to start out upon Eric's forehead? At any rate, he laid the cigar down, and perceiving with a sort of surprise that he was wearing his uniform, began to explain again that he had put it on, for that day, because Count Wolfsgarten had advised him to do so.

Sonnenkamp again sat up wholly erect, feeling himself completely fortified against this man, who, an entire stranger, had taken possession of his house, his wife, his son, and thought even to domineer over him, and make him a stranger in his own home. He would let the applicant talk till he was tired.

"Go on, captain," he exclaimed, laying his right hand with the fingers crooked upon the table, and then drawing it back again, as if he had deposited a stake at play.

Eric had now become master of all his powers, and in a tone of cheerful good humor, began in a wholly different style: —

"Excuse a scholar for not throwing off his scholastic method. In the old poems, before the hero enters upon his career, the parents are described; and although I am no hero, and what I have to unfold is no record of personal prowess, yet allow me to give a preliminary account of my father and mother."

Eric once more gave a brief and concise sketch of his life. Mindful of Clodwig's advice not to say anything about his fancied mission to educate convicts, an incident occurred to him, which he had, in an incomprehensible way, wholly passed over before. He gave an account of his once having had charge of a powder-mill. "I was driven away by a revolting expression of my employer. From some cause never yet explained, the mill blew up, and four men were killed. But what said my employer when he reached the spot? Not one word of pity for the lost men, but 'that it was a shame for so much good powder to be lost.'"

"What was the man's name?" asked Sonnenkamp.

Eric gave one of the most distinguished names of the principality, and was not a little surprised to hear Sonnenkamp say, "A wonderful man, — influential and powerful."

Eric found it difficult to continue his narrative with composure after this incident, and ended by saying, —

"I beg that you will not regard me as a weak, restless person, for having so often changed my calling."

"On the contrary," Sonnenkamp declared, "I have had experience enough both in the old and new world, to teach me that the most capable people are just those who determine for themselves upon their employment. Whoever changes his calling must do so either from some external necessity, or from real fitness for something else. Allow me to ask one question. Do you believe it possible for a man who undertakes, compelled by want or because he can find nothing better to do, some employment, I do not like to call it a service, but a dependent position — you know what I mean, but I am not familiar with the German — is it possible for him to devote himself heartily to that occupation? Will he not always feel himself bound, under obligation to serve, and often ill at ease?"

"Your frank objection," Eric replied, "does me great honor. I know well that the calling of an educator requires to be made supreme, from morning until night. Nothing can be more desirable to me than to perceive that you are as deeply interested in the matter as I could wish."

Again a peculiar expression darted across Sonnenkamp's countenance; but Eric, without appearing to perceive it, continued, in a voice full of emotion, "It is not because I can find nothing better to do that I apply for the position of tutor in your family. I agree with you, that he who takes such a place merely from necessity can never fulfil its duties, although I do not mean to assert, and unconditionally, that inclination may not be developed, or as we say, that one may not make a virtue out of necessity. My knowledge is not great, but I have learned what one must do in order to learn, and therefore I think that I am able also to instruct. As far as earnest sincerity of purpose is concerned, I will yield to no one; and so far as I can judge, I venture to say, that were I placed in the most favorable circumstances, I would enter upon the calling of an educator in a spirit of freedom, with joyful zeal."

"Right honorable, right honorable! go on!" Sonnenkamp interposed in such a tone that Eric was somewhat confounded, hearing as he yet did, in a measure, the echo of his own earnest utterance, now so strangely interrupted. In a sort of triumphant tone, Sonnenkamp continued: —

"An amateur is all very well; but I prefer a man with a profession."

"I am entirely of the same opinion," Eric answered; "and I am amazed at the good results practically secured in the new world, by adopting a different course."

With constrained calmness he continued, —

"In regard to this matter, I have only one desire, and only one request to make."

"And that is?"

Sonnenkamp again placed his hand upon the table as if he were laying down a stake at play.

"I should like that you would not find it disagreeable to consider me at first, for some days, a guest in your house."

Eric said nothing more, hoping that Sonnenkamp would answer at once in the affirmative; but he cracked in two, abruptly, a cigar which he had just lighted, and which did not seem to draw freely, and threw it away into the shrubbery. His face became red again, and a mocking smile played upon his lips, as he thought: "Very confident indeed! This young man imagines that if he can only get a lodgment for a few days, he can so bewitch every one that he will be deemed indispensable. We shall see!"

As he maintained a persistent silence, Eric said: —

"It would be desirable as well for you as for me, before making a permanent agreement, to know more of each other; and I especially desire this on Roland's account."

Sonnenkamp smiled, and watched two butterflies chasing each other, hardly giving any attention to Eric as he went on to state, that the boy seemed to him in one respect too mature, and in another not mature enough to be made acquainted with the selection of a tutor, and perhaps to have a voice in it; therefore he must first know him as a guest in the house, and afterwards as his tutor; also it was his own desire that Roland should not know that his tutor received pay in money, or at least, should not know the amount.

At the word money, Sonnenkamp seemed to come out of his butterfly-gazing.

"What sum would you demand?" asked he, putting into his mouth a fresh cigar that he had held for some time in his hand. Eric replied that it was not for him, but for the father, to determine that.

Sonnenkamp brought his cigar to a glow with a few violent whiffs, and with great unction declared how well he knew that no sum was large enough to compensate adequately the painstaking duties of education and instruction.

Then leaning back in his chair, crossing his legs, and holding on to his left leg with the right hand, manifestly well satisfied with this declaration of his noble sentiments, he said, —

"Would you be willing to give me an exposition in a few words of the principles and method you must employ in the training of my son?"

"The method to be marked out in any particular case, the course I should adopt in actual instruction, I myself do not as yet know."

"What! you yourself not even know that?"

"I must take my method from Roland himself, for it must be adapted to the pupil's natural characteristics. Let me take an illustration from your own surroundings. You see here the river. The boatmen have sounded the bottom, and knowing where the shoal-banks are, keep well clear of them. So must I, first of all, fathom, in the peculiar sense of that word, the depths of Roland's nature."

Eric looking up continued: —

"Or let me take a yet more pertinent illustration. If you see that your servants, in going from the house to the servants' quarters, take by preference a short cut over a grass-plot artistically measured and laid out, you will, if it is possible, give in to this beaten track, and not obstinately adhere to your artificial plan, however correct it may be, and however much in conformity with the principles of landscape-gardening. You will adopt this natural foot-path as a part of your plan. This is the method adapted to circumstances. Such thoroughfares are found also in human beings."

Sonnenkamp smiled; he had, in fact, tried very hard, by means of stringent prohibitions, to keep a bed of shrubbery in the middle of the court-yard free from foot-passengers, and finally had laid out a pathway through it.

"Agreed as to the method, but how about the principles?" He smiled with self-satisfaction, for he perceived how nice a distinction he had drawn. The man had made him conscious that, in an intellectual struggle, he had here no mean antagonist.

"Here I must take a wider range," resumed Eric. "The great contest, which runs through the history of humanity and the whole of human life, shows itself in the most direct way in the training of one human being by another; for here the two elementary forces confront each other as living personalities. I may briefly designate them as individuality and authority, or historic civilization and nature."

"I understand – I understand, go on!" was thrown in encouragingly by Sonnenkamp, when Eric paused for a moment, anxious not to get lost in generalities.

"The educator is necessarily the representative of authority, and the pupil is a personality by the very endowment of nature," resumed Eric. "There is continually then a balance to be adjusted between the two, a treaty of peace to be made between the contending forces, which shall at last become a real reconciliation. To train one merely as an individual is to place a child of humanity outside of actual existence, and for the sake of freedom to isolate him from the common life, and make it burdensome to him; to subject him merely to prescribed laws is to rob him of his inborn rights. The human being is a law to himself, but he is also born into a system of laws. It was the great mistake of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and the French Revolution, that in their indignation at the traditions contradictory to reason, they thought that an individual and an age could develop everything from themselves. A child of humanity neither contains all within himself, nor can he receive all from without. I think then that there is a mingling of the two elements, and there must be an hourly and an imperceptible influence exerted both from within and from without equally, inasmuch as man is a product of nature and a product of history. It is through the last, only, that man is distinguished from the beasts, and becomes an heir of all the labors and all the strength of the past generations."

Sonnenkamp nodded acquiescingly. His whole mien said, This man lays down very aptly what he heard yesterday from the lecturer's desk; and Eric continued, —

"Man alone comes into an inheritance, and an inheritance is the heaviest human responsibility."

"That is something new to me. I should like to ask for a fuller explanation."

"Permit me to illustrate: the beast receives from nature, from birth, nothing except its individual strength and its stationary instinctive capacity, while the human being receives from his progenitors and from humanity a superadded strength which he has not in himself, but of which he becomes possessor, and so he is the only inheritor. And let me say further, that it is difficult to decide whether

it is harder to turn to good advantage that which a man is in himself, or that which he may receive, as for example your son will, as an inheritance. Most persons are of account only through what they possess. I consider this last of no trifling importance, but – "

"Wealth is no sin, and poverty is no virtue," Sonnenkamp interrupted. "I admit the depth and fineness of your perception in all this. I confess it is new to me, and I think that you have taken the right view. But whether, in the education of one individual boy, you shall find occasion for such great fundamental principles – "

"While engaged in the work of instruction," Eric quietly replied, "I shall not be likely to have directly before my eyes universal principles, as everything must be developed from its own basis. While one is loading, aiming, and firing off a musket, he does not define to himself the various physical laws that come into play, but he must know them in order to proceed in the right way."

Sonnenkamp was rather tired of this discussion; it was somewhat out of his line, and he had the unpleasant consciousness, that while trying to make an impression upon the stranger, he had himself been made to appear infinitely small.

"Pardon, gracious sir," a groom interposed, as Eric was beginning to expatiate anew. Sonnenkamp stood up hastily, and remarking that it was time for his ride, with affable condescension he waived with his hand the discussion to some other time.

He went quickly away. Roland came along the path, and called out, —

"I may ride out with Herr Dournay, may I not, papa?"

Sonnenkamp nodded, and departed with a hurried step. He mounted on horseback, and was soon to be seen riding a spirited black horse along the white high-road by the river. He made an imposing appearance as he sat on horse-back; the groom followed him.

CHAPTER V. A NEW PATRON AND A NEW TUTOR

By Roland's direction his own pony had been saddled, and also a horse for Eric. They mounted, and rode slowly through a part of the village which joined the estate. At the very end of it stood a small vine-covered house, with all the window-shutters closed. Eric asked who owned it, and why it was shut up. Roland told him that it belonged to his father, and that the architect, who built the villa, had lived there, and sometimes his father also, when he came from Switzerland or Italy during the building of the house, or the laying out of the park and garden.

"Now for a good trot," said Eric; "take your bridle more firmly in your left hand. Now!"

They started briskly, keeping side by side, but suddenly Eric's horse shied and began to rear. Roland uttered a cry, but Eric reassured him, saying, "I'll conquer him;" he drew his feet from the stirrups, and rode off at such a pace that the horse was soon covered with foam and quite submissive; then he rode back to Roland, who was waiting for him in anxiety.

"Why did you throw off the stirrups?" he asked.

"Because I didn't want to hang by them if the horse fell backwards."

They rode on quietly near each other. Eric asked: —

"Which do you like best, to have some fixed object for your ride, or simply to go over a certain distance, and then turn back?"

Roland looked puzzled.

"Didn't you understand my question?"

"Yes, perfectly."

"And what do you think?"

"I like to have some object, a visit to pay, at the end of my ride."

"I thought you would say so."

"Only think," said Roland, "they say I must have another tutor."

"Indeed."

"But I won't."

"What do you want?"

"I want to get away from home and go to a military school! Why should Manna go to the convent? They always say that my mother can't eat unless I am with her, but she'll have to eat when I'm an officer."

"Then you want to be an officer?"

"Yes, what else should I be?"

Eric was silent.

"Are you a nobleman?" asked the boy, after a pause.

"No."

"Shouldn't you like to become one?"

"We cannot make ourselves noblemen."

The boy played with his horse's long mane; glancing back, he saw that the flag had been lowered from the tower. He pointed it out to Eric, saying haughtily that he should hoist it again. His fine, delicately cut, but pale face gained strength and color as it lost its weary look, and assumed a daring expression.

Without noticing his domineering manner, Eric said how much he liked Roland's pride in being an American.

"You are the first person in Germany who has commended it," cried the boy joyfully. "Herr von Pranken and Fräulein Perini are always ridiculing America; you are the only man, — but I beg your pardon, I ought not to be talking so familiarly to you."

"Put away that notion; we want to be good friends."

The boy held out his hand, and Eric pressed it warmly.

"See, our horses are good friends too," said Roland. "Have you many horses at home?"

"No, not any; I am poor."

"Wouldn't you like to be rich?"

"Certainly, wealth is a great power."

Roland looked at him in surprise; none of his tutors had said that to him; they had all represented wealth as a temptation and a vanity, or had extolled it for the sake of flattering him.

After some time, in which the boy was evidently thinking about Eric, he said, "Are you French, like your name?"

"No, I am a German, but my ancestors were French emigrants. How old were you when you came to Europe?"

"Four."

"Have you any recollection of America?"

"No, but Manna has. I can only remember a song which a negro used to hum, but I can't quite recall it, and nobody can sing it to me."

As they rode up the mountain, the little man, whom they had seen at work in the garden, stood aside to let them pass, and greeted them respectfully. They drew up, and Roland asked Nicholas, as the dwarf was called, why he was going home so early.

The little man replied that he was going home now at noon, and then into the wood to get some of the new earth which Herr Sonnenkamp had found. Up in the wood was a spring which contained iron, and Herr Sonnenkamp had dug down and found the earth also impregnated with iron. In this earth he had planted hydrangeas, and the flesh-colored flowers had changed to sky-blue.

The little man could not express all his wonder at Herr Sonnenkamp, who knew everything, and how to turn everything to account; it was no wonder that he had grown so rich, while stupid men might go all over the world, where millions were to be had, without ever knowing it.

But the little man took especial delight in telling them of a simple device of his master, who always mixed juniper leaves with the earth where he planted seeds of fruit-trees, and in that way kept away worms and mice.

As they rode on, Eric expressed his admiration for a man, who, like a second Columbus, was still making new discoveries in a world which seemed already explored and parcelled out. His readiness to appreciate, from a single example, Herr Sonnenkamp's greatness in this direction made Roland draw himself up in his stirrups, struck with surprise as he thought of the subject. He had never before heard his father so praised.

"Is there no one in the neighborhood whom you would like to call upon?" "No – or – yes, the major – but he is now at the castle. But up there in the village the huntsman Claus lives, he has our dogs – will you go with me to see him? I must let him know how Nora's puppies are; he was with me an hour before you came."

Eric readily assented, and they trotted up the gentle ascent, turned into a side path, and dismounted before a small cottage. Dogs of various kinds came round them and jumped upon Roland; Puck also seemed to have friends; he played with a brown badger-dog. An old man came out of the house and touched his cap with a military salute. He wore the short, light-gray cotton jacket which is the easy and comfortable everyday dress of the country people along the Rhine, and he was smoking a clay pipe, on which a sort of Ascension of Napoleon was painted in glaring colors.

The tone and manner with which Roland presented his new friend to the huntsman, showed that he knew how to take an imperious tone toward his inferiors.

"Off with your cap," said he to the screamer; "only think, the captain knew by their whimper how old and of what breed Nora's puppies were, before he had seen them."

"Yes, one can do that," replied the screamer in a very loud voice, "one can do that. Dogs have their own peculiar whine and bark, according as they belong to a knowing or a stupid race; and stupid people, too, cry and complain quite differently from smart ones."

He cast a pleased glance upon Eric, and held his pipe in his hand for some time.

"You are right," said Eric. "I see you have had much experience and reflection."

"May be so," answered the huntsman.

He led the way into his house, and when Eric asked what saint it was whose picture hung on the wall, he replied, laughing, —

"That is my only saint, it is Saint Rochus of the mountain yonder, and I like him because he has a dog with him."

There were many bird-cages in the room, and such a twittering and confused singing, that one could hardly hear himself speak. The old man was very happy in explaining to Eric how he taught birds that lived on beetles and caterpillars to eat seeds, and how he got maggots and weevils also, and he complained of Roland's want of interest in the feathered tribe.

"No, I don't like birds," the boy declared.

"And I know why," said Eric.

"Do you? why then?"

"You have no pleasure in the free-flying creatures which you cannot make your own, and you don't like them imprisoned either. You like dogs because they are free and yet cling to us."

The dog-trainer nodded to Eric, as if to say, "You've struck the nail on the head."

"Yes, I do like you!" cried Roland, who had two young spaniels in his lap, while the mother stood by and rubbed her head against his side, and the other dogs crowded round.

"Envy and jealousy," said Eric, "are striking characteristics of dogs. As soon as a man caresses one, all the rest want to share the favor."

"There's one that doesn't trouble himself about it," said the trainer, laughing.

In the corner lay a small brown dog, that only blinked at them occasionally. Eric remarked that it must be a fox-hound, to judge from its appearance.

"Right, he understands dogs!" cried the screamer, turning to Roland. "You are right! I got that fellow out of a fox-hole, and he is and always will be an unfaithful and ungrateful beast, who is not to be trusted; do what you will for him, he is never thankful nor affectionate."

The dog in the corner just opened his eyes and shut them again, as if he didn't disturb himself about the talk of men.

Roland showed Eric his ferrets, which seemed to know him as he took them out of the cage. He pointed out a bright yellow one, as an especially cunning, tough rascal; he had given him the name of Buchanan. The name of the other he would not tell; it was really Knopf, but now he only said that he called him Master of Arts, because he always considered so long before he went into a hole, and moved his lips as if he were delivering a lecture.

They went into the garden, and the huntsman showed Eric his bee-hives. Turning to Roland, he said, —

"Yes, Roland, your father's flowers are good for my bees, if the poor little creatures didn't have to fly so far down to reach your garden. I let my cattle feed in other men's pastures, and the world hasn't yet got so far that rich men can forbid poor men's bees to suck honey from their flowers."

A sharp glance shot from his eyes as he said this, which expressed the whole rankling hostility of the poor towards the rich. The keeper complained that Sonnenkamp cherished so many nightingales, which certainly sang beautifully, but robbed the bees of their honey, and even ate the bees with the honey. The nightingale, which men prize so highly, is a cruel murderer of bees.

"Yes," answered Eric, "the nightingales do not know that the bees give honey, and we cannot blame the birds for considering them as plagues for whose destruction men will be grateful. However, they do not eat them altogether for our sakes but their own."

The screamer looked first at Eric, then at Roland, and nodded as if saying, "Yes, yes, that's quite another thing."

Roland now asked how far Griffin had been broken in. The reply was, that he would now run at the man, but he was still too wild, and his leap not quite regular, but he was beginning to seize hold. Roland desired to see him do it; but the day-laborer, who allowed himself to be experimented upon in that way, was not at home. Roland said that the dwarf was at home, and he would be ready to do it. He himself went after the dwarf.

After Roland had gone, the huntsman, Claus, hastily grasped Eric's hand, saying, "I will help you to catch him, and I can give the fellow slick into your hand."

Eric gazed in utter astonishment at the old man, who proceeded to inform him that he understood very well what he had come for, and whoever knew how could make out of Roland a proper man. He signified by a very sly wink that Eric would some day be exceedingly grateful to him, if he should help him out.

Before Eric could make any reply, Roland came back with the dwarf, who allowed a pillow to be fastened over his shoulders, and stationed himself at the garden-fence, holding fast by the palings with both hands. A large Newfoundland dog was let out of a kennel, and sprang about awkwardly in all directions, but at a whistle from the keeper stationed himself behind him.

The keeper now called out, "Griffin! catch him! At him!"

With a bound the dog-leaped through the garden at the dwarf standing by the fence, jumped upon him, bit into the pillow, tugged at him until he fell over, and then placed his right fore-foot upon his breast, looking back at his master.

"Bravo! bravo! You see he is a real devil!"

"You are right!" exclaimed Roland. "Devil! that's just the name – Devil he shall be called. Now they will be afraid of me all over the neighborhood."

Eric was shocked at this insolent bravado as well as at the off-hand application of the idea. He appealed to the trainer whether a dog's name ought to be changed who had already cut all his teeth.

"Certainly not," asserted the man; "a dog whose name is changed don't know when he is called."

"And besides," added Eric, "it is wholly wrong to give a dog such a name. A dog's name ought to have an *a* in it, and have only one syllable; the letter *a* can be called aloud very easily."

"You are a great scholar; I never heard of the like before; you know everything;" the screamer went on in high commendation, winking at the same time merrily, and with half-sidelong glances.

Devil – for Roland persisted in giving the dog this name – would not come away from the dwarf, prostrate on the ground, although both Roland and the trainer called to him repeatedly. That was not a part of his lesson. He held on until the trainer showed his whip.

Roland gave the dwarf a piece of money, for which he was very abjectly grateful, and only wished that he might be thrown down in that way three times every day by the dog. Eric looked on meditatively. How was this rich youth to be made to learn to love, labor for, and influence the world which so laid itself at his feet?

When the two left the cottage, the trainer escorted them a part of the way, followed by a whole pack of dogs. They led their horses by the bridle, and the trainer, keeping exclusively by the side of Eric, made an ostentatious display of his whole stock of wisdom concerning the training of dogs. The huntsman considered himself infinitely clever, and all learned men stupid.

He seemed also to wish, in a sly way, to instruct Eric, when he said to him that as soon as a dog can stand without stumbling over his own legs, a beginning could be made. And it was an all-important thing not to say much to a dog, but to use short, simple words, such as "go!" "come!" "here!" but never any long speeches; and one must not make much of him, but leave him to himself for whole days; and if he wished to make friends, not to mind it, for if one gives too much attention to a dog he becomes troublesome; and any one whom a dog is to respect must not be found wanting at the hunt, especially when the dog is taken out for the first time; if one has shot any game that

the dog can fetch, he will be faithful and true, but if one misses, he acquires no respect, and never gains over the dog.

"Do you know Herr Knopf?" the screamer asked abruptly. Eric answered in the negative.

"Yes; Herr Knopf," said the screamer, "has told me a hundred times, that all the school-masters ought to be under my tuition. Dogs and human beings are just alike. But the dogs are the more faithful beasts, and let themselves be broken in, and bite only when the master orders them to."

Eric looked at the man in astonishment; there was in him an inexplicable bitterness, and this man was the boy's friend. He returned to their former topic, and the screamer chuckled when he said that beasts acquire something of the understanding of the men they are with.

The huntsman was very merry, and when they were about to separate, on reaching the level ground, he took Roland aside, and said to him: —

"Thou blustering fellow! all thy ramrod priests and school-masters have been of no account. That would be the man! Thy father ought to buy such a man as that, and then something might be made of thee. But all your money can't get him!"

The screamer said this ostensibly to Roland alone, but Eric was also to hear it, for he must know that he ought to be grateful to him.

Just as they mounted, the huntsman said further, —

"Do you know that your father is buying up the whole mountain? Cursed accumulation! Your father is buying the whole Pfaffen-street." At the same time, pointing to the far extending wide-spread Rhineland, he said, —

"In a hundred years, not one handbreadth of all those vineyards will belong to those who rake and dig there. Must that be? Can that be allowed?"

A brisk trot carried them back to the villa; Eric had made up his mind; at the very moment when Eric had said to himself, "It is your duty not to abandon the boy," he saw in the garden, near the small vine-embowered house, a female form which vanished round the corner.

Had he really seen his mother, or had she been only present to his imagination?

Quicker than one can compute, the idea was formed in his mind, that here his mother and his aunt were to dwell; this house with its little garden, its dwarf-trees, and its beautiful prospect was made ready for her.

"Did you see a woman there in the garden?" he asked Roland.

"Yes, it was Fräulein Milch.

"Who is Fräulein Milch?"

"The Major's housekeeper."

CHAPTER VI. THE BREAD OF SERVICE AND THE BLESSING OF THE HUGUENOT

When Eric and Roland returned from their ride, they learned that Herr von Pranken had arrived. Eric's portmanteau had also been carried to his room. The valet, Joseph, introduced himself as the son of the Professor of Anatomy's servant, and he mentioned, with perceptible emotions of gratitude, that Eric's father had given him a French Grammar, out of which he had learned by heart French phrases, in his spare moments at the Academic billiard-saloon, where he had been an attendant. He had there laid the foundation of his present prosperity, and he expressed his satisfaction at being able to thank the son of his benefactor.

Joseph helped Eric in his arrangements, and gave him information concerning the habits of the household; according to these, the next thing to be done was, that each one, before dinner, which was regarded as a sort of festive occasion, should repair in full dress to the pleasure-ground in summer, and in spring to Nice, – as that part of the covered walk on the terrace was called which had the best exposure to the sun.

Eric laid aside his uniform; he entered the covered walk, and there found Pranken and Fräulein Perini promenading up and down together. Pranken approached Eric with a bland smile that flickered upon his face, disappearing as quickly as it came. In the consciousness of his rank and his social position, he could afford a perfect courteousness of demeanor, in which even a certain degree of geniality might be observed. With a bow he again took a position by the side of Fräulein Perini, and continued his previous promenade and conversation with her.

Eric stood apart, and the admonition that he, as one in service, must not be sensitive, struggled with his pride. But it might be regarded as very considerate in Pranken, that he did not ask how it fared with his application for the position of tutor.

Roland now entered in full dress, and the boy was amazed to see Eric in citizen's clothes. Eric asked him, "Is your sister's name Manna?"

"Yes; Hermanna, in fact, but she is always called Manna. Have you ever heard of her?"

Eric had not time to reply that he had heard that name frequently mentioned by Pranken and Fräulein Perini, for Sonnenkamp entered in a black dress-coat, white neck-tie, and irreproachable yellow gloves. He was very gracious to everybody, one might say *appetizing* in his manner, as if he would say, "I hope you will all enjoy your dinner." Never was Sonnenkamp in a more cheerful mood, never more buoyant, than during the quarter of an hour before dinner.

They went into the dining-saloon, a cool, square, vaulted room, lighted from the roof.

The carved oak furniture here was very massive. A large side-board, set out with beautiful antique vessels and Venetian glasses, displayed the rich silver plate. The whole neighborhood said that Herr Sonnenkamp ate out of golden plates; but this was a gossiping story.

They waited a few minutes in the dining-room until the folding-doors opened, when two servants in the coffee-colored livery of the house stood like guards, one on each side, and Frau Ceres, like a princess, stepped between them. At the threshold she courtesied somewhat stiffly; and Pranken, coming forward, conducted her to the table. A servant was stationed near each person, and drew back the chair whilst he took his seat; Fräulein Perini stood up behind her chair and leaned her arms upon the back, held the mother-of-pearl cross in her folded hands, said a prayer, made the sign of the cross, and sat down.

Frau Ceres, during the dinner, retained her yellow gloves, scarcely tasting any food, and appearing as if she had come to the table merely not to derange the order of things. She declined every dish, until Herr Sonnenkamp said: —

"Do take something, dear child, do, I pray you."

In his manner, in making this request, there was a double tone, hard to be distinguished separately. Sometimes it sounded like the call and signal of a tamer of wild beasts, who allowed some subdued animal to take the food lying before him; but again it sounded as when a father, fondly and coaxingly, beseeches his peevish child to eat something for his own good. Frau Ceres ate only a part of a bird, and some sweetmeats.

Pranken's demeanour at table was that of an honored guest, to whom was conceded the duty of paying particular attention to the hostess and conversing with her. He gave a humorous account of the horse-market at Mannheim, from which he had returned to-day at an early hour, with his companion; he had bought for the fall-races a gray mare, which he would be happy to transfer to Herr Sonnenkamp. And he soon took care to gain the good will of Frau Ceres. She had a special aversion to the family of the Wine-chevalier, who were very reserved towards the Sonnenkamp household. He proceeded to relate some ridiculous swaggerings of the Wine-chevalier, although he had been his own chosen companion.

He had also great skill in imitating the peculiar manner of speaking of different persons, and in introducing; facetious anecdotes, which produced a movement of the muscles in the weary face of Frau Ceres, and frequently even a smile.

The conversation was carried on in Italian, which Pranken spoke pretty well, but in which Eric was not fluent. For the first time in his life, Eric sat at a table where he was obliged to keep as silent as the servants who were in waiting.

Frau Ceres considered it her place not to leave the stranger wholly neglected, and therefore she asked him in English if his parents were still living.

Assuming a patronising tone, Pranken went into an account of Eric's father and mother; he did it with marked friendliness of manner, and dwelt with special emphasis upon the fact that Eric's mother belonged to the nobility.

"Are you a Frenchman, as your name indicates?" Fräulein Perini inquired.

Eric once more repeated that his ancestors had immigrated into Germany two hundred years before; that he felt himself to be purely a German, and rejoiced to be descended from the Huguenots.

"Huguenots? – ah, yes! they sing that," Frau Ceres said, taking a childish delight in this knowledge.

Every one at the table was obliged to restrain himself from laughing aloud.

"Why was the name Huguenots given to them?" asked Roland, and Eric replied,

"Some people think that the name originated in the circumstance of their holding their secret religious assemblies at Tours, only by night, when the ghost of King Hugo appeared; but I am of the opinion of those who consider it a German word, originally Eidgenosse, meaning associates, and changed by the French into Huguenot."

Pranken nodded to Eric in a very friendly manner, as if he would give him a testimonial of his excellent qualifications as a tutor.

"You take pride, then, in your descent from the Huguenots?" asked Sonnenkamp.

"Pride is not precisely the word I should prefer," Eric answered.

"But you know that the Puritans, who were exiled to the New World on account of their religious belief, were the parent-stock of that substantial, conscientious, and courageous middle class; and that they carried with them and transplanted into their new homes, as the Greeks of old times into Sicily and Italy, a complete civilization."

The manner in which Eric uttered this, touching upon a great historical series of events, suddenly gave to the conversation at table a wholly new direction. They were at once taken out of the light, brief witticisms, and piquant personalities, into an entirely different atmosphere. Roland felt this to some extent, looked proudly at Eric, and was glad that his voice and his thoughts so overmastered all.

Sonnenkamp himself recognised here the serene presence of a higher nature, which always breathed in an elevated region; he could not help feeling a certain respect for the man, and at last put the question, "How do you associate the Pilgrim Fathers in America with the Huguenots?"

"Let me briefly explain," answered Eric. "The new age has broken through the stringent lines of demarcation between different nationalities, as, for example, the Jews have become actual and constituent parts of the various peoples among whom they have been scattered. A haughty and tyrannical king drove the Huguenots out of France, and they became Germans. The emigrating Englishmen imprinted their culture upon America; the emigrating Huguenots, established among a people already civilized, were obliged to adopt the social cultus of their new fatherland. Permit me, Herr Sonnenkamp, to take you as an example."

"Me? what do you mean?"

"You emigrated to America as a German, and the German emigrants in the New World become assimilated to their adopted home, and their children are completely American."

Roland's eye glistened, but whether it was that Pranken felt himself cast in the shade by Eric, or that he endeavored to embarrass him as much as possible, he exclaimed, with an odd mingling of humor and pity, —

"It is very modest in you to place the Huguenots, who almost all belonged to the gentry, in the same category with the Jews."

"I regard it as a matter of no consequence," Eric replied, "whether my ancestors belonged to the gentry or not; they were engaged in the common occupations of business and trade, and my immediate ancestors were goldsmiths. The resemblance of the Jews with the Huguenots, however, I must maintain. Every community exiled on account of its religion, and scattered abroad, incurs thereby a double obligation: first, to keep in view, over and above all nationality, the oneness of humanity; and second, to contend against all fanaticism and all exclusiveness. There is no one religion in which alone salvation is to be found, and no one nationality comprising in itself all excellence."

Pranken and Fräulein Perini looked at each other in astonishment. Frau Ceres was at a loss to comprehend what all this meant, and Sonnenkamp shook his head over this sermon-like style of his guest, who intermingled his world-wide historical views with the light table-talk; and yet he could not get rid of the impression that there was before him a nature that had its permanent abode in the region of pure thought.

"You must unfold that to me yet more definitely at some other time," he said, seeking to divert the conversation.

And Roland said: —

"Louis the fourteenth, who exiled your ancestors, is he the one who destroyed the castles here on the Rhine?"

"The same."

It seemed difficult to draw the conversation away from a subject which made it drag heavily, but it was suddenly diverted, for just then a highly seasoned dish was brought in, of which Roland desired to eat. His father would not permit it. His mother, perceiving it, cried out in a shrill voice, "Do let him eat what he likes."

A glance from Eric met Roland's eye, and the boy laid down the morsel that he was about putting into his mouth, saying, "I would rather not eat it."

Sonnenkamp made a sign to the servant to re-fill Eric's glass with Rauenthaler. This appeared to be his way of expressing his gratitude for the glance of Eric.

No new topics for light conversation came up. Pranken was silent, and it was uncertain whether he had exhausted his material, or whether he wished to make Eric conscious by this reticence how pedantically, and at the same time ostentatiously, he had disturbed the cordial good feeling of the table.

The cloth was removed. Fräulein Perini again repeated a prayer in a low tone, all stood motionless, and the servants having quickly drawn back the chairs, they repaired to the veranda, where coffee was served in very small cups.

Frau Ceres gave a biscuit to a snow-white parrot, and the parrot called out, "God bless you, massa." Then she sank down into an easy-chair, and Pranken placed himself near her on a low tabouret, sitting almost at her feet.

Fräulein Perini selected a seat sufficiently near, if she wished to take part in the conversation, and yet far enough off to allow Pranken to speak with Frau Ceres alone.

Sonnenkamp beckoned to Eric to go with him into the garden. Roland accompanied them without being asked.

The servant came to inform them that the huntsman Claus was with the puppies, and begged that the young gentleman would come to him.

"I give you permission to go," the father said.

"But I would prefer to remain with you here," Roland replied.

There was an expression of childlike fondness in the tone and gesture, as he grasped Eric's hand.

"If your father says that you may go, you should go," Eric quietly answered.

Roland departed with lingering steps, halting at intervals, but still he went.

CHAPTER VII. AN EXAMINATION THAT ENDS WITH A LAUGH

For some time, the two walked silently side by side. Eric was dissatisfied with himself; he lived too exclusively in himself, and in the longing to arrange everything according to his own mental laws, and to express each truth in the most comprehensive way, throwing himself into it in the excitement of the moment with perfect freedom and naiveté, yet not unconscious of his intellectual riches.

Hence the hearers felt that, what he said was not only inopportune, but was presented with a sort of zealous importunity. Eric acknowledged this and was conscious of it immediately afterward, when he had divested himself of himself; yet he was continually making the same mistake, which caused him to appear in an ambiguous light, and as if he were out of his appropriate place. Eric had a sort of clairvoyant perception how all this was affecting Sonnenkamp, but he could not discern the peculiar triumph that it afforded him over the visionary, as he smiled to himself at the green youth who served up such freshly-cooked dishes of sophomoric learning. He knows what it is, he has passed through it all. People settle themselves down there in the little university-town, and coming in contact with no one else, they live in a fantastic world of humanity, and appear to themselves to be personages of the greatest consequence, whom an ungrateful lack of appreciation hinders from manifesting their efficiency in actual life. And this captain-doctor now before him had only a small company of ideas under his command.

Sonnenkamp whistled to himself, – whistled so low that nobody but himself could hear the tune; he even knew how to set his lips so that nobody perceived him to be whistling.

He placed himself in a chair on a little eminence, and showed Eric also a seat.

"You must have noticed," he said at last, "that Fräulein Perini is a very strict Catholic, and all our household belong to the Church; may I ask, then, why you rang the changes so loudly upon your Huguenot descent?"

"Because I wish to show my colors, and nail them to the mast; for no one must ever take me for what I am not."

Sonnenkamp was silent for some time, and then he said, leaning back in his seat, —

"I am master in this house, and I tell you that your confession shall be no hindrance. But now" – he bent himself down, putting both hands on his knees and looking straight at Eric – "but now – I came very near falling from my horse to-day, which has never happened to me before, because I was deeply engaged, while riding, in reflection upon what you said to me – in brief – the main point of our conversation. How do you think that a boy who is to engage in no business and who is to come into possession of a million – or rather say, of millions – how do you think that such a boy is to be educated?"

"I can give a precise answer to that question."

"Can you? I am listening."

"The answer is simple. He cannot be educated at all."

"What! not at all?"

"That is what I affirm. The great mysterious Destiny alone can educate him. All that we can do is, to work with him, and to help him rule over and apply whatever strength he has."

"To rule over and to apply," Sonnenkamp murmured to himself; "that sounds well, and I must say that you confirm an impression which has often before this been made upon me. Only a soldier, only a man who has developed and trained his own inborn courageous energies, only such an one can accomplish anything great in our time; nothing can be done by sermons and books, for they cannot overcome the old, nor create the new age."

In a changed, almost cringingly humble tone, Sonnenkamp continued, —

"It may appear in the highest degree strange, that I, a man of little knowledge, who have not had time in the active business of life to learn anything rightly, – that I should seem to subject you to examination; but you must be convinced that I do it for my own instruction. I see, already, that I have even more to learn from you than Roland has.

"I pray you then to tell me what training – imagine yourself a father in my circumstances – what training you would give your own son."

"I believe," Eric answered, "that fantasy can call up all sorts of pictures, but a relation which is one of the mysteries of nature can only be known through experience, and cannot be apprehended by any stretch of the imagination. Permit me then to answer from my own outside point of view."

"Very well."

"My father was the educator of a prince, and I think his task was the easier one."

"You would then place wealth above sovereignty?"

"Not at all; but in a prince the sense of duty is very early awakened. Not only pride but duty is a means, every moment, of inducing him to conduct himself as a prince. The formal assumption of state dignity, in which those in the highest rank are so accomplished, appears from a very early age as an essential feature of their position, as a duty, and becomes a second nature. Taste becomes connoisseurship. Pardon my scholastic ways," Eric laughingly said, breaking in upon his exposition.

"Don't stop – to me it is in the highest degree interesting."

Sonnenkamp leaned back in his seat, and gave himself up to the enjoyment of Eric's discourse, as if it were some choice tid-bit: very well for this man to go off into the regions of speculation, who in the meanwhile could not call his own the chair on which he sat, nor the spot of earth on which he stood, whilst he; Sonnenkamp, could proudly call his all that was around him, and could obtain possession, if he wished, of all that was within reach of his sight, and, as the keeper said, buy up the whole of the Rhinegau.

"Continue," he said, putting a fresh cigar in his mouth.

"It may seem laughable," resumed Eric, "but it is certainly significant that a prince receives, in his very cradle, a military rank. When reason awakens in him, he sees his father always under the ordinance of duty. I do not at all deny that this duty often sits very lightly upon him, if it is not wholly neglected, but a certain appearance of duty must always be preserved. The son of a rich man, on the other hand, does not see the duty which wealth imposes placed so peremptorily before his eyes; he sees beneficence, utility, the fostering Of art, hospitality, but all this not as duty, but as free personal inclination."

"You come round again to the obligation imposed by social civilization. I pray you, however, – you have a decided talent for instruction, I see that plainly; and I am at any rate thankful to Count Clodwig and to you."

"A point for comparison occurs to me," Eric began anew.

"Go on," Sonnenkamp said, encouragingly.

"It was a custom, in the good old time, for German princes to learn some trade. Irrespective of all else, they learned how to understand and to esteem labor. The rich youth ought to have something like this, without its being suffered to degenerate into a mere hollow ceremonial."

"Very suggestive," Sonnenkamp asserted. He had proposed to himself only to make inquiries of Eric, only to procure a new species of enjoyment by allowing a learned idealist to open his whole budget; he had taken especial satisfaction in the thought that Eric would do this for his enjoyment, and would reap no advantage from it himself; he also experienced a certain delight in being able for once to journey into the region of the ideal – it seemed a very pretty thing – but only for one hour, for one half-day; and now he was unexpectedly awakened to a lively interest. He placed his hand upon Eric's arm, and said, —

"You are really a good teacher."

Eric continued, without remarking upon the compliment, —

"I set a very high value upon sovereignty; it is a great influence, and confers independence and self-possession."

"Yes, that is true. But do you know what is the most desirable thing, which money cannot buy?"

Eric shook his head, and Sonnenkamp continued, —

"A trust in God! Look! a poor vine-dresser was buried there day before yesterday. I would give half my property to purchase of him for the remainder of my life his trust in God. I could not believe what the physician said, but it was only the truth, that this vine-dresser, a real Lazarus covered with sores, in all his sufferings constantly said, 'My Saviour underwent yet severer pains, and God knows beforehand why he inflicts this upon me.' Now tell me if such a faith is not worth more than any millions of money? And I ask you now, do you feel yourself able to give this to my son, without making him a priest-ridden slave, or a canting devotee?"

"I do not think that I can. But there is a blessedness to be obtained from the depths of thought."

"Is there? and in what does it consist?"

"According to my opinion, in the blissful consciousness of acting according to the measure of our strength, and in harmony with the well-being of our fellow-men."

"I think that if I, when a boy, had had an instructor after your stamp, it would have been happy for me," Sonnenkamp exclaimed, in a tone entirely different from before.

Eric replied, "Nothing that you could say to me would give me more confidence and hopefulness than this utterance."

A quick movement of the hand, as if he were throwing away some object, indicated that something went wrong with Sonnenkamp. This continued conversation wearied him, for he was not used to it, and this sort of immediate balancing of the ledger wounded his pride. Eric never remained in his debt, and he himself had always the feeling that there was something for him to pay.

For some time nothing was heard but the splashing of the fountain, and the gentle flowing of the Rhine, and at intervals the note of the nightingale singing unweariedly in the thicket.

"Did you ever have a passion for play?" Sonnenkamp asked unexpectedly.

"No."

"Were you ever passionately in love? You look at me in astonishment, but I asked only because I should like to know what has made you so mature."

"Perhaps a careful and thorough training has given me that serious thoughtfulness which you are so kind as to call maturity."

"Well, you are more than an educator."

"I shall be glad if it is so, for I think that he who is to bring anything to pass must always be something more than what his immediate activity calls for."

Sonnenkamp again made a wry face, and once more jerked his hand as if throwing something away. This readiness always to return the blow, and this assured response, put him out of countenance.

They heard Pranken and Fräulein Perini walking up and down in a side-walk.

"You must take care to stand in good relations with Fräulein Perini," Sonnenkamp said, as he rose; "for she is also — she is of some importance, and is not very easily fathomed, and she has one great advantage over most persons I know, — she has that most valuable trait of never indulging in any whims."

"I am sorry to say that I cannot boast of any such trait, and I ask your pardon in advance if I ever —"

"It is not necessary. But your friend, Pranken, understands very well how to be on good terms with Fräulein Perini."

Eric considered that truth demanded of him to inform Sonnenkamp that he had no right to call Pranken a friend of his. They were in the military school together, and acquainted in the garrison, but their ideas had never chimed together, and his own views in life had always been wholly different from those of a rich elder son; he acknowledged the kindness with which Pranken had facilitated

his entrance into the family of Sonnenkamp, but the truth must be spoken in spite of all feelings, of gratitude. Sonnenkamp again whistled inaudibly; he was evidently amazed at this courageous openness of mind, and the thought occurred to him that Eric was a subtle diplomatist, he himself considering it the chief peculiarity of diplomacy not to make any confession of being under obligation of any sort. This man must be either the noblest of enthusiasts or the shrewdest of worldlings.

Eric felt that this confession was untimely, but he could not anticipate that this communication would counteract the whole impression previously made upon Sonnenkamp.

On meeting Pranken and Fräulein Perini, Sonnenkamp greeted the Baron in a very friendly way, and took his arm.

Eric joined Fräulein Perini. She always carried some nice hand-work; with very small instruments and with a fine thread, she completed with surprising quickness a delicate piece of lace-work. It was the first time that Eric had spoken with her, and he expressed his great admiration for her pretty, delicate work. But immediately it was fixed as firmly as if there had been a written covenant between them, – We shall avoid each other as much as possible, and if we are placed in the same circle, we shall conduct ourselves just as if there were no such persons in the world.

In contrast with the clear, full tone of Eric, Fräulein Perini always spoke in a somewhat husky voice; and when she perceived that Eric was surprised at hearing her, she said, —

"I thank you for not asking me if I am not hoarse. You cannot imagine how tiresome it is to be obliged to reply, again and again, that I have always spoken so from my childhood."

Eric gladly entered into this friendly mood, and related how troublesome it was to a friend of his, born on the 28th of February, to have the remark always made to him. It is fortunate for you that you were not born on the 29th, for then you would have had only one birth-day every four years. "He has now accustomed himself to say pleasantly, 'I was born on the 28th of February, and it is fortunate for me that I was not born on the 29th, for then I should have had only one birth-day every four years.'"

Fräulein Perini laughed heartily, and Eric was obliged also to laugh.

"What are you laughing at?" Sonnenkamp asked, drawing near. Laughing was the thing of all others that he most delighted in.

Fräulein Perini narrated the story of Eric's friend, and Sonnenkamp laughed too.

The day continued after that serene and unruffled.

CHAPTER VIII. EYES OPENED

While Eric was in the garden with Herr Sonnenkamp, Roland sat with Claus near the young dogs. The huntsman asked him whether all was settled with the captain, and seeing that he did not understand his meaning, he laughed to himself as he thought he might win a double reward.

"What will you give me," he asked, "if I manage to have the captain stay with you as a companion and teacher? Whew!" he interrupted himself suddenly, "you look like a dog whose eyes are opened for the first time. Come, tell me – what will you give me?"

Roland could not answer; everything was giddy and confused in his thoughts, and the young dogs seemed to be whirling round and round.

Joseph came into the stable, and after representing Eric's parents as veritable saints, he concluded, —

"You ought to be proud, Master Roland; the father educated the prince, and now the son is to educate you."

"Open the shutters, quick!" cried Claus suddenly. Joseph did so, and the trainer took up one of the puppies, drew up its eyelids, and exclaimed, "There, that's enough to show me that this one's eyes are just opening. Now don't let any more light in, or they will be spoiled."

In his interest in the animals, Claus forgot his shrewd two-fold plan; he went with Roland and Joseph into the court, where Roland immediately left them. He saw his father and Eric sitting together, and felt angry with Eric for not telling him directly who he was. Soon overcoming this feeling, however, he would gladly have hastened to him and embraced him, but he restrained himself, and only approached when he heard the whole party laughing.

He pressed close to Eric confidingly, and his eyes said, "I thank you; I know who you are."

Eric did not understand his glance, until Roland said, —

"The others have had you long enough, now come with me."

He accompanied Eric to his room, and seemed to be waiting to talk with him, but Eric begged to be left alone; he was inexpressibly weary, and, like a heavy burden, there lay upon his spirit the consciousness that he who enters the service of others cannot live his own life; especially if he attaches to himself a faithful soul which he is to mould, sustain, and guide, he must never be weary, never say, "Now leave me to myself," but must be always ready, always expectant, always at the beck and call of others.

Roland was much troubled at Eric's look of fatigue; he could not suspect that he was extremely dissatisfied with himself. It was not merely the weariness after imparting extensive and various knowledge which often brings a sense of exhaustion, it was pure chagrin that he had allowed himself to be beguiled into drawing a plan of vast extent, and for what object? The education of a single boy.

Eric's chief vexation was, however, that he was obliged to acknowledge himself still so undisciplined; he must become more self-restrained before he could give stability and right training to another. In this state of discontent he hardly heard the boy, who talked on about the wonderful opening of the dog's eyes, and kept asking him questions, and looking inquiringly in his face.

A servant entered, and announced that the carriages were ready for a drive.

Eric was startled. What sort of a life was this? To promenade in the garden, ride, drive, eat, amuse one's self. How could he guard and preserve his own inner life? How would it be possible to hold a young spirit to a definite course of constant self-development?

Eric's pride rose; he had not worked all his life for this, — exercised himself in earnest and strict renunciation for the sake of filling the intervals between driving and banqueting. The plan would be unbearable; he would have an arrangement which he could control and to which he could give the tone of his own mind.

He went into the court with Roland, and politely asked to be excused from the drive, as he felt the necessity of being alone for a few hours.

This announcement was received by glances of various expression. Herr Sonnenkamp said quickly, that he laid no sort of constraint upon his guests: Pranken and Fräulein Perini exchanged looks in which there seemed to be a malicious pleasure in the harm that Eric had done himself by the wilfulness which led to a want of tact.

Roland said at once that he would like to stay at home with Eric, but Pranken rejoined in an exultant tone:

"Herr Dournay just wishes to be alone; if you stay with him, my dear Roland, the gentleman will just not be alone."

He uttered the word "gentleman" in a peculiarly disagreeable tone.

The second carriage was sent away. Fräulein Perini, Pranken, and Roland entered the other; Sonnenkamp seated himself on the box; he was fond of managing four horses from the box-seat; four-in-hand was a great delight to him. This driving four-in-hand was generally taken for ostentation, but it was only a personal gratification.

Frau Ceres also remained behind; she had already exerted herself to be social quite enough for that day.

Eric watched the party drive off, then returned to his room.

He sat there alone in perfect quiet, more weary than it would have seemed possible to become in so short a time, but the day had been one of excitement, and full of a violent effort to make himself master over novel circumstances. How much he had been through! It seemed years since he looked over the Roman antiquities with Clodwig. During the day he had been obliged to turn over and over, and to unfold his own character and environment; he had tasted for the first time the humble bread of servitude, and the feeling, half of friendliness, half of ingratitude, the enigmatic in Sonnenkamp, in Roland, in Fräulein Perini, and Frau Ceres, seemed to him like the dim memory of a dream, like a far-off life, as his thoughts went home to his mother.

A profound home-sickness threatened to overcome him, but he shook it off resolutely. It must not be! His military training helped him; his orders were to stand at his post, keep a close watch, and never to tire.

"Never to tire!" he said half aloud to himself, and the consciousness of youthful vigor supported him. He felt that on the next day he could meet the problems before him full of fresh courage; and one thought above all others strengthened him, and lightened his heart: he had remained faithful to the truth, and so should it always be. Truth is that firm standpoint of mother-earth where the wrestling spirit is not to be conquered and thrown.

In the distance, from the railway station across the river, he now heard an idle locomotive blowing off steam. It snorted, shrieked, and panted like a fabulous monster; and Eric thought. This engine has all day been drawing trains of cars in which hundreds of human beings had, for the time, been seated, and now it is resting and letting off its hot steam. He smiled as he thought that he himself was almost such a locomotive, and was now cooling himself, to be fired up anew on the morrow.

Suddenly he was waked from sleep; for he had slept without intending to do so. A servant announced that Frau Sonnenkamp wished to speak to him.

CHAPTER IX. A TWILIGHT RIDDLE

The sun had set, but a golden haze enveloped valley, mountain and river, when Eric went with the servant, and from the corridor looked out over the distant prospect. He was conducted through several rooms. In the last, where a ground-glass hanging-lamp was lighted, he heard the words, "I thank you, – be seated."

He saw Frau Ceres reclining on a divan, a large rocking-chair standing before her. Eric sat down.

"I have remained at home on your account," Frau Ceres began; she had a feeble, timid voice, and it was evidently, difficult for her to speak.

Eric was at a loss what to reply.

Suddenly she sat upright, and asked, —

"Are you acquainted with my daughter?"

"No."

"But you've been to the convent on the island?"

"Yes; I had a greeting to deliver from my mother to the Lady Superior – nothing farther."

"I believe you. I am not the cause of her becoming a nun – no, not I – do not think it," and reclining again on the pillow, Frau Ceres continued, —

"I warn you, captain, not to remain here with us. I have been informed of nothing – he has let me be informed of nothing – but do not stay with us, if you can find any other employment in the world. What is your purpose in coming into this house?"

"Because I thought – until an hour ago I believed – that I could be a fitting guide to your son."

And now Eric gave utterance to his inmost feeling of unfitness for being another's guide, and yet he must confess that no other person could have a stronger inclination to be, only some other might perhaps take it more easily. He unfolded from the very depths of his soul the newly awakened longing to plunge into solitary meditation, and lamented that one builds up an ideal of life and of work only to have it shattered in pieces upon the rock of actual existence; but it was only unvanquished self-seeking, for which his own thought, and not, the world, was to blame.

"I am not learned – I don't understand you," Frau Ceres replied. "But you speak so beautifully – you have such good expressions – I should like always to hear you speak, even if I do not understand what you are saying. But you will not let him know anything about my having sent for you?"

"Him? Whom?" Eric wished to ask, but Frau Ceres raised herself up hastily, and said, —

"He can be terrible – he is a dangerous man – no one knows it, no one would imagine it. He is a dangerous man! Do you like me too?"

Eric trembled. What did that mean?

"Ah! I do not know what I am saying," continued Frau Ceres.

"He is right – I am only half-witted. Why did I send for you? Yes, now I know. Tell me about your mother. Is she really a learned and noble lady? I was also a noble lady – yes, I was one indeed."

A fresh shiver passed over Eric. Is this half lethargic, half raving person really insane, and kept within bounds in society only by the greatest care?

He had wished this very morning to write to his mother that he had come into fairyland, – the fairy land was yet more marvellous than he had himself fancied.

Eric depicted with extreme precision, as far as a son could, the character of his mother; how she was always so very happy, because she was contriving how to make others happy. He described the death of his father, the death of his brother, and the greatness of soul with which his mother endured all this.

Frau Ceres sobbed; then she said suddenly, —

"I thank you – I thank you!"

She extended her white hand to Eric, and kept saying, —

"I thank you! With all his money he has not been able to make me know that I could weep once more. O, how much good it does me! Stay with us – stay with Roland. He cannot weep – say nothing to him – I also should like to have a mother. Stay with us. I shall never forget it of you – I thank you – now go – go – before he returns – go – good-night!"

Eric went back to his chamber. What he had experienced seemed to him like a dream; the hidden element of mystery which seemed at Wolfsgarten to envelop the family of Sonnenkamp was more and, more evident. Here were the strangest sorts of riddles. Roland, full of life and spirits, came to him; the brief separation had given both a new and joyful pleasure in meeting again; it was as great as if they had been separated for years.

Roland asked Eric to tell him about the Huguenots; there had evidently been much talk about them during the drive. Eric put him off, saying that it was not necessary, at least not now, to dwell upon the horrible tortures which human beings inflicted upon one another on account of their religious belief.

Roland informed Eric that Herr von Pranken was going the next day to visit Manna at the convent.

Eric was doubtful what he ought to do. If he were to forbid the boy's informing him of what he heard, he would scare away his confidingness, his perfect confidence; and yet it was disagreeable to himself to be informed of things which might not be intended for him to hear. He proposed to himself for the future, to request Sonnenkamp to say nothing in the hearing of the boy which he ought not to know, Eric was summoned once more to tea; Frau, Ceres did not make her appearance.

Eric was this evening perplexed, and lost the feeling of untroubled security.

Should he tell Sonnenkamp that his wife had sent for him? But then he must inform him of what she had revealed to him, though it was only half uttered, – it was a warning, a speech wholly disjointed and incoherent.

Eric also saw Roland looking at him as if beseeching. The boy felt that some painful experience was going on in his new friend, which he would gladly remove. And to Eric's affection there was superadded the feeling of pity. Here was a manifestly distressing family relation under which the boy must have suffered, and it was a fortunate thing that his light, youthful spirits were untouched.

Eric was reminded continually of an experience of his in the house of correction, The most hardened criminals had avowed always, with the most triumphant mien, that it conferred the greatest satisfaction to them to be able to conceal their deeds from the world; but the least hardened disclosed, on the other hand, how glad they felt to be punished; for the fear of discovery, and the constant endeavour to conceal the crime, were the severest punishment.

Eric had now a secret; was he to let it be possible for a servant to betray him, and himself appear untrustworthy?

When Eric was about to go to rest, Roland came to him and asked whether he had anything to impart to him.

Eric replied in the negative, and the boy appeared sad when he said good-night.

CHAPTER X.

A NEW DAY AND DARK QUESTIONS

The morning dew glistened on grass, flower, and shrub, and the birds sang merrily, as Eric walked through the park. There was evidence everywhere of an ordering, busy, and watchful mind.

Eric heard, on the bank of the river, two women talking with each other, as they carried on shore the garden-earth out of a boat.

"God be praised," said one, "who has sent the man to us; no one in the place who is willing to work need suffer poverty any more."

"Yes," spoke the other, "and yet there are people here who are so bad as to say all sorts of things about the man."

"What do they say?"

"That he has been a tailor."

Eric could hardly restrain himself from laughing aloud. But a third woman, with a rather thick voice, said, —

"A tailor indeed! He has been a pirate, and in Africa stole a gold-ship."

"And supposing he did," said the other, "those man-eaters have heaps of gold, and are heathens beside, and Herr Sonnenkamp does nothing but good with his gold."

Eric could not help smiling at these strange tales and implications; and it was also painful to him that great wealth always stirred up new and calumnious reports.

He went on farther. He saw from a height, with satisfaction, how the main building and all its dependencies, with park and garden, were combined in a beautiful harmony. Near the main building there were only trees of a dark foliage, lindens, elms, and maples, which brought out, by contrast, so much the more brightly the brilliant architecture of the house built in a good Renaissance style. The arbored walks converged gradually, as if conducting to the solidly-built mansion, which seemed not to be built upon the ground, but as if it had sprung up from the soil with the scenery that surrounded it; the stone colonnades, the lawns, the trees, the elevations, all were an introduction to the house; all was in harmony. The verandas appeared to be only bearers of the climbing plants, and the whole was a masterpiece of rural architecture, a work of natural poetry according to the laws of pure art, so that all that was man's handiwork seemed as fresh as if it had just come out of the builder's hand, and in such perfect preservation, that one perceived that each tree, each leaf, each lattice, was owned and carefully cherished by a wealthy man.

Eric, however, was not to be long alone; the valet, Joseph, joined him, and with a pleasing deference offered to inform Eric concerning everything in the household.

As Eric was silent, Joseph related once more that he had been a billiard-boy at the University, Henry the thirty-second, for all the boys must be called Henry. Then he had been a waiter in the Berne Hotel at Berne, where Sonnenkamp had boarded for almost two summers long, occupying the whole first floor – the best rooms in the world, as Joseph called them – and had learned to know him, and taken him into his service. Joseph gave rather a humorous account of the corps of servants in the household, that it was a sort of menagerie gathered from all countries. As in a poultry yard there are all sorts of fowls, and even the peacock is not wanting, which shrieks so horribly and looks so beautifully, so it was with the people here, for Herr Sonnenkamp had travelled all over the world. The coachman was an Englishman, the first groom a Pole, the cook a Frenchman, the first chambermaid a thoroughgoing Bohemian, and Fräulein Perini an Italian Frenchwoman of Nice. The master was, however, very strict; the gardeners must not smoke in the park, nor the grooms whistle in the stable, for all the horses were accustomed to the whistle of the master, and must not be disturbed. And moreover, Herr Sonnenkamp would rather not have his servants look like servants, or have any peculiar dress of servants, and it was only a short time ago that he had given in to his wife, and

dressed a few of them in livery. The servants were allowed to speak only a few words, and there were particular words which Herr Sonnenkamp used to each of them, and which each used in answering, and so all were kept in good order.

Joseph related in conclusion, not without self-satisfaction, that he had spread abroad in the servants' room the fame of Eric's parents; it was a good thing for people to know where a man came from, for then they had a much greater respect. But that Madame Perini was the special mistress in the household, and would continue to be; she was really a Fräulein, but the gracious Frau called her always Madame.

"The keeper is right," added Joseph. "Fräulein Perini is a woman with the strength of seven cats, and a marten into the bargain."

Eric wished to hinder this revelation, but Joseph begged him to allow everything to be spoken out, and to pardon him as being a University acquaintance. He only added the information that Pranken was to marry the daughter of the house.

"Ah! that is a beauty! not exactly a beauty, but lovely and charming; formerly she was so frolicsome, no horse was too wild for her, no storm on the Rhine too violent; she hunted like a poacher, but now she is only sad – always sad – vilely sad."

Eric was glad when the gossiping youth suddenly drew out his watch, and said: —

"In one minute the master gets up, and then I must be near him. He is a man always up to time," he added as he went away.

Like confused echoes which gradually mingle into one sound, Eric thought upon all that he had now heard about the daughter of the house. And was not this the girl with wings, who had met him the day before yesterday in the convent? Involuntarily standing still, and staring at a hedge, a whole life-picture presented itself to his mind. Here is a child sent to the convent, removed from all the world, from all intercourse with people; she is taken out of the convent, and they say to her: "Thou art the Baroness Pranken!" and she is happy with the handsome and brilliant man, and all the dazzling splendor of the world is showered upon her through him. It seems as if he had called it all into being, and this without knowing what kind of a man her husband is, – it will be indeed a good thing for her not to know.

He shook his head. What was the little cloister-plant to him?

Eric saw nothing more of the gorgeous beauty of the garden; he hastened out of it with his eyes fixed upon the ground, wandered through the park, and just as he came out of a copse of trees by the pond, Sonnenkamp met him. He had a foreign look in his short gray plush-jacket fastened with cord, and was especially glad to find Eric already up, proposing to himself to show him the house and grounds.

He directed his attention first to a large tuft of prairie-grass; he smiled as Eric imagined a stampede of buffaloes, and he made a peculiar motion of throwing, in describing how he had caught many a one with the lasso.

Then he led Eric to an elevation set out with beautiful, plane-trees, which he pointed out as the very crown of the whole place. He prided himself very much upon these fair and flourishing trees, adding that in such a tract as the wine-district, destitute of shade, a thickly shaded place was a thing to be taken into consideration against a hot day of summer.

"You will perceive that I have gone beyond my own territory, in order to add to its beauty; above there upon the height is a group of trees, which I have kept in order and thinned out, laying out paths, and making new plantations, in order to get a picturesque view. I have built my house not to please the eyes of others, but where I could have the best prospect from it. The peasant's house yonder was built after a plan of my own, and I was very properly obliged to contribute a part of the cost. That plantation beyond is a screen to hide the glaring stone-quarry; and that pretty church spire above there in the mountain-village, – that was built by me. I was very highly praised for doing it, and a great deal of flattering, pious incense was burned for me, but I can assure you that my sole motive

in doing it was to gain a fine view. I am obliged to change the whole character of the region – a very difficult job – and here comes in the covetousness of people. Just see, a basket-maker builds him a house yonder, with a horribly steep roof covered with red tiles, that is a perpetual eye-sore to me; and I cannot reach the fellow. He wishes to sell the house to me for an extravagant price, but what can I do with it? He may just keep it, and accommodate himself to my arrangements."

There was a violent energy in Sonnenkamp's manner of speaking, reminding Eric of an expression of Bella's, that the man was a conqueror; such an one has always something tyrannical in him, and desires to arrange and dispose everything in the world according to his own individual taste, or his own personal whims. The villages, the churches, the mountains, and the woods, were to him only points in the landscape, and they must all come into one favorite angle of vision.

And now Herr Sonnenkamp conducted his guest through the park, and explained to him how he had arranged the grounds, and how through the disposition of elevations and depressions he had broken up the uniformity; but that in many cases he had only to bring out the natural advantages, and give them their right effect: he pointed out the careful disposition of light and shadow, and how he oftentimes set out a clump of trees, a little group of the same species; which he mingled together not in sharp and distinct contrast, but in regular gradation of colors, such as we see in nature.

Sonnenkamp smiled in a very friendly way, when Eric, in order to show that he comprehended, replied, that a park must appear to be nature brought into a state of cultivation; and that the more one knows how to conceal the shaping hand and the disposing human genius, and allows all to appear as a spontaneous growth, so much the more is it in accordance with the pure laws of art.

A little brook, which came down from the mountain and emptied into the river, was made to wind about with such skill, that it kept disappearing and appearing again at unexpected points, saying by its murmur, "Here I am."

In the disposition of resting-places, particularly good judgment was exhibited. Under a solitary weeping-ash that cast a perfectly circular shadow, a pretty seat was placed for a single person, and it seemed to say invitingly, "Here thou canst be alone!" The seat, however, was turned over, and leaned up against the tree.

"This is my daughter's favorite spot," Sonnenkamp said.

"And have you turned over the seat, so that no one may occupy it before your child returns?"

"No," Sonnenkamp replied, "that is entirely by chance, but you are right, so it shall be."

The two went on farther, but Eric hardly saw the beautiful, comfortable benches, and hardly listened while Sonnenkamp declared to him that he did not place these on the open path, but behind shrubbery, so that here was a solitude all ready made.

A table was placed under a beautiful maple, with two seats opposite one another. Sonnenkamp announced that this place was named the school; for here Roland at intervals received instruction. Eric rejoined that he never should teach sitting in the open air; it was natural to give instruction while walking, but regular, definite teaching, which demanded concentration of the mind, demanded also an enclosed space in which the voice would not be utterly lost.

Sonnenkamp had now a good opportunity to tell Eric what conclusion he had arrived at in regard to the matter in hand, but he was silent. As an artist takes delight in the criticisms of an intelligent observer, who unfolds to him concealed beauties which he was hardly aware of himself, so he took delight in perceiving how understandingly, and with how much gratification, Eric took note of the various improvements, and of the grouping of trees and shrubs.

They stood a long time before a group where the gloomy cedar was placed near the hardy fir, and the gentle morning breeze whispered in the foliage of the silver poplar, and caused the white leaves to glisten like little rippling waves upon the surface of a lake.

Near a little pond with a fountain was a bower of roses, upon a gentle elevation, patterned according to a dream of Frau Ceres; and here Sonnenkamp remained stationary, saying:

"That was at the time when I was still very happy here in our settlement, and when everything was still in a sound and healthy condition."

Eric stopped, questioning whether he ought to tell Herr Sonnenkamp of yesterday's strange occurrence. Sonnenkamp said, accompanying his words with peculiar little puffs, as if he were lightly and carefully blowing a fire, —

"My wife often has strange whims; but if she is not contradicted she soon forgets them."

He appeared suddenly to remember that it was not necessary to say this, and added with unusual haste, —

"Now come, and I will show you my special vanity. But let me ask you one thing; does it not seem dreadful to you, who are a philosopher, that we must leave all this, that we know we must die; and while everything around continues to grow green and bloom, he who planted and acquired the means to plant is here no more, but moulders in the dust?"

"I should not have believed that you indulged in such thoughts."

"You are right to answer so. You must not ask such questions, for no one knows their answer," said Sonnenkamp sharply and bitterly; "but one thing more. I wish Roland to understand rightly this creation of mine and to carry it on, for such a garden is not like a piece of sculpture, or any finished work of an artist; it is growing, and must be constantly renewed. And why should there not be granted us the certainty of transmitting to our posterity what we have conquered, created, or fashioned, without fear that strangers will at some time enter into possession and let all go to waste?"

"You believe," answered Eric, "that I know no answer to the first of your questions, and I must confess, that I do not quite understand the second."

"Well, well, perhaps we will talk of it again – perhaps not," Sonnenkamp broke off. "But come now and let me show you my special pride."

CHAPTER XI. SONNENKAMP'S PRIDE

They stepped immediately out of the shady, well-wooded park, whose margin was planted with noble white-pines, into a wonderful and complicated arrangement of orchard-trees, in a level field several acres in extent, that had a truly magical effect.

The plats were bordered with dwarf-apple and pear-trees that looked very much like small yews; their stems were hardly two feet in height, and the branches on each side so disposed on wires, that they extended to the width of thirty feet. These were now in full bloom the whole length, and the arrangement exhibited man's energetic and shaping volition, where nature was compelled to become a free work of art, and even warped into a dwarfish over-refinement. Trees of all imaginable geometrical forms were placed, sometimes in circles and sometimes in rows. Here was a tree that, from the bottom to the top which shot up into a sharp point, had only four branches at an even distance from each other, and directed to the four cardinal points. On the walls, trees were trained exactly in the shape of a candelabrum with two branches; others had stems and branches adjusted obliquely, like basaltic strata. All was according to artistic rules, and also in the most thriving condition.

Eric listened attentively while Sonnenkamp was informing him that the limbs must be cut in, so that the sap might all perfect the fruit, and not go too much to the formation of wood.

"Perhaps you have a feeling of pity for these clipped branches?" Sonnenkamp asked in a sharp tone.

"Not at all; but the old, natural form of the fruit-trees so well known to us – "

"Yes, indeed," Sonnenkamp broke in, "people are horrible creatures of prejudice! Is there any one who sees anything ugly, anything coercive, in pruning the vine three times every season? No one. No one looks for beauty, but for beautiful fruit, from the vine; so also from the fruit-tree. As soon as they began to bud and to graft, the way was indicated, and I am only following it consistently. The ornamental tree is to be ornamental, and the fruit-tree a fruit-tree, each after its kind. This apple-tree, must have its limbs just so, and have just so many of them, as will make it bear the largest apples and the greatest possible number. I want from a fruit-tree not wood, but fruit."

"But nature—"

"Nature! Nature!" Sonnenkamp exclaimed, in a contemptuous tone. "Nine-tenths of what they call nature is, nothing but an artificial sham, and a whimsical conceit. The spirit of nature and the spirit of the age are a pair of idols which you philosophers have manufactured for yourselves. There is no such thing as nature, and there is no such thing as an age; and even if there were both, you cannot predicate spirit of either of them."

Eric was deeply struck by this apparently combative and violently aggressive manner of speaking; and yet more so, when Sonnenkamp now leaned over suddenly, and said: —

"The real man to educate would be he who was able to train men as these trees are trained: for some immediate end, with no superfluous trash and no roundabout methods. What they call nature is a fable. There is no nature, or at least only an infinitesimal particle. With us human beings everything is habit, education, tradition. There's no such thing as nature."

"That is something new to me," Eric said, when he was at last able to put in a word. "The gentlemen of tradition call us men of science deniers of God, but a denier of nature I have never until now become acquainted with, and never have even heard him mentioned. You are joking."

"Well, yes, I am joking," said Sonnenkamp, bitterly.

And Eric, who seemed to himself to be utterly bewildered, added in a low tone: —

"Perhaps it may be said that those who derive the laws of our life from revelation deny nature, or rather they do not deny her, but disregard her."

"I am not a learned man, and, above all, I am no theologian," Sonnenkamp abruptly broke in. "All is fate. Damage is done by worms in the forest; there stands near us an oak-tree clean eaten up by them, and there stands another all untouched. Why is this? No one knows. And look here at these trees. I have watched what they call the economy of nature, and here a thousand life-germs perish in order that one may thrive; and it is just the same in human life."

"I understand," Eric said. "All the things that survive have an aristocratic element wholly different from those things that perish; the blossom that unfolds itself to the perfect fruit is rich, the blighted one is poor. Do I rightly apprehend your meaning?"

"In part," Sonnenkamp replied, somewhat weary. "I would only say to you that I have done looking for the man, for I despair of finding him, who could train my son, so that he would be fitted in the most direct way for his position in life."

For some time the two walked together through the marvellously-blooming garden, where the bees were humming; and Eric thought that these, probably, were the bees of Claus, the huntsman.

World passing strange, in which all is so unaccountably associated together!

The sky was blue, and the blossoms so deliciously fragrant, and yet Eric, deeply troubled in spirit, seemed to himself to be ensnared when he fixed his eyes upon a notice stuck up over the garden wall, which ran thus: —

"Warning. Spring-guns and steel-traps in this garden."

He looked around to Sonnenkamp, who said, smiling, —

"Your look asks me if that notice yonder is true; it is just as that says. People think that no one dares to do that now. Keep always in the path near me."

Sonnenkamp appeared to enjoy Eric's perplexity and annoyance. And yet it was a lie, for there were no spring-guns nor steel-traps in the garden.

On this part of the wall, stars, circles, and squares, were shaped out of the tree-twigs; and Sonnenkamp laid his hand upon the shoulder of Eric, as the latter asserted that number and geometric form were given only to man. Geometric form, indeed, was the basis of all manifestation, and the straight line was never actually seen, but must be wholly the product of man's conception. This was also the characteristic mystery in the doctrine of Pythagoras.

"I have thought for a long time," Sonnenkamp said with a laugh, "that I was a Pythagorean. I thank you for nominating me as one of the sect. We must christen our new art of gardening the Pythagorean."

This outburst was in a bantering tone of contempt and satisfaction.

They came to the place called Nice, by the colonnade constructed in the Pompeian style, which extended very far on the second terrace of the orchard.

"Now I will show you my house," Sonnenkamp said, pressing against a little door which opened upon a subterranean passage, and conducting his guest into the habitation.

CHAPTER XII.

A LOOK INTO THE HOUSE AND INTO THE HEART

Men-servants and maid-servants in the under-ground rooms were amazed to see Sonnenkamp and Eric make their entrance. Sonnenkamp, without noticing them, said to Eric in English: —

"The two things to be first considered by a man consulting for repose, as I am, are the kitchen and the stable."

He showed him the kitchen. There were dozens of different fire-places for the different dishes, and each kind of meat and vegetables; each viand had its special dish and pan, fire on the side and behind. The whole science of the preparation of extracts was here transported into the art of cookery. Eric was delighted with it as with a work of art.

Sonnenkamp pointed out to his guest for special notice the fact that every fire-place and every stove in the house had its own chimney; he considered that as of great importance, as he had by that means made himself independent of the direction in which the wind might blow. The architect had resisted him on that point, and he had undergone great trouble and expense to have the requisite flues constructed, but by this means new beauties had been developed.

Sonnenkamp now showed him the greater part of the house, through which electromagnetic bell-wires ran in every direction. The stairs were richly carpeted, everywhere were costly candelabra, and in the chambers broad double-beds.

Everything was arranged with elegance and taste, a truly chaste elegance and refined taste, where gold, marble, and silk contributed to the artistic decoration, with no overloading of ornament, and with a preservation of the appearance of home-like comfort. The furniture was not standing about like things looking for some fitting place, but every piece was adapted to the building itself, and seemed fixed, and at home; and yet the arrangement had this peculiar feature, that all the furniture appeared waiting for the inmates to come and occupy it, and not placed there to be gazed at by them in passing to and fro.

The heavy silk curtains, hanging in thick folds, were matched with the carpets; the large clocks in all the saloons were ticking, and the delicate works of art on the mantles and brackets were tastefully arranged. But it was plainly to be seen that this arrangement gave no physiognomical indication of the character of the owner, but was only the tasteful skill which every good upholsterer supplies to order; and, above all, one felt the absence of anything like an heir-loom. Eric could not rid himself of the impression that the persons here lived in their own house as if it were a hired one, and it seemed to him that Roland was following him, and that he must enter into the soul of the boy, who was already aware that some day he would call all this his own.

Sonnenkamp declared that he thought it contemptible for people to embellish their houses with mediæval furniture, or the imitation of that, while it answered the purpose neither of ornament nor of comfort. When Eric replied to him, that Goethe had expressed the same thing, Sonnenkamp answered: "That is very pleasant to me. I think that Goethe understood life."

He uttered this in a very condescending tone, as much as to say, that any one must esteem himself fortunate to have Herr Sonnenkamp recognise his worth.

On the north side of the house in the large saloon, covered with a red Persian carpet, was a half-octagon recess, in the middle of which stood a handsome malachite table surrounded by fixed chairs.

Four large windows, or rather four single panes of glass six feet in height, gave a free outlook; and in the spaces between the windows tablets of marble were inserted, half way up, on which were sculptured the four parts of the "Day" of Rietschel. The ceiling was ornamented with fine stucco-work, from which a silver lamp seemed to fly forth, rather than to hang down, for it took the form of a flying Cupid of bronze, holding a torch in his hand, and this torch, as Sonnenkamp immediately illustrated, could be lighted as a gas-burner.

"Only here," he said smiling, "do I have works of art, insomuch as I would neither deceive myself nor others – I have no taste for creative art. You, as the son of a Professor of Æsthetics, perhaps consider this very barbarous?"

"Not at all, only honest; and I think you are so far entitled to do as you think best."

"It is a duty for every one to be honest, and there is no choice in the matter."

"Pardon me if I have expressed myself badly. I mean, that even the realm of art is not free from rival claims; and he who has such a manifest gift for landscape-gardening, ought to be content with that, and can refrain from expressing himself in any other art."

Sonnenkamp smiled. This man, he thought, knows always how to come down on his feet.

He led his guest into the music-saloon. It had no gilding nor satin, only a centre-piece on the ceiling, and sea-green hangings on the walls. In the niches made by two small chimneys were brown, stuffed damask seats and sofas. This saloon seemed to be continually waiting for a social company, either moving about, or quietly seated.

Sonnenkamp smiled when Eric said that he was pleased to see the music-saloon so unadorned. The plain white had a sunshiny appearance, as if the sun lingered on the walls, and the eye was not attracted to any particular object, so that one could listen all the more attentively, only one sense being called into activity.

Sonnenkamp was yet more and more delighted; and when Eric inquired, "Which one of your family is musical?" he answered, —

"This saloon is intended for my daughter."

"Wonderful," said Eric; "yonder in the garden the upturned seat, and here the music-saloon, is expecting her."

Sonnenkamp, as he often did, took his under-lip between his fore-finger and thumb; he appeared to be either intending to say something, or wishing to keep something back.

"As we are talking about my daughter, I will just show you her room," he said suddenly, opening a side-door.

They entered a little apartment, in which the Venetian blinds were down. Sonnenkamp at once drew them entirely up. The prospect extended over the long vine-arbor and beyond the Rhine. The room was plain, but all was extremely pretty. A number of photographs, wreathed with blue ribbon into a circle, in the centre of which was a large picture of the pope, hung upon the wall. The white curtains of the white bed, now drawn back, allowed a beautifully carved ivory crucifix on the wall to be seen, while below it hung a neatly framed colored engraving, a sort of diploma, admitting Hermanna, styled Manna Sonnenkamp, into the band of good children.

A writing-table, a small book-shelf, tasteful chairs, everything showed that here was the abode of a maiden who quietly lived within herself, occupied chiefly with religious meditations. In the chamber itself there seemed to be the hovering spirit of prayer, and one involuntarily looked round to see the maiden herself come in, with those large childlike eyes immediately cast down at beholding her sanctuary intruded upon.

Eric's glance became fixed upon a handsome chimney-piece of green marble, whose semi-circular edge was bordered with living ivy, while the entire chimney-place was filled with flowers and growing plants. No flower-pots were to be seen, for they were skilfully concealed; it was all a mysterious growth of leaves and flowers.

"Does that please you?" Sonnenkamp asked. "Yes, my daughter always has the chimney-place filled with flowers in summer, and I think that Fräulein Perini has continued the practice in memory of her."

Eric continued to stare at the plants; and he fancied that he could read something of the character of the maiden who in summer kept the fire-place covered with flowers. Here Sonnenkamp laid a heavy hand on his shoulder, and said: —

"Are you entirely honest? You have not come here on my son's account, but on my daughter's."

"I do not comprehend," Eric replied.

"Were you not at the convent? Have you not seen my daughter?"

"Yes, both; but I had not the most remote knowledge of you, or your daughter, or your son."

"I believe it. But have you not conceived the idle fancy, that by taking up your abode in my house, you may perhaps win the affections of my daughter?"

"I thank you for this directness," Eric responded, "and I will use equal directness in my reply. I should consider it the misfortune of my life, if I should have the feeling of love towards your daughter."

"Towards my daughter? Why so?"

"Because I should esteem it a misfortune to love a maiden of such great wealth, without taking into view her Catholic opinions. I would never marry so rich a girl, and I would let my heart break before I would do it. I now beseech you – it is not entirely impossible that mistrust, by and by, may be awakened from this source – I beseech you, openly and directly, not to give me this situation in your family. It is better; I have been this short time your guest, and I thank you for your great kindness."

"Young man, you remain. I believe you, and I trust you. I thank you for teaching me to have confidence again in a human being, and to believe in a human being. You remain! Give me your hand – you remain! We will settle all quietly. Moreover, my daughter is – and I give you here the best testimony of my confidence – my daughter is as good as betrothed to the Baron von Pranken. Now come into my own work-room."

They entered it. Everything here was arranged with a special attention to convenience. For every frame of mind, and every season of the year, for solitude and for society, chairs, tables, and sofas were disposed everywhere for comfort, as much as one room could contain. There was a vast space, and yet a homelike seclusion; and this south side was admirably situated for a view of the landscape. Here could be seen, outside, the smooth beeches and plane-trees, which hid from view the bare-looking vineyards, and suffered the eye to rest upon the summits of the wooded heights; and directly in front of the balcony window there was a full view of the ruins of the castle, which, as Eric had already heard, was being rebuilt by the order of Herr Sonnenkamp, and under the special supervision of the major.

A single, beautiful painting hung here; it was a life-sized portrait of Roland, in his seventh year. The boy sat upon an overturned antique column, his hand upon the head of a splendid Newfoundland dog, and gazing into the distance.

A large arm-chest stood here with weapons of all sorts.

While Eric was looking about, Sonnenkamp shoved back two doors which were let into the walls, and he led the way into what he called his library. No books were to be seen, nothing but great boxes, vessels of porcelain and clay, as in a well-arranged apothecary's shop; and Sonnenkamp explained that these contained seeds from all the different parts of the earth.

From the seed-room a special stair-case led into the garden, and this stair-case was entirely grown over with the Chinese honeysuckle, which was now in full bloom with its clusters of blue papilionaceous flowers. Sonnenkamp conducted his guest back into the large work-room, and there said that it had, formerly, been his desire that Roland should have an inclination to enter upon the active life which he himself had now retired from. He spoke of trade. Eric was amazed at the vast, comprehensive glance which Sonnenkamp took of the business of the world: for him there was no isolated activity, no isolated product; one part of the world subsisted only through another; and the whole earth was for him one great market-place, where iron, wool, tobacco, and grain received his attention at the same time, and whether in Sweden, Scotland, the East Indies, or Havana, were brought to one common warehouse.

Sonnenkamp seemed to be desirous, today, to compensate Eric for his unreserved communication, and Eric was astonished at the broad and strong grasp of the man's view, so that all his schemes were well calculated and sure of success; this vast power of insight was visible in all his talk. He had seen the wide world with that keen-sightedness characteristic of the English and

Americans, who, of all nations, consume the smallest number of spectacles. He seized hold of the main features, without burdening himself with the incidental, and without being hindered by any afterthought; he described with great objectivity what he had seen in foreign lands, as well as what he had done in his own.

Sonnenkamp was well aware of the impression he had made upon Eric, and nodded, smiling, when the latter expressed his opinion how grand it must be not only to possess, but also to acquire and to be.

"Reflect seriously upon this," Sonnenkamp said, – "what would you make, and what am I to make, of Roland? You have seen so much," he added with a look of elation, "that you would not seek to change me and my family, if you should undertake the education of my son."

This last remark dissipated, to a certain extent, the deep impression which Sonnenkamp had made upon Eric. The whole appeared a premeditated affair.

A servant came to inform Herr Sonnenkamp that Herr von Pranken wished to take leave of him.

CHAPTER XIII. DEVIL GETTING WONTED

Pranken's horse stood saddled in the court, and Pranken himself was walking up and down, snapping his riding-whip. In exceedingly good spirits, and in a very amiable mood, he hastened to meet Sonnenkamp, saying that he must take leave of him. There was a tone of bantering politeness in their manner towards each other. When Sonnenkamp remarked that Pranken was always surprising one, never saying that he was going away until the very moment of starting, Pranken answered, with mock modesty, that he was sure that he must in that way meet the approval of his friend Sonnenkamp, for nothing was more disagreeable, and made life more insipid and dull, than a constant talking over and discussion and cooking up of plans; he shot the hare, and left it to be dressed by the artists of the kitchen.

Pranken said all that with his usual rattling manner, as he twisted the end of his light moustache. He took a cool leave of Eric, saying that he hoped to find him still there on his return from a short journey.

"Should you, however, leave before I come back, have the kindness to present my respects to the gracious – " he paused a moment, then added, "to the Professor's lady, your mother."

He had taken off his glove when he said good-bye to Sonnenkamp, but drew it on again before he held out his hand to Eric, and it was evident that he did so intentionally. This coldness was rather agreeable to Eric; a part of his debt of gratitude was removed as Pranken treated him more distantly, and they could perhaps be more harmonious and independent when they were thrown together.

Pranken called Sonnenkamp aside, and said, though he certainly had recommended the young scholar – haughtily emphasizing this expression – he would beg him not to conclude any hasty engagement without making a strict examination himself.

"Herr Baron," replied Sonnenkamp, "I am a merchant – " he made a watchful pause before continuing, – "and I know what recommendations are, and how often one is forced to give them. I assure you that you are free from all responsibility, and as to the examination myself – I am a merchant, Herr Baron – " again the wary pause, – "the young man is the seller, and a seller always has to lay himself open, and to show what he is, more fully than the buyer, especially here, where the seller is offering himself for sale."

Pranken smiled, and said that was the deepest diplomacy. He went to his horse, vaulted nimbly into the saddle, and set off at a gallop. Sonnenkamp called after him that he must see whether the magnolia in the convent yard was thriving; he waved his hat to show that he understood, and rode away at full speed.

"A charming, agreeable young man! always bright and merry," Sonnenkamp said, as he looked after Pranken; and he went on to remark, at some length, on his constant light-heartedness.

Eric was silent. There seemed to prevail in this circle into which he was introduced, a perpetual commenting and remarking upon others. He knew Pranken, he knew tins everlasting galloping style of utterance, which is always so extremely animated, and even becomes enthusiastic when the conversation can be turned into an emulous contest of raillery. But this galloping genius had a deep foundation of insincerity, for it was not possible to be strained up every moment to this pitch: it could only be the result of violent tension, which must perpetually make a show of energy, and in this constant effort the soul must, consciously or unconsciously, put on a false appearance.

Eric quietly listened to his remaining statements, and only when Sonnenkamp asked him whether he did not think that the man, who had from his youth been conscious of a superior rank, could alone attain to this regal and sportive mastery over life, only then did he answer, that no fair province of life was shut out from the middle class.

Sonnenkamp nodded very acquiescingly. His saddle-horse was now brought to him, and he immediately mounted and rode off.

Eric went in search of Roland, and found him with his dogs. The boy desired that Eric should at once select one of them for himself. "And only think," he added, "a day-laborer just informs me that the dwarf has received a bite from Devil. Served the stupid fellow exactly right, for trying to do what he wasn't fit to do."

Eric was shocked. Was it possible that a young heart could already be so stony? He laid down to Roland at length how inhuman it was to regard a human being as a mere puppet, and to have no further concern about him, after one has had his sport out of him. His whole heart was moved with feeling as he spoke. Roland disdainfully threw back his head.

"Why do you make no reply to me?" Eric asked.

"Ah! I had no idea that you would preach to me like all the rest."

Attracted by the beauty of the boy, and his bold spirit, Eric had come to the determination to devote himself to him, and now, for an instant, he experienced a revulsion of feeling, but only to devote himself with fresh earnestness to his resolve. He would soften and thaw out this soul, naturally hard, or made so by the training it had received.

Roland went up quietly to Eric, and requested him to ride out with him. They rode together to the village. But Roland could not be induced to visit the dwarf, whom Eric found lying on the bed, moaning and groaning. When he arrived at the house of the huntsman, he did not find Roland, who had gone with Devil into the woods upon the height.

The huntsman greeted Eric less submissively; he lifted his cap, indeed, but only to cock it a little one side; he approached him in that familiar way so common on the upper Rhine, where it always seems as if one would touch glasses, and make himself friendly with you.

"Captain," he asked, "have you settled matters?"

"No."

"May I be permitted to say something to you?"

"If it is something good, why not?"

"That's just as one takes it. That one, down there" – he pointed with his thumb back to the villa – "that one is buying up the whole Rhine-land. But see you, that fox-hound there –"

"Stop," at once exclaimed Eric, proceeding to point out, in a very decisive manner, that he had no right to speak so to him, and about another person.

Eric was aware that he had not properly preserved his own dignity, or this man would not have been able to approach him so familiarly; and he was now more severe in repelling this forwardness than he intended. The huntsman only puffed the more vigorously at his pipe, and then said, —

"Yes, yes, you are the one to seize the man down there by the throat, and I see that you are too smart for me. You wish to get off from thanking me; I want no thanks, and no pay."

He muttered to himself, that everything which came near the rich man was always spoilt.

Eric must undo somewhat the impression he had made, for the huntsman was the only one who could rival him in his influence over Roland. The huntsman took, in very good part, Eric's expressions of friendliness, but he remained silent. When Roland came back, Eric asked him nothing about his excursion to the woods, and told him nothing about the dwarf. It was Roland's place to ask him, but the boy said nothing, and they both rode back in silence.

Eric immediately caused himself to be announced to Herr Sonnenkamp, and informed him that he now felt compelled to assume a definite relation with Roland.

"You find Roland, then, an excellent youth?"

"He has great boldness, determination, and – I know that a father can only hear it with unwilling ears, but after your searching inquiries yesterday, I may be permitted to hope that you are sufficiently free to –"

"Certainly, certainly; only speak out."

"I find a degree of hard-heartedness, and a want of sympathy with the purely human, surprising at such an age;" and Eric related how Roland had deported himself in regard to the dwarf.

A peculiar smile darted over Sonnenkamp's features, as he asked, —

"And do you feel confident that you can make a corrupted nature noble?"

"Pardon me, I said nothing about a corrupted nature; I should say, rather, that Roland is just now changing his voice, in a spiritual sense, and one cannot judge what tone it will take; but so much the more necessity is there for care in the kind of influence exerted."

"And what is your opinion of Roland's talents?"

"I think that he is not superior to the average. He has a good natural understanding, and a quick comprehension, but persistency, —*that* is indeed very questionable, and I have already observed that he goes along well enough a certain distance, then comes to a standstill, and will pursue the thought no farther. I am not yet very clear in regard to this mental characteristic; if it cannot be changed for the better, I should fear that Roland would be unhappy, for he would experience no abiding satisfaction, nor would he feel the delight, nor the obligation, of perseverance. Yet this is, perhaps, drawing too fine a thread."

"No, no, you are right. I place no reliance upon my son's stability of character; he only lives from hand to mouth. It is a bore to him to do anything of which he cannot see the direct result.

"That is the way with children. But such children never make sterling men; therefore I wanted Roland to love plants, as he would then be obliged to learn that there was something which can at no time be neglected or forgotten."

"I am rejoiced," Eric replied, "that you here remind me of the most vital points. First of all, the rich man, and the son of a rich man, like the prince and the son of a prince, have only subservient friends. Against my will I have become Roland's play-fellow, and so the subsequent serious work will be interfered with."

"Is it impossible then, to combine work and play?"

"I hope to do so. But the necessity of work must be recognized." Eric continued silent, and Sonnenkamp asked, —

"You have still another point?"

"Most certainly, and it is this. As I have already suggested, Roland must acquire a steadfast relation to external things, an intimate bond of union with them, as then only will he be at home in the world. He who has no recollections of childhood, no deep attachment to that which has transpired around him, is cut off from the very fountain-head of genial and hearty affection. Question yourself, and you will find — your return to Germany fully proves it — that the heartfelt, endearing recollections of childhood were the very sustenance, what one may perhaps call the spiritual mother's milk, of your deepest soul."

Sonnenkamp winced at these words, and Eric added, —

"Homelessness is hurting the soul of your son."

"Homelessness?" Sonnenkamp exclaimed in astonishment.

His face quivered for an instant, and his athletic strength seemed eager to make some outward demonstration, but he restrained it within the bounds of forced composure, asking, —

"Do I rightly apprehend you? Homelessness?"

"That is what I think. The inner life of the child needs training, that it may cling to something; a journey is, perhaps, not harmful to the soul of a child; at the best, it has little effect upon him. A child in travelling has no distinct impression from all the changes of the landscape; he takes delight in the locomotive at the station, and in the wind-mill on the hill. One fixed point in the soul anchors it firmly. I said that the human being ought to have an object to strive for, but permit me to add to that, that he must also have a fixed point of departure, and that is the home. You said, and I see it myself, that Roland takes no real delight in anything; and is not that owing to the fact that the boy is homeless, a child of hotels, with no tap-root in any place, and still more, no deep-seated impressions,

no pictures in his memory which have become a portion of his very life, and to which he returns from all his wayward fancies? He told me that he had played in the Coliseum at Rome, in the Louvre at Paris, in Hyde-park at London, and on the lake of Geneva, – and now, living in Europe, yet always proudly conscious of being an American, – this causes – pardon me, I only ask the question – does this not cause a restlessness of spirit, which may be fatal to any growth?"

"I see," Sonnenkamp answered, leaning back his head, "you are an incarnate, or one might rather say, an insouled German, who runs over the whole world, in reality and in thought, and cajoles himself always with the self-complacent notion, 'I am so whole-souled, and that is more than the rest of you are.' Pah! I tell you that if I bestow anything of worth upon my child, I believe it will be just this, that he will be free from that sentimentality of a so-called settled home. The whistle of the locomotive scares away all the homesickness so tenderly pampered of old. We are in fact cosmopolites, and that is just the greatness of American civilization, that, not being rooted in the past, national limitations and rights of citizenship have no narrowing influence upon the soul. The home-attachment is an old nuisance and a prejudice. Roland is to become an untrammelled man."

Eric was silent. After a considerable time, he said: —

"It is, perhaps, not beneficial, but tiresome, both to you and to me, to deal in generalities. I would only say, that however little calculated travelling may be to create an inner satisfaction, when there is no definite object to be attained that one can all along hold in view, much less can a life that has no special aim of action, thought, or enjoyment, confer any central peace. If Roland now had some special talent – "

"Do you find none at all in him?"

"I have discovered none as yet; and still it seems to me, that if he had been born under different circumstances, he would have made a serviceable lock-smith, or a good groom. I hope you do not misunderstand that – I consider it a guaranty for human equality, that what a man becomes, wholly or chiefly depends upon circumstances. Hundreds of judges would have become, under different circumstances, common laborers, and hundreds of common laborers would have become judges. As I said before, it is to me a direct proof of the universally diffused capacities of human beings, that only the few have the genius that absolutely demands a special work."

"I understand, I understand. And do you think that you can train a boy, of whom you have formed so low an opinion?"

"I have not a low opinion of Roland, neither of his head nor his heart. He seems to me not unsusceptible of love, but it is to him an enjoyment, not also a duty; he has the qualities belonging to the average of men not marked by any special characteristic, and those are entirely sufficient to form him, under judicious and proper direction, into a good and honorable man, happy himself, and able to make others happy. And I shall be very glad, in the meanwhile, if I am mistaken in attributing to Roland no special genius."

"I honor and value highly your great earnestness," Sonnenkamp interposed, "but I am just now in great haste. Inform Roland of your position."

He seemed out of humor, as he rolled his cigar from one corner of his mouth to the other, and busied himself with his papers, just as if Eric were no longer present.

Eric left the work-room of Sonnenkamp, and betook himself to Roland. He found the boy busily employed in chewing a piece of half-raw meat, and giving the chewed morsels to the lately broken-in dog; the huntsman affirmed that that would attach the dog to him inseparably. Eric looked on a while, and then requested Roland to send the dog away, as he had something to say to him.

"Can't the dog stay with us?"

Eric made no reply, for he saw that he must first settle whether he or the dog had the deepest hold. On his casting a sharp look again upon Roland, the boy said, "Come, Devil, wait here at the door," and returning, he exclaimed, "There, now go on."

Eric took Roland's hand, and informed him that he had come to be his tutor. Roland leaned his handsome head upon his partly closed hand, gazing at the speaker fixedly with his large, restless, glowing eyes.

"I knew it," he said at last.

"And who told you?"

"The huntsman and Joseph."

"And why did you say nothing to me about it?"

Roland made no answer to this, only looking at the speaker, as if he would say, "I can wait." He only once removed his gaze, when Eric added, that he had wished to try first whether he was adapted to the family. Roland still remained silent. The dog scratched at the door; Roland looked towards it, but did not venture to open it. Eric opened it. The dog sprang in, crouched down before Roland, and then went to Eric and licked his hands; he seemed to be a mysterious messenger, a silent yet eloquent interpreter between them.

"He likes you too!" Roland cried out in childish delight.

These were the only words spoken by the boy. Suddenly springing up, he threw himself upon Eric's breast, where he was held in a firm embrace; the dog barked as if he must express himself.

"We will be true to each other," Eric exclaimed, unclasping his arms; "I had a brother of your age, and you are to be my younger brother."

Roland, without speaking, held Eric's right hand between both of his.

"Now let us at once begin our life, fresh and bright."

"Yes," replied Roland, "we'll make Devil fetch something out of the water; he does it splendidly."

"No, my dear brother, we will go to work. Let us see what you have learned."

Eric had noticed particularly, that Roland, who was deficient in every other branch of knowledge, had a pretty good acquaintance with geography. He tested him in this, and Roland was highly pleased to be able to give him accurate answers. They gradually passed to the consideration of other studies, and then Roland appeared confused, and for Latin he had a hatred amounting to a personal hostility.

"We will quietly study what is necessary," Eric said consolingly, "and then we will ride, drive, shoot, fish, and row."

This prospect cheered the boy very much, and when the clock struck in the tower, he suddenly observed, —

"In one hour Herr von Pranken will be with Manna. I can learn to ride, fence, and shoot, as well as Herr von Pranken, don't you think I can?"

"Certainly you can."

"I sent a letter, too, to Manna by Herr von Pranken."

"What language did you write it in?"

"English, of course. Ah! it just occurs to me, — all speak so highly of your mother, let your mother come too; she might live out therein our small, vine-covered house."

The boy could say no more, for Eric lifted him up, pressed him to his breast, and kissed him. The boy had uttered what at first sight had flashed through his own soul, and now it was evident that he bestowed gladly, loved to confer benefits, and to contrive pleasure for others; his hard-heartedness towards the dwarf disappeared as a mere superficial blemish.

A servant came and announced that dinner was served. Holding each other by the hand, Roland and Eric went to the dining-room.

CHAPTER XIV.

A RIVAL

The dinner was as ceremonious as it had been the day before. Frau Ceres, who appeared again at table, betrayed by no look or word that she had conversed so confidentially with Eric; she addressed, frequently, some brief remark to him; but again all were occupied in urging her to eat something. Eric wondered at the patience with which Sonnenkamp did this again and again.

After dinner, while they were taking coffee, Sonnenkamp observed to Eric in a careless way, that a new applicant had presented himself, who brought the highest recommendation from Roland's last tutor, the candidate Knopf. He gave Eric to understand that they did not receive every one at once to dinner, and ordered Joseph to introduce the stranger.

A slim, sunburnt man entered. He was introduced to the company. Eric was introduced by the title of Captain, Doctor being suffered temporarily to rest in peace. The stranger, whose name was Professor Crutius, had been a fellow-student with the candidate Knopf, had seen a good deal of the world, and, finally, for several years, had been professor in the military school at West Point, near New York.

He gave this information with great ease, but in rather a harsh tone of voice.

Sonnenkamp seemed to have reserved this entertainment for the dessert, to allow the two applicants to engage in a tilt with each other, while quietly smoking his cigar. He was very shrewd in finding the points where they could attack each other, but he was not not a little surprised that Eric immediately laid down his arms; expressing his thanks to the stranger, he said that he envied his rich experience in life, and his wide survey of the world, while he himself had, to his regret, been confined to the limited circle of the Principality and to the world of books.

The stranger had made the discovery very soon that Fräulein Perini was the hair-spring in the watchwork of this household, and he found that they had some reminiscences in common. Crutius had accompanied an American family to Italy, and had gone from thence to the New World.

In a manner showing candor and experience, he described the characteristics of an American boy of the upper class, and how such a boy must be managed. Without directly pointing it out, this description was evidently intended for Roland, who sat gazing at the stranger.

Eric, standing with Sonnenkamp by the balcony-railing, which he grasped tightly in his hands, said that he himself was not sufficiently prepared, and that the stranger would be, probably, the most fitting person.

Sonnenkamp made no reply, puffing out quickly cloud after cloud of smoke into the air.

"Magnanimity," he thought to himself. "Magnanimity, – nothing but smoke and vapor."

The stranger was very zealously engaged in conversation with Frau Ceres and Fräulein Perini. Roland went to his father, and said, in a voice as determined as it was low, —

"Send him away; I don't want him."

"Why not?"

"Because I have Herr Eric, and because Herr Knopf has sent him."

"Go to your own room; you have nothing to say about this," Eric ordered.

The boy stared at him, and went.

Eric declared to the father that Roland's instinctive feeling was just; the bitterness against his former teacher he could not at all judge of, but it was evident that the boy wanted to be received by some entirely unprejudiced stranger.

Sonnenkamp was surprised at this kindly appreciation on Eric's part, especially when he went on to state how unpleasant a thing it must be for the boy to be transferred in this way from one hand to another. The stranger, in the meanwhile, had asked Fräulein Perini whether Sonnenkamp had any relatives, whether that had always been his name, and whether he received many letters. He

touched upon one and another point in his conversation, evidently to reconnoitre the state of feeling entertained by the family concerning America; and when Sonnenkamp, with great energy, asserted that he should like a dictator for America, who would put to rout the rascality there, Crutius said, that there were very many in the New World who really cherished the conviction and desire that America would establish a monarchy, but didn't dare to say so.

Sonnenkamp nodded to himself, and whistled again inaudibly.

"Where did you put up?" he abruptly inquired of the stranger.

Crutius named an inn in the village.

"There you are very well quartered."

The stranger's countenance changed for an instant. He had evidently expected that his luggage would be sent for, and that he would be received as a guest in the house.

Sonnenkamp thanked him very courteously for the call, and requested him to give his address in full, so that he might be written to if there should be occasion. The stranger's hand trembled as he took out his well-worn pocket-book, and gave his card. He took leave with formal politeness.

Sonnenkamp requested Eric to escort his fellow-teacher a part of the way, and handed him several gold pieces, which he was to give to the needy-looking man in a suitable manner.

"Is this friendly confidence, or is it expected as a service?" Eric asked himself, as he went after the stranger.

He overtook him near the park-wall, and when Eric represented himself to be also a teacher, the countenance of the professor changed, and he exclaimed: —

"Ah! a teacher then, and perhaps my competitor?"

Eric answered in the affirmative.

Crutius looked sour at this; he had been gratified at the friendly encouragement of the captain, whom he took to be an inmate of the family, and he was grateful to him for the praise he had given him; but now he turned out to be a teacher too! He gnashed his teeth a little over this mistake.

Eric tendered him the present of gold with great delicacy, putting himself on an equality with the stranger, making known his own poverty, and declaring how impossible it often was not to accept from those who had means.

"Ha! ha!" the stranger laughed out. "He knows me; he wishes to put me under obligation and release himself!"

Eric said that he did not understand such expressions.

"Indeed!" the stranger said, laughing. "So innocence with a captain's rank allows itself also to be bought? The whole world is nothing but an old rag-shop. What matter! The den where the tiger devours his prey is very fine and very tasty! paint and tapestry can cover up a good deal! I ask your pardon, I have taken wine this morning, and I am not used to it. Well, hand it over! My most humble compliments to Villa Eden! Ha! ha! a very nice name!"

Without adding a word more, the stranger, grasping tightly the gold, touched his hat, and walked off at a rapid pace.

Eric returned to Sonnenkamp in a meditative mood. Sonnenkamp invited him to be seated, in a very friendly manner, asking. —

"Did he take the money?"

Eric nodded.

"And of course, with hardly a thank you?"

Eric said that the man had acknowledged, of his own accord, that he had been drinking wine that morning, and was not used to it.

Pointing to a great packet of letters, Sonnenkamp said that they were all applications for the advertised situation. He expatiated very merrily upon the great number of persons who depend upon some wind-fall or other; if one should only open a honey-pot, suddenly bees, wasps, and golden-flies appear, nothing of which had been seen before. Then he continued: —

"I can give you a contribution to your knowledge of men."

"Anything about Herr Crutius?"

"No; of your very much be-pitied dwarf. It is really refreshing to find such a charming piece of rascality. I have known for a long time how smart he was in stealing the black wood-vetch from the hill above; but now the bite received in training the dog is nothing but a lie. I have already informed Roland of it, and I am glad that he can become acquainted so early with the vileness and deceitfulness of men."

"You will not keep the dwarf any longer in your employment, I suppose?"

"Certainly I shall. I am delighted that the droll little man has so much rascality. It is a perfect satisfaction to play with the villainy and roguery of people, and I should like to have half a dozen such on hand, so as to teach Roland how to deal with chaps of that stamp."

"I would rather not be able to give him that instruction," said Eric.

"It is not for you to do that; you are here for something else."

Eric left Sonnenkamp's room, greatly depressed.

A servant informed him that Roland was waiting for him at the river-bank; he went there, and Roland invited him to take a sail with him on the Rhine. He unfastened the pretty boat from the shore, and rowed expertly out into the stream; it was now a dark green, and the islands above, with their dense foliage, seemed to be growing out of a soil of liquid emerald.

A fresh breeze rippled the surface; Roland was happy that he could unfurl the sail, and showed himself skilful in his mastery over the elements. Every movement was so graceful that Eric took great delight in looking at him.

Eric was a novice on the water, and he was glad to give Roland the satisfaction of instructing him, and of showing him how the boat is made to turn, and to go in any direction. There was a joyous tone in Roland's voice that Eric had never remarked before.

And while they were sailing along with a full breeze, the splashing waves striking against the boat, Roland spoke of the candidate Knopf, who first made him really at home upon the water. Knopf could row, sail, steer, and make the boat describe a circle in the water, better than the best boatman. Yes, better than the boatman's wife even, a large, powerful woman, who now called out to him as she steered a large boat made fast to a tow-boat, while her husband, a not less powerful form, leaned against the mast.

Roland, steering towards the tow-boat, made fast to the boat which the woman was managing. She chatted with him without looking round, for she must keep the exact course. When they had gone far enough, Roland unfastened the boat, and sailed back with the current.

He gave a humorous account of the helmswoman's rule over her husband, but Eric led the conversation to the candidate Knopf. Roland was not inclined to say anything more about him, nor to speak of his previous tutors, who were evidently regarded by him with as much indifference as is a yesterday's waiter at a hotel, or a discharged servant. Who will ask about people whom they have dismissed? It was only apparent, from some words dropped by Roland, that this candidate must have had a warm affection for his pupil.

Mention was made, also, of the dwarf, and Roland took it very coolly that he had turned out a rascal, for he regarded all poor people as rascals.

Eric had gained in this sail a new and deeper knowledge of his pupil; pity was now added to the love he felt for the boy, who had so early acquired a contempt for the world, and who appeared to have no person and no thing to which he clung inseparably, and the thought of which gave him new inspiration. Only with his sister did he seem to have any real bond of affection, for as they were approaching the villa, he said: —

"Just as I am now walking with you, Manna is walking with Herr von Pranken. I think that you and Manna, when she comes, will also be good friends."

BOOK III

CHAPTER I. THE SUBTERRANEAN CALL

A fragrant strawberry glistens on the ground, beautiful to the eye, and luscious to the taste. If there were some method of seeing, or even of hearing, what was going on at the root of the plant, we might perhaps be able to discern how the ammonia, homely, and of very pungent odor, turned up conceitedly its nose, as much as to say, What indeed would all this be without me?

The potash, on the other hand, brightly glistening and sweet-smelling, is under no necessity of saying anything, for its very appearance says already, All the scientific men of the upper world speak on my behalf.

And the hard, silicious earth, in its comfortable repose, might be understood to say, I am an aboriginal inhabitant, and what do these transient fellows want? To-day here, and to-morrow gone; I have already lived through a great deal, – everything goes by fashion.

The maggot-worm grubs at the root, blinking with its cunning eyes, and thinks, The rest are happy in rendering service, but I – I fatten myself. The earth-worm rolls itself along in a proud feeling of triumph that it can go through the streets and water-courses, whereon everything is moving hither and thither. A mole, that has nestled in the neighborhood, lies in wait for the moment when the maggot-worm is taking a little nap, after its surfeit, and gobbles it up.

Such are the manifold operations of life and movement down there at the roots, and such also are those in the servants' room of Villa Eden above.

Herr Sonnenkamp has a wise rule, although many consider it hard-hearted, that all his servants must be unmarried. They receive good wages, are in want of nothing, but make no pretension to family life. A beggar never comes into the well-kept garden, for he would disturb its comfortable serenity. He receives alms, at the entrance, from the keeper of the lodge, and the old cook oftentimes complains that the remnants of food, which might nourish many a hungry one, go so utterly to waste.

It is noon. They take their meals here, long before the table of their master above is set. Two grooms and a third coachman, who keep watch in the stables, eat by themselves in silence, for they must relieve the others.

The superintendent here below is the head-cook, dressed in light clothes, and called for shortness, "the chief;" of a burly and portly figure, with a beardless face, and a large hawk-nose, he plays here the marquis. His German is a sort of jargon, but he rules over the subordinate cook and kitchen-maids, with absolute sway.

The watchmen have dined. A long table is laid for more than a dozen persons, and they come in one after another.

The first who makes his appearance, or, rather, the one to whom the first entrance is conceded, is the head-coachman, Bertram, with a powerful, gigantic form. He has a great red beard, parted in two waving masses coming to a peak, with an embroidered waistcoat covering his hips, and over it a striped blue and white jacket, with just a slight badge of distinction from that of the other coachmen.

With a greeting to the whole corps of servants, Bertram seats himself at the head of the table with Joseph on his right, and the head-gardener on his left. Next to this one, a little man, with seamed face and rapidly glancing eyes, takes a seat; this is Lutz, the courier. Then the rest seat themselves according to their rank, the stable-boys and the men working in the garden being placed at the lower end of the table.

The first female cook, a special favorite of Fräulein Perini, insisted strenuously upon grace being said before dinner. Bertram, the travelled coachman, a decided free-thinker, always busied himself during the blessing with his great embroidered waistcoat, which he drew proudly down over his hips. Joseph folded his hands, but did not move his lips; the rest prayed silently.

No sooner was the soup removed, and a little wine sipped, – for the servants had their wine every day, – than Bertram started the talk, and upon a very definite topic.

"I was just waiting to see whether Lieutenant Dournay would recognise me; I belonged to his battery."

"Indeed!" Joseph delightedly chimed in. "He was right popular, I'm certain?"

Bertram did not consider it incumbent upon him to give a direct reply. He only said that he could never have believed that Herr Dournay would ever become a servant.

"Servant?"

"Yes, a servant like us; and because he knows something of books, a tutor."

Joseph smiled in a melancholy way, and took great pains to bring the table over to a correct view. First he praised the celebrated father of Eric, who had received at least twenty decorations; and his mother, who belonged to the nobility; and he was very happy to say that Captain Dournay understood all about the sciences, and, to throw at their heads the very hardest names which he could get hold of, – Anthropology, Osteology, Archæology, and Petrifactology – all these the captain was master of; he was a complete university in himself. But he did not succeed in convincing the company that Eric was anything else than a servant.

The head-gardener said, in a high-Prussian dialect: —

"Anyhow, he is a handsome man, and sits his horse well; but he don't know a thing about gardening."

Lootz, the courier, praised Eric for speaking good French and English, but of course, when it came to Russian, and Turkish, and Polish, the learned gentleman didn't understand them; for Lutz himself, as a journeyman tailor, having made the tour of all countries, understood all languages. He had attended formerly Fräulein von Pranken, the present Countess Wolfsgarten, and two English ladies, on their travels; now he acted as courier for Herr Sonnenkamp on his journeys, and was idle the rest of the time, unless one calls work the carrying of the letter-bag to and from the railroad station, and the playing of the guitar, which the little man practised a good deal, with the accompaniment of his own whistling. He had also a secret service.

There appeared to be a tacit agreement at the table, that they should make no reply to anything that Lutz said; he only received a smile from the second female cook, with whom he had a tender but not acknowledged relation.

A man with Sarmatian features and a Polish accent claimed for Herr von Pranken the credit of having brought the man into the house. Bertram gave Joseph a slight nudge, and proceeded to praise Herr von Pranken in the most eulogistic terms, while Joseph winked slyly, as if he would say. Just so; this shows again that the Pole is in the secret service of Herr von Pranken.

Now they speculated whether Herr von Pranken would take up his abode in the house after his marriage with Manna, for this event was regarded as a settled thing.

A gardener, who stammered a little, remarked that it was said at the village inn, that Herr Sonnenkamp had been a tailor. All laughed, and the stuttering gardener, who was the special butt of the circle, was more and more spurred on to talk, and bantered till he became blue in the face. Bertram, taking both waves of his long beard in his hands, exclaimed: —

"If any one should tell me that, I'd show him how his teeth taste."

"Just let people talk," said soothingly the head-gardener, with a smile in advance at his own wisdom, as he added, "As soon as a man gets on in the world he must make up his mind to be slandered."

One of the hostlers gave an account of a scuffle which had taken place between them and the servants of the so-called Wine-count, who reproached them with being the servants of a man whom nobody knew anything about, – who he was, or where he came from; and that one of them had gone so far as to say that Frau Sonnenkamp was a purchased slave.

The secret, and, in fact, not very edifying history of several families was now related, until the stout female cook cried out at last: —

"Do stop that talk! My mother used to say, that

""Whether houses be great or small.
There lies a stone before them all.""

The second gardener, a lean, thin man, with a peaked face, called the squirrel, who often had prayers with the pious people of the neighborhood, began a very evangelical discourse about evil speaking. He had, originally, been a gardener, then a policeman in a northern capital, where Sonnenkamp became acquainted with him, and placed him back again in his first occupation, employing him frequently in commissions that called for special circumspection.

An ancient kitchen-maid, who sat apart, holding in her lap the plate from, which she was eating, cried suddenly: —

"You may say what you please, the gentleman who has just come marries the daughter of the family. Just bear that in mind. Mark my words. He hasn't come for the young gentleman, but for the young lady. There was once on a time a prince and a princess in the castle, and the prince put on a servant's dress – yes, laugh away, but it is just so."

Joseph and Bertram exchanged glances full of meaning.

Now there was a general joking. Every one wished to have his fortune told by old Kate. The courier made fun of superstitious people, but assumed a very forced smile when Bertram called out: —

"Yes, indeed, the tailors are all enlightened, they don't believe in hell."

There was no end to the laughing now. Suddenly a voice sounded from the ceiling: —

"Bertram is to put the horses to the glass-carriage, and Joseph to come up."

The company at the table broke up; the hostlers went to the stables, where they smoked their pipes, the gardeners to the park and the green-houses. Joseph told two servants to set the dinner-table, and there was stillness under ground. Only the kettles bubbled and hissed, and the chief surveyed with lofty mien the progress of his work.

An hour later, Loozt received the letters which he was to carry to the station, and, in a very casual and innocent way, related that the new tutor had as adherents in the house, Bertram, who was formerly stationed in his battery, and Joseph, who considered himself committed to him as coming from the University. It had never been said in so many words that Lutz was to be a spy over the servants, but it was understood, as a matter of course, between him and his master.

CHAPTER II. A SUNDAY FILLED OUT

Eric had wished to write a letter to his mother out of fairy-land, when he rode as if under a spell of enchantment through the wood, where all was music, fragrance, and brightness. Yes, then! It was only a few days ago, and yet it seems as if years had elapsed. How much in these few days had Eric thought, seen, experienced! The letter is an entirely different one.

On Sunday there was a change in the household arrangements, no common breakfast being served. When Eric met Sonnenkamp in the garden, the latter asked him if he would go with them to church. Eric answered no, at once, adding in explanation, that by going he should be guilty of an act of hypocrisy; as a mark of respect for a confession not his own, he might perhaps be willing to go, but a different view would be taken of it.

Sonnenkamp looked at him in surprise. But this straight-forwardness seemed to have an effect upon him, for he said, —

"Good; one is at no loss to find out your opinion."

The tone was ambiguous, but Eric interpreted it favorably.

After all had gone to church, Eric sat alone, writing to his mother. He began by saying that he seemed to himself like Ulysses thrown upon a strange island; he had, indeed, no fellow-voyagers to take care of, but he had for companions many noble sentiments, and he must watch sharp lest they be turned into—

Just as he was writing the word, he stopped; that was not the proper tone. He destroyed the sheet, and began again. He narrated, simply and briefly, the interview, with Pranken, Clodwig, and Bella, saying that as the Homeric heroes were under the special protection of the gods, so to-day a different and better one was vouchsafed, and he was accompanied by the spirit and noble character of his parents. In speaking of Roland, he said that wealth had a peculiar power to excite the fancy, and a mighty energy in carrying out its purposes, for Roland had already removed her into the small, vine-covered house.

The bells were ringing in the village, and Eric wrote with flying speed about his conception of the noble vocation of guiding in the right path a human being, upon whom was conferred the great and influential power of wealth.

And now, mingled with the ringing of the bells, there came suddenly the recollection of that narrative in the Gospel of the rich young man coming to Jesus. He did not remember the precise question and answer, and he looked for a Bible in Roland's library, but there was no Bible there; yet it seemed as if he could go no farther, until he had become exactly acquainted with that incident.

He went down into the garden; there he came across the gardener, the so-called squirrel, who was very happy to be able to give an affirmative answer to the question whether he had a Bible. With words full of unction he brought one to Eric, who took it with him to his room.

He wrote no more, he read for a long time; then he sat there motionless, his head resting upon his left hand, which covered his eyes, until Roland returned from church, and laid down his prayer-book. As Eric grasped now the hand which had deposited the book, the inquiry darted through his soul. Wilt thou be able to give the youth a like firm trust as a compensation, if thou shouldst—

His thoughts were interrupted, for Roland said, —

"You have procured a Bible, then?" With childish pleasure he informed him that, by means of the gardener, it had been reported all over the house. Eric felt obliged to declare to the boy that he held this book in high esteem, and thought there was no other to be compared with it, but that he had none of the customary ecclesiastical reverence for it.

"Do you know this?" Eric asked, pointing to the passage about the rich young man.

Roland read it, and when Eric asked him what he thought of it, Roland only stared, for he had evidently not perceived the difficulty of the problem there enunciated. Eric avoided enlightening him now in regard to the meaning of the parable; he would wait. A seed-grain lies at first motionless in the earth, until it is stirred into activity by its own vital forces. Eric knew that at this moment such a seed-grain had fallen into the child's soul. He would bide quietly the time when it should germinate and spring up.

He complied with Roland's desire that he would go with him to meet the major, who came every Sunday to dinner. They walked for a while in the road under the nut-trees, and then up the hill through the vineyards. They saw, near a large open space where stakes only were standing, the Major, with whom we have already become acquainted at Wolfsgarten; he was to-day in full uniform, with all his badges.

Whilst the established nobility of the region were very reserved in their visits to the Sonnenkamp mansion, the Major was the banner of distinction to this household, Frau Ceres being especially delighted that a man with so many badges should devote himself to her in so friendly a way. Evil tongues, indeed, reported that the Major, in consideration of this attention to the ladies, and this Sunday display of his badges, received no trifling addition to his not very large pension, but this was pure scandal, for the Major, or rather Fräulein Milch, strenuously refused to accept presents from any one in the region, nor would they allow themselves to be in any manner dependent.

The Major was very happy to see them both.

"Have you got him so soon?" said he to Eric. "Be sure and hold him by a tight rein."

And, pointing to the vineyard, he said: "Next season we shall have there – so Herr Sonnenkamp says – the first wine. Have you ever drunk virgin wine?"

Eric answered in the negative, and the Major delighted in being able to explain to him that the first product of a vineyard was so denominated.

The Major's gait was nothing but a perpetual plunge forward and a recovery of himself again; every two steps he stopped and looked round, always with a smile. He smiled upon every one he met. Why were people to be made unhappy because he has lost his toes? Why should they see a troubled countenance? He informed Eric that he had frozen his toes in the Russian campaign, and had been obliged to have them amputated; and he smiled very cheerfully, as he said: —

"Yes, truly our German proverb is right. Every one knows best himself where the shoe pinches."

He nodded his agreement with Eric, who made an application of the proverb to the various relations of life.

Then he asked Roland whether his mother had yet risen; for Frau Ceres made the no small sacrifice of getting up at nine o'clock, and, what will be considered a not much inferior one, of completing her toilet in a single hour, and going with the family to church. She always made up, therefore, for the lost sleep by going to bed again before dinner, and putting on afterwards, for the first time, her real Sunday apparel.

When they reached the level road, the architect met them, on his way also to dinner; he joined Eric, while Roland went with the Major. The men were all obliged to look at Roland's dogs, before they assembled in the balcony-saloon. They found the doctor and the priest already with Herr Sonnenkamp.

Eric had scarcely been introduced, when Frau Ceres appeared in splendid full dress.

The Major offered his arm, the servants drew back the folding-doors, and they went through several apartments into the dining-hall.

The Major had his seat at the left of Frau Ceres, and the priest at her right; next to him was Fräulein Perini, and then the physician, Sonnenkamp, the architect, Roland and Eric took their respective seats.

The priest said grace to-day aloud. The conversation was, at first, wholly incomprehensible to Eric, for it was of persons and circumstances that he knew nothing about. The great wine

establishment, the son of whose proprietor had bought, with Pranken, the beautiful horses, was often mentioned. The head of the firm had realized enormous profits, at a sale held at one of his wine-vaults up the stream. It was reported that he intended to give up business entirely, and to reside at the capital, for the shrewd old gentleman was very desirous of gaining the consideration and good will of the court.

"I give him credit," cried the doctor, "of being infatuated with the notion of getting ennobled."

Herr Sonnenkamp, who just that moment had put into his mouth some fish cut up very fine, was seized with such a sudden and violent fit of coughing, that all the table were anxious at seeing him turn so red in the face; but he soon re-assured them, saying that he had only incautiously swallowed a fish-bone.

The Major thought it unfitting that the great wine-merchant should allow himself to stand as a government-candidate for the chamber of deputies, and that, too, against such a man as Weidmann. Eric gave attention when this name was now again mentioned; it was always as if an indescribable train of honors waited upon it. But the doctor continued, by saying that the Wine-count was only desirous of satisfying his ambition, and his purpose to make himself acceptable to the government, and that he would succeed even if he knew that he would be beaten, for he appeared in the journals as a supporter of the Government.

"Now, Herr priest," he directly asked, "which candidate will the clergy vote for?"

The priest, a tall, slender form with white hair, and remarkably bright eyes, which looked keen and quiet from beneath the massive eye-brows, united both dignity and adroitness in his deportment. He would have been very glad to remain silent, but he now said – moving his left hand, with the thumb and forefinger joined – that there was really no opposition to be made to Weidmann's good qualities as a citizen.

The doctor was obliged to put up with this indirect reply. But the Major extolled very decidedly the noble character of Weidmann, who was sure to triumph.

The Major always spoke with great difficulty, and turned purple even to the roots of his white hair, whenever he was obliged to address not his immediate neighbor only, but the whole table as well.

"You speak as a brother Freemason," said the physician, giving him a nod.

The Major looked grimly at him, shaking his head, as if to say. One should not jest about such things; but he said nothing.

Sonnenkamp was very free in declaring, that although he paid taxes in this country, he should not vote; that he was cosmopolitan, and considered himself and his family to be only guests in Germany.

Eric's glance and that of the doctor met, and both looked towards Roland. What can be expected of a boy, to whom it is said. The State in which you live is of no account to you at all?

The physician, having begun to make a butt of the Major, kept it up incessantly. Known and liked as a jovial person, the physician was, early in the day, in the hilarious mood of one who has just risen from a well-spread table, and his very lively tone contrasted strangely with the heavy delivery of the Major, who very willingly allowed himself to be made the object of jesting. It seemed to him to be a man's duty to minister, even passively, to his fellow-men; and his features always said, My children, make yourselves merry, even if it is about me.

The priest, in the meanwhile, took the part of the persecuted Major, but it was hard to tell whether it was not for the sake of keeping up the raillery, for the Major smiled in a yet more puzzled way at his advocate, than at his assailant. The priest always began in a sort of narrative way, and as he went on, shot his well-aimed shafts on all sides, preserving at the same time his polished and obliging manners, and never losing sight, for a moment, of the respect due to his spiritual calling; and he had, in particular, certain tranquillizing motions with his handsome, delicate hands. The eyes of Fräulein Perini seemed to expand, more and more, and to feast in gazing, as she looked at the ecclesiastic, and listened to him with her eyes. Only she could not repress her discomfort, when the priest, after

the fashion of the snuff-taking clergy, rolled up his blue linen pocket-handkerchief into a ball, and, in the full flow of discourse, tossed it from one hand to the other. She breathed more freely when he put the horrible blue handkerchief into his pocket.

Fräulein Perini maintained a tranquil imperturbability towards the rough and excitable temperament of the physician, while he regarded her as a sort of colleague; and it was really the case, that she had some medical knowledge. He had a particular respect for her, inasmuch as she had never consulted him in regard to any ailment. She lived very temperately, indulged sparingly in the luxurious entertainments and the rich daily repast, seemed to have no wants, and devoted herself to the service, or more properly, to the accommodation, of others. Doctor Richard took the liberty, as a physician of extensive practice, to use but little ceremony, and was as much the popular as the pampered despot of the whole district, and especially of the Sonnenkamp household. He was talkative at the table, eating but little, and drinking so much the more to make up for it. He praised the wines, knew them all, how long they had been kept, and when they were mellow. He inquired about an old brand, and Sonnenkamp ordered it to be brought; the physician found it harsh, rough, and immature. Herr Sonnenkamp would often look up dubiously to the physician, before partaking of some dish, but he would say in anticipation: —

"Eat, eat, it won't hurt you."

"The really best thing in the world would be to drink," Sonnenkamp said, jestingly.

"It's a shame that you never knew the 'precious Borsch,'" cried the doctor, "who once uttered that illustrious saying, 'The stupidest thing in the world is, that one can't also drink what he eats.'" Turning to Eric, he continued: —

"Your friend Pranken doesn't speak well of our Rhine-land, but this ill-humor is only an epidemic catarrh while getting acclimated, which every one must catch. I hope you will not be so long in getting over it. Look at this bottle of wine, — all is corked up here that poetry, the scenic art, and creative art can do to enchant and enliven us; the drinker feels that he is not a common pack-horse, and though, theoretically, he does not know what elements of the beautiful are contained in such a bottle, he has no need to know, he tastes it; he drinks in, in fact, the beautiful."

"Provided there is no adulteration," the architect suggested.

"Very true," the doctor cried in a loud voice; "we used to have very few cases of delirium-tremens, now so common in our district; and delirium-tremens is not from the wine, but from the alcohol in it. Do you know anything about wine?" he asked, turning to Eric, and, as if actual president, calling upon him for his opinion.

"Not any."

"And yet you have probably composed drinking-songs, where the chorus always comes in, 'We will be merry, let us be merry, we've been merry,' and after the first bottle, the merry gentlemen can't stand on their rhimed feet any longer."

A glance towards Roland brought the doctor to his senses; it was not well to make Eric a subject of ridicule in this way. He therefore turned the conversation, and gave Eric, whom he called with special friendliness Herr Colleague, an opportunity to narrate many interesting incidents of the collegiate and military life. The Major nodded approval; through Eric's conversation he was left in peace, and could give his undisturbed attention to eating and drinking. Under the napkin which he had pinned to his shoulders, he opened his uniform. It is well, he thought, that Fräulein Milch has furnished me with such a nice white vest, and it ought to be seen. He was on the best of terms with the servants, and whilst they were changing the wine, it only needed a wink to Joseph, a universal favorite, and he immediately poured out some choice Burgundy from the sparkling crystal decanter for the Major.

The Major drank no more. The conversation had taken a happy turn, after Eric began to speak of the Geneva convention for the care of those wounded in battle. This was a good common point

of union for the priest, the physician, and the soldier, and, for a time, the conversation at table was harmonious and well-sustained.

The Major, in a loud tone, declared that men who did not like to have their names mentioned were the original movers in this, as in all other humane arrangements. The physician remarked to Eric, in a lower tone than ordinary, that the Major attributed to the Freemasons all the good in the world, and if he wished to keep in his good graces, he must never say anything against Freemasonry.

The entire table listened with great attention to Eric, as he asserted that we ought to be proud to see in our century such an arrangement established on the ground of pure humanity; and the priest himself nodded in assent, when Eric added that the Christian religion, in its self-sacrificing devotion to the care of the sick, had attained an elevated position, purer and loftier than had ever before been reached, in any age, and under any dispensation.

Roland was happy to see the gleaming eyes of all resting upon Eric, and collected them all in one focus for him.

They arose from table, and a blessing seemed to have descended upon the whole repast. The priest engaged in silent prayer, and the Major, coming to Eric, pressed his hand rather tightly, saying in a subdued tone: —

"You are one already, you must learn the signs."

Eric was so excited, that he hardly heard what the old man said, although he expressed his highest possible esteem in this readiness to accept him as a Freemason.

"See," cried the doctor, impudently, "see how much whiter the hair of our Major has turned."

And it actually seemed so, for the face of the Major was so permanently red, that its color seemed incapable of being deepened, and now from the excitement of the conversation and the wine, the whiteness of the hair was in reality discerned with greater distinctness.

"The Major's hair has become whiter," everybody now said, and the bewildered smile, that was always round his mouth, exploded in a loud laugh.

CHAPTER III. THE WORLD OUTSIDE

The doctor was informed, immediately after dinner, that many patients were waiting for him, for it was generally known that he dined on Sunday here at the villa. He hastily took a cigar from Sonnenkamp, and said that Eric must accompany him, as he wished to speak with him. He said this in a positive manner admitting of no refusal.

After they had turned the corner, the physician extended his hand to Eric, saying in a hearty tone, —

"I am the scholar of your grandfather, and I also knew your father at the University."

"I am very glad to hear it; but why did you not tell me that at once?" The doctor looked at him awhile from head to foot, then he laid both hands on his shoulders, and shaking his head, but in a cordial tone, said, —

"I have been mistaken in you. I thought that the species idealist had died out; you are doctor of world-wisdom, but not doctor of worldly wisdom. Dear captain-doctor, what's the need of their knowing yonder how you and I stand with each other? — So you wish to live with Herr Sonnenkamp?"

"Why not?"

"The man can't weep if he would, and you — ?"

"Well, and I?"

"With you the tear-sack is filled at every emotion, as when you spoke there of your father, and of the noble care of the sick — you have a talent for hypochondria."

Eric was struck. This style of personal criticism was novel to him, but before he could reply, the doctor called to the waiting group of patients standing at the entrance of the porter's lodge, —

"I am coming in a moment! Wait here for me, and I'll come back soon," he said now to Eric, and went up to the group, all of whom took off their hats and caps. He spoke with one and another, taking out a blank book with loose leaves, and writing several prescriptions, with the back of a broad-shouldered man for a desk, and giving to others only verbal directions.

Eric stood in a fixed attitude, and he realized that he was wanting in worldly wisdom, but a deep feeling of happiness took possession of him, that his grandfather and father sent him here a friend. An unknown and inestimable inheritance was awaiting him in all places, like a harvest gathering in from all quarters; he regarded the family and its rich possessions with a different feeling; he was no longer poor.

The physician, coming back, said with a more cheerful countenance, —

"I am now free. Count Clodwig has told me about you, but he has given me a wrong impression of you. Never mind! Every one sees, standing in the centre of his own horizon, his own rainbow. I wished only to say to you, that what one — pardon me — what one does for you, is hardly the payment of interest, for no human being has done more for others than your grandfather and your father. Now allow yourself for once to undergo a regular examination. I saw you years ago, when you were coupled with the prince."

The doctor receded a step from Eric, and continued, —

"The crossing of races is a good one. Father, Huguenot, — Mother, pure German, real blond, delicate organization, — proper mixture of nationalities. Come with me into the arbor. Will you allow me a brief and concise diagnosis?"

Eric smiled; the physician's method of passing him under review and pronouncing verdict upon him seemed extremely odd, but yet he felt attracted.

Striking off on a twig the ashes from his cigar, the doctor asked, —

"Can you have intercourse with any one day by day, and not like him, or at least have some regard for him?"

"I have never tried it, but I think not; and such an intercourse assuredly hurts the soul."

"I expected this answer. For my part, I say with Lessing, It is better to live among bad people, than to live apart from everybody. May I ask still another question?"

But without waiting for a reply, he continued, —

"Have you ever experienced ingratitude?"

"I think that I have, as yet, done nothing which deserves gratitude. Especially may we ask, Ought we to lay claim to any thanks, inasmuch as what we do in behalf of others, we do, first of all, to secure our own self-approval."

"Good, good. Wise already. Yet one thing more. Do you believe in natural depravity, and if you do, since when?"

"If by depravity you mean the conscious delight in injuring others, then I am no believer in it, for I am convinced that all evil doing is only a stepping over the limits of a justifiable self-preservation; it is only an excess caused by sophistry or passion. Perhaps the belief in depravity is also merely passion."

The doctor nodded several times, and then said, —

"Only one question more. Are you sensitive – vulnerable?"

"I might perhaps urge your friendly testing as a proof that I am not."

The doctor threw away the cigar, which he had not wholly smoked up, and said, —

"Excuse me, I was in an error; my final question has another at the end of it. Now to conclude: Are you surprised, when you find simply stupid some little man or some little woman in fashionable clothes, and with polished address, and are you willing to take them as simply stupid, without attributing to them principles of action, and a comprehension of the principles of others?"

In spite of the evidently friendly intention, Eric's patience was exhausted; he replied to this, not without some irritation, that he had been through a great many surprising examinations here, but the present was the most surprising of all.

"You will perhaps have some light upon it, by and by," the physician said in a low tone, stealthily pressing Eric's hand, for he saw Fräulein Perini coming along the path, and he went to join her.

The company at table met again at the fountain, chatted awhile, and then separated. The priest and the Major invited Eric to call upon them; the physician asked Sonnenkamp if Eric and Roland might not be allowed to drive with him upon his round of visits. Sonnenkamp appeared struck that Roland and Eric were linked together in this way, but he nodded his assent. Eric and the doctor seated themselves in the open carriage, and Roland took his seat with the coachman, who gave him the reins.

The day was bright and full of the fragrance of flowers, bells were ringing, and larks were carolling.

They drove to a village lying at a distance from the river. From, a garden where the elder was in bloom came the beautiful music of a quartette song, and under a linden in an enclosed place, boys and youths were engaged in gymnastic sports.

"O this magnificent German land of ours!" Eric could not refrain from exclaiming. "This is life! This is our life! To cheer the soul with inspiring song, and the body with brisk motion, – this makes a people strong and noble, and honor and freedom must be theirs! All that is great belongs to us, as well as to the classic world."

The doctor, laying his hand quietly upon Eric's knee, looked him full in the eye, and then begged him, if he remained here, to make himself thoroughly acquainted through him with the Rhine life, and not allow himself to be misled, if he should find much that was repulsive both inside and outside of the house. "And if you can – I believe you alone can, if you can't, I give it up – confer upon the boy there, not merely joy in what he has, but joy in the great life of the nation and of the community, which now he has not, then you will have accomplished something that is worth living for. But the main point is, while you are doing this, to have no thought of self, and then the blessing will not fail. This is what I understand by the direction, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God – that is, the life

of truth and of love – and all things shall be added unto you.' Roland," he interrupted himself by calling, "stop here."

The doctor got out, and went into a small but neat-looking house; Eric and Roland went to the gymnastic-grounds. They were regarded at first with great shyness; but when Eric readily showed a fine-looking youth, who went through some exercise clumsily, how to do it better, and when, stripping off his coat, he swung with agility on the horizontal bar, every one became more familiar. Roland also attempted some of the exercises, without much success, and Eric said that they would practise them diligently, but it was unfavorable that they would be obliged to engage in them by themselves, for there was much greater animation and exertion of all the powers, when there was a common emulation.

A messenger came to call Eric and Roland back to the house where the doctor had stopped. Just as the physician came out of the house, the church-bell tolled; all the bystanders took off their hats, even the doctor, and he said, —

"A human being is dead; the man has lived out the term of existence; he was seventy-two years old, and yet yesterday, on his death-bed, he gained comfort in the recollection of a little deed of beneficence. In the year of the famine, 1817, he was travelling as a journeyman cooper over the Lunenburg heath – he continually called it the Hamburg heath – where there was no road; and after several hours he came across a wretched hovel, in which were several children crying from hunger. The cooper had some dried eels, and some bread in a tin box. He gave all to feed the children, and they were happy. 'Mark;' he said to me only yesterday, – 'mark how it does me good, and always rejoices me, that I could at that time feed the children, and perhaps they never have forgotten it, that once a stranger appeased their hunger.' Is it not beautiful that a man can gain solace from a single good deed? He has suffered much, and death is a release to him. Yes, my young friend, such is the world! There outside all is in bloom, people are singing, exercising, sporting, and in the meanwhile, a human being is dying – pooh!" he cried, recovering himself, "I have not brought you with me to make you troubled, Roland; drive the whole length of the village to the last house." And turning to Eric, he said, —

"We are going to see cheerful poverty; you are now to look upon the bright side. The man is a poor vine-dresser; has seven children, four sons and three daughters, and in their poverty they are the merriest people to be found anywhere, and the merriest of all is the old father. His real name is Piper; but because he sings with his children and practises them finely as often as he can get a chance, he is called Sevenpiper."

They drove to the house; the daughters were sitting before the door, the sons were at the gymnastic-ground. Sevenpiper immediately made his appearance, and said that his sons should be sent for. The doctor then asked how things were going with him.

"Ah, Herr doctor," he replied, in a loud tone, "it is always so; my youngest always has the best voice." And turning to Roland, he added, —

"Yes, dear sir, I make my children rich too; each one receives from one to two hundred songs as an outfit, and if they can't make their way through the world with that, then they are good for nothing."

The sons came, and now a cheerful song was struck up, so that the doctor and Roland were put into excellent spirits, and Eric, who quickly caught the tune, sang with them.

The old man nodded to him, and when the song was ended, said, —

"Herr, you can sing too, that's a fact."

The doctor always carried a bottle-case in his carriage, and drawing upon it now, every one became exceedingly merry; and Sevenpiper informed them, and more particularly Roland, that the best thing in the world was to be in good health, and make music for one's self.

The physician took leave, and at evening, Roland and Eric, in a joyous mood, left the house. Sevenpiper's two oldest sons went with them to the bank of the river, where they unfastened the boat, and rowed to the villa.

The water was now very still and clear, and reflected the red glow of the sunset-sky. Eric sat by himself in silence, during one of those blissful hours when one thinks of nothing, and yet enjoys all. Roland kept time in rowing with the sons of Sevenpiper; then, without stroke of the oar, they let the boat float, and it glided noiselessly along in the middle of the stream.

The stars were glittering in the sky when they arrived at the villa.

CHAPTER IV. THE GOSPEL OF THE RICH YOUNG MAN

The architect came in the morning for Roland, who was to make, under his direction, some drawings of the castle-ruins.

Herr Sonnenkamp reminded Eric that he was to visit the priest, and he set out soon after he had seen Fräulein Perini return from mass. The priest's house had a garden in front, and was in silent seclusion in the village itself silent. If the bell had not rung so loudly, and if the two white Pomeranian dogs had not barked so loudly, one would have believed that there could be no loud noise in such a well-arranged establishment as this appeared to be at the very entrance-hall. The dogs were silenced, and the housekeeper told Eric, who seemed to be expected, to go up stairs.

Eric found the ecclesiastic in his sunny, unadorned room, sitting at the table, and holding in his left hand a book, while his right lay upon a terrestrial globe supported upon a low pedestal.

"You catch me in the wide world," said the ecclesiastic, giving Eric a cordial welcome, and biding him take a seat upon the sofa, over which hung a colored print, of St. Borromeo, which was well-meaning enough, but not very beautiful.

A home-like peacefulness was in this room; everything seemed to express an absence of all pretension and all assumption, and a simple desire to pass the hours and the days in quiet meditation. Two canary birds, here, however, in two cages, appeared to entertain a lively desire, as did the dogs below, to give vent to their feelings. The ecclesiastic called to them to be quiet, and they became dumb, as if by magic, and only looked inquisitively at Eric.

The priest informed him that he was just following out on the globe the journey of a missionary; and he caused the globe to revolve, while saying this, with his delicate right hand.

"Perhaps you are not friendly to the missionary spirit?" he asked immediately.

"I consider it," Eric replied, "to be the first step in the world's civilization, and it is a grand thing that the missionaries have everywhere spread a knowledge of written language, through translations of a book revered as holy, and in that way have reduced to an organic form, as it were, the inorganic languages of all peoples."

The priest closed the book that lay open before him, folded his hands in a kind of patronising way, that seemed natural to him as the official form of consecration, and then placing the tips of the fingers of one hand upon those of the other, he said that he had heard of Eric many favourable things, and that, from his own experience, he was prepossessed in favor of those who changed their calling out of some internal ground of conviction. To be sure, fickleness and restlessness, never at ease in any regular employment, often led to this, but where this was not the case, one could predicate a deep fundamental trait of sincerity.

Eric thanked him, and added that the dignity of any vocation lay not in the external consideration awarded to it, but in the preservation of the purely human inherent in every calling.

"Very just," replied the ecclesiastic, extending one hand, as if with a benignant blessing. "The ecclesiastical vocation is therefore the highest, because it does not strive after gain, nor enjoyment, nor fame, but after that which you – I know not for what reason – call the universally human, when it ought simply to be called the divine."

A certain degree of humility, and a reluctance to make any opposition, came over Eric, as he listened to the ecclesiastic setting forth in such mildly discordant tones the precise point of difference. It seemed, after every word, as if the sacred peacefulness of the place gained fresh potency; nothing of the world's noise intruded there, and all its busting activity was far away.

The park, and the country-house in the distance over the river, could be seen from the window; the ecclesiastic took special notice of Eric's lively interest in the beautiful, quiet view, and remarked,

—

"Yes, Herr Sonnenkamp has arranged all that for himself, but the beauty is also our gain. I really never go out of my house, except for some parochial work."

"And do you never feel yourself solitary here in the country?"

"Oh no! I have myself, and my Lord, and God has me. And the world? I had in the great city, even, nothing different – my parish, my church, my house – what, besides these, is there, is not there for me."

A reminiscence of his early youthful years was awakened in Eric's soul, and he told the priest that the thought had often presented itself to him, in the midst of his jolly garrison life, that he had a fitness for the ecclesiastical vocation, but that he could not devote himself to it without a belief in revelation.

"Yes, indeed, one cannot make himself believe, but one can make himself humble, and every one can and ought to do that, and then the grace of believing is vouchsafed."

The ecclesiastic announced this as if it were a mathematical axiom, and Eric replied in a modest tone, —

"Every man acquires a ground-work of thought and feeling, just as he does his mother tongue, by hearing it spoken; and might it not be said also, that his soul acquires a language which has no outward sound, but which becomes embodied as a religious disposition and habitual tendency, and which, if it is genuine, cannot be interfered with, for, in this primitive stratum, root and soil are one and the same."

"You have studied the Mystics?" asked the ecclesiastic.

"Only partially. I should like to say further, that all fair controversialists are obliged to agree upon something as unassailable, or undemonstrable."

That holy stillness again possessed the place, where two human beings were breathing, who desired each in his own way to serve the highest.

"You are at the age," the priest resumed, "when young gentlemen think of marriage, and as is the prevailing fashion, marriage with a maiden who has money, – a great deal of money. You appear so true-hearted, that I must ask you directly, although I would much rather not, if it is true that you are a suitor of Fräulein Sonnenkamp?"

"I?" Eric asked with vehement astonishment. "I?"

"Yes, you."

"I thank you," Eric said in a clear voice, recovering from his amazement, "I thank you, that you question me so directly. You know I am not of your church."

"And Fräulein Sonnenkamp is of our church, and it would be hard –"

"I was not thinking of that," Eric said, interrupting him. "Wonderful, through what tests I must pass! First a supercilious cavalier, then a nobleman, then a military officer, then a doctor, and now in the priestly sieve."

"I do not understand you."

"Ah, truly," began Eric, "and I tell you, I confess to your noble, mild countenance, and so I acknowledge to you, seeing you before me, that I admire the undisturbed unity of your being from which comes the Catholic law of celibacy as a dogma, and I allow myself to claim that we have reached the same ideal stand-point. Yes, honored sir, I say to myself, he who wishes to live for a great idea, whether he is artist, scholar, priest, he can need no family, he must renounce its joys, apart by himself without any hinderance, that he may fulfil his mission in the perpetual service of thought."

"Divisus est! divisus est!" repeated the ecclesiastic. "The holy apostle says that he who has a wife is divided, and he will be yet more divided, whilst the lot of his children becomes his own. The ecclesiastic has no changes of lot."

A smile passed over the countenance of the priest, as he continued: —

"Only imagine a priest married to a quarrelsome wife – there are also peaceable women, gentle and self-sacrificing, and it is certain that there are quarrelsome ones too – and now the priest is to

mount the pulpit in order to proclaim the word of peace and love, when an hour before in dispute and scolding – "

The ecclesiastic suddenly ceased, placed the forefinger of his left hand on his lips, and bethought himself, that he was wandering from the real point. Did not Fräulein Perini inform him that Eric had visited the convent before he came to this place? He looked at Eric, who had led him from the direct inquiry, wondering whether he had done it from prudence, or whether it was really from excitement. He hoped, indeed, to attain his end in some different way; and, apparently in a very natural manner, but yet with a lurking circumspection, he now asked whether Eric really felt confident, from his position, of being able to train a boy like Roland.

When Eric answered in the affirmative, the ecclesiastic further asked: —

"And what do you mean to give him first, and in preference to everything else?"

"To sum it up in few words," replied Eric, "I wish to give Roland joy in the world. If he has this, he will furnish joy to the world; that is to say, he will desire to benefit it; if I teach him to despise the world, to undervalue life, he will come to misuse the world and the powers entrusted to him in it."

"I regret," said the priest in a gentle tone, "that you are not a believer; you are on the way to salvation, but you turn aside into a by-path. Do you know what riches are? I will tell you. Riches are a great temptation, yes, perhaps the greatest of our time; riches are a force in nature, perhaps the most lawless, most untamable, and the hardest to be governed. Riches are a brutal power, for which there is no ruler, except the Almighty Lord; riches are below the brute, for no brute has any more force than it embodies in itself. Man alone can be rich, can have what he is not himself, and what his children cannot consume. Here is the misery of it! Whoever gains so much of the world hurts his own soul. I have tried to bring this family and this boy to this, that they should at least make the acknowledgment, before every meal, that what they enjoy in such luxurious abundance is only a gift. Do you believe that this boy, conscious of his riches, and this whole family, can receive a moral culture except through religion? A prayer before one sits down to eat is a meditation, a recollection of the fact that thou hast some one to thank for what thou dost enjoy. This takes out the vainglorious pride, and gives humility instead, and makes one give, even as he himself has been given to. Only where the fear of God is, yes, fear, is there also the blissful feeling of His Almighty protection. On the table of this rich man there is placed, every day, a display of sweet-smelling, bright-colored flowers, – what does that matter? On the poorest table of the neediest cottager is placed a bouquet more beautiful and more fragrant, from the higher realm, through the utterances of prayer; and the soul is filled, and this first makes the filling of the body conduce to its health. But this is only one thing. Above there, on the Upper Rhine, they call personal property movables, and so it is! The riches of the present world are nothing but movables, moving possessions, and they will move away. Believe me," cried the ecclesiastic, laying his hand upon Eric's, "believe me, the public funds are the misfortune of the present age."

"The public funds? I do not understand."

"Yes, it is indeed not so easy to understand. Of whom can one borrow millions? of no one but the State. If there were no public funds, there would be no one to lend such great sums; that's the way it is. Formerly, a man could not acquire so many millions, because he could not lay out so many millions; but now there are the public funds, and everybody lives on interest-money, and interest is very properly forbidden by the canons. See, in old times the rich man had a great deal of real estate, many fields and forests, and he was first of all dependent upon God's blessed sun, and when everything in good time had ripened, and lay there in the sight of all, then he gave a tenth part to the church. But now the riches are tucked away in fire-proof, burglar-proof safes, not dependent on sun, not on wind and weather, are not visible to the world, and have no tenth of the profit to give, – at the most a trifling discount on the coupons to the banker; the harvest of the bond-holder is the cutting off of coupons; these are the sheaves of his harvest-home. If the Lord should come to-day, he would find no temple from which to drive out the money-changers and traders, they have erected for themselves their own temples. Yes, the stronghold of Zion, to-day, to which princes, as well as rich

men, make their pilgrimage and commit themselves to its protection, – it is the Bank of England! Have you ever once thought of this, what is to become of humanity; what of States, if this increase of state-debts continues to go on in this way? of course not. The whole earth will be one tremendous mortgage, and mortgaged to whom? to him who lends on long credit, but who will, some time or other, demand payment. A universal conflagration will come, against which no fireproof vaults will avail, and a deluge, which will wipe out the millions and millions upon millions of State debts. I am not a man who delights in seeing mischief done, but this I would say, – I should like to live to see the Bank of England bankrupt. Only imagine it! At night the news comes. It is all gone. Then will thousands of small men and small women see, for the first time, how small they are, when they see themselves at once stripped of all their trappings, and set down upon the bare earth."

Eric smiled. Every man placed in solitude, without an environment of equalizing conditions, entertains readily peculiar notions that dart through his mind; and he said that the earth would be burdened with greater debts than it could pay, if it could only find those who would advance the money. But the real possession of humanity was of more value than the whole earth could pay for, as its greatest possession was its ideal being, its power of working; and while, formerly, all property was in the soil, it was just the problem of the modern age to make available ideal and personal property. He wished further to add, that even among the Romans in the time of the Republic itself, the wealth of individuals was thus enormously excessive; but the ecclesiastic, in his great excitement, seemed scarcely listening to him, went to his book-case, took down a great Bible, and opening to a passage, handed the book to Eric.

"There, just read; that is the only way that Roland can be educated. Read aloud."

Eric complied, and read: —

"And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him. Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God. Thou knowest the commandments, – Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him. Master, all these things have I observed from, my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him. One thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them. Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God!"

"And now stand up and tell me," said the priest, in a trembling voice, "tell me honestly, is not that the one and only method?"

"Honestly, no: I love and revere him of whom this is told, perhaps more than many a church-believer, and it is particularly affecting to me, and at this moment wonderfully touching is that passage, where it is said here, – Then Jesus beholding him loved him. I see the handsome rich young man in the presence of the sublime Master; the young man is glowing and filled with a genuine ardor; then the Master dearly loves him as he looks into his countenance. However – "

"That is incidental, that is incidental. Speak to the main subject," the priest interrupted.

"According to my view of the subject," Eric replied, "I must own that I consider this teaching to have been given at a time when all actual might, the power of the State, riches, and all the good things of life, were contemned, and when they were obliged to reject everything which had no reference to their purely ideal view. That could alone maintain the uprightness of noble souls in a time of oppression under foreign rule; and this teaching could have been given at a time only, and by a soul, which sees all that is worth living for vanishing away, which builds up a new creation, and in which

pure thought has entire sway. But if each one gives away, and gives away continually, who is there in that case to be the recipient? And why is it that this doctrine, that no one is to possess anything, has not become a command of the Church?"

"I am glad," answered the ecclesiastic, "that you have touched the real point. Our Church has commands which are not universally binding, but are only so for him who wishes to be perfect, as, for instance, the law of chastity and of poverty. Only he who wishes to be perfect comes under it."

"I ask," interposed Eric, "is the teaching of revelation, which is amply sufficient for the purely spiritual, sufficient also for the worldly? In the course of the development of humanity do not new social conditions establish themselves in the world, as out of nature new forces, steam, electricity –"

"Man," replied the priest, "is always the same from eternity to eternity, the citizen only changes. But I see now, you are letting yourself be guided into the right path. I do not desire – the rich man himself did not desire it – that the boy shall be perfect, and therefore the command to sell his possessions is not applicable to him. I only say to you, you will not be able to educate this boy unless you give him positive religion. The brute does all he has power to do; with it there is no word 'ought;' but man does not do all that he has power to do. Simply to do that for which one has the strength, or, yet more properly, the inclination, and to do everything purely from inclination, that is not the human; the human begins there where one tramples his inclination under foot, and does what God's law commands. Were every one to act according to his inclination, then should we be sure, at no time, what would become of humanity. The law of God holds it together, and holds it erect. Here is the significance of the law of God, here begins the fall, which the gentlemen of natural science have never got over. The animal has urgent impulses; man can voluntarily awaken impulse, excite it, goad it, multiply it; where is there a limit here, except in God's law? I am not speaking of any Church. You have, so much I know, busied yourself chiefly with history?"

"Not so particularly."

"Well, you know this much: no people, no State, can be free, at least we have no historical instance to the contrary, no people, no State, can be free without a positive Church; there must be something immovably fixed, and at this very day the Americans are free, only because they subject themselves to religion."

"Or, rather, enfranchise it," Eric interposed, without being heard.

The priest continued: —

"I think that you desire to make a free man of this youth. We also love free men, we want free men, but there can be no free men without a positive religion, and, in truth, without one requiring a strict, legal obedience. The highest result of education is equanimity – note it well – equanimity. Can your world-wisdom produce a harmony of all the tendencies and dispositions of the soul, a quietude of the spirit, a state of self-renunciation, because our whole life is one continual act of self-sacrifice? If you can produce the same result as religion, then, justified by the result, you agree with us. For my own part, I doubt whether you can; and we wait for the proof, which you have yet to give, while we have furnished it now for a thousand years, and still daily furnish it."

"Religion," replied Eric, "is a concomitant of civilization; but it is not the whole of civilization, and this is the distinction between us and the ecclesiastics. But we are not to blame for the opposition between science and religion."

"Science," interposed the priest, "has nothing to do with the eternal life. Although one has electric telegraphs and sewing machines, that has no relation to the eternal life. This eternal life is given only by religion, and its essence remains the same, no matter how many thousand, and thousand upon thousand, inventions he may devise in his finite existence."

Eric inquired now in a diffident tone, —

"But how can the Church itself possess riches?"

"The Church does not possess, it only administers," the priest sharply answered.

"I think that we are getting too far away from the point," Eric said, coming back to the subject. "As we cannot expect that Herr Sonnenkamp and his son Roland will give away all their property, the question returns, how shall we get the right hold?"

"Precisely so," cried the ecclesiastic, suddenly standing up, and walking with long strides up and down the room. "Precisely so; now are we on the very point. Hear me attentively. Observe well, there is something new started in the world, a still more homeless condition yet in the higher moral order, and that is the moneyed aristocracy. You look at me in amazement."

"Not amazed, but expecting what will come next."

"Very right. This moneyed aristocracy stands between the nobility and the people, and I ask what it is to do? Must not a rich young man of the middle-class, like Roland, thrown into the whirlpool of life, be inevitably engulfed?"

"Why he," asked Eric, "any more than the noble youth in the civil or in the military service? Do you suppose that religion saves them from destruction?"

"No, but something positive of a different kind; the historic traditions of the nobility save them. The man of the nobility has the good fortune to complete the preliminary period of youthful training, with the least amount of detriment. He afterwards retires to his estates, becomes a worthy husband, and respectably maintains his position; and, even in the city, in the midst of the mad whirl, his position in regard to the court, and to the higher class in the community, keeps him within prescribed limits. But what does the rich young man of the middle-class have? He has no honorable rank, no social obligation, at least none of any stringency."

"Then it would be, perhaps, the greatest piece of good fortune to Roland, if his father could be ennobled?"

"I cannot say," replied the priest. He was vexed that he had allowed himself to be drawn so near to the subject of a very confidential conversation with Sonnenkamp a short time previous to this. "I cannot say," he repeated, adding besides, "If one could be ennobled with seventeen descents, it might be well; but a new noble – let us say no more of this. I desired to say, that the nobleman has honor, traditionary, inherited obligation; the nobleman has established and has to maintain the maxim, 'noblesse oblige,' 'nobility requires.' What great maxim have riches established? The most brutal of all maxims, one utterly bestial. And do you know what it is?"

"I don't know what you refer to."

"The maxim which this pursuit of gain sets up as its highest is, 'Help thyself.' The beast does that, every one helps himself. Riches thus stand between nobility and people; they occupy that morally homeless position, without a recognized obligation, between nobility and people. I understand by people, not only those who labor with the hands, but also the men of science, of art, and even of the church. The people have work; this moneyed class does not wish for honor, and only wants labor so far as it can have others labor for it, and appropriate to itself the product of their labor. What does it want? gold. What does it want to do with the gold? procure enjoyment. Who guarantees this? the State. What does it do for the State? There's the whole question! Have you any answer?"

Eric's lips trembled, and he replied: —

"If the nobility feels itself obliged and entitled to assume the leadership in the army for war, then are the young men of wealth to feel themselves called to become leaders in the army of peace; and they are to make good their position to the community, to their own circle, and to their fellows, serving without compensation, and actively engaged in entire subjection to authority, as a protection of the whole State, and a sacrifice in all works of beneficence."

"Stop!" cried the priest; "the last is our work. You will never be able to organize that without religion; you will never be able to effect, that people, out of their opulence, out of their luxury, or, as you would denominate it, out of purely humane emotions, shall visit the dying in the huts of the poor, the helpless, the sick, and the abandoned."

As if the ecclesiastic had invoked this high duty of his office, the sacristan now came, and said that an old vine-dresser desired extreme unction. The priest was speedily ready, and Eric departed.

When he came out into the road, and breathed the fresh air, he felt its influence anew. Did he not come out of the atmosphere of incense? No, here was more; here was a mighty power, which placed itself face to face with the great riddle of existence.

Eric sauntered away, lost in thought, and it occurred to him again how much more easy was the task of those who can impart some fixed dogmatic principles which they do not originate, but receive; he, however, must create all out of himself, out of his own cognition.

And can what comes out of your own cognition become a part of the cognition of another?

Eric stood still, and the thought that he would educate himself while educating another made his cheeks glow; the youth should acquire knowledge from himself; for what is all culture which must be imparted from one to another? nothing but help and guidance to him who has a self-moving power.

Half way up the mountain, Eric stopped at the road which led to the Major's. He looked down at the villa which bore the proud name of Eden, and the Bible story came to his memory. In the garden are two trees, the tree of life in the midst, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil; Eden is lost for him who eats of the tree of knowledge. Is it not always so?

Like a revelation the thought came to him, There are three things given to man upon earth, – enjoyment, renunciation, and knowledge.

Sonnenkamp yonder – what does he wish for himself and his son? enjoyment. The world is a spread table, and man has only to learn to find the right means and the right measure of enjoyment. The earth is a place of pleasure, and brings forth its fruits that we may delight ourselves therewith. Have we no other calling than to drive, to eat, to drink, and to sleep, and then to eat, drink, sleep, and drive again; and is the sun to shine just for this?

What does the priest want? renunciation. This world has nothing to offer, its enjoyments are only an illusive show, which tempt you hither and thither, therefore turn away from them.

And what do you desire? And what ought those to desire whom you wish to make like yourself? knowledge. For life is not divided into enjoyment and renunciation, and knowledge rather includes both in itself, – is the synthesis of both. It is the mother of duty and of all beautiful deeds.

In the old times, the combatants received out of an immeasurable height a protecting shield from the hands of the gods; Eric received no shield, and yet he felt that he was concealed from and protected against all foes, and he was so happy in himself that he felt no desire for any human being, no desire for anything beside; he was upborne by the wings of knowledge.

He went yet farther on in the way. Peaceful, and enjoying an internal satisfaction, he came to the Major's in the next village. He knew that here he should have to stand no examination.

CHAPTER V. THE GOOD COMRADE

The Major lived in a beautifully situated house in the vineyard of a rich vintner from the fortress, or rather, to use the proper expression, of a brother of the order, for the central point of the Major's life rested firmly, in Freemasonry, and he cherished it within his life and thought, as his holy of holies; and if men talked of the riddles of life, his face always said, – I see no mystery, all is clear to me; only come to us, we have an answer to everything.

The small house which the Major inhabited was attached to the large mansion; one side looked toward the highroad, and the other commanded a view of the river and the mountains beyond. The Major confined himself strictly to his little house, and his own special little garden with its arbor. He watched over the larger dwelling and its garden, like a castellan, but he never lived there, and often did not enter them for the many months during which they stood empty.

Eric found the Major in his little garden, smoking a long pipe and reading the newspaper, with a cup of cold coffee before him. An exceedingly neat-looking old lady, with a large white cap, was sitting opposite, engaged in darning stockings; she rose as soon as Eric entered the garden, and hardly waited to be presented. The Major touched his cap in military fashion, and took the long pipe from his mouth.

"Fräulein Milch, this is my comrade, Herr Doctor Dournay, lately Captain."

Fräulein Milch courtesied, took up her basket of stockings, and went into the house.

"She is good and sensible, always contented and cheerful; you will become better acquainted," said the Major, as she withdrew; "and she understands men, – no one better, – she looks them through and through. Sit down, comrade, you have come just at my pleasantest hour. You see, this is the way I live: I have nothing particular to do, but I get up early, – it prolongs life, – and every day I gain a victory over a lazy, effeminate fellow, who has to take a cold bath, and then go to walk; he often doesn't want to, but he has to do it. And then, you see, I come home, and sit here in the morning: – and here is a white cloth spread on the table, and before me stand a pot of coffee, good cream, a roll – butter I don't eat. I pour out my coffee, dip in the roll which is so good and crisp – I can still bite well, Fräulein Milch keeps my teeth in order – then at the second cup, I take my pipe and puff out the smoke over the world, and over the world's history, which the newspaper brings me every day. I still have good eyes, I can read without spectacles, and can hit a mark; and I can hear well, and my back is still good; I hold myself as straight as a recruit – and look you, comrade, I am the richest man in the world. And then at noon I have my soup – nobody makes soup like her – my bit of good roast meat, my pint of wine, my coffee – with four beans she makes better coffee than any one else can with a pound – and yet it has happened to me a thousand times to have to sing this song to the fellow sitting here: You are the most ungrateful fellow in the world, to be cross as you often are, and wish for this and that which you have not. Only look round you; see how nice and neat everything is, – good bread, a good arm-chair, a good pipe and so much good rest, – you are the happiest man in the world to have all this. Yes, my dear comrade, you may be deucedly learned – I beg pardon – I mean, you may be very learned – look you – I never studied, I never learned anything, I was a drummer – I'll tell you about it sometime – yes, comrade – what was I saying? ah, that's it, you know a thousand times more than I do, but one thing you can learn of me. Make the best of life; now's the time, be happy now, enjoy yourself now, this hour won't come back again. Don't always be thinking about to-morrow. Just draw a long breath, comrade – there, what sort of air is that? is there better anywhere? – and then we have our nice, clean clothes on! – Ah, thank the Builder of all the worlds! – Yes, comrade, if I had had any one, when I was your age, to tell me what I'm telling you – Pooh, pooh! – What an old talker I am – I'm glad you've come to see me! – Well, how do you get on? Are you really going to drill our boy? I think you are the right man to do it, you will bring him into line

– you know, comrade, what that means – only a soldier can do that. Only a soldier can school men. Nothing but strict discipline! – I'll warrant, he'll come out right – he'll do well – Fräulein Milch has always said, 'He'll come out right, if he only falls into the right hands.' The school-masters are all of no use; Herr Knopf was very worthy and good-hearted, but he didn't hold the reins tight. Thank the Builder of all the worlds, now it's all right! – Thank you for coming to see me. If I can help you, remember that we are comrades. It's very fortunate that you have been a soldier. I have always wished – Fräulein Milch can testify that I've said a hundred times, none but a soldier will do! – Now let us make a soldier of Roland, a true soldier, he has courage, he only wants the training!"

"I should like," answered Eric, "if I really have the position – "

"Really have the position? There's no doubt about it, I tell you – Pooh, pooh; I'll wager something on that. But, I ask your pardon, I won't talk any more – what were you going to say, comrade?"

"I think we ought not to train him for any special calling; Roland must be a cultivated, wise, and good man, whatever his profession may prove to be – "

"Just so, just so – excellently said – that's right – the fellow has given me much anxiety! How foolish people are, to hanker after millions. When they get them, all they can do is to eat their fill and sleep eight hours, that's all any one can do. The chief point is – " here the Major lowered his voice, and raised his hand – "the chief point is, he must return to nature; that is all the world needs – to return to nature."

Eric luckily abstained from asking the Major what he precisely meant by this mysterious proposition, for the Major would, unfortunately, not have been able to tell him; but he was fond of the phrase, and always used it, leaving every one to find out the meaning for himself.

"To return to nature, everything is included in that," he repeated.

After a while he began: —

"Yes, what was I going to ask? – Tell me, did not you have a great deal to bear as a soldier, because you were a commoner and not a noble?"

Eric answered in the negative, and the Major stammered out, —

"Indeed, indeed – you – a liberally educated man, felt less of it. I asked for my discharge. I'll tell you about it sometime."

Eric mentioned that he had been at the priest's, and the Major said, —

"He is an excellent man, but I call for no aid of the ecclesiastics. You know I am a Freemason."

Eric assented, and the Major continued: "Whatever is good in me has its home in that; we will talk farther of it – I will be your god-father. Ah, how glad Herr Weidmann will be to know you."

And again, at the mention of Weidmann's name, it seemed as if a beautiful view of the highest mountains of the landscape was brought before the mind. The Major resumed: —

"But now as to the ecclesiastics. Look" – he drew his chair a little nearer – "look at my drum, it's all there in that – look you, I was a drummer – yes, smile away, if you like – look you, everybody says such a drum makes nothing but racket, and I tell them there's music in it, as beautiful as – I won't disparage any one – as beautiful as any other – look you, then, I say, – mark my words – then I say, 'I will not quarrel with you if you hear nothing but noise, but don't quarrel with me, if I hear something else.' Look you, I have thought it all over, everything else will be made by machinery, men are very clever, but drum and trumpet-signals can not be made by machinery, human hands and mouths are needed for that; I was a drummer, for example, I'll tell you about it. Look you, I know by the sound what sort of a heart a man has, when he beats a drum; where you, my brother, hear nothing but noise and confusion, I hear music and deep meaning. Therefore, for God's sake, no strife about religions; one is worth as much or as little as another, they only lead the march; but the main thing is, how every man marches for himself, how he has drilled himself, and what sort of a heart he has in his body."

Eric was amused by the eccentricity of this man, who had a deep earnestness and moral freedom peculiar to himself.

Standing his pipe near him, the Major asked, —

"Is there any human being in the world whom you hate, at the sight of whom the heart in your body gives a twist?"

Eric answered in the negative, and said that his father had always impressed it upon him, that nothing injured one's own soul like hatred; and that for his own sake, a man ought not to let such a feeling take root within him.

"That's the man for me! that's the man for me!" cried the Major. "Now we shall get on together. Whoever has had such a father is the man for me!"

He then told Eric that there was a man in the village whom he hated: he was the tax-collector, who wore the St. Helena medal given by the present Napoleon to the veterans, for the heroic deeds in which they had taken part in the subjugation of their fatherland. "And would you believe it!" exclaimed the Major, "the man has had himself painted with the St. Helena medal; the portrait hangs framed in his room of state, and under it, in a separate frame, the diploma signed by the French minister. I don't bow to the man, nor return his bow, nor sit down at the same table with him; he has a different principle of honor from, mine. And tell me, ought there not to be some way of punishing such men? I can only do it by showing my contempt; it is painful to me, but must I not do it?"

The old man looked much astonished when Eric represented to him that the man ought to be judged mildly, since vanity had great powers to mislead, and besides, many governments had been well pleased to have their subjects win the St. Helena medal, and the man, who was in the service of the State, was not to be sentenced without hearing.

"That's good! that's good!" cried the old Major, nodding frequently, according to his habit; "you are the right kind of teacher! I am seventy years old, that is, I am seventy-three now, and I've known many men, and let people say what they will, I have never known a bad man, one really bad. In passion, and stupidity, and pride, men do much that's wrong; but, good God! one ought to thank his heavenly Father that he isn't such as he might very often have become. Thank you; thank you: you have lifted the enemy from my neck; — yes, from my neck; he has sat there, heavy and — look, here comes the man himself!"

The collector was walking by the garden; the Major went to the hedge with many nods and gestures of his hand; he hoped, perhaps, that the man would utter the first greeting; but as this did not happen, he suddenly called out, with a voice like the explosion of a bomb, —

"Good-morning, Herr Collector!"

The man returned his salutation and went on. The old Major was entirely happy, and passed his hand several times over his heart, as if a stone or burden were removed from it. Fräulein Milch looked out of the window, and the Major asked her to come out, as he had something very good to tell her. She came, looking still neater than before, having put on a white apron, in which the ironed folds were still fresh. The Major told her that the collector was not to blame, for he had received the St. Helena medal only in obedience to the government.

They went together to the house, and the Major showed his guest the rooms where simple neatness reigned; then he looked at the barometer, and nodded, saying to himself, "Set fair."

Then he looked at the thermometer screwed up by the window, and wiped his forehead, as if he had not felt till then how hot it was.

A shot was heard in the distance, and the Major pointed out to Eric the direction whence the sound came, saying, —

"I can hear the gun-practice from the fortress. I find that the rifle-cannon have just the same sound as the smooth-bore. Ah, comrade, you must instruct me in the new art of war. I don't know anything about it, but when I hear them firing down there, all the soldier in me wakes up."

He asked Fräulein Milch to bring a bottle of wine, one of the very best. Fräulein Milch seemed to have it all ready; she brought bottle and glasses directly, but gave the Major a significant look, which he understood, and answered: —

"Don't be afraid; I know very well that I can't drink in the morning. Pray, captain, give me your cork-screw. I take you to be the right sort of man, and the right sort of man always has a cork-screw in his pocket."

Smiling, Eric handed him his knife, which was fitted with a cork-screw.

While the Major was opening the bottle, he said, —

"And another mark of a genuine man is, that he can whistle. Comrade, be so kind as to whistle once for me."

Laughter prevented Eric from drawing up his lips. The bottle was uncorked, and they drank to good comradeship. The Major said, —

"Perhaps we are in better spirits here, than our friend Sonnenkamp in his grand villa. But Herr captain, I say again, an elephant is happy, and a fly is happy too; only the elephant has a larger proboscis than the fly."

The Major laughed till he shook with delight at his comparison, and Eric found the laughter contagious, and as often as they looked at each other, the laughter began afresh.

"You show me the meaning of the proverb," cried Eric, "'a gnat may be taken for an elephant,' and in fact it is correct; not the size, not the mass, but the organism is the life."

"Just so, just so!" exclaimed the Major. "Fräulein Milch, come in again a moment."

Fräulein Milch, who had left the room, re-entered, and the Major continued, —

"Pray, captain, say that once more about the organism. That is the sort of thing for Fräulein Milch, for, look you, she studies much more than she chooses to let any one know. If you please, comrade, the organism once more. I can't tell it half so well."

What was Eric to do? He explained his figure again, and the laughter broke out anew.

Fräulein Milch recommended to Eric the school-master of the village, as a remarkably fine writer, and the Major cried, laughing, —

"Yes, comrade, Fräulein Milch is a living roll of honor for the whole region; if you want information about anyone, ask her. And for Heaven's sake, don't let the Countess Wolfsgarten give you any medicine. Fräulein Milch knows much more about it – and no one can apply leeches so well as she can."

Eric saw the good old woman's embarrassment, and began to praise her beautiful flowers, and thriving plants, which stood in the window. The Major asserted that she understood gardening perhaps even better than Herr Sonnenkamp, and if it were only known with what small means she raised her plants, she would get the first prize at the exhibition, instead of the gentlemen with their great forcing-houses.

Turning the conversation, Fräulein Milch said to Eric that it was the chief misfortune of Roland, the poor rich boy, that he had no real satisfaction.

"No real satisfaction?" laughed the Major; "just listen to that!"

"Yes," asserted Fräulein Milch, the ribbons and bows on her cap nodding assentingly as she spoke, "he has merely pleasure and amusements that money can buy, but they are not genuine; and any one who only drives through the world for pleasure, with nothing to do in it, seeks satisfaction in vain."

A gleam of pleasure from Eric's eyes rested on the good Fräulein, and at that moment a secret bond of union, a sense of mutual understanding, was formed between them.

Accompanied by both as far as the garden-gate, Eric left the house. When the door was opened, a brown and white spaniel jumped upon the Major.

"Halloo!" cried the Major, in a tone of mingled scolding and caress, "where have you been again, you disorderly vagabond, who can tell where? and here we've had a visitor; old as you are, you will never learn good behavior and regular habits. Shame on you – shame!"

So spoke the Major to his dog Laadi, well-known in all the country round; he kept a female dog, because the village dogs never fought with her.

As the Major left the garden with Eric, he said, —

"Look at these two posts, these closely-trimmed ash-trees. Several years ago I noticed that the one at the left got its leaves ten or eleven days before the one at the right. Now, once the frost came unexpectedly, and the leaves withered on the left-hand one, and it drooped all summer; since then it has been prudent, and lets the other get its leaves first, and then itself leaves out. Doesn't it seem as if trees had understanding? Yes, dear comrade, everything is better arranged in the world than we understand, and, look you, though I have a pension and nothing to do, I have so many things to keep in sight, that the day is often too short. Now, good-by, and remember that you can always feel at home with us."

And as Eric shook hands, he added: —

"I thank you, for now I have another man to hold dear, and that's the best thing in the world to keep one young and sound."

Eric had gone several steps, when the Major called to him to stop, and coming up to him, said: —

"Yes, as to Herr Sonnenkamp – do not be led astray, comrade. Men of the world either make an idol of a successful man, or they abuse him. Herr Sonnenkamp is somewhat rough outside, but he is good at heart; and, as to his past history, who is there who can feel satisfied with all his past life? can any man? certainly not I, and I don't know anyone who can. I have not always lived as I wish I had. But enough, you are wiser than I."

"I understand perfectly," replied Eric. "American life is an existence without a seventh day of rest; there is a continual working and striving to win money, nothing else. If men have led such a life for half a score of years, they lose the power of turning to anything else; they say to themselves that if they only had enough – ah, those who strive for gold never get enough – they say then they would devote themselves to nobler ends. If it were only still possible! I understand you, and wonder at Herr Sonnenkamp."

"Just so – just so," said the Major, "he must have dragged himself through a good deal of mud, as a gold-hunter, to get such a great property together. Yes, yes, I am easy – you are wiser than I. But now, just for the first time, the main question occurs to me – look at me, tell me honestly, is it true that you have been to see Fräulein Manna at the convent?"

"I have been at the convent, and saw Fräulein Manna, but without knowing her or speaking to her."

"And you didn't come to establish yourself in the house, in order to marry the daughter?"

Eric smiled, as he said in reply, how strangely this question came to him from every direction.

"Look you, comrade, put the maiden out of your thoughts, she is as good as betrothed to Baron Pranken – I would rather you should have her, but it can't be changed."

Eric at last got away, and went back toward the villa with cheerful thoughts. Good powers were working together to keep Roland constantly in a circle of thought and feeling, from which he might not deviate through his whole life.

He stopped before a wide-spreading walnut tree, and looked up smiling into its rich branches.

"Sonnenkamp is right," he said to himself; "the planting of trees and their growth depend upon the surrounding heights and the prevailing winds. There are nervous trees, which are killed by the blasts, and others which only strike root when they are blown this way and that by the wind. Is not the life of man such a plant? the men around it constitute its climatic zone."

Eric thought he was constantly getting a better insight into the influences which were helping, and those which were hindering, the true growth of his pupil.

How rich is the world! Up there at the castle sits the old count by his young wife's side, and creates for himself an ideal realm of thought, after a full and active life; – here sits the old Major with his housekeeper. How Bella would turn up her nose if she were compared with that housekeeper, and yet —

Suddenly Eric heard carriage wheels behind him, and a man's and a woman's voice called out to him.

CHAPTER VI. A THIRD PERSON

On the day that Eric had left Castle Wolfsgarten, an habitual visitor made his appearance there; this was the son of the eminent wine-merchant, the so-called Wine-count. He came once a week, to play chess with the count. He looked young, but he was worn out in soul, not knowing what to do in the world; he derived no satisfaction from the business of his father, had money enough, had learned a variety of things, was something of a musician, drew a little, had very various talents, but no one predominant. All was wearisome to him; hollow and stale seemed that enjoyment of life which was to be decorously pursued. Wherefore should he devote himself to the restricted limits of some regular pursuit, in order to make money? That is wholly needless. He was a director in several railroads, and for a period it had satisfied him to oversee and to manage, to be saluted respectfully, and listened to obsequiously, by the subordinates held strictly to their place; but that too became distasteful to him. Travelling, too, proffered him nothing further, one had to drag along with himself continually such an extra weight of ennui. He turned a disgusted eye upon the world which had nothing to do for him, and in which he could do nothing. He had cultivated one talent, that of chess-playing, and as Clodwig also took great pleasure in the game, and was skilful in it, he came every week to Wolfsgarten, and played with Clodwig, for it conferred upon him a special regard in his own eyes, and in those of others.

He had also a great reputation, among all those in the neighborhood who prided themselves upon the same qualities as he, of being a rake, and appearing to the world as a gallant. He had a collection of lewd pictures of every kind, and one must be very intimate with him to be able to say that he had seen them all, even to the most carefully hidden. Of course the Wine-chevalier presented a very respectable appearance before the world. No one had ever seen him intoxicated, and, in general society, he always played the part of one very condescending and indifferent, who is yet so noble as to remain in intercourse with these inferior people, as much as to say. One owes that much for old acquaintance' sake. Mothers always warned their daughters of the Wine-chevalier, just as one speaks to children of the wolf howling outside there in the fields, but the mothers themselves did not take it in bad part when he sometimes cast a languishing glance upon them, and even when he frequently said something to them in whispers.

The Justice's daughter, Lina, was not so simple as the mother always said, for she declared that the Wine-chevalier was that transformed manikin in the fairy-tales, who travelled to learn what shivering meant.

The Wine-chevalier of course kept himself fresh in his toilet and his anecdotes, and in everything, externally and internally, that the prevailing fashion required, from year to year, living also for several months in Paris. He did not, like his father, speak of his friend this and the other ambassador, minister so and so, and prince so and so, but he let it be known that he lived in the most inseparable intimacy with the most famous members of the Jockey Club.

The Wine-chevalier always experienced, besides, some degree of pleasure in devoting himself to paying courteous compliments to the virtuous Frau Bella, but she looked at him to-day, as if he were not present, and as if she heard not a word of what he was saying. The count also was so abstracted and absent-minded; that he speedily lost all the games, often gazing at him with wonderment, sitting there in the same chair that Eric had occupied.

A new ally to the Wine-chevalier made his appearance, but this was also of no avail to-day. A corpulent man dressed with fastidious nicety likewise called at Wolfsgarten; he was formerly a famous basso, who had married a rich widow from the neighboring commercial city, and settled down here in this beautiful region. At other times he was well received by Bella, for he sang very agreeably with the remnant of his voice. When he perceived that his greeting to-day was not so cordial as usual, he said that he only came to make a passing call, and Bella was vexed so much the more; she did not

like to have Wolfsgarten regarded as a place for casual visits. When both had departed, Bella and Clodwig breathed again freely.

Clodwig went into the cabinet, where he kept the collection of objects that had been excavated from the ground; but all here seemed changed. The urns, the vases, the lachrymatories, swords, necklaces, and many figures in relieve looked so very desolate, and a warrior, only half of whose face in burnt clay could be dug out, wore to-day such a hideous visage.

All looked so forlorn, as if these thousand things, brought out of the darkness under ground into the light, were making their moan to Clodwig: What then are we here for? There is something wanting to us, – a piece to each. And if Clodwig had been able to exhibit his soul with all its emotions, he, the well-regulated, would have had nothing but potsherds to show. Something was wanting to him since Eric rode off.

With closed lips, and restless eyes that seemed to be in search of something, he went all day long through house and park. Bella succeeded at last, in bringing him to say that the ideal of his whole life might have been realized, but that he had strangely wanted the requisite energy. He complained, for the first time, of feeling the hesitancy and timidity of age. He made a pause, hoping that Bella would complete the suggestion, but she kept silence; and in a very roundabout way, he explained that people indulged in many luxuries, and yet not the right ones. Finally he came directly to the point, that he considered it wrong to have permitted Eric to depart, he had long wished for such a man, and he might venture perhaps to say, that he would also contribute to the advancement of the young scholar with the Apollo-form.

The upper lip of Bella quivered, and she said, —

"The captain" – she was going to say, the captain in Goethe's "Elective Affinities," and stumbling over this thought, she continued: – "The captain, – I mean, the doctor, – would certainly consider himself very fortunate. But – we ought surely to speak openly. I have the happiness of a firmly established good name, and we do not ask what people say – "

"Speak out direct," Clodwig said encouragingly, and Bella continued after she had passed a fine pocket-handkerchief over her face: —

"Do you not think that this young man – would often – how shall I express it?"

"Put us into an awkward position?" suggested Clodwig. Bella nodded, but Clodwig had already thought that matter over, and he combated the notion, dwelling upon the consideration of how great an enslavement it would be of the good, if they must omit doing what was noble because the bad committed the basest things under the cloak of deceit.

Bella now advised her husband to send a messenger to Eric immediately, so that he might not enter into any engagement. Clodwig pressed her hand, and went into his study, with an elastic step not often seen in him. He began to write there, but soon came to Bella and said that he could not write, and the simplest thing to do was to order the carriage and drive over at once to Villa Eden.

Clodwig avoided, as a general thing, all immediate connection with Sonnenkamp and his family, so far as it was possible with the intimacy of his brother-in-law there, but to-day nothing was said of this, and they drove off in good spirits.

Frau Bella often drew her veil down over her face and raised it again; she was very uneasy, for she thought over a great many things, and when she noticed the quick beating of her heart, she grasped hastily her husband's hand, saying, —

"Ah! you are so good, so angel-pure! I could never have believed that I should be continually discovering new excellencies in you."

With the utterance of these words aloud, she silenced in some degree the voice speaking within her what she was not willing to acknowledge to herself, – yes, she consciously disowned it. It is an incomprehensible whim, a freak – not of passion, no – how could Bella confess that of herself? It was the freak of an evil spirit! This young man must possess some incomprehensible, bewildering, magic influence! Bella hated him, for he had disturbed the quiet of her husband, and now was attempting

to do the same with her. He should atone for that! She straightened herself back; she was resolved to interrupt the childish, enthusiastic plan of her husband by the very means of her going with him, and if Eric did not perceive her opposition, she would acknowledge it in so many words, and thereby induce him to decline.

Entertaining this thought, she looked up again in a cheerful mood, and Clodwig, perceiving it, settled upon a room for Eric, and laid out the new household arrangement.

A new member of the family too was to be added for Bella, as she was to invite Eric's mother to visit them. It was fortunate that Bella had already known her for some time before, and held her in high esteem. Clodwig informed her that the Dournays also were really of the nobility, and their appellation was Dournay de Saint Mort, and that they had dropped the title only at the expulsion of the Huguenots from France, and he would see to it, in case Eric made a suitable marriage, that his title was renewed, – yes, he could probably do more in his behalf.

Bella asked jokingly, whether he might not desire to adopt him as a son. Clodwig declared that he was not disinclined to do so. With a bitter smile, but to all appearance very lively, Bella answered that it would seem very strange for her to have a son only a few years younger than she was herself.

Now the disentombed antiquities danced joyously before the eyes of Clodwig, and indulged in all sorts of antics. Frau Bella, on the other hand, was exceedingly out of humor; it was a perpetual astonishment to her, that her husband felt so deep an interest in these matters. She had not used deception when, the winter before their betrothal, she had appeared to be a cultivated nature, recognizing the more serious depths of existence, and had manifested an interest in the art-productions of the classic age, in the sciences, and in the higher realities of life; she had, in fact, not wilfully misled him, for she had always supposed that every one regarded these as conversational topics, proper subjects for small-talk. And in regard to the study of the historical development of the past and the present, it appeared to her as a tacitly conventional pastime.

She was terror-stricken to perceive that these great thoughts constituted her husband's very life, that he sorrowed and rejoiced in all that related to the world's progress as in family occurrences, and moreover that he was even religious. He did not speak, as she did, of the dear God, but he would remain in devout contemplation at every manifestation of the Eternal Providence, and wherever a contradiction, a riddle, presented itself, he experienced even a degree of feverish disturbance.

Bella did not confess to herself that the whole appeared to her horribly pedantic, like a preacher or a pedagogue; she had not thought that she was to marry a pedantic professor, instead of a live man.

But whether avowed or not, this whole matter of cherishing a so-called higher interest was extremely wearisome to her. Every one plays only his part in life, and who is to regard it in serious earnest? Those poor devils, the scholars and the philanthropists, may do so, if they please, but not a man of a higher station. Now it appeared that Clodwig was ready to break up a regular routine existence, tedious indeed, but yet tranquil and honorable, by the sudden introduction of a stranger. It was pure calumny, when they said of Bella that she had married the count in the hope of becoming soon a rich and attractive widow. The old Head-equerry had looked out for a good marriage settlement, and a certain part of the income of the great estate was retained and invested yearly, which did not go to the heir by the collateral line. As I have said, it was unmitigated slander that Bella had gone to the altar cherishing a hope of widowhood, but to her alarm – she covered it up whenever she became conscious of it – she found herself growing prematurely old by the side of her husband, who was old enough to be her father.

And who knows how much money Clodwig will spend upon this adventurer, Dournay, who has no regular occupation, and besides, is not in favor at court! But the worst is, that this young man, with his confident expectation of success, will wholly withdraw from her the attention of her husband. They will study with one another, and make explorations, whilst thou wilt be sitting all alone, thou, the young and fresh heart that has devoted itself so nobly, so truly, so self-forgetting, to the care of the old man!

Bella was sorely vexed at Eric, because he made her entertain evil thoughts, and suddenly, while looking at her husband, she cried, —

"In God's name! Your lips are white. What is the matter?"

Were her evil thoughts suddenly to be realized? But Clodwig answered, —

"It's nothing. Look! There he stands. What a wonderful form! I fully believe that he is occupied with thoughts of deepest moment, as he stands there dreamily, gazing down at the grass."

The carriage rolled on. Eric heard his name called, and looked in amazement at the husband and wife, who gave him a cordial greeting. He was made to take a seat in the carriage, and Clodwig's glance to his wife said, "Hast thou ever seen a nobler specimen of a human form?"

Eric was asked whether he had accepted definitely the situation, and when he replied in the negative, Clodwig extended his hand to him, and said, —

"You will find a welcome with me."

Nothing farther could be said, for just then Sonnenkamp trotted up on his black horse, and he was extremely glad to be able to salute such visitors; he was very much surprised, however, to see Eric on such intimate terms with them. He rode up to the coach-door, and very joyfully and respectfully welcomed the guests to the villa.

Hardly had they left the carriage, when another drove into the court, and the physician got out.

CHAPTER VII. THE FIRST ROSE IN OPEN GROUND

Eric acquired an entirely new regard by the arrival of Clodwig and Bella. For the first time Sonnenkamp called him "dear friend."

Herr Sonnenkamp offered his arm to Bella, which she accepted, turning slowly toward him, that Clodwig might see how great a sacrifice she was making; her hand rested lightly on Sonnenkamp's arm. As she was thus walking on, holding the arm of the master of the house, she stopped full of wonder, for there was a rose blooming in full beauty upon a rose-bush raised in the open air.

Herr Sonnenkamp hastened to pluck it, and presented it to her in some pretty words. Bella said that she was very much obliged to him, and seemed not to notice that he again proffered his arm. They went at once to the hot-houses. Joseph, who was always present at the right time, as if specially summoned, received from his master orders to inform Fräulein Perini and Frau Ceres of the visit. Joseph understood.

The doctor had been summoned to Frau Ceres, but when she learned what guests had arrived, she immediately declared that she was well; but she was cunning enough to say to the doctor, that merely seeing him had made her well. Doctor Richard understood.

In the meantime, Clodwig had said to Eric, "You don't remain here; you go with us. I can't leave you."

He jerked the words out briefly and rapidly, as one utters in a compressed, uniform tone something which has lain in his mind for a long time.

Just then, Roland came down the mountain, with his camp-stool and drawing-board, and Bella called out to him, while far off, in a very friendly "welcome."

"How handsome he is!" said she to those standing about her. "He who could fix permanently this image of the marvellous boy as he is coming along, would have a picture out of the Grecian age, by changing camp-stool and portfolio into spear and shield."

Bella perceived the look of happiness in Eric's eyes, and said to him: – "Yes, Herr Doctor, I once gave to an artist at the capital the design for a picture as I saw Roland; he had sprung across the road, and had cast an alms into the hat of a street-beggar sitting upon a heap of stones; and as he sprang back, so well formed and graceful, every muscle stretched, and his countenance so beaming with the delight of beneficence, it was a wonderful sight that can never be forgotten."

Clodwig looked down to the ground; Bella was evidently not aware that it was not she, but he, who had thus seen Roland and given the order to the artist.

Roland was very much surprised at the visit, and the manner in which he was greeted, Bella saying to her husband, – "Clodwig, kiss him for me!" Clodwig embraced the youth, who now turned to Eric with a puzzled look.

"If the Herr Captain remains with us, you must visit us often, dear Roland," said Bella.

Sonnenkamp was at a loss to know what that meant, but the danger of losing Eric seemed immediately to affect the youth, so that he looked up in a help-imploring way. And it was now clear to Eric, what was intended in regard to him, and he now for the first time understood what was interrupted by Sonnenkamp's coming up to the carriage.

They took only a hasty look at the greenhouses, for Bella said that when it was green and blooming outside, the imprisonment of the plants had something oppressive to her.

Fräulein Perini soon appeared, sent by Frau Ceres, to make known her intention not to be sick to-day.

Bella and Fräulein Perini had separated themselves from the men; they had much to say to each other, and Eric was naturally the first subject. Bella could not forbear expressing her surprise to Fräulein Perini, that she had so completely seen through the singular man, although Fräulein Perini

had not really yet said anything. But this remark forced her to reply, though nothing of her real opinion was given; for Fräulein Perini said that she constantly felt fresh admiration at the German learned world, meaning to include Bella, who was to be almost looked upon as a learned woman.

Bella took no notice of this equivocal compliment; she assumed a matronly tone, while confessing that she had no near relation to the young men of the day, and was not sure that she understood them. Neither one of the ladies seemed to come out fully with her opinion, and each appeared to regard the other as cherishing a secret inclination for Eric.

"Do you know," said Frau Bella, looking very attentively at the rose which Sonnenkamp had given her, "do you know that this man with the double title has an insultingly low opinion of the female sex?"

"No, I did not know that, but it may be a part of that radical heresy, as Baron von Pranken calls it, which he parades with such manifest conceit."

"But what opinion have you formed about Herr Dournay?"

"I have not formed any opinion about him."

"Why not?"

"I am not impartial; he does not belong to our church."

"But supposing that he did belong to our church, how would you then regard him?"

"It is not to be supposed. This complacent self-assumption is not possible with a person who has subjected himself to the divine law; his deportment is that of a prince travelling incog., or more properly, as Herr Baron von Pranken says, 'the man coaches round the world in a lecturer's invisible chair.'"

The two women laughed. Bella had found out enough. She very carefully impressed upon Fräulein Perini the necessity of exerting all her influence against the reception of a man proud of his unbelief. Fräulein Perini held her cross with her left hand, and looked somewhat mischievously at Bella. Then the countess does not wish to have him here. Is she trying to bring him into her own house, and getting up a nice intrigue against her husband? She hinted, not without mischievous satisfaction, that Herr von Pranken, who had occasioned all this, must also find the proper remedy. Bella gave out also that Eric was, perhaps, unsuitable in another view; and here, for the third time, it was expressly said, that Eric was a "dangerous" man.

Fräulein Perini had spoken of it as applicable, in two respects, to one present and to one absent, for the special interest of Bella had not escaped her penetrating eye.

Quickly, and in order to conceal how well she had hit the mark, she added, that a man like Otto von Pranken had certainly no one to be afraid of. She spoke with sympathizing eagerness of his journey, that perhaps it was imprudent, but one must let the passionate youthful heart take its own course, and it often brought about the right result better than cautious deliberation and consideration. But Fräulein Perini spoke very plainly, and Bella replied as plainly, in condemnation of Pranken's desire to go counter to the social ordinances, but any such tendency must be indulged, though with great reluctance on their part.

Again the conversation reverted to Eric; and Bella was now extremely good-humored. She pitied the man's aged mother, regarded the self-conscious bearing of the youth as in reality timidity; he carried a haughty outside, that he might cover up thereby the menial dependence. An elevation of the eyelids disclosed that Fräulein Perini was slightly hurt, and Frau Bella quickly added, that pious natures are never really oppressed by dependence, for they, have in themselves a higher position, yes, they are through piety constituted the equals of anybody.

Fräulein Perini smiled; she understood how kindly Bella; treated her, and there was no need of the friendly pressure of the hand to make her perceive it.

A servant came, and announced that Frau Ceres would receive the gracious countess in the balcony-saloon; she was not allowed by her physician to go out into the open air.

Fräulein Perini accompanied Bella as far as the outside-stairs, and made there a very polite courtesy; Bella, however, grasped both her hands with irrepressible cordiality, and said that she should like such a friend as Fräulein Perini for daily intercourse; she pressingly urged her to confer the honor of a visit without any delay.

When the rustling of Bella's garments was no longer heard, Fräulein Perini clawed with her little hand like a cat, which, silently lurking, has caught something; contemptuously she opened her eyes, always so veiled, and her small mouth almost uttered the words, —

"You are all deluded."

Frau Ceres complained of her constant suffering, and Frau Bella attempted to console her, saying that she had everything, and especially such splendid children. She knew not which to praise most, the charming attractions of Roland, or the angelic nature of Manna.

Bella seldom came into Sonnenkamp's house, but when she came there, she was always seized by a passion which is perhaps peculiarly a woman's passion. She lived at Wolfsgarten in an abundance which left nothing to be desired, but as soon as she drove through the gate of Villa Eden, an evil spirit came over her; and the demon's name is Envy — envy of this exuberant superfluity, where there was no dragging along under the burden of old lumber and decaying remnants, but everything newly created. And as often as she thought of Frau Ceres, sparkles flashed before her eyes, for she saw then the diamond ornaments of Frau Ceres, such as the reigning princess herself did not possess.

She was thoroughly condescending and gracious to Frau Ceres, and she was happy that she could be condescending. These people can buy everything for themselves, but not a noble, historically famous name; and if the proposal of Otto succeeds, it is only the covering up of lowness with a fresh varnish, which is always begging, "Do not touch me, if you do, I shall rub off."

Eric was here also naturally a prominent subject of conversation, and Frau Bella pressed the rose to her mouth, in order to hide her laugh, when Frau Ceres said, —

"I should like to have the Herr Captain for myself."

"For yourself?"

"Yes. But I don't think I can learn anything more, I am too old and too stupid. He hasn't let me learn anything."

Frau Bella contested very zealously this modesty. Was not Frau Ceres beautiful and young? She might be taken indeed for Roland's sister. Was she not prudent and elegant in her deportment? Frau Ceres smiled and nodded continually, appearing to believe that it was all true. But now Bella felt obliged to take her leave, as she desired to spare the delicate organization of Frau Sonnenkamp.

Frau Ceres looked up timidly at these words; she did not know whether that was praise or blame. Bella took leave, kissing Frau Ceres upon the forehead.

Herr Sonnenkamp had left the count and Eric; he had many things to see after in the house, also letters and despatches had come in, which required an immediate answer. He sent moreover for the Major to dinner, and gave orders that if they did not find him at home, they should go for him to the castle.

Clodwig went with Roland and Eric to their room, and before they were aware, they became engaged so earnestly in conversation that they wholly forgot Roland. The youth sat there dumb, looking sometimes at one, and sometimes at the other. He did not understand what they were saying, but he could feel how much they were enjoying. When Clodwig had retired to his own room, Roland seized Eric's hand and cried: —

"I will also learn, I will also study all, whatever you want; I want to be like you and Clodwig."

A thrill passed through Eric's soul. The invitation from Clodwig was exactly the ideal of all that he could desire, but here was an actual duty of life; he could not choose any longer what course, to take.

CHAPTER VIII.

I SERVE

The Major fortunately came as they were about to sit down to dinner. He was extremely glad to meet Clodwig and Bella here; every manifestation of friendliness between individuals was a cordial to him: it confirmed his proposition that all human beings were immeasurably good, and he could thereby silence the revilers and the doubters. He was grateful to Clodwig and Bella, as if he had received a personal favor; he looked at the chairs as if he would enjoin them to seat right comfortably their occupants. He extended his hand to Eric as to a son; he had become thoroughly attached to him, and now he complained to him, with the tone of a child who has eaten dainties by stealth, that he had allowed himself to be enticed; for, wishing to see for himself whether the workmen at the castle had good food to eat, he had made trial of it, and it tasted so unexpectedly good, that he had completely satisfied his appetite.

Eric comforted him with the suggestion, that the nice dishes might yet perhaps find some spare room.

The Major nodded; he said, to Joseph the magic word, "Allasch." Joseph understood. At a small side-table he poured out from a bottle surrounded by little glasses; the Major drank off the tonic.

"That's a quartermaster;" then he nodded to Eric, and his face laughed all over, as Eric responded: —

"Of course, the spirit orders the vulgar mass to give way."

Frau Ceres did not come to dinner. They had hardly taken their seats, before the physician was called away; he immediately rose. Sonnenkamp entreated him to remain, but Clodwig said in a very decided tone, that he would like to urge him to obey the summons, for if one placed himself in the situation of those who were expecting the physician, it would appear a cruel thing to be detaining him here meanwhile for one's own enjoyment.

"That is a nobleman, a genuine nobleman!" said the Major to Eric, and Roland, on hearing it, looked round as if somebody had suddenly seized hold of him. Is his father, then, not noble, for desiring the contrary?

Eric had a feeling of what was passing in the boy's mind, and said to the Major, so that Roland could not but hear him, —

"Herr Sonnenkamp spoke on the very just supposition, that the country people very often exaggerate the danger, and needlessly hurry the physician."

"That's true. I've made a mistake, — I thank you, comrade."

Roland drew a long breath, he gave Eric a smile; he would have liked to embrace and to kiss him.

Eric understood this smile. The table seemed disturbed, for the physician, who had easily and briskly led the conversation, left a gap by his departure; and as they were obliged to sit more closely together bodily, in order to fill up this vacant space, so it seemed as if they must now also for the first time draw nearer together spiritually. And the call made upon them to go, in imagination, with the physician to the bedside of a moaning patient, and to the lamenting relatives, had also interrupted the pleasant mood with which they had seated themselves in good cheer at the table.

Eric, who might well consider that the visit of Clodwig and Bella was meant for him, felt under a double obligation to entertain the guests as well as he could, and bring the company at table into a congenial mood. But while he was yet in search of some thoughts to direct the general conversation, the Major stole a march upon him.

He smiled beforehand very pleasantly, for he had something to tell, and now was the aptest time.

"Herr Sonnenkamp," he began, and his face again became blood-red, for he had to speak in the presence of many persons, —

"Herr Sonnenkamp, it is said in the newspaper that you are soon to receive a great number of visitors."

"I? In the newspaper?"

"Yes. It is not said in so many words, but I infer so. It is said there, that an emigration is now taking place from America, on account of the high cost of living there; many families are coming from the New World to Europe, because they can live with us at more reasonable prices, and in a pleasanter way."

The Major congratulated himself, that he had pushed forward into the gap something very agreeable and very suitable. He drank off, at one draught, with great gusto, a glass of his favorite Burgundy.

Sonnenkamp remarked in a careless way, that probably a prejudice would be created against Americans, like that which existed against English travellers.

No one again took up the conversation; they would gladly have heard Clodwig talk, but he was constrained from the feeling that he had intruded into a strange house, had there sat down as a guest, and yet all the time, he was intending to commit a theft. This made him ill at ease and reserved.

Eric took a different view of his deportment. He gave a fortunate turn to the conversation, referring to Goethe's poem which extolled America because it had no ruined castles, and passing on to the favorite pursuits of Clodwig and of Sonnenkamp, and indeed drawing a parallel between a fondness for antiquity and for the rearing of plants. Eric was very animated and communicative, introducing matters which, he knew would awaken interest, and yet in the very midst of his talk there was an accompanying feeling of self-reproach. Until now, throughout his whole life, he had simply replied to questions put to him, and had always spoken either to impart something to others, or to enlighten them; now he was speaking with the view, at any rate with the secondary view, of appearing well, taking pleasure in the effect of this and that expression. He was startled when he became aware of it, and continued speaking further. He repelled the reproachful suggestion, saying to himself that it was really his duty to play the part of host. His eyes glistened, and he brought Sonnenkamp and Clodwig into a state of pleasant animation. The ladies also received their share. But Bella had a manner, – and since she had it, it must be well-mannered, – when she was not leading the conversation, – no matter who was speaking, or what was spoken about, – a manner of introducing into the little circle, where it was a disturbing element, a dialogue with the person sitting next to her, and hindering him, even if he wished to do so, from falling into the general stream of conversation.

Eric had vanity enough to make him note her want of interest; it vexed him at first, but afterwards he thought no more about it.

Herr Sonnenkamp was very well satisfied with the family-tutor, who not only made a good appearance in his own sphere, and gave to him the rightful consideration, but whose very presence was an ornament of the house, and brought to his table the noblest of the land.

Clodwig again requested that he might be immediately informed of every remains of Roman Antiquities discovered in the restoration of the castle; Sonnenkamp promised it with readiness, and gave an extremely humorous account of the silly motives attributed to him for rebuilding the castle. Some said he wished to figure in "Bädeker's Traveller's Manual," which people carried with them in the summer season, when they passed up and down the river, so that the castle might be pointed at, and the bored English, with finger upon the line of the book, might gape at it awhile with open mouth; but that really an æsthetic reason determined him. He honestly confessed that he intended, in rebuilding the castle, to give a harmonious finish to the view from his work-room window, desiring at the same time to make some contribution to the beauty of the German fatherland.

There was always a peculiar tang in Sonnenkamp's utterance of these words, "German fatherland;" one could detect therein something like deep-seated savage hate, and yet the tone was rather that of tender pity and commiseration. Sonnenkamp knew that Clodwig was, of all things else, a patriot, and he was ready to strike this chord. Eric looked at Roland, to see if he noticed the

hypocrisy, for it was no longer ago than Sunday, that Sonnenkamp had expressed himself so strangely and contemptuously, when the conversation turned on the subject of voting. But Roland's features were motionless.

In one view, it was encouraging that the inconsiderate mind of the youth did not perceive the contradiction; while in another, Eric saw here an enhancement of the difficulty of his work as an educator; it was indeed his principal problem, to awaken and to establish in the mind of his pupil the consecutiveness and interlinking of all thought and all action.

Sonnenkamp expatiated, too, on the many strange things imputed to him; and yet no one had really made the charge: but he himself, together with Pranken, had spread the report, that he was desirous of giving his own name to the castle, the line of the original family having long since become extinct. It was reported that the Rauhenberg coat of arms was not accurately known, and yet that it was purposed to place it again over the entrance of the restored castle.

Clodwig, who prided himself, notwithstanding all his liberality, in knowing the genealogy of all the princely and noble families, with their coats of arms, affirmed that the Rauhenberg coat of arms was unmistakably certain, and that it had as a device a Moor's head on a blue ground in the left field, and in the right, a pair of scales. The family had greatly distinguished itself in the crusades, and had been at that time invested with a high judicial function.

Sonnenkamp smiled in a very friendly manner, and he almost grinned, as he requested the count to favor him, as soon as possible, with a drawing.

Eric's rich store of knowledge was again a matter of surprise, as he excited attention by the information he gave concerning armorial mottoes.

They were in very good spirits whilst assigning to some one of their circle of acquaintance one and another motto, which sometimes seemed a laughable contrast to the real character, and sometimes a striking expression of it.

"What motto would you select for yourself?" Sonnenkamp asked Eric; and he gave for a reply these two simple words: —

"I serve."

CHAPTER IX. A DOUBLE RESCUE

It happened, as if by accident, that Eric and Frau Bella walked together, and Bella tried a little experiment to see in what direction it would be safe to venture, by remarking that she was surprised at Eric's understanding her good husband so thoroughly, for it was not so easy to live with him as it seemed. She said this very warily, and it might be taken for simple praise. Eric replied: —

"The world is so much the more indebted to you, gracious lady, for the count has gained new youth through you."

Bella nodded. Eric had quietly and securely taken the first step toward a good understanding; to recognize her sacrifice was a delicate politeness on his part. She went on to speak very enthusiastically of Clodwig, and of her happiness in being able to do anything towards cherishing a pure spirit, without making any demand for herself. It was so beautiful to sacrifice one's self, to serve quietly, unrecognized and unnoticed; and here there came in a word about the childlike mind, so placed that Eric could apply all she had said to his vocation as a teacher.

Eric expressed his agreement with her, simply and without embarrassment, and Frau Bella could not tell whether he had really not understood her, or whether he chose to seem not to understand. She knew how to intimate with delicacy how difficult it was to deal with just such a man as Clodwig, though he seemed so unexact and so yielding; she begged Eric to help her in making the evening of his days completely happy; she said all this with a tone of feeling which was not to be mistaken.

Eric expressed his doubt whether it would be well to disturb so peaceful a life by the introduction of a third person; he acknowledged that he was still wanting in tact, was capricious, and passionate.

"You are so sincere that you have no need of being diffident," answered Bella.

She looked searchingly at Eric; her fan fell, and as he picked it up she gave him her hand in thanks. With much tact and elegance of expression, but with emotion which made her breast heave, she extolled the good fortune which allowed her to devote herself to a noble man, and to have a friend who thoroughly understood her. Eric could not tell whether the latter part of her remark applied to him or to Clodwig.

"There he comes!" cried Bella suddenly. "See, it is a peculiarity of his never to carry a cane, though he needs it."

She went to meet her husband, and he turned his steps towards her. Clodwig seated himself under a fine cedar, where pretty rustic chairs were placed; Eric and Bella stood before him. And now Clodwig explained his whole plan, painting so attractively the pleasantly busy life which they would lead together, that Eric's cheeks glowed. In a voice full of emotion he expressed his gratitude, and said that he felt bound by duty to the decision which his heart had made.

Bella rested one hand on Clodwig's chair, and Eric went on to say that he rejoiced that anything so attractive had been offered him, because he derived thence an assurance that he had chosen the right course, that which accorded with his duty. A great and difficult task was laid upon him in Roland's education, and the very fact, that so different and charming a life was now opened to him, made him happy by renewing and confirming his confidence in his decision; and the offered alternative helped him to recognize his choice as a real duty.

For a while Clodwig looked down, and Bella, taking her hand from his chair, stood suddenly erect. Then, as Eric represented his delight in Roland, and the mysterious, happy attraction which he felt towards him, even towards his faults, Clodwig smiled, as he looked up into the branches, for just as Eric felt drawn to Roland with enthusiastic love, he was drawn to Eric; the sentiments were exactly analogous. Yet he was unwilling to give Eric up, and pointed out to him again that he could not cut off all other influences in educating Roland, but that he would have to contend with elements which perhaps he could never conquer.

"Ah, there comes the doctor," he interrupted himself; "are you willing to call in a third person to the decision?"

"No one but myself can make the decision," answered Eric, "however difficult it may be; but I have not the least objection to entrust the office of umpire to our friend."

This was done; but, to the surprise of all, the physician decided against both parties; he expressed his wish that some one would enable Eric to see Italy and Greece.

Before Clodwig could answer, Eric interposed, saying that he was bent on finding some employment, so that he could support himself and his mother from his own means.

Rising with difficulty, Clodwig said, —

"Young friend, give me your arm." He stood erect, and turned toward Eric, on whose arm his hand lay heavy and trembling.

"I don't know," said he, "I should not think I was the man who had been through such hard experience as I have; I am today undergoing a bitter experience. Is it old age which makes it so difficult for me to give up a desire? I have learned to do so before now. Yes, yes; a man becomes childish — childish; a child cannot give up."

He leaned heavily on Eric, who was shaken to the depth of his soul by the emotion of the noble man. He did not know what to reply, and Clodwig continued: —

"I feel as if I knew not where I am. Do you not think it is very close?"

"No. Will you not sit down?"

Hastily loosing his hold of Eric's arm to pass his hand over his face, Clodwig said, —

"My young friend, when I die —"

Hardly had he uttered the word, when he sank down: Eric caught him in his arms. Bella, who was walking behind with the physician, uttered a cry; the physician hurried to the spot; Eric stooped, raised Clodwig in his arms like a child — all this was the work of a moment.

Clodwig was carried into the great drawing-room, and laid upon a sofa. Bella sobbed aloud, but the doctor soothed her. He had a remedy with him which soon restored Clodwig to consciousness; he begged Eric and Bella to leave the room as soon as the count had spoken.

Outside, Bella threw herself on Eric's breast, and he trembled as he felt her breath on his face, and a thrill ran through him as the beautiful woman leaned upon him in such passionate and unrestrained excitement.

"You are our helper, our friend in need! O my friend, my friend!"

Sonnenkamp entered hastily, and Bella, standing erect, with wonderful composure addressed him, saying, —

"Herr Sonnenkamp! our mutual friend. Captain Dournay, is a blessing to us all; with the strength of a giant he carried my husband. Thank him with me."

Eric was astonished at this rapid recovery of self-control.

The physician came out, and Sonnenkamp asked anxiously, —

"How is he? how is he?"

His mind was set at rest by the doctor's declaration that it had been a very slight attack, which would have no bad consequences. Clodwig requested that Eric would come to him.

Eric entered the drawing-room. Clodwig sitting upright held out his hand to Eric, saying, with a wonderfully bright smile, —

"I must finish my sentence; I was going to say: When I die, my young friend, I should like to have you near me. But don't be anxious, it will not be for a long time yet. There, now sit down by me. Where is my wife?"

Eric went to call her, and she entered, with the physician and Sonnenkamp.

The doctor was not only willing, but expressly desired that Bella and Clodwig should return directly to Wolfsgarten. Sonnenkamp raised various objections, wishing to keep his noble guests with him, and saying with great hospitality, —

"Consider my house exactly as if it were your own."

"Will you permit Herr Dournay to accompany us?" asked Clodwig.

Sonnenkamp started as he answered quickly, —

"I have no permission to give the captain, but if you are determined to go, I would ask him as a favor to accompany you, with a promise of returning to us."

"You will go with us also?" begged Bella of the physician, who assented.

So the four drove off through the mild spring night; little was said, though once Clodwig seized Eric's hand, with the words, "You are very strong."

Eric and the doctor spent the night at Wolfsgarten. In the early morning, the physician prepared for departure while Eric was still sleeping soundly; he woke him and said, —

"Doctor, remain here to-day, but no longer."

Eric stared at him.

"Did you understand me?"

"Yes."

"Now, good-bye."

Again Eric spent a whole day at Wolfsgarten. Clodwig was as cheerful and serene as ever; Bella's bearing toward Eric was shy, almost timid.

In the evening Sonnenkamp and Roland rode over, and Eric returned with them to Villa Eden. Sonnenkamp was in very good spirits, and the blood mounted to Eric's face as he said, looking sharply at him, —

"Countess Bella will make a beautiful widow."

On the evening of the following day the physician appeared again at Villa Eden; he had been at Wolfsgarten and brought a good report. He took Eric aside, and said, —

"You have confided to me that you neither expect, nor will accept in a personal interview, a decisive answer from Herr Sonnenkamp. I approve of that; it can be much better settled by letter. You will see more clearly, away from him, and so will he. So I advise you to leave the house; every hour that you remain is your ruin."

"My ruin?" Eric was startled.

The physician said, smiling, —

"Yes, my dear friend, this forced exhibition of yourself, which has now lasted almost a week, is injuring you."

He continued, after a pause, —

"No man can be on parade for a week without receiving some harm. You must go away, or you will become an actor, or a preacher, or both together. You repeat what you have learned, and repeat it with the conscious purpose of producing a given effect. Therefore away with you! you have been examining, and examined, long enough. Come with me, spend the night at my house; to-morrow return to your mother, and wait quietly for what may come next."

"But Roland," asked Eric, "how can I leave the boy behind? His heart has turned to me, as mine has to him."

"That's well, very well. Then let him wait and long for you. Let him learn that the rich cannot have everything. Let him feel obliged to sue for you. All that will give you a power of incalculable influence in the family and over your pupil. Let me act for you now; to-morrow morning you will see with my eyes."

"There is my hand. I'll go with you!" answered Eric.

There was great surprise in the house when the announcement of Eric's sudden departure was made; an hour had scarcely elapsed when he entered the physician's carriage.

Eric was glad that his leave-taking of Roland was hurried. The boy could not understand what had happened; his emotion prevented him from speaking. After Eric had seated himself in the doctor's carriage, Roland came with one of the puppies and laid it in his lap, but the physician gave it back,

saying that he could not take it, it was too young to be taken from the mother; but he would see that Eric should have it eventually.

Roland gazed wonderingly after the departing guests. In the boy's heart there was a confused whirl of all the feelings which he had experienced in the few days since Eric's arrival; but Eric did not look back. In his father's house the boy felt as if abandoned in a strange land. He took the young dog by the nape of the neck, and was about to throw it from him, but the puppy whimpered pitifully, and he pressed it to his breast, saying, – "Be quiet, nothing is hurting you; but I'm not a dog, and I don't whine, now don't you whine any more either. He didn't want either of us." Roland carried the dog to its mother, who was very glad to see her pup again.

"I'll go to my mother, too," said Roland; but he had first to be announced. She allowed him to enter, and when he lamented that Eric had gone so suddenly, she said, —

"That's right; I advised him to go."

"You? Why?"

"Oh, your stupid *why*! One can't be always answering your why!"

Roland was silent, and his mother's kiss almost pained him.

He wanted to go to his father, but found that he had driven to the castle with the Major.

Deserted and lonely, he stood in the court; at last he went into the stable, sat down by his dogs and watched their amusing actions; then he went to his horse, and stood quietly leaning on his neck for a long time. Strange thoughts rolled tumultuously through the boy's brain. The horse and dog are yours; only what one can buy and possess is his own.

Like a flash of lightning, just seen, then gone again, there woke in the boy's soul the idea that nothing but love can give one human being possession of another. He was not used to steady thinking, and this into which he had fallen brought on a real headache. He had his horse saddled, and rode off over the road which Eric and the doctor had taken.

CHAPTER X. THE PRACTICAL NATURE

Eric sat quiet and thoughtful by the doctor's side, and was disturbed by no word from him, seeming to himself to be driven hither and thither by wind and wave. A few days before, he had ridden to this place on a stranger's horse, and now he sat in a stranger's carriage; he had become intermingled with the life and destiny of so many persons, and this could no longer count for anything in his and their existence. He could not anticipate, however, that an unexpected event was awaiting him.

"You believe then in education?" asked the doctor at last.

"I don't understand what you mean."

"I place no dependence whatever on education; men become what nature fits them to be. They attain, under all relations, what is called their destiny. As the human being lies in his cradle, so he lies in his coffin. Some little help comes from talents and capabilities, but as a whole they are only incidental; the natural bias gives the home blow."

Eric had no heart to enter upon these discussions; he was weary of this everlasting game of words.

The doctor continued: —

"I have a peculiar grudge against these people; it vexes me that these rich people should buy for themselves the fragrant fruits of higher culture; then, again, I am consoled by the word of Him who stood at the very centre of thought, and said, 'A rich man cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' The rich are too heavily ballasted; they have a pampered existence, they are removed far from the actual needs of life, and they withdraw themselves from the natural influences of the seasons; they flit into different climates and out of them again, and everywhere they have comfortably prepared swallow-nests. It would be an intolerable heartlessness of fate, if, without any irksome toil, they, are to have also the higher joys as a possession, which belong alone to us."

"There is no royal road to geometry, is Euclid's saying," Eric interposed; "science and knowledge are acquired only through labor, and what I want to do with this boy can all be comprehended in one word: I want to give him self-activity."

"Just so," replied the physician; "yes, that's it! we who live to the spirit have the advantage over the rich in this respect, that we are alone by ourselves; the rich man does not know the silent growth in the dewy stillness of solitude; he always has so much, he never has himself, and never himself alone. This is what I understand by that verse of the Bible, 'What shall it profit thee, if thou shalt gain the whole world, and lose thine own soul? That is to say, Art never alone in thyself, with thyself? He who has nowhere to lay his head, he can yet carry his head high and free. You see it was to some purpose that I studied theology for two years, until I came to see that though much cannot be effected, yet more is to be done by practising quackery on the body, than on the soul.'"

The doctor could not speak, he laughed so heartily. At last he said, —

"The great question always is, how receptivity itself confers upon one all that is desirable. That would be your principal task, to awaken and to perfect in Roland his power of receptivity. He must first of all, be taught in a regular way. In what he knows of the world, he is yet a child, and in what he desires of the world, he is a man, one may say a live man."

Eric had much to say in reply, but he smiled to himself, for he thought how easy it is to theorize. The doctor had justly found fault with him for enlarging upon so many topics, and now he was to perceive that he could be silent. He said nothing, and the doctor continued: —

"As to the rest, I can tender you effectual aid, if you conclude to accept the position. Pity that you are not a medical man; as I look at it, no one but a physician should be an educator. Have you taken notice that the young fellow has a poor digestion? a young man in these times ought to be able to digest pebble-stones! I cannot bring it about that only simple kinds of food should be given

him. The noble and the rich eat without hunger, and drink without thirst. This young man can have everything but one real, substantial enjoyment. It is a small matter, but take it just for an example: Roland receives no enjoyment from new clothes. Now strike this joy out of your childhood, out of your youth. I must confess, that I can take pleasure for weeks in a well-fitting garment, as often as I put it on. What are you smiling at?" the physician interrupted himself.

"I am thinking of a theological friend," answered Eric. "How he would be astonished, if any one should say to him, that the fall, which brought with it the consciousness of nakedness, has become the very foundation of all the enjoyment that comes from weaving, making, and sewing clothes."

The doctor smiled too, but he stuck to his subject, and went on, —

"Food and clothes are of the greatest importance, but the third most important thing is sleep; it is the regulator of life. Air, nourishment, and sleep are the three fundamental conditions of vegetative life. I believe, captain, that I know something about you already, but I cannot pronounce a full verdict upon you, until I have seen you sleep. Our nineteenth century sleeps poorly; our education, our labor, and our politics ought to be so arranged that people can once more get better sleep. I should like to be able to write a history of sleep, showing how different nations and different ages have slept; that would lay bare to us the deepest roots of all the manifestations of civilization. As far as regards Roland, there is in him a strange blending of temperaments from the father's and the mother's constitution."

The doctor pictured out the muscular organization of Sonnenkamp, and the struggle he was obliged to make every moment with his violent natural tendencies. "A certain indomitable energy in him always enters a disclaimer against his mildness, which is at once seen to be a result of self-compulsion and of voluntary effort. He is a suppressed pugilist, and he has in fact, as he once himself boasted in an unguarded moment, an iron fist. The old Germans must have possessed this stalwart force, who, with their naked arms, overthrew and crushed the mail-clad Romans."

The physician laughed, and he could hardly succeed in narrating how, when he first saw Sonnenkamp, he always looked for the club which seemed to belong to such a man's hand. When he behaved in a friendly way, then it seemed always as if he said. Be quiet, I won't hurt you. And moreover, Sonnenkamp had a heart-disease, according to all pathologic signs, and he was obliged, therefore, to guard against every agitating emotion.

He cautioned Eric, particularly, not to make easy terms with Sonnenkamp when he came to a definite understanding, for if he did he would lose all hold upon him.

"You see," he said, "the priests, and we physicians, always give our masses and receipts in Latin; for who would gulp down for us sulphuric acid, if that were written on the paper in good German? So you will see that you can make an impression upon Herr Sonnenkamp only by a certain mysterious loftiness; otherwise he fancies that he can make quick work with you."

The doctor then gave a very humorous description of the sleepy existence of Frau Ceres, to whom the sharp-tongued, but still more envious Countess Wolfsgarten had given the epithet "crocodile," because she really had some of the traits of that monster as he basks in the sun. For Herr Sonnenkamp, there was no mode of activity in which he could let out his energies; and for Frau Ceres, there was no exertion that was not an effort. She was not really to be blamed for having her dress changed three times a day, without sticking in a single pin herself; that she walked about her chamber for hours together, looked at herself from every point of view, fed her parrot, played "patience," and cherished her nails. The poor creature ought always to live simply and naturally, but even those more highly endowed cannot do that. She was indeed weak and dependent, but she was also artful and capricious.

Eric was on the point of confiding to the doctor his interview with Frau Ceres, but before he could open his lips, the doctor began to narrate: —

"It may be now almost a year since an occurrence took place which I could not have believed possible. I was sent for to the villa. The daughter of the house was in a condition of muscular rigidity, and at the same time delirium, which I could not comprehend. Fräulein Perini told me that the girl had

clasped her hands together so tightly, that they had been drawn apart only by the aid of two servants, although the girl herself opposed no resistance, and when I came the fingers were still clenched. I could never find out what extreme mental excitement could have produced such a condition of the body; I could only learn this much, that Herr Sonnenkamp had refused his wife something or other which she strongly desired. She revenged herself by confiding to her daughter, who had hitherto revered her father as a higher being, something which put the poor girl into this state of excitement. But when she recovered, she continued melancholy, until they sent her to the convent, where she gained new animation."

Eric turned the conversation to the reasons why Sonnenkamp was so much hated and calumniated. The physician readily took up the subject, and explained that the poor nobility looked out for every blemish as a natural defence against a man of such immeasurable wealth, who almost personally insulted them by his outlays. Herr von Pranken was the only one favorably disposed towards him, and he was so, not merely because he wanted to marry his daughter, but there was also a natural attraction to each other, for Herr Sonnenkamp was deeply interested in himself, and Herr von Pranken deluded his neighbor as himself. "And now, my friend," concluded the physician, "now see to it, how you come into this house with the right understanding."

"I have one request," Eric at last began. "Let me hear what you would say to a friend concerning me, if I were absent. Will you do that?"

"Certainly; this is what I intended to do. You are an idealist. Ah! how hard a time people have with their ideal! You idealists, you who are always thinking, toiling, and feeling for others, you seem to me like a landlord who has an inn on the road, or in some beautiful situation. He must get everything in readiness, and pray to God all the time: Send good weather and many guests! He himself cannot control either weather or guests. So the counsel is very simple. Don't be a landlord of the inn of ideality, but eat and drink, yourself, with a good zest, and don't think of others; they will themselves call for their own portion, or bring it with them in their knapsack; if not, they can go hungry and thirsty. I have found that there are only two ways of coming to terms with life: either to be wholly out with the world, or wholly out with one's self. The youth of to-day have yet a third way: it is to be at the same time out with the world and with themselves.

"That is, I am sorry to say, my case."

"And just for that reason," continued the doctor, taking off his huge glove, and laying his hand on Eric's shoulder, "just for that reason, I should desire for you some different lot – I don't know what – I cannot think of any."

A long row of wagons loaded with stripped beech-boughs came along the road. The physician gave the information that they had already extracted from these branches various chemical substances, and now they were carrying them to a powder-mill. Eric said that he knew it, that he had been ordered to a powder-mill in the mountains for a long time, and was employed there.

The doctor was silent, and looking up, he saw that some one was greeting him. An open carriage drawn by two dapple-gray horses came towards them, and a handsome young man, sitting in it and driving himself, was already bowing from a distance.

The doctor ordered his carriage to be stopped.

"Welcome!" he cried to the young man. They shook hands from their vehicles, and the doctor asked, —

"How are Louise and the children?"

"All well."

"Have you been to your mother's?"

"Yes."

"How are your parents?"

"They are well too."

The doctor introduced the young man as Herr Henry Weidmann, his daughter's husband.

"Are you the son of the Herr Weidmann whom I have so often heard of?"

"Most certainly."

"Where is your father now?" asked the doctor.

"Yonder there in the village; they are considering about establishing a powder-mill."

Something seemed to come into the doctor's mind like a flash; he turned quickly round to Eric, but did not utter a word. The young man asked excuse for his haste, as he was obliged to be at the station at a particular hour, and soon took leave.

The young Weidmann said hurriedly to Eric, that he hoped this would not be their last meeting, and that next time he hoped they would not pass each other in this way, and that his father would be glad to see him.

The two carriages drove on, each in its own direction.

The doctor informed Eric that his son-in-law was a practical chemist, and he murmured to himself, —

"Trump called for, trump shown." Eric did not understand him; he thought, smiling, how Pranken had spoken of Weidmann's sons, with the impertinently white teeth.

The carriage drove on. Just as they were entering the next village, the steamboat from the upper Rhine came along; the doctor ordered the coachman to drive as rapidly as possible, in order to reach the landing in time. They went at a tearing gallop. The doctor cried, —

"I have it now! I have it now!" He struck Eric's arm at the same time, as if he were giving a blow upon the table that would make the glasses jingle, and he held it with no gentle grasp.

The carriage reached the landing just as the plank was thrown from it to the steamboat. The doctor got out quickly, and told the coachman to say to his wife that he would not be home until evening; then he took Eric by the arm, and went with him on board the boat. Only after it had got under way, could Eric ask him if he were going to visit a patient. The doctor nodded; he thought that he was safe in saying so, for he had a patient with him whom he was curing constitutionally.

The physician was immediately greeted by acquaintances on board, and a company around a punch-bowl invited him and his friend to join them; he touched glasses, but did not drink, for he said that he never took mixed drinks. The company was merry; a deformed passenger played upon an accordion, and accompanied the singing.

On the deck, at a little table upon which stood a bottle of champagne in a wine-cooler, the Wine-cavalier was seated, and opposite him was a handsome woman, with a great deal of false hair, and also peculiarly attractive charms of her own. They were smoking cigarettes, and chatting very fast in French. The Wine-cavalier avoided meeting the physician's eye, and the physician nodded to himself, as much as to say, "Good, a little shame yet left."

When they came in sight of the village which his son-in-law had mentioned, the doctor told Eric that he would now inform him directly that he was going with him to Weidmann's; he was the man who understood how to help him, and his advice was to be unconditionally followed. For a time Eric was perplexed, but then it appeared to him again as a strangely interesting thing, that now perhaps he was to pass through an entirely new and unanticipated examination. He and the doctor entered the boat which landed the passengers from the steamboat, and those on board, with glass in hand, bade them farewell; the steamboat was soon out of sight. Even the boatman knew the doctor, and said to him, greeting him in a familiar way, —

"You will find Herr Weidmann yonder in the garden."

They landed at the quiet village. Eric was introduced to Weidmann. He was a lean man, and, at first sight, seemed uninteresting; his features had an expression of quiet self-possession and intelligence, but in his gleaming eye lay a burning enthusiasm. Weidmann sat with several persons at a table, on which were papers, bottles, and glasses.

He nodded in a friendly way, and then turned to the persons with whom he had been conversing.

CHAPTER XI. STRIVE TO MAKE MONEY

It is not well to hear a man so much spoken of and praised, before seeing him face to face. It seemed incomprehensible to Eric how this man exerted such a wide influence, and impossible for himself to enter into his life. The doctor was immediately called away, for the landlord's father being sick, his arrival was regarded as very fortunate. Eric walked up and down the shore; he seemed to himself to be thrown into a strange world, and to be borne along by strange potencies. How long it was since he had left Roland, how long since he went by this village, which was then to him only a name! Now, perhaps, some eventful occurrence was to take place here, and the name of this village to be stamped indelibly upon his life.

"Herr Captain! Herr Weidmann wishes me to ask you to come into the garden," the boatman cried to him.

Eric went back into the garden, where Weidmann came to him, with an entirely different mien, saying that he would now, for the first time, bid him welcome; previously he had been very busy. A short time afterwards the doctor also came.

The three now seated themselves at the table in a corner of the garden, where there was an extensive prospect, and Weidmann began in a humorous way to depict "the heroic treatment" of the doctor's, practice, who liked to deal in drastic remedies. A suitable point of agreement was established between Eric and Weidmann, while they united in a facetious, but entirely respectful assault upon the doctor.

Eric learned that the doctor had already proposed that he should undertake the superintendence of the powder-mill. Weidmann, in the meanwhile, explained that the difficulties were too great, and that the government threw in the way all sorts of obstacles, although they wanted principally to open a market in the New World, and with this view, his nephew, Doctor Fritz, had sent over from America, and had well recommended, one of the men with whom he had just been conversing. And his nephew desired that they would find some experienced German artillery officer, who would emigrate to America, and there take charge of a manufactory of gunpowder and matches, with the sure prospect of soon making a fortune.

The doctor looked towards Eric, but he smiled and shook his head in the negative.

Weidmann informed them further, that a discovery had been lately made of a deposit of manganese, and that they were desirous of forming a company to work the mine; that a man who knew how to regulate matters might easily make himself acquainted with the business.

He also looked inquiringly at Eric, and then made him the direct offer of a considerable salary, and an increasing share of the profits.

Eric declined, courteously and gratefully, as he had not entirely decided whether he would engage at all in any new pursuit. The doctor entered warmly into the matter, and extolled the superiority of our age, in which men of ripe scientific attainments devoted themselves to active employments, and, through their independent property; created a commonalty such as no period of history had ever before known.

"This is ours, this is ours,' we commoners can say. Don't you think so?"

"Most certainly."

"Now then, go thou and do likewise."

And he added to this, how glad the Weidmann family would be to receive him into their circle.

Eric smilingly replied, that he felt obliged to decline this very friendly offer; that he valued very highly the independence which property gives, but was not adapted to a life of acquisition.

"Indeed?" cried the doctor, and there was something of contempt in his tone. "Do you know how the question of our age is put? It is, To use, or to be used? Why are you willing to be used by this Herr Sonnenkamp?"

"You surely would not want me to use other people, and appropriate to myself the product of their labor?"

"It is not well," interposed Weidmann, "to generalize in this way upon a wholly personal question. I see – I expected that the utter separation of the rich and the poor would vitally interest you; but here we have our doctor, and he will agree with me, that it is with the so-called social maladies as with those of the body. We know to-day, better than any period has ever known, the scientific diagnosis of disease, but we are ignorant of the specific remedy, and a disease must be known a long time, and known very thoroughly, before its method of cure is discovered; yet we must put up with it, in the meantime, and let it pass."

"Have you had no craving to be rich?" the doctor cried, apparently excited.

"It would be unwise to have a craving for what I cannot obtain through my own capabilities."

Weidmann's eye was quietly fixed upon Eric's countenance; the latter was aware of it, and whilst he thought, at this moment, that he could with a motion of his hand quietly relinquish all the offered riches of the world, the temptation came over his soul. What it would be for one to be free from all the cares of life, and to be able to devote himself to life itself; and he saw also how he could gratify every wish of his mother and his aunt.

But no; the first wish of his mother will be that he should remain true to himself. And the more Clodwig there, and here the physician, wanted to turn him aside from his vocation, so much the clearer was it to him, that he not only must abide by that vocation, but that he also had incurred a moral obligation to Roland.

Weidmann related that he had received a letter from New York, from his nephew. Doctor Fritz, who was going to send immediately his young daughter to be educated in Germany. The conversation now turned upon persons and things with which Eric was unacquainted.

The boatman came to inform them that the last steamboat was now coming up the river.

The doctor and Eric took hasty leave of Weidmann, who warmly shook Eric's hand, and requested him to claim his help in any situation in life where he could be of service.

The physician and Eric got into the boat and were rowed to the steamboat. Hardly a word was spoken by them during the passage to the town, where they were to disembark.

When they reached it, men and women were walking under the newly-planted lindens, for it is always a significant event of the day when the steamboat arrives, which remains here over night. The wife of the doctor was also at the landing, and she went homeward with Eric and her husband. She was very friendly to Eric, whom she had already met at Wolfsgarten; Eric, indeed, had no recollection of her, for at that time he had scarcely noticed, in fact, the modest, silent woman.

Many persons were waiting at the house for the physician. Eric was shown into his chamber, and then into the library; he was glad to see that the physician kept abreast with all the new investigations of his science, and he hoped through his help to fill up many a gap in his own knowledge.

The twilight came on; as Eric was sitting quietly in a large chair, he heard a horse trotting by the house. He involuntarily stood up, and looked out; he thought that the rider who had just passed was Roland, or had only his own imagination, and his continual thinking about the boy, deluded him?

There was an air of comfort in the physician's house, and everything gave evidence of solid prosperity; but the physician was obliged to go from the tea-table to a neighboring village.

Eric walked with the doctor's wife along the pretty road on the bank of the river, and there was a double satisfaction in her words, as she said that she greatly desired that her husband could have constant intercourse with such a mentally active friend as Eric, for he often felt himself lonely here in the town, and he was often obliged to depend wholly upon himself.

Eric was happy, for he perceived in this not only a friendly appreciation of himself, but also the deep and intelligent esteem of the wife, who would like to bestow upon her husband a permanent blessing.

CHAPTER XII.

A CHEERFUL LITTLE TOWN

There was a genuine neighborly feeling among the inhabitants of this small town. People called out to friends who were standing at the windows and on the balconies, or walking in the streets; groups were formed, where much chatting and jesting went on, while from windows, here and there piano-playing and singing were heard.

The justice's wife and her daughter Lina joined Eric and his hostess. People were surprised that he was leaving Sonnenkamp's house, as the report had already spread that he was to remain there. And now Eric learned that Roland had really ridden through the town, passing several times before the physician's house, and letting his horse prance so that it frightened one to look at him.

Lina was burning with eagerness to speak to Eric alone for a moment, and she found her opportunity when they met the school-director and his wife, and the two elder ladies stopped to inquire about the health of the forester's wife, who lived in the director's house. Lina went on with Eric, and said abruptly: —

"Do you know that your pupil Roland has a sister?"

"Certainly. I have heard so."

"Heard so? Why, you have seen her. She was the young girl with the star on her forehead, and the wings, who met us in the twilight on the cloister steps."

"Ah, indeed!"

"Ah, indeed!" mimicked Lina. "Oh! you men are dreadful; I have always thought that you—"

She stopped and Eric asked: —

"That I — what of me?"

"Ah, mother is right, I am too heedless and clumsy, and say everything that comes into my head; I should have believed you now—"

"That you may do; it is a sin to be untrue, and a double sin to be so towards you."

"Well then," said Lina, taking off her straw hat, and shaking the curls in her neck, "well then, if you will honestly confess, that Manna made an impression on you at that time, I will tell you something; but you must be frank and sincere."

"My dear young lady, do you think I would say no? You tempt me not to be sincere."

"Well then, I'll tell you — but please keep it to yourself won't you? — Manna asked me who you were, and that's a great deal from her. Oh, Herr Captain, wealth is a dreadful thing; people offer themselves only for the sake of a girl's money — no, I didn't mean to say that — but try to manage that Manna shall not be a nun."

"Can I prevent it?"

"Did you see the wooden shoes that the nuns wore? Horrid! Manna would have to wear those shoes, and she has the prettiest little foot."

"But why shouldn't she be a nun, if she wants to?"

Lina was puzzled, she was not prepared for such an answer. She remembered, too, that she was a good Catholic.

"Ah," she said plaintively, "I fancied to myself — I am a silly child, am I not? — in old times a knight used to enter a castle disguised as a squire or something else — well, I thought now the squire must be a tutor and then —"

She could not go on with her fancy sketch, for her mother overtook them, rather anxious lest her daughter had made some of her dreadfully simple speeches in her walk with the stranger.

"May one know what you are talking about so earnestly?" asked the Justice's wife. Lina drew a long breath, and put her hat-elastic in her mouth, which her mother had often forbidden, as Eric answered with great unconcern, —

"Your daughter has been reminding me that I was not very attentive when we first met on the convent island. I must ask your pardon now, madame. It relieves my mind of a burden of self-reproach to have the opportunity of excusing myself to you, and I earnestly beg that you will carry my apologies to your husband. One meets in travelling so many people who think to make themselves of importance by being ill-tempered, that one catches the unfriendly spirit, and harms himself the most. If I had not had the good fortune to meet you again, a little misunderstanding would have remained between us. Ah! on such a beautiful evening, by your beautiful river, where people are so friendly and cheerful, one longs to do some good to every one he meets, and to say, Rejoice with me, dear fellow-mote, dancing in the sunlight, for the little time which is called life."

Eric was very animated, and the Justice's wife much pleased with his demeanor. The evening walk was most refreshing. Lina directly gave up to her mother the place next Eric, and walked on the other side of the doctor's wife. The walk lasted a long time, till the doctor's carriage was heard in the distance by his wife, who knew the sound of its wheels before the others could distinguish anything.

The doctor joined them with a fresh fund of cheerfulness, saying, —

"I was sent for to receive a confession, and now I have lost an excellent reminder."

He went on to tell them that a man had lived in the next village, the sight of whom had always given him a stab in the heart, for the man had sworn a false oath about a hundred florins which he owed him. But as time went on, he had become quite grateful to this person for serving him as a reviver of his faith, because every time he met him he felt a fresh belief in the meanness of mankind, which one easily forgets. Now, before his death, the man had confessed to him and given back the money. So here he was, a hundred florins richer, but he had lost his faith. How could he laugh now at the world, if he had no longer the meanness of men to laugh at?

"What will you do now with the hundred florins?" asked Lina.

"What would you do with them?"

"I don't know."

"What would *you* do, captain?" said the physician, turning suddenly to Eric; "what would you do, if you had a million to give away?"

"I?" asked Eric, somewhat taken aback. He did not understand the reason of the sudden question.

"Yes, you."

"I never thought about it, but first I would found valuable scholarships at all the German universities. The man of wealth ought to be able to reflect how he is cultivating the mind of the man of genius."

"Good," answered the doctor, "every one thinks first of his own circle. Here's my little friend Lina; if she had a million to give away, she would spend it all on blue muslin, and dress all the female world in it. Wouldn't you, Musselina?"

Lina was silent, and her mother said, "Give some smart answer; can't you think of one?" Lina apparently could not think of one, but there was a pleasant, merry tone in the intercourse between the doctor and the child.

After their friends left them, the doctor said to Eric, —

"You can become familiar with a new method of instruction here. The Justice's lady tries with all her might to make her daughter a pert, worldly chatterbox, but fortunately the child has a simple, genuine nature which can't be spoiled, and when you talk with her alone she is full of bubbling life, and rightly deserves the name of Musselina."

The doctor was more friendly than ever in his bearing towards Eric, for he saw that he had wished to interfere in his life too hastily and roughly. He expressed regret that Eric had not seen Herr Weidmann to advantage that day, as the latter had been preoccupied, or something had gone wrong with him, and he advised Eric not to adopt a wrong impression in regard to him. The doctor smiled, well pleased, when Eric replied that he should not allow himself to form an opinion of a view

on the Rhine which every one admired, if he had seen it only through rain or mist. The physician had evidently been thinking much of Eric during his drive; he always addressed him to-day as Herr Captain in a very marked manner, and he explained this when he held out his hand in bidding him good-night, by saying, —

"You are the first soldier with whom I have ever been able to live quite comfortably. With all other officers, I have always had a feeling of — I can't say fear, exactly — but a certain consciousness of being unarmed in the presence of an armed man. You soldiers always have an air of preparation, of readiness for attack, in which there's much that's good. I take back my words; perhaps a soldier can be a still better educator than a physician. Well, good-night!"

When Eric was alone, everything vanished which he had seen or experienced during the day, and Roland's form alone remained before him. He tried to fancy what the boy's thoughts were in riding after him. He sought to transport himself into the boy's state of feeling; he could not entirely do so, for Roland was full of anger with Eric, for deserting one who was so truly and fondly devoted to him. The boy felt as if he had been robbed, and so he rode over to the town fancying that Eric must be coming to meet him, or must be watching for him at the window; he rode back weeping with anger.

The world, of which he was to possess so much, appeared to him worthless and strange, while it seemed to Eric, who had nothing but his own thoughts, bathed in a dew of blessing. In the stillness of the night he thought over the hospitable and homelike reception he had met from Clodwig, and now from the physician, and hospitality seemed to him the purest fruit of noble manhood. In ancient times men entertained gods and angels, and they still entertained them, for in freely offering what one has to a stranger, whose very existence was yesterday unknown, the divine is unfolded in the pure soul.

Up yonder at Wolfsgarten, Eric had met with a fatherly good-will, based upon congeniality of thought — here with the doctor, as much goodwill as difference of opinion; but here, too, that personal friendliness which is so satisfying and home-like.

There was Bella who always wished to make an impression in her own behalf, and here was the doctor's wife, who wished nothing for herself, who thanked Eric in her heart, and wished only that her husband might have the good fortune to be able to talk over learned subjects with another man. And were these many forms, were all these events, to be only the passing occurrences of a journey?

CHAPTER XIII. AGAIN ALONE WITH THYSELF

"In the morning," the doctor often said, "I am like a washed chimney-sweeper." He rose, summer and winter, at five o'clock, studied uninterruptedly several hours, and answered only the most pressing calls from his patients. Through this practice of study he not only kept up his scientific knowledge, but as he bathed his body in fresh water, so was he also mentally invigorated; let come what would of the day, he had made sure of his portion of science. And that was the reason – we may congratulate ourselves upon knowing this secret – that was the reason why the doctor was so wide awake, so ready primed, and so vivacious. He himself designated these morning hours to an old fellow-student as his camel-hours, when he drank himself full, so that he could often refresh himself with a draught in the dry desert. And life, moreover, did not seem to him a desert, for he had something which thrived everywhere, and was all-prevailing, and *that* was an indestructible cheerfulness, and an equanimity, which he attributed above all to his sound digestion.

So was he sitting now; and when he heard Eric, whose room was over his study, getting up, he sent word to him to come soon to breakfast; and in this hour the freshness of the man was yet wholly unimpaired. His wife, who had to be busy, or rather, who made herself busy about household matters, in order not to oblige her husband to enter into any conversation on less learned matters, had soon gone into the garden, in which flourished many scions and seeds of various kinds out of Sonnenkamp's garden. But the doctor conversed with Eric upon no scientific topics.

In the breakfast-room there hung portraits of the parents and the grand-parents of the physician, and he took occasion to give some account of his own life. His grandfather and father had been boat-men, and the doctor had been present at the golden wedding of both, and expressed his hope to celebrate also his own. And after he had portrayed his own struggle with life, he proceeded to ask Eric about his pecuniary affairs, and those of his mother.

Eric disclosed the whole state of the case; he described how his mother had noble and rich friends; on whom she placed great expectations, but he did not believe in, and to speak honestly, he did not desire, any help of that sort. The doctor asserted in confirmation, that no one would help them substantially and handsomely; he unfolded, as he went along, wholly heretical views upon beneficence; he expatiated upon the nonsense of leaving endowments and legacies in one's will, and on scattering small donations. He thought it was much handsomer, and more permanently beneficial, to make an individual or a family entirely independent, so that they may thereby be the means of accomplishing greater good. He stated that he had often attempted to bring this about; nothing of this kind was to be effected with Herr Sonnenkamp, who would have nothing further to do with people into whose hat he had cast an alms.

The conversation, in this way, having once more turned upon Sonnenkamp, the doctor offered to take upon himself all the external financial arrangements with Sonnenkamp, insisting upon Eric's consent to his doing so.

"And do you take no farther trouble about this man," said the doctor, opening an egg. "See, it is all a fair exchange. We devour this egg with the greatest zest, while the hen got her living out of the manure-heap."

Eric was happy with this lively, practical man. He expressed his satisfaction that, here in this little town, there were so many noble persons, who could constitute a rich social environment. The doctor contested this, for he considered that the necessity of being thrown upon one another, and the not being able to make a selection, as one can do in a great city, belittled, contracted, and created gossip. One had, indeed, in a great city, no larger circle than was here formed for the direct participation in the various duties of life, but the necessity of contracting marriages within such a limited circle did not permit the existence of a free social community.

"On the whole," he said in conclusion, "we are no more to each other than a good whist-party."

It was time to think of departing. Eric left the house with a feeling of serene satisfaction. The doctor drove him to the nearest railroad station, where he got out and warmly shook Eric's hand, repeating the wish that they might be able to live together.

The train, meanwhile, stopped longer than usual at the little station, waiting the arrival of the train from the lower Rhine which was behind time. A merry crowd of men, young and old, greeted the doctor and seated themselves in the same car with Eric. The doctor told him that they were wine-testers, who were going to a sale which was to take place to-day at the wine-count's cellar. He called Eric's attention specially to a jovial-looking man, the gauger, the finest judge of wine in the district. The doctor laughed heartily when Eric said to him, that he had also gone about the whole district testing wines, that is, the spiritual wine of character.

"Strange how you make an application of everything!" laughed the physician. "Count Wolfsgarten, Pranken, Bella, Sonnenkamp, the huntsman, Sevenpiper, Musselina, Weidmann, Fräulein Perini, the Major, the priest, I, and Roland – a fine specimen-catalogue of wines. Look out that you do not stagger as you come out of the wine-cellar."

The doctor suddenly turned round, and cried: —

"You may yet induce me to put something in print. I am verily of the opinion, that though there must be some consumers who are not producers, there are no graduated German heads that don't want, at some time or other, to write a book; perhaps that helps them to study. And when you come again, you will, perhaps, bring me to the point of writing my history of sleep."

The train from the lower Rhine whistled, and the doctor, grasping Eric's hand again, said with emotion, —

"We are friends! take notice, that if either one of us is to be no longer the other's friend, he pledges himself to give a week's notice. And now farewell."

The last word was cut off, for the locomotive whistled, and Eric set out towards home.

He was sitting with downcast eyes when he heard some one in the car say, —

"There's young Sonnenkamp on horseback!"

Eric looked out, and caught one more glimpse of Roland, just as he disappeared behind a little hill.

Eric heard nothing of the lively talk, often interrupted by loud laughter, which the wine-party kept up; he had much in the past and future to think over, and he was glad when the party left the car at the next station, and he remained alone. He felt some repentance, and some doubt whether he had not acted wrongly and unwisely in not concluding an arrangement with Sonnenkamp, but he soon took courage again and cast his regret behind him.

We are rapidly rolled along by the power of steam. And in spirit? How far are we masters of our destiny?

At several stations, school-boys, with their satchels on their backs, entered Eric's car. He learned, in answer to his questions, that they lived with their parents in country-houses and distant villages, but went every day to school in the city, returning home in the evening. Eric thought long on the new race of youths which is growing up; taking their places in the noisy railway-train in the early morning, then assembling for instruction, and going home again over the railroad; these boys must and will learn to guard, in the restlessness and tumult of the new age, their own inner life, which is, indeed, quite different from ours. And then he looked farther on into a future, when the alarming growth of the great cities shall cease, and men shall again live outside of them, where the green fields, the rushing streams, and the blue sky shall be daily before their eyes, and yet it shall be granted them to make their own the elements of culture, and all which is now supplied by the union of men in large towns. Then again will country air force its way into the soul.

At the time when Eric and the doctor were setting out, the justice's wife sat with her husband and her daughter over their morning coffee. The conversation turned on the evening walk with Eric, and the lady repeated his frank apologies.

"Very good, very good," said the justice. "He is polite and clever, but it's well that he has gone; he's a dangerous man."

BOOK IV

CHAPTER I. THE STRUGGLE IN A CHILD'S HEART

The sparrows in the alders and willows on the shore of the convent-island twittered and chattered noisily together, they had so much to say to each other about what they had experienced during the day; and who knows whether their to-day was not a much longer interval of time than ours? One puffed up by his experience – perhaps we should say *her* experience, for the feathers had lost their colors from age – sat quietly in the crotch of a bough, comfortably resting against the trunk; he echoed and re-echoed his delight at the splendid time he enjoyed over the river, under the closely-trimmed branches of a shady linden, in the inn-yard by the shore.

The waiter there had long delayed removing the remnants of an English breakfast, and there were cakes, the pieces, alas! too large, abundance of eggs, honey, and sugar; it was a feast without parallel. He considered that the real joy of existence had its first beginning when one wished to know nothing more of all other things, and had supreme satisfaction in eating and drinking alone. Only in mature life did one really come to that perception.

Others would listen to nothing from the swaggering fellow, and there was an irregular debate, whether lettuce-seeds or young cabbage-heads were not much better than all the cooked-up dishes of men. A young rogue, fluttering around his roguish mate, reported to her that behind the ferryman's house, there hung from the garret-window a bulging bag full of flax-seed; if one only knew how to rip open the seam a little, one could gradually eat up all the tidbits, but it must be kept a profound secret, else the others would come too; and hemp-seed, it must be acknowledged, was just the most precious good which this whole round earth could furnish. The rogue was of the opinion that her delicate bill was exactly the nice thing to pick open the seam; it was the most contemptible baseness in human beings, to hang up in the open air just the most tempting dainties all fastened and tied up.

A late-comer, flying up in breathless haste, announced that the scarecrow, standing in the field, was nothing but a stick with clothes hung upon it.

"Because the stupid men believe in scarecrows, they think that we do too," laughed he, and flapped his wings in astonishment and pity at the manifest simplicity.

There was a frantic bustle in the alders and willows, and almost as frantic in the great meadow, where the girls from the convent caught hold of each other, chattered together, tittered, teased one another, and laughed.

Apart from her noisy companions, and frequently passing under the alder-trees where there was such a merry gathering of the birds, walked a girl slender in form and graceful in movement, with black hair and brilliant eyes, accompanied by a tall and majestic woman in a nun's dress, whose bearing had an expression of quiet and decisive energy. Her lips were naturally so pressed together, that the mouth seemed only a narrow streak of red. The entire brow was covered with a white kerchief, and the face, the large eyes, the small eyebrows, the sharp nose, the closely pressed lips, and the projecting but rather handsome chin, had something commanding and immovable.

"Honored mother," began the maiden, "you have read the letter from Fräulein Perini?"

The nun – it was the superior – only turned her face a little; she seemed to be waiting for the maiden – it was Hermanna Sonnenkamp – to speak further.

As Manna, however, was silent, the superior said: —

"Herr von Pranken is then to make us a visit. He is a man of good family and good morals, he seems a wordling, but he is not one exactly. He has, indeed, the impatience of the outside world;

I trust, however, that he will not press his wooing as long as you are here our child, that is to say, the child of the Lord."

She spoke in a very deliberate tone, and now stopped.

"Let us go away from here; the noise of the birds above there allows one hardly to hear herself speak."

They went by the churchyard, in the middle of the island, to the grove growings near a small rocky ledge, which the children called the Switzerland of the island; there they sat down, and the superior continued: —

"I am sure of you, my child, that you will decline hearing a word from Herr von Pranken that has any reference to protestations of love, or to the soliciting your hand in marriage."

"You know, honored mother," replied Manna, — her voice was always pathetic, and as if veiled with tears; — "you know, honored mother, that I have promised to take the veil."

"I know it, and I also do not know it, for what you now say or determine is for us like a word written in the sand, which the wind and the footsteps of man may efface. You must go out again into the world; you must have overcome the world, before you renounce it. Yes, my child! the whole world must appear to you like your dolls, which you tell me of, — forgotten, valueless, dead, — a child's toy, upon which it is scarcely conceivable that so much regard, so much love, should be lavished."

For some time all was still, nothing was to be heard but the song of the nightingale in the thicket, and above the river ravens were flying in flocks and singing — men call it croaking — and soaring to their nests in the mountain-cliffs.

"My child," began the superior, after a while, "to-day is the anniversary of my mother's death; I have to-day prayed for her soul in eternity, as I did at that time. At the time she died — men call it dying, but it is only the birth into another life — at that time, my vow forbade me to stand by her death-bed; it cost me hardly a struggle, for whether my parents are still out there in the world, or above there in heaven, it makes no difference to us. Look, the water is now tinged with the glow of evening, and people outside, on the hills and on the banks, are speaking in raptures of nature, that new idol which they have set up, for they are the children of nature; but we are to be the children of God, before whose sight all nature seems only a void, under whatever color it may appear, whether clothed in green, or white with snow."

"I believe, I comprehend that," Manna said assentingly.

"That is why I say it to you," continued the worthy mother. "It is a great thing to overcome the world, to thrust it from one's self, and never to long for it a single instant, and to receive in exchange the eternal blessedness, even while we dwell here in the body. Yes, my child," she laid both hands upon the head of Manna, and continued, "I would like to give you strength, my strength — no, not mine, that which God has lent me Thou art to struggle hard and bravely with the world, thou art to be tried and sifted, before thou comest to us forever, to the fore-court of the Kingdom of Heaven."

Manna had closed her eyes, and in her soul was the one only wish, that now the earth might open and swallow her up, or that some supernatural power would come and lift her up over all. When she opened her eyes, and saw the marvellous splendor of the sunset sky, the violet haze of the mountains, and the river glowing in the red beams of evening, she shut her eyes again, and made a repellant movement with her hand, as if she would have said, — I will have nothing of thee; thou shalt be naught to me; thou art only a doll, a lifeless thing, on which we waste our love.

With trembling voice Manna mourned over her rent and tempest-tossed spirit; a few days before, she had sung and spoken the message of the heralding angels, while dark demons were raging within her. She had spent the whole day in prayer, that she might be worthy to announce such a message, and then in the twilight a man had appeared before her, and her eye had rested on him with pleasure; it was the tempter who had approached her, and the figure had followed her into her dreams. She had risen at midnight, and wept, and prayed to God that he would not suffer her to fall into sin and ruin. But she had not conquered. She scorned and hated the vision, but it would not leave

her. Now she begged that some penance might be imposed upon her, that she might be allowed to fast for three days.

The superior gently consoled her, saying that she must not blame herself so bitterly, because the self-reproach increased the excitement of fancy and feeling. At the season when the elders were in bloom and the nightingales sang, a maiden of seventeen was apt to be visited by dreams; Manna must not weep over these dreams, but just scare them away and mock at them; they were only to be driven off by ridicule.

Manna kissed the hands of the superior.

It became dark. The sparrows were silent, the noisy children returned to the house, and only the nightingale sang continually in the shrubbery. Manna turned back to the convent, the superior leading her by the hand. She went to the large dormitory, and sprinkled herself with holy water. She continued praying silently long after she had gone to bed, and fell asleep, with her hands folded.

The river swept rustling along the valley, and swept rustling by the villa where Roland slept with contemptuously curled lip; it rushed past the streets of the little town, where Eric was speculating upon this and that in the doctor's house; it rushed by the inn where Pranken, leaning against the window, stared over at the convent.

The moon shone on the river, and the nightingales sang on the shore, and in the houses thousands of people slept, forgetting joy and sorrow, until the day again dawned.

CHAPTER II. A GREEN TWIG

On the west side of the convent, under the lofty, wide-spreading, thickly-leaved chestnut-trees, beeches, and lindens, and far in among the firs with their fresh shoots, stationary tables and benches were arranged. Girls in blue dresses were sitting here, reading, writing, or busy with their hand-work. Sometimes there was a low humming, but not louder than the humming of the bees in the blossoming chestnut-trees; sometimes a moving this way and that, a change in one's position, but not more than the fluttering of a bird in the trees overhead.

Manna sat at the table beneath a large fir-tree, and at a little distance from her, on a low seat under a lofty beech on whose trunk many names were carved, and on which was suspended a framed picture of the Madonna, sat a little child; she looked up frequently at Manna, who nodded to her, indicating that she must study her book more diligently, and be as busy as the rest. The child was nicknamed Heimchen, because she had suffered so much from homesickness, and Heimchen had become the pet of all the girls. Manna had cured the child, to all appearance at least, for on the day after the representation of the sacred play, she had received permission from a lay-sister who presided over the gardening, to prepare for the child a separate little garden-plot; and now she seemed to be taking root in the foreign land, as did the plants which she had since watered and cared for, but she was inseparable from Manna.

Manna worked diligently; some pale blue paper was lying before her, and she was painting on it, with a fine brush, pictures of the stars in color of gold from small shells.

She prided herself especially on having the neatest writing-books, every leaf ruled very regularly with lines close together, and uniformly written upon, neither too coarse nor too fine. Manna had received, a few days since, the highest mark of honor ever conferred on a pupil, by being unanimously made the recipient of the blue ribbon, which the three classes of the children, namely, the children of Jesus, the angels of Mary, and the children of Mary, had adjudged to her. There had hardly been any election, so much a matter of course did it seem that nobody but Manna could be designated for the blue ribbon. This badge of distinction gave her a sort of right to be considered a superior.

While she was thus drawing, and frequently running her eye over the children left under her care, she had a book open by her side; it was Thomas à Kempis. While putting in the stars, which she did with that delicate and beautiful finish attainable, perhaps, only in the convent, she snatched a few sentences out of Thomas à Kempis, that her soul might be occupied with higher thoughts during this trifling occupation.

The stroke of oars sounded from the shore on that side: the girls looked up; a handsome young man was standing in the boat, who lifted his hat and waved it, as if saluting the island.

"Is he your brother? your cousin?" was whispered here and there.

No one knew the stranger.

The boat came to land. The girls were full of curiosity, but they dared not intermit their work, for everything had its allotted time. Luckily, a tall, fair-complexioned maiden had used up all her green worsted, so that she must go to the convent for more, and she nodded significantly to the others that she would find out who was the new arrival. But before the blond girl could come back, a serving-sister appeared, and informed Manna Sonnenkamp that she was to come to the convent. Manna arose, and Heimchen, who wanted to go with her, was bidden to remain; the child quietly seated herself again on her little stool under the beech-tree from which hung the picture of the Madonna. Manna broke off a little freshly-budding twig from the tree under which she had been sitting, and placed it in her book as a mark; she then followed the sister.

There was great questioning among those who remained: Who is he? Is he a cousin? But the Sonnenkamps have no relatives in Europe. Perhaps a cousin from America.

The children were uneasy, and seemed to have no longer any inclination for their studies. Manna had given to a companion the blue sash which she wore on her right shoulder, and this one felt it incumbent on her to keep strict order.

Manna came to the convent. As she entered the reception-room, to find the lady-superior. Otto von Pranken rose quickly and bowed.

"Herr von Pranken," said the superior, "brings you a greeting from your parents and Fräulein Perini."

Pranken approached Manna, and extended his hand, but as she had the book in her right hand, she gave him in a hesitating manner her left. Pranken, the fluent talker, only stammered out – for Manna's appearance had greatly impressed him – the expression of his satisfaction at seeing Manna so well and so much grown, and of the joy it would give her parents and Fräulein Perini to see her again, so much improved.

The stammering manner of Pranken, moved as he was by repressed feeling, lasted while he continued to speak further; for in the midst of his involuntary agitation, he became suddenly aware that this evident emotion could not fail to be noticed by Manna, and must produce some impression upon her. He skilfully contrived to keep up the same tone with which he had begun, and congratulated himself on his ability to play so well a bashful, timid, and surprised part. He had many animating narratives to give of her family at home, and congratulated the maiden on being allowed to live on a blissful island until she could return to the mainland, where a pleasant company of friends formed also a social mainland. Pranken contemplated with a great deal of self-satisfaction this comparison, as pretty as it was new.

Manna did not say a great deal; at last she asked, —

"Who may this Captain Dournay be, of whom Roland writes to me so enthusiastically?"

Pranken winced a little, but he said smilingly, —

"I was so fortunate as to find a poor young man to instruct our Roland – permit me to speak of him so, for I love him like a brother – in a variety of matters. I think that it will do Roland no harm to acquire information from the man."

"Roland writes me that he is an intimate friend of yours."

"Herr Dournay has probably said so to him, and I will not contradict it, if Roland is thus led to entertain a higher respect for a teacher. But, my dear Fräulein, I may venture to say to you that I am somewhat sparing in the use of the word friend, and I would therefore rather not –"

"Then tell me something of the character of this man who calls himself your friend."

"Excuse me from giving the particular details. You yourself will certainly agree with me, that it is our duty to help toward the good one who is striving to turn from the error of his ways, even if we cannot wholly blot out the past."

"What, then, has this Herr Dournay done?" interposed the superior. "I should be sorry on his mother's account, who was a companion of my youth; she is a Protestant, to be sure, but she is what the world calls good and noble."

Pranken appeared perplexed, but with a motion of the hand which implied careful consideration, kind intentions, and a sort of delicate reservation, he said, looking down at the floor, —

"Honored mother, and dear Fräulein! Spare me from making such a statement here in the convent, and consider what I have touched upon as if it had not been said. When I look around me here – as little ought certain words, not perhaps so inappropriate in the world outside, to be spoken aloud in this pure air, as unsaintly pictures, to use a mild expression, to hang by the side of the pious, transfigured forms upon these pure walls. Permit me to say to you, I have special guaranties that the poor young man will not conduct himself unworthily."

Manna's countenance suddenly assumed an expression of noble indignation as she said, —

"But I cannot conceive how they can commit my brother to the charge of a man, who –"

Pranken prayed to be excused for interrupting her. He conjured her by what was high and holy, to forget that he, in his zeal for the truth, had said anything against a former comrade; he had done it involuntarily in his contemplation of purity and loveliness. He besought so earnestly, he manifested so good a heart, so full of human love, that Manna now voluntarily extended to him her hand, and said, —

"I believe you. Ah, how rejoiced I am you are so good!"

Pranken was happy, but determined that Eric should not be received into the family. It seemed more and more puzzling to him that he should himself have raised up such an antagonist; he was now doubly out of humor with Eric, for he had been the occasion of his being untrue and unjust, and Pranken was too proud to be so misled, especially when a little caution on his own part might have prevented the necessity of it.

"Might I venture to request you to show me the lines?" he now said. "My object is to see how good a judge of men Roland has become. Would you be willing to show me what our splendid brother has written of this Herr Dournay?"

Manna blushed, and replied that they had better say no more about the captain; and she besought Pranken to do all he could to remove the man out of the house, if it were still a possible thing. Pranken promised to do all in his power, and he recovered his natural elasticity while he prayed Manna, in a lively tone, but subdued to the proprieties of the place, that instead of giving him so easy a task, she would commission him, like a knight of the good old times, to contend against the dragon-brood. And yet, while calling it easy, he felt in his own heart that the task could not rightly be called so.

The superior rose; she thought that it was high time, and a good time, too, to break off the conversation. Pranken had renewed his acquaintance, and that must suffice for the present. The superior was not so resolutely bent upon the convent for Manna, as to desire that Pranken might not win her affections. Such a house and such a family, endowed with such incredible wealth, might be of great advantage to the convent and to the Church.

"It was very kind in you to visit us," she now said. "Carry my greeting, I pray, to your sister, the Countess Bella, and say to her that she is remembered in my prayers."

Pranken saw that he was expected to take leave, and yet he wanted to say something more definite, and to hear some word which should give him the desired security. His countenance suddenly lighted up, as he said, with such modesty and such friendly feeling that one could not refuse compliance, —

"Fräulein Manna! We erring creatures outside like to have a lasting token in our hands."

"What do you want?" quickly and sharply struck in the superior.

"Honored mother! I would beseech you," Pranken said, turning quickly with humble mien toward the severe lady, "I would beseech you to permit Fräulein Sonnenkamp to give that book into my hand."

"Wonderful!" cried Manna, "I wanted to do that! I wanted to give it to you to carry to my brother. Ask him to read every day a chapter, beginning from the place where the green twig is put, so that he may receive every day the same thoughts into his soul that I do."

"What happiness this harmony of feeling, this oneness of sentiment, gives me! It would be a profanation to try to describe it!"

The superior was at a loss what to do, and Pranken continued: —

"I beseech you, then, my honored Fräulein, to pardon my presumption; I would like to request you to give me this holy book for my own edification, and that I too may be allowed to keep even step with your brother and you."

"But my name is written in the book," said Manna, blushing.

"So much the better," Pranken wanted to say, but luckily he was able to withhold it; he turned to the superior, folded his hands, and stood as if praying her to grant his petition. The superior nodded her head several times, and at last said, —

"My child, you may, perhaps, comply with this request of Herr von Pranken. And now, farewell."

Pranken received the book. He left the convent. As he sat in the boat, the ferryman said to him, —

"Perhaps some maiden over there is betrothed to you?"

Pranken did not reply, but he gave the ferryman a whole handful of money. His heart throbbing with bliss, Pranken rushed up the bank, and immediately sent a telegram to his sister.

CHAPTER III. HERCULES IN A HAIR-DRESSER'S SHOP

The telegraphist was very much astonished, but did not dare to express his surprise, when the handsome, noble young man, with the polished exterior and the unassuming air, through which there was plainly discernible a feeling of condescension towards a public officer, handed in a telegram mysteriously worded, and running thus: —

"God be praised! a green twig from the island of felicity. New genealogical tree. Heavenly manna. Endless possessions, A consecrated one, new-born.

"OTTO VON PRANKEN."

Pranken walked about in the tasteful, well-arranged grounds of the station, looked up to the mountains, down to the river, to the island; the whole world was as if freshly created to him, he seemed to himself in a new earth; a veil was removed from everything, and all was ravishingly beautiful. In a copse, where no one saw him, he knelt down; and while he knelt he felt inexpressibly happy, and as if he never wished to rise again. He heard a noise in his vicinity, stood upright, and brushed his knees carefully. It was nothing but a beggar that disturbed him. Without waiting to be spoken to, Pranken gave him a considerable sum of money, and after the beggar had gone away, he called him back and gave him as much again.

The air was loaded with aromatic fragrance, intermingled with that delicate resinous perfume that comes from the opening buds; innumerable rose-buds hung from the trellises, as if waiting for the word to open; from the steep wall of rock, where a passage for the railroad had been cut, a cuckoo called, and thousands of birds joined in with their song. The whole world was full of blossoming fragrance and music of birds, — all was redeemed, ransomed, blessed.

The people at the station thought that the young man who was thus walking to and fro, sometimes hurrying, sometimes standing still, sometimes looking up, and then casting his eyes to the ground, must be expecting a relative by the next train; but Pranken was waiting for no person and no thing. What could there be in the world to come to him? He had everything. He could not conceive how he could stay here, and Manna be over there; no moment ought to pass away without their being together, one, inseparable.

A finch now flew away from the tree beneath which he was standing; it flew over the river to the island. Ah! could I also fly over and look at her and greet her from the tree, and at evening fly to her window-sill, and look upon her until she went to sleep, and in the morning when she awoke!

All the feelings that ever moved the heart of youth now took possession of Pranken, and he was frightened at himself, when that demon of vanity and self-conceit, whose growth he had so fostered within him, whispered in his ear. Thou art a noble, enthusiastic youth! All great qualities are thine! He now hated this evil spirit, and he found means of driving him out.

He sat in a retired arbor and read in Thomas à Kempis. He read the admonition: "Learn to rule thyself, and then thou canst rule the things of the world." Pranken had, until now, regarded life as a light jest, not worth the trouble, indeed, of attempting to do any thing with it. He had that contemptuous tone with which one orders a poodle to jump over a stick, and he looked up amazed as to what this should mean.

Is it possible that there is such a way of thinking as this, even in those who belong to the church? "In my father's house are many mansions, and perhaps, it is very well to show for once to the children of the world, that they are not the sole possessors of the right to sport freely with the world."

All was to Pranken more and more amazing, more and more enigmatical, and, at the same time, more and more illuminated. If the buds there upon the hedge could tell, in the moment when they open, how the light thrills through them, it would be like what was now taking place in the soul of this young man. And if a man, who had heard the old legend without believing it, should find down there in the river the Niebelungen treasure, the old, beautiful, splendid, rare and solid jewelry – he would feel as Pranken did when he really discovered, for the first time, the Christian doctrine in this searching and impressive little book. All is here so comprehensive, expressing thine own inner conflicting desires, and expressing them with such tenderness, and disclosing their secret springs, and giving too, the directions how thou canst lay aside what is wrong, and make the true thine own.

Pranken sat there a long time in a reverie; railway trains came, railway trains went; boats went up and down the river, but Pranken heard and saw all as if it were only a dream. The noon-day bell at the convent first aroused him. He went to the inn.

He met here a comrade, who was making a wedding tour with his young bride. Pranken was warmly welcomed; they were very glad to meet him. Pranken must join a water-party on an excursion to the mountains, after dinner; but he declined, he knew not why. But he looked at the young bride and bridegroom with gleaming eyes; so will it be, – so will it be, when he journeys with Manna! It thrilled him with ecstasy to think that he should be alone with her, alone out in the wide world! Why can he not, even now, go for her and bring her out? He promised to himself to learn patience.

They were very merry at dinner-time, and Pranken was delighted that he could still crack his old jokes; his comrade should not have a fine story to tell at the military-club, its members should not have a chance to jeer; and the stout Kannenberg should not bet a flask of Canary that this pious mood was only one of Pranken's whims. Pranken brought out his witticisms as if he had learned them by rote, and it seemed to him a century ago, almost as if it had been in a previous state of existence, that there had been such a thing as appearing on parade.

At table, Pranken heard accidentally that, on the next day, a pilgrimage was to leave the town near by with great pomp. The new-married couple took counsel whether they should not be spectators of the display at the place of pilgrimage; they would decide in the evening.

After Pranken had accompanied them to the boat, he went to the station, and took a ticket for town; he was glad to be able to be in time for the evening service at the cathedral. He reached the town and smiled compassionately, when obliging servants in the streets offered themselves as guides to places of amusements; he smiled compassionately, when a servant in the church asked the "gracious gentleman," whether he should show him everything. Pranken knelt among the worshippers.

Refreshed, and satisfied with himself, he left the church. He strolled through the town, and stood long before a hair-dresser's shop. No one would have thought, and Otto von Pranken least of all, that there was a battle-field destined for him, not outside in the wild contest of arms, but before a great window filled with various perfumes, false hair for men and women, with dolls' heads, whose glass eyes stared under the artificial brows and lashes. Over the door was printed in golden letters, "Hair-dressing and shaving done here." Is it not laughable that a battle is to be fought here? so far from being laughable, it is serious, bitter, earnest.

Pranken had made a heroic resolve to take part in the pilgrimage, and indeed he wanted to unite himself with the pilgrims in a humble manner, and join in their prayers and mortifications. And in the meanwhile, not to attract attention, and all alone, to allow the change to proceed silently in himself, it seemed expedient, first to get rid of his very noticeable whiskers and moustaches; and it was very important to make recognition difficult, for he feared that some one might meet him and change his determination, and other people be guilty of the sin of mockery. And he was especially troubled in regard to the young married couple, who wished to make the pilgrimage. He would be one of the sights of their journey which they could talk of on their return home. And, besides, how many might be seduced into impiety by laughing over it, and they certainly would laugh at Otto von

Pranken's being among the pilgrims! Therefore, for your own sake, and that of others, you must be disguised somewhat.

So with heroic resolution – and it was certainly heroic, for who would be willing to deprive himself of an ornament so highly prized and not to be replaced at pleasure? – Pranken entered the fragrant shop, sat down in an arm-chair, and looked at his beard and moustache reflected in a great mirror hanging opposite. His eyes almost overflowed. A great white apron, a true sacrificial mantle for the sacrificial lamb, was thrown over him, and an exceedingly polite young man, who had no suspicion of the priestly office assigned to him, asked, —

"Does the gracious gentleman wish to be shaved, or to be curled?"

"Curled," answered Pranken, quick as lightning, for it came to him like an inspiration, that he would mingle with the pilgrims curled and elegantly dressed; this would be a fuller and deeper confession, and it would bring more honor to the sanctuaries, if it were seen that a man of rank, evidently a military officer, offered to them his veneration.

Finally, with hair nicely dressed, Pranken went out of the shop, and in all the large windows of all the stores he passed, he looked not without satisfaction at his rescued treasure, – his beard and moustache.

He smiled victoriously upon the world.

Pranken knew of an inn, in the town, which was the resort of the élite of the nobility, and he went there hoping to find some companion of equal rank, and with the firm determination to induce him to go on the pilgrimage with him. He found no one whom he knew, and he could not remain in the public parlor, for he saw there, on entering, a famous actress, who was fulfilling here a star engagement, and whom he had formerly known; he pretended not to recognize her and withdrew to his own room.

The morning came; the bells rang for the pilgrims to take their departure. Pranken formed a weighty resolve. Nothing hasty! he said to himself. Make no show! Give the world no opportunity for misconstruction! One has a duty to perform to the world and to the past! One must be putting off the old man, by degrees, and let the new man be unfolded.

From the window of the inn Pranken saw the pilgrims go forth, as he puffed clouds of smoke from his cigar. Then he went to the station, bought a ticket, and returned to Wolfsgarten.

CHAPTER IV. BITTER ALMONDS

In the country where the tankard rules, the ladies assemble to take coffee, and wine and coffee are equal in this respect, that they can be had at all seasons of the year. In spring and summer, it is pleasant to drink them on a gentle eminence, in a shady arbor where there is a fine view of the country around; in autumn and winter, in comfortable rooms furnished with an abundance of sofa-cushions, embroidered in patterns of parrots or fat woolly dogs.

The coffee-party has the advantage of being given in succession by various persons, and as the pint of wine is not strictly a pint, but can be increased at pleasure, so coffee is only a modest expression for the May-bowls and fruits of the culinary art which follow it; and a hostess who wishes to do something surpassing the rest sends to the great city for ice, to be brought over the railroad.

The Justice's wife led off in the spring coffee-parties. The little garden behind the house was very pleasant, where the lilacs were blooming in all their glory, but the surrounding houses overlooked it, and it was better to have the party in the best parlor opening upon the balcony.

The rustling chintz covers were taken off the sofa-cushions. The invitations were sent out, among the rest to the Countess Wolfsgarten, who had returned an acceptance; but the regular course of proceeding was, that about an hour before the appointed time, a delicately scented, prettily written note should arrive, in which Frau Bella expressed her regret that an unfortunate head-ache would deprive her of the long anticipated pleasure of meeting the highly respected wife of the Justice, and her much esteemed company.

To-day, contrary to all expectation, the Countess had come herself, and had indeed arrived before any of the rest of the party, which was not exactly the thing in fashionable society.

The Justice's wife sent Lina directly into the state parlor to place one more chair, for they had felt quite sure that the Countess would not come.

"I expect my brother to-day, he has been down the Rhine," Frau Bella soon said.

She did in fact wish to carry her brother home from the town, that she might hear more of Manna and the enigmatical telegram; but she had a second purpose in view, and an opportunity of carrying it out soon presented itself.

The Justice's wife complained that Captain and Doctor Dournay – "what is one to call him – ?"

"Call him simply doctor."

That Doctor Dournay, then, had paid a visit to the priest, to the major, and to the physician. The Major's housekeeper had told the beadle a great deal about him. But very singularly, though he seemed to be a man of excellent manners, he had neglected the very central point of the town, which was certainly the Justice's court. He had certainly apologized very humbly when he spent the night at the doctor's, and the doctor's wife said that he was soon to return and enter Sonnenkamp's service with a salary more than double that of a Justice. Herr von Pranken had done a very kind thing in getting this position for the young man, who, it was to be hoped, would show himself worthy of his recommendation.

Bella nodded acquiescingly, and praised the Justice's wife for acknowledging in so friendly a manner the kindness which it was a duty to show to an unfortunate man, but added that she must certainly see the danger also, that an untrustworthy man could be injured in no way more than by benefits, which served only to nourish enemies, who lay in wait for the right moment to show themselves in their true light.

The Justice's wife was delighted with the manner in which this lady of acknowledged intellect dressed up her own plain commonsense so finely. She assented, and felt much pleased with the idea, that, as soon as one enjoyed personal intercourse with the Countess Wolfsgarten, one could think more clearly and understand everything better. Both ladies smiled contentedly, and each declared that

the other was dressed most becomingly and tastefully, though of course with the acknowledgment that Frau Bella was the most marked in this respect, for to attempt to rival her would be folly.

Bella certainly looked very animated. She spoke lightly – for the matter must not be misrepresented – of the slight attack of illness which the Count had had at Villa Eden, when "Herr Dournay" who had lifted him had behaved right bravely. The Justice's wife launched out in praise of the Count, and of the care which was taken of his life.

Frau Bella led the conversation back, and with cautious circumspection insinuated that Eric had omitted a visit to the Justice, because he felt a certain shyness of legal tribunals, and still more of all faithful servants of the reigning king.

With considerable eagerness, the Justice's wife pressed for further information, and under a promise of strict secrecy – though, of course, the Justice must know all – she was informed that people knew of certain political declarations, even of printed announcements in a foreign paper, or rather a paper published beyond the boundary line, which had induced the former Lieutenant Dournay to ask for his discharge, before it was given him without his asking.

"Then why was the rank of captain given him?" asked the Justice's wife.

"You question with as much shrewdness as the Justice himself," replied Bella.

She did not seem prepared for this inquiry, and only said that it was not for her to wish to stand in the way of a poor young man's earning a living. Very likely it had been done – at this point she seized the hand of the Justice's wife and held it between her own, as if signifying that she was entrusting a great secret to her charge – very likely it had been done for the sake of his mother, who had been a favorite lady of honor to the dowager princess; of course the matter was kept as quiet as possible.

Bella tried to put on a pleased smile, and to repress an expression of mild compassion, when the Justice's wife said, —

"There my husband guessed right again. As we were driving home from your reception – ah, what a pleasant, cheerful time we had – my husband said to me and my daughter, 'Children, I tell you, this Herr Dournay is a dangerous man.' Oh, men are always more keen-sighted, and know more about each other than we women can ever find out."

She seemed to be losing herself in general reflections on mankind, which she liked to make, saying that any one who lived over a ground-floor full of legal documents took a very gloomy view of men.

This did not seem to be what Bella wanted to-day. She asked very carelessly, —

"Has your husband spoken to Herr Sonnenkamp of his very sagacious opinion that this Herr Doctor Dournay is a dangerous man?"

"It's true that would be proper," said the Justice's wife. "Will you not tell my husband, gracious lady, that he ought to make his views known? He doesn't heed me, I'm sorry to say, but he is glad to do anything for you."

"Don't ask me," Bella replied. "You must see that I cannot mix myself up in this affair. My brother has a sort of regard toward his former comrade although they were not in the same regiment, and my husband has taken a morbid, I mean enthusiastic fancy to the young man. You are quite right; your husband is bound –"

Bella did her work so securely, that she felt sure that the Justice would go to Sonnenkamp before evening, and Herr Dournay might make the most of his confident bearing somewhere else, for Bella wished, on many accounts, that Eric should not be established in the neighborhood; he caused her uneasiness, almost pain indeed. As she tapped one hand with the closed fan which she held tightly grasped in the other, she inwardly repeated the words of the Justice: This Dournay is a dangerous man.

The Justice's wife was a woman of democratic principles; she was the daughter of a Chief-Justice who had offered unbending resistance at the time when Metternich ruled Germany, and, besides, she had a comfortable property of her own, which helps one to keep to liberal ideas. She felt a sort of democratic pride in not yielding anything to the nobility; but she saw in Frau Bella an

amiable, highly intellectual lady, and she submitted to her, without acknowledging to herself that her submission amounted to subserviency toward a countess. Bella was acute enough to see and understand it all, and treated the Justice's wife with that confidence which is shown only to equals; but she took care to be more than usually amiable, that the Justice's wife might attribute her visit to some other than the real object.

Lina entered the room, looking like a charming little housekeeper in her blue dress, and high-necked, white apron. Her mother sent her away again very soon, as the child must not be present if the gracious lady had still any private matter to speak of.

"Your dear child has developed finely, and she speaks very good French."

"Thank you," said the mother. "I don't know much of the young people of the present day; but Lina is still so slow, there's nothing piquant about her, and she is frightfully simple. Just think, the child has formed a fancy – how she ever got hold of such ideas in the convent, is a mystery to me – but only imagine, she believes that this Herr Captain Dournay has forced himself in as Roland's tutor, only because he is secretly in love with Fräulein Manna, whom he saw at the convent."

Frau Bella pretended much surprise, and heard the story of the meeting with Eric again, but the Justice's wife soon led the conversation back to the failure of all her efforts to make Lina a wide-awake girl.

Frau Bella might have said to her, if she had been disposed, You want to change this child, who has no special talent or beauty, from her genuineness and openness; you are continually teasing her to be lively, arch, and merry, to sing and to jump! You want to turn your fair-complexioned daughter with clear, light-blue eyes, into a dark-haired maiden with flashing brown eyes! Frau Bella might have said all this, but she did not. She pressed her thin lips close together; her nostrils quivered; she despised, at this moment, the whole of mankind. She was spared the necessity of saying anything, however, for the ladies who were invited came in successively. They were particularly glad to meet the Countess Wolfsgarten, and yet every one was a little vexed that she could not be the first in dress and appearance.

Ah, such a coffee-party of the fair sex!

There are some things, institutions, and arrangements, that have received a bad name, and cannot get rid of it again; this is the case with this fine institution of coffee-drinking. As soon as any favorable mention is made of it, every hearer and reader is convinced that is only downright irony, or a good-humored jest; for it has been settled, once for all, that this coffee-drinking of the ladies is only a hoax, and a pretence of kindly intercourse, with the participants. And yet this institution is a very excellent one, except when cards are introduced, and they carry it so far as to get up a regular gambling-party, as do the ladies at the small capitals, who have a handsome book with black morocco-binding, lettered on the back, "Hours of Meditation," but containing, inside, only blank leaves on which to mark down the points, and to enter the score. But that is only in the smaller capitals; here in our sociable little town, civilization has not advanced so far. Cards are not yet the book of salvation from all the evil of ennui; here they rely upon their own resources, the best way they can. And why should they not talk of persons, and occasionally say something pretty severe? What do other people, yes, even the men, in higher spheres, and at the tankard? Do they converse always about abstractions?

To be sure, there is talk here of town news, and whoever takes no part in this, holding himself aloof, does nothing for the town, nothing for his neighbor. And these ladies, who here have something to say about the so-called higher dignitaries, as well as the so-called inferior people, they are the same ladies who have established benevolent reunions, and behave in a strictly proper manner. So let us be pleasant and well-disposed guests, without any tendency to find fault, at this coffee-drinking of the fair sex.

Here comes Frau White. She is called Frau Coal behind her back, for she is the wife of a wood and coal-dealer. She has black locks and a dark complexion, which looks as if she had never washed herself thoroughly; and since the good woman is aware of her being nicknamed Mrs. Coal, she always

dresses herself in dead-white colors, which are not very becoming to her dark hair and complexion by bright daylight, but by lamp-light she is very charming to look at. Unfortunately she has the defect of squinting, and with so sweet an expression, as if her eyes had been permanently arrested in the midst of a killing affectionate glance.

Here is the wife of the cement-manufacturer, a tall and stately woman, never laughing, always inexpressibly serious, as if she carried about with her some great secret; she has no secret to impart, except that she has nothing to say.

Here sits the handsome wife of the school-director, a little too portly perhaps, nicknamed the Lay-figure because she is always dressed so finely; she has a perpetual smile upon her face, and one might almost imagine that she would still smile and show her beautiful teeth, even if she were to be the bearer or hearer of the tidings of death.

Here is the wife of the steamboat agent, a very fine looking woman, the mother of eleven children. The whole company are quite provoked with the little, plump, good woman, who never lets her cup stand on the table, but holds it up in her left hand, and repeatedly dips into it her biscuit, nodding assent to every one's remark, and seldom giving her own opinion, or, when she does, speaking with her mouth so full, that nobody understands her.

Here are the two Englishwomen who reside in the town; they were plain citizens, much beloved, without any title of lady, but were truly lady-like in appearance, for the reason that they needed no rank to set them off. They passed their time at home, did not depend upon visiting, and were like their own island, which produces all that man requires. Whenever the two ladies went into society they were always fresh, and were very cordially welcomed; and the amiable, awkward way in which they spoke German, and made use of strange constructions, served to increase the general kindness. Bella was especially friendly toward the Englishwomen. The ladies' conversation was all intermingled together, like the singing of birds in the woods. Each one sings its own song, then polishes its own bill, and has no concern about the rest, – hardly hears them. Only two remarks were generally listened to and repeated; once, when Frau White made the happy observation that one would be aware of Count Clodwig's many badges of distinction, even if he did not wear any, which the Justice's wife took occasion to report to Bella; and again, when they came upon the subject, no one could tell how, whether the men's smoking was agreeable or disagreeable, Frau Lay-figure said that her good man often expressed the wish that he could be passionately fond of smoking, so as to wean himself from being so fond of her. Frau Bella had that perpetual complaisant smile which is so cold, and yet so fascinating.

The conversation only grazed Herr Sonnenkamp lightly. It remained fixed upon Eric, and why should it not? Here in the summer time, thousands frequent the little town, and swarm on the road leading to the old castle and to the other objects of interest for sight-seers, but when had there been a person who remained among them, and such a noteworthy personage too? Eric was a strange bird who wanted to take refuge in the mysterious house of Sonnenkamp; they will do him no harm, ruffle not one of his feathers, but each one wishes to have her say concerning where he comes from, and how he looks.

The Justice's wife remarked that she would have liked to invite the Major to the coffee-drinking, for he could tell the most about the captain-doctor.

The ladies were busy, of course, with their crochet, embroidery and sewing; but these are only make-believe labors, for one must not seem to be wholly idle.

When they understood that Eric's mother was a lady of unimpeachable nobility, each one wanted to make out that she had perceived that in him at once, it was something that could not be concealed. Bella accorded to this remark one of her most friendly looks of general approval.

When the Justice himself now came, for a little quarter of an hour, to join the company, Bella requested him to take a chair by her; she declared that they were very happy in this harmless circle,

and she desired that no disturbing element should ever enter, to have only a decomposing influence upon it.

The Justice looked at her with his good-natured eyes, wholly at a loss to know what she meant, and stroked his obstinate whiskers; he could not imagine that this was intended to prepare the way for what his wife was to impart to him. He excused himself and soon went away; his wife informed them that Lina had joined the Liederkrantz of the town; they were practising now for the great musical festival which was to be held in the neighboring city, and to Lina would undoubtedly be assigned a solo-piece.

Frau Bella spoke very advisingly, and at the same time very discouragingly. She expressed her dislike of musical festivals, being convinced in her own mind that she alone understands music, and that the music which she fancies is the only genuine music. In these days, hundreds of young people of both sexes, of ordinary standing in society, sing in the musical festivals an oratorio of Händel, Haydn, Bach, and this vexed Bella; these people are convinced that they know something. If she had had power, she would have had the police put a stop to these meetings. For this reason, Frau Bella had a special spite against the oratorio, but she only said, – "I have no appreciation of it;" and inasmuch as she said, "I have no appreciation of it," this ought to be ample evidence that there is nothing in it to be appreciated.

She was exceedingly gracious and condescending. She said that she did not question the merits of the German masters in oratorio. The truth is, that it was extremely repugnant to her to have the Justice's wife, the wife of the school-director, and the two daughters of the head-forester, and even perhaps the tailor's and cobbler's daughters, presuming to be interested in high art, when not one of them could sound a single true note.

Lina now acquired a new importance, for there was a general expression of desire to hear her sing. The English ladies asked very pressingly for a German song, but Lina, who usually was not backward, to-day was not willing to comply. Her mother's eyes flashed, but Frau Bella placed her hand upon the arm of the angry mother, and an unheard of event happened; saying that she did not blame Lina for not being willing to begin to sing abruptly, without any preparation, she arose, went to the grand piano, preluded, and then played a sonata of Mozart in masterly style. All were happy, and the Justice's house, highly exalted, for none could boast, except the Castle Wolfsgarten and the castles of the nobility, that Bella had ever touched a key in any other than her own house.

Bella received overwhelming laudation, but she rejected it, and in a half serious, half contemptuous way, maintained that every one who wore long dresses wanted to play the piano. Bella was a genuine sister of her brother; she could be happy a whole day if she succeeded in uttering one pointed speech, and she took great delight now in saying, —

"Every girl, now-a-days, thinks she must learn to knit a musical stocking."

She continued to repeat these words, musical stocking, in a measure of three-fourths time. Every one laughed, the English ladies looked up in surprise, and Bella, was glad to explain to them what she meant by these words, adding, —

"Yes, they knit a stocking out of notes, and the great thing with them is, not to drop a single stitch. I truly believe that the good children consider the four movements of the sonata to be the four parts of the stocking; the top is the first movement, the leg is the adagio, the heel is the scherzo, the toe is the finale. Only one who has a real talent for it ought to be allowed to learn music."

This was generally agreed to, and they spoke of the amount of time spent upon the piano in youth, and that after marriage it was given up.

The Justice's wife had been appealed to, and if there can be a higher heaven in heaven itself, it was opened when Frau Bella praised Lina's singing, which she had heard, and requested that Lina might make her a visit of some weeks, when she could, perhaps, give her some instruction. The glance which the Justice's wife cast to her husband was inexpressibly joyful; and how delightful it is to have the ladies ear-witnesses of all this! It seemed to her that she was very good-natured and

very condescending, to be still friendly and affable with the doctor's wife, and also, indeed, with Frau Coal and the merchants' wives.

Bella extolled now, in the warmest terms, the delicious, spicy cakes which the Justice's wife knew how to make so excellently well; she would like to know the ingredients. The Justice's wife said that she had a particular way of giving them their flavor by putting into them a certain quantity of bitter almonds; and she promised to write out the receipt for her, but she resolved in her own mind never to remember to do it.

They had hardly tasted of the May-bowl, and declared that no one else knew how to mix it so well, before the Justice was informed that Herr von Pranken had arrived. The Justice went down, his wife detained Bella, and Lina, looking out of the window, saw that Pranken decidedly refused to come in for a moment. Bella now drove away, after taking a very hasty leave.

When she had gone, it seemed to all as if the court had withdrawn; they drew near to each other in a more confidential way, and had for the first time a really easy and home-like feeling.

The English ladies were the first to take their departure; the rest would not be less genteel than they, and in a short time the parents and the child were by themselves.

The wife took her husband into an adjoining room, and impressed upon him very earnestly, that it was the duty of a Justice to keep his district clean.

The Justice was faithful in his office, and whoever spoke of him would always affirm that he was the best man in the world. But he had no particular zeal for his calling; he was in the habit of saying, – Why am I mixed up with the affairs of other people? If I were a man of property, I would have nothing to do with the quarrels of other persons, but live quietly and contentedly to myself. But inasmuch as he had been inducted into the office, he performed its duties with fidelity. He was very reluctant to come to the determination to interfere in the matter of Eric, and he consented only when his wife told him in so many words, that the countess Bella had expressed the wish that he should.

They had come to the best understanding, when suddenly a slam, crash, and shriek were heard. Lina had let fall a whole tray full of cups.

The Justice's wife could not give a more satisfactory evidence of her serene content, than by saying, as she did, to Lina, —

"Be quiet, dear child. The mischief is done; it's of no sort of account. Cheer up, you've looked so blooming, and now you're so pale. I could almost thank God for sending us this trifling mishap, for in every joy there must be some little sorrow intermingled."

Lina was quiet, for she could not tell what she was thinking of when the coffee-tray fell out of her hands.

CHAPTER V. THE WORLD-SOUL

"Why did you not look in, for a moment, upon the worthy people?" asked Bella of her brother, after they had both taken their seats in the carriage.

Whenever she came from a company where she had been amiable, this mood continued awhile, and she would look smilingly into the air, then smilingly upon the furniture around; it was so now. There was in her the dying echo of a pleasant and cheerful frame of mind, but her brother came out of an entirely remote world, having spoken to-day with no one, – who would have thought it of him? – but his own soul, or more properly, Manna's soul.

"Ah! don't speak to me of the world," he said; "I wish to forget it, and that it should also forget me. I know it well, all hollow, waste, wilted, mere puppet-show. If you have been helping the puppets dance there awhile, you can lay them away again in the closet of forgetfulness."

"You seem rather low-spirited," said Bella, placing her hand upon her brother's shoulder.

"Low-spirited! that's another catchword! How often have I heard it used, and used it myself! What is meant by low-spirited? nothing. I have been knocked in pieces, and newly put together again. Ah, sister, a miracle has been wrought in me, and all miracles are now clear to me. Ah! I may come back to the words of the world, but I do not see how."

"Excellent! I congratulate you; you seem to have really fallen in love."

"Fallen in love! For God's sake, don't say that; I am consecrated, sanctified. I am yet such a poor, timorous, wretched child of the world, that I am ashamed to make my confession even to you, my only sister. Ah! I could never have believed that I should feel such emotion – I don't know what to call it – exaltation, such rapture thrilling every nerve. O sister, what a maiden!"

"It is not true," said Bella, leaning her head back against the soft lining of the carriage, "it not true that we women are the enigma of the world; you men are far more so. Over you, over Otto von Pranken, the ballet connoisseur, has come such a romantic feeling as this! But beautiful, excellent, the mightiest power, is the power of illusion."

Pranken was silent; he heard Bella's words as if they were uttered in a past state of existence. When, where, did they speak and think of the ballet? And yet, at these words there came dancing before his memory merry, aerial, short-dressed, roguish, smiling forms. His heart thumped like a hammer against the book, the book placed there in his breast-pocket. He was about to tell his sister that for several days he had no longer known who he was; that he was obliged often to recall to mind his own name, what he had wished, and what he still wished; that he went like one intoxicated through the world, which was only a flitting by of passing shadows; here were swiftly darting railway-trains, there towns and castles reflected in the river: all were fleeting shadows which would soon be gone, while only the soul had real being, the soul alone.

Such had been the influence of Thomas à Kempis, so had he read the words on which Manna's dark-brown eye had rested. All this passed through his mind; he could not make his sister comprehend the transformation, he could hardly comprehend it himself. He came to the conclusion to keep it all to himself; and changing his tone, with great self-command, he said smiling: —

"Yes, Bella, love has a sort of sanctifying power, if the word is allowable."

Bella told him in a bantering way, that he uttered this like a Protestant candidate for the ministry, who is making a declaration of love in the parsonage arbor to the minister's blonde little daughter, clad in rose-colored calico. She looked upon it, however, as an excellent, very commendable guaranty of his feelings, that he had declined, in his present state of mind, to enter the Justice's house; she praised his intention of breaking off now his flirtation with Lina.

Otto nodded, with a feeling of shame; and he began now to speak of Manna, in so gentle a tone, and in such serious earnestness, that Bella was more and more amazed. She let him go on without

interruption, and, clasping together the fingers of her right and left hand, she said to herself in a low tone: —

"Nut-brown eyes seven times, gazelle three times, glorious beyond all count."

They drove through a little, fragrant pine-wood, and it seemed to Pranken as if this perfumed air from without, and that from the book in his bosom, enveloped him, enwrapped him in its sweet odors, and elevated him above everything. He said, looking fixedly before him: —

"Since our great-uncle, the Archbishop Hubert, no one of our family has entered the service of the church; I shall —"

"You?"

"I shall," continued Pranken, "dedicate my second son to the church."

It appeared exceedingly comical, and yet Pranken said it with the deepest seriousness, while leaning comfortably against the back of the carriage, and puffing thick clouds of smoke in quick succession from the cigar in his mouth.

Bella, who always had some direct reply or some apposite remark to make in continuation, now said nothing, and Otto, who found it very hard to change the tone of conversation, seemed to himself to be under a spell. He, the merry one, he, always so free and easy, was reduced to the level of some intrusive Swaggerer in a convivial company, who had pretended to be a boon-companion, and must drink and drink, whether he relished it or not.

"I should like to give you one piece of advice," said Bella at last.

"I should like to hear it."

"Otto, I believe that your feeling is genuine, and I will also believe that it will last; but, for heaven's sake, don't let anything of it be perceived, for it will be considered hypocrisy, and the abject submission of a suitor, to win by this means this pious, wealthy heiress. Therefore, for the sake of your own honor, for the sake of your position, — I pass by every other consideration, — keep all these extravagances under safe lock and key. Otto, it is not my mouth that speaks, I am but the mouth-piece of the world: lock up all these heavenly sensations. Forgive me if I have not used the right word; I can think now of no other. In short, be the same as you were before you took this journey, at least in presence of the world. Are you offended with me? Your features are so painfully contracted."

"O, no, you are shrewd and kind, and I will do as you say."

As if a new stop had been drawn out, Pranken immediately asked: —

"What's the state of things at the Villa? Is the All-wise, the great World-soul, still there?"

"You mean, perhaps, your friend?" Bella could not refrain from bantering her brother.

"My friend? He never was my friend, and I never called him so. I have allowed myself to be bamboozled only through pity. It is a long-standing trait in our family, that we are not able to see anyone in misfortune, and I, when I help an unfortunate one, come readily into a more intimate relation with him than is natural and proper. If one wishes to rescue a man from drowning, one must grasp him in his arms and to his heart, but this does not make him our bosom-friend."

Here was again the flippant, galloping style of speaking, but there was a depth of thought in the illustration derived from the meditations of the previous days.

Bella handed her brother a note which Fräulein Perini had given her for him. Pranken broke the seal and read it; his countenance became cheerful. He put the letter in his breast-pocket, but as it did not seem to suit the neighborhood of Thomas à Kempis, he took it out again, and put it in another pocket. Then he folded his arms over his breast, and looked peacefully and serenely before him.

"Might I be permitted to read Fräulein Perini's note?" said Bella, extending her hand.

Otto took it out, hastily ran through it again, and handed it to his sister. It contained the information that Eric had gone away, and that he had held a secret interview with Frau Ceres; the details must be given by word of mouth.

Otto said that he wanted, some time or other, an answer to this riddle.

"The riddle is solved for me," said Bella exultingly. "Lina, the Justice's daughter – it just occurs to me that Egmont's Clara had no surname, needed none – well, Lina, the Justice's daughter, has declared to all the world, that the Captain World-soul was with her at the convent where Manna is, and without saying a word about it, he gets himself introduced by you, the next day, to her father. You then, as well as the rest of us, have been taken in by this loftily sublime World-soul."

Pranken drew a long breath, doubled up his fist, and then made a repelling motion with his hand. Bella imparted the further information that she had seen to it, at the coffee-party, that the World-soul – this word seemed to her just the one to designate Eric – should be obliged to seek another abiding place; the Justice would give the finishing stroke to him. Bella perceived, to her amazement, that Otto did not agree with her in this method of proceeding. It was entirely unworthy of the higher life – he did not explain whether he meant the higher social or spiritual life – to intrigue in this way against a poor deceitful wretch; he would much rather go openly to work, and directly enlighten Sonnenkamp.

Bella was in very good spirits, and took it in good part. She began with saying, that it was in the highest degree contemptible to make such a stir about the appointment of a private tutor, a personage that must always play a subordinate part, however fine may be his appearance. She advised her brother, in the mean while, not to let the Justice be beforehand with him if he himself wanted to have credit in the matter.

Otto declared his intent to visit Herr Sonnenkamp the next day, and then to cut off Dournay's secret threads. But he let the next day, and yet another, pass by, without going to the villa. If other tools and other hands did the work of annihilation, so much the better. The Justice should have time to carry out his design. Otto read Thomas à Kempis, to see if there was not some direction given for such a case; he found none.

CHAPTER VI. SKILFUL STRATEGY

On the third day after his return, Pranken set out for the villa. He stopped at the Justice's, for he wanted to know what he had done. But the Justice said, modestly as well as wisely, that he did not think it fitting to take any step before speaking with Herr von Pranken, who had recommended his friend to the house; he was ready, however, to drive with Herr von Pranken to Villa Eden.

Pranken bowed his thanks. He must then himself take a part in the affair. He did not decline the offer of the Justice, perhaps the pedantic little man might serve as a reconnoitering party, to find out where, and in what condition, the enemy was.

In his new frame of mind, Pranken was not inclined to enter into any intrigue, and he said to himself that this was nothing of that sort; but strategy was always permissible, even required. One must lay hold of the enemy wherever and howsoever he can. Pranken drew himself up erect, and laid down the precise method of proceeding: he would pretend to apologise for Eric, in order to help the Justice accomplish his object more directly. He was, again, the spirited, confident, captain of the horse-guards leaping the barriers.

The Justice requested that he would see the ladies, while he got ready for the drive. He had not yet shaved. The good Justice lived all the year round in violation of the law; every day his mustaches were liable to fell a sacrifice to the stringent regulation of the Prince, that the officers of the civil service should not wear a moustache. He gave as an excuse for wearing it his suffering from tooth-ache, but the real reason was, that he wanted to hide the loss of his teeth.

Pranken went up stairs. The Justice's wife welcomed him, and could not find words strong enough to describe her rapturous admiration of Bella, and the regret of the whole company that Herr von Pranken had not come in for a moment.

"Might one be allowed to ask where you have been?" enquired the wife of the Justice.

"I have been to see a dear friend on the lower Rhine."

"Might one ask the name of the friend?"

"Herr von Kempen."

She congratulated Pranken on having such intimate friends; if they could be always worthy of his friendship. The conversation might naturally, at this point, have brought in Eric, but Pranken refrained, and asked after Fräulein Lina. The mother said that her child was learning to cook, which every good housewife ought to be able to do; only it was to be regretted that there were no cooks fit to give any instruction. Pranken expressed himself in praise of this proceeding, and spoke of the demoralised condition of service, for which they had to thank the revolutionists, who undermined all fidelity and all belief.

The lady considered this very true, and was again on the point of referring to Eric, when luckily the Justice entered. He had put on his official dress, and his sword, making an almost ridiculous appearance, but Pranken was highly delighted at this respect for the occasion. They drove together to the villa. When Pranken left the Justice's house, he twirled his mustaches, in a most serene state of self-satisfaction and content. He is still honorable in the highest degree, shamefully good would many of his comrades call it, so to spare the girl. With this feeling of exemplary virtue – and it has a fine relish – he was extremely amiable, and full of elasticity, feeling convinced that he was, every instant, a benefactor of the family, and that at no small sacrifice on his own part.

Lina looked at them from the servant's room near the kitchen, as they drove off; she stood behind the flowers in full bloom upon the window-seat, and, as she inhaled the fragrance of a new-blown monthly rose, a fragrance not less sweet breathed through her soul. When she could no longer see the carriage in which her father sat with the baron, she hastened to the best room, opened the piano, and sang, with clear voice and ardent expression, love-songs to the world in general. Her mother

came in, with her hair in disorder, and considered it wholly incomprehensible that Lina should be singing, while two pots put there in the kitchen were boiling over.

"You'll never be anything but an ignoramus; except a little bit of language you learned there, the convent has only made you simpler than ever."

Lina went into the kitchen again, and stood before the hearth, lost in reverie. She would like to have heard what her father and Pranken had to say to one another.

Their conversation was very constrained. Pranken praised the Justice for his zeal in keeping his district pure; the Justice complained that he had, in this case, no overt acts to proceed upon, only a supposed dangerous tendency. He understood how to draw Pranken out, and the latter narrated many charges, of course wholly unjust, an appearance of treason among others, which had been brought against Eric. He prayed him, however, to spare the poor, young man to whom the Prince himself had been merciful, and he thanked the Justice for neutralizing the effects of the impulse, by which he himself had been violently carried away. The Justice did not know exactly what course he ought to take, and he was terrified when they came in sight of the villa.

CHAPTER VII. A SUBSTITUTE

Roland had gone to sleep with anger in his heart, on the evening of the parting, and he awoke in sorrow. It seemed impossible that Eric could have left him, and so strong was his faith in the bond between them, that he wished to go to Eric's room to ask forgiveness for having dreamed such evil things of him. But it was all true. He went to the room; it was empty, with only the doctor's diploma lying upon the table, a sign that it had not been all a dream.

Roland was not to remain long alone; he was summoned to his father.

His father introduced him to a man of gentlemanly bearing, who spoke only in French and somewhat broken German. This agreeable-looking young man, the Chevalier de Canne by name, was from French Switzerland, and came warmly recommended by a banker in the capital, who did not himself know the fountain-head of the stream which had brought the man to him, for it was all Fräulein Perini's work.

Fräulein Perini was never seen to send her letters by post, for they went through the hands of the priest, but her relations with the French clergy were such, that, by safe mediation, a lay-pupil who could be depended on was called to the position in Sonnenkamp's household. Sonnenkamp's prejudices against such a connection were well known, and it was carefully concealed.

By his modest and dignified bearing the Chevalier knew how to win the favor of the whole household, not excepting Herr Sonnenkamp. In contrast with Eric, he had about him something impersonal, so to speak; never obtruding any peculiar expression of his own special views, skilfully agreeing with everything, and succeeding, without flattery, in giving back each person's own words in such a way that they seemed to the speaker remarkably significant and excellent. He was able so to illustrate and interpret even the few words which Frau Ceres uttered, that one would believe he had long known the lady; he was besides especially welcome to Herr Sonnenkamp, from having a thorough knowledge of botany. With Fräulein Perini, he said grace before dinner, with so modest and elegant an air that it only added to the attractiveness of his appearance. Everyone was charmed except Roland, who, without knowing why, was constantly comparing the Chevalier with Eric. For the first time, he begged his father to send him to some school, no matter what one, and promised to be perfectly tractable; his father would not yield to his desire, but declared instead that Roland was very fortunate to have such a tutor found for him.

Roland could not complain that the Chevalier made his studies a burden to him, but he could not put Eric out of his thoughts. He had already thrice written to him directly, letters like the lament of a maiden who tells her lover how she is urged to a loveless marriage, and implores him to come to her. He begged Eric, who knew nothing of his angry mood, to forgive him for having fallen away from his allegiance for a moment; he clung to the hope that his father, who always spoke well of Eric, would still summon him.

So wrote Roland; he did not send the letters, but carelessly left them lying open, and the Chevalier took copies, which Fräulein Perini received.

Eric had in Joseph a firm ally in the family. He asked Roland continually when Eric would return, told him much of his parents and his grandfather, and also of a brother who was just Roland's own age. This gave new intensity to the longing after Eric, for Roland thought he would bring his brother with him, and then he would also have a brother and comrade.

Several days had passed thus; Roland was sitting on a camp-stool, near the road, where there was a fine view of the park, from which the tower of the castle seemed to spring up as a natural growth. Roland was drawing, and the Chevalier, who was a master in the art, sat near him. Roland soon saw that he had heretofore received too much assistance; he was now really painstaking and earnest. The Chevalier drew whatever Roland was drawing, and, from time to time, they compared

their work. His teacher had advised him to make drawings of all the views of the castle before it was rebuilt, and Roland had succeeded in doing so. Sometimes he believed that he had done it himself, then it all seemed like a humbug to him, for the teacher had really done most of the work.

Roland heard carriage-wheels, his heart beat, it was certainly Eric coming. He hurried to the road, and saw Pranken sitting by the Justice.

The Chevalier had followed Roland, who stood staring at the carriage. Pranken held out his hand and asked Roland to introduce the gentleman; Roland was obliged to mention his name, and the Chevalier added, in a tone of studied respect, the position he held. Pranken nodded in a very friendly manner, and left the carriage to walk with Roland, telling him that he brought him greetings from his sister, and that he wanted to speak with him alone, by and by, as he had an important message for him. Then he praised the noble bearing of the stranger, and said that such a man was far better than a conceited German doctor.

"Eric has a right to be conceited, but he is not," answered Roland.

Pranken twirled his moustache; he might be easy, and let Eric have due, since he was out of the way.

Roland felt an anxiety for which he could not account; he had a foreboding that something was going on which concerned Eric. At the villa Pranken left Roland to the Chevalier, to whom he nodded graciously; he asked the Justice to go without him to Herr Sonnenkamp, and, while the Justice stared in astonishment, vanished, without waiting for an answer, and went to find Fräulein Perini.

There was a most cordial greeting between the two, who held out both hands to each other. When Pranken asked about the Chevalier, Fräulein Perini pretended to know nothing of him; Pranken spoke strongly of the good impression he had received of the man, and affected not to suspect that she had brought any secret influence to bear in the matter.

Then came an account of the visit to Manna. Not fully, but in some measure, Pranken made known what a change had taken place in himself.

Fräulein Perini listened attentively, holding her pearl cross in her left hand; then she gave the particulars of Eric's secret visit to Frau Ceres, which she had referred to in her note: she showed Pranken a letter, which she had received from the superior in answer to her inquiries about the meeting between Eric and Manna. A copy of a letter from Roland to Manna, in which Eric was mentioned, was also at hand.

But now all the chivalry in Pranken's nature showed itself, increased by a moral and religious impulse. He stretched out his hand, as if he would shelter Manna from every breath, and said firmly and decidedly, that not a syllable more should seem to put her in a doubtful position. The whole thing was nothing but a school-girl fancy of the Justice's silly daughter, Lina. Manna's radiant being should not be dimmed by the least cloud of suspicion, for she was pure, and great, and noble. Pranken felt himself her knight, the defender of innocence, and he was noble enough to extend his defence to Eric, who was blameless in this respect: honorable feeling and elevated sentiment required that he should do him justice. Fräulein Perini watched Pranken's noble ardor with surprise, as he continued: —

"From this moment let us forget Lina's childish fancy; neither you, nor I, nor my sister, nor Herr Sonnenkamp, who fortunately knows nothing of it, you say, will ever cherish a thought of it again."

Fräulein Perini, instead of being hurt, was quite happy at this greatness of mind and acuteness in Pranken; she was modest enough to make a jest at the petty ideas of women. With great tact she declared that this was now the true knight's service, for the ground on which the tournament was held in our days was higher than of old.

Fräulein Perini would, on no consideration, come into collision with Pranken, knowing what power she would thereby put out of her hands. Pranken left her, with calm self-satisfaction, to go to Herr Sonnenkamp: he was almost ready to defend Eric since he was already set aside. With great peace of mind he laid his hand on the book in his breast pocket; the man who spoke in it would be content with him.

CHAPTER VIII.

BALAAM

Pranken found the Justice and Sonnenkamp engaged in general conversation; the greeting between him and the master of the house was very cordial, and he seated himself astride on a chair.

"I will tell you, honored friend," began Pranken, – he liked to call Sonnenkamp "honored friend" before people, – "I will tell you, by and by, about my journey. Now, let me congratulate you on having apparently found the right man for our Roland."

Herr Sonnenkamp answered that he should hardly keep the Chevalier; he was only in the house on trial. Something seemed to tell him that the highly cultivated Swiss would lead Roland's disposition too much towards the clergy and the church. Eric was exactly the man whom he should like the best.

Pranken looked around, as if to make sure whether the enemy was taking up a new position, and said, —

"We must undoubtedly estimate the true market-value of this man."

Sonnenkamp looked at him sharply, as Pranken rattled out the words "market-value." Did the baron think he must adapt his language to him, the merchant? He could not guess that Pranken prided himself on the expression which he had carefully arranged beforehand; he answered, —

"The market-value of the man is not small, but this Captain Doctor is an eccentric man, and eccentric men are very agreeable, but one can not rely upon them."

With the warmth of a new convert Pranken dwelt on Eric's scepticism, and the necessity of Roland's being trusted to the guidance of a truly religious man, who might, at the same time, know the world and its ways.

Sonnenkamp asked, smiling, —

"Then would you really advise making an ecclesiastic of Roland?"

"If it were his mission-"

Pranken played with his moustache, as he noticed Sonnenkamp's watchful look, bit his lips, and quickly corrected himself.

"If it were his true vocation, who would take the responsibility of holding him back? Perhaps it would be the noblest thing for him to renounce the treasures of this world, in order to win eternal treasure."

The Justice played, in an embarrassed manner, with his sword-belt; these words of unction from the Captain of the Guards seemed to him incomprehensibly, and yet they could not be spoken in jest. He avoided meeting the eye of either of his companions. Sonnenkamp looked serious. It only appeared inconceivable to him that the young man could speak so incautiously, if, not satisfied with the prospect of Manna's rich dowry, he wished to appropriate Roland's portion.

In the consciousness of superiority, and in the triumph of playing with men, Sonnenkamp stated that Doctor Richard had spoken to him of Eric so enthusiastically, that it would seem that one could not bring the man back fast enough in a coach and six.

"Ah, the doctor!" exclaimed Pranken, swinging his right hand as if it held an invisible riding-whip. "The doctor! Of course! Atheists and Communists stand by each other. Has the doctor also told you that he had a private conversation with Herr Dournay on Sunday?"

"No; how do you know it?"

"By an accident. I heard – through – through a servant: there was a pretence of going to give medical advice, then a rubbing of hands, and the remark that there was no need of Herr Sonnenkamp's knowing that they were united by old ties."

Sonnenkamp thanked him warmly for this information, but inwardly it grated upon him. A suspicion that one of his servant's was in Pranken's pay, was confirmed. The Pole, to whom Pranken always spoke so pleasantly, must be the man, and he should leave the house.

Sonnenkamp whistled inaudibly, only from the position of his lips could it be seen that he was whistling.

The Justice considered it his duty to permit no attack on the doctor, inasmuch as he was the official district-physician; their positions called for mutual support. After he had defended the doctor from any harsh judgment, while Pranken continually stroked his beard and mustache, he gave the conversation a turn by saying: —

"Herr von Pranken had the best intentions in recommending him, but might I express my opinion of the young man?"

Sonnenkamp replied that he should attach much weight to the opinion of the Justice. This was the moment when the strategic movement ought to be made. Pranken set himself more firmly on his chair, and cheered the Justice on to the charge, crying, —

"Explain yourself clearly. I ought to reproach myself for not having considered that any connection with this young man would be looked upon as a disrespect to the supreme authorities, even as an act of hostility."

"Allow me," answered the Justice, with a tone and manner as if he were in the court-room, remanding the accused into custody, "allow me to keep within the limits which it behooves me to observe."

Pranken was beside himself with this Justice; this little, insignificant, almost impotent mannikin maintained a deportment which was quite incomprehensible. Pranken had expected that he would work Sonnenkamp into a state of great excitement, and would give him an indelible impression of the hatred of the court towards Eric, and what really came? An exceedingly mild, most prudently-weighed, amicable consideration.

The Justice had called Eric a dangerous person considered only as a man, as a member of society. He said he did not know how rightly to express himself; he had meant it only in a moral sense; but he immediately took back the word *moral*, for Eric was known to be a highly moral man. And when he now came to the question whether, through any association with Eric, one would draw upon himself the displeasure of the court, a mild and benignant loyalty beamed from the countenance of the little man.

"The princes of our line," said he, "are not vindictive, but, on the contrary, extremely generous and forgiving; and our present reigning master! Good heavens! he has his peculiarities, but they are quite innocent, and with them he has inexhaustible kindness of heart, and do you think he would persecute the son of his teacher and the comrade of his brother's youth? I would sooner assert that he would show favor to any one who should assist Herr Eric — this Herr Eric, who has made it impossible for him to aid him in person."

Pranken was in despair. He looked at the Justice as if he were a hunting-dog that would not obey. He kept opening and shutting his hand, which seemed to feel a desperate longing for a whip; he made signs to the Justice, but in vain, and at last he smiled bitterly to himself. He looked at the Justice's mouth, thinking that his teeth must have grown again, he spoke fluently and decidedly as he never had done before. Ah, these bureaucrats! thought Pranken, pulling up his top-boots. Yes, these bureaucrats are not to be depended on!

"I am very glad," he cried at last, with a forced smile, "I am delighted that our respected Justice dispels all apprehension. Certainly, these official gentlemen understand their business excellently."

The Justice received his stab, but it did not penetrate the uniform. Sonnenkamp seemed to have played with the two men long enough. With an air of triumph, he went to his writing-table, where several sealed letters lay, tore the cover from one which he selected, and gave them the enclosed sheet, saying, —

"Read that, Herr von Pranken, and you too, Herr Justice, read it aloud."

And the Justice read, —

Villa Eden, May – , 186-.

Respected Herr Captain Doctor Dournay, – You will not take it ill of an old and experienced man, honored sir, if he takes the liberty of questioning from his one-sided, practical point of view, whether you are not committing an injustice in employing your mind, so richly endowed by nature, and furnished with knowledge, upon a single boy, instead of a large community. Allow me to say to you that I regard mind and knowledge as capital, and you make of your capital an investment at far too low a rate of interest. I honor the nobleness of mind and the modesty so manifest in your offer, but feeling assured that you entirely mistake yourself, when you think that you can be satisfied in so limited a sphere. I must, no less decidedly than gratefully, decline your offer to undertake the education of my son.

I desire that you would give me the opportunity, by offering you a situation for a year, with no special employment attached to it, to show to you how truly I am, most respectfully,

*Your obedient servant,
Henry Sonnenkamp.*

While the Justice was reading, Sonnenkamp whistled to himself, keeping time with one foot thrown over the other, manifestly very well satisfied with the letter.

He received it back with a triumphant glance, put it in a fresh envelope, and addressed it to Eric. While he was writing the address, he said, —

"I should like very much to take the man into my house on a different footing; he should do nothing but sit at the table and converse. Why should not that be had for money? If I were a Prince, I would appoint conversation-councillors. Are not the chamberlains something of this sort?" he asked Herr von Pranken, with a slight touch of sarcasm.

Pranken was disturbed. There was often in this man a height of presumption, which did not spare even the sacred precincts of the court; but Pranken smiled very obsequiously. Lootz was summoned through the speaking-tube, the letter was put into the post-bag, and Lootz departed.

Roland was waiting for Pranken, who now went with him into a retired place of the park, and there gave him an account, of his journey, and delivered to him a second copy of Thomas à Kempis. He pointed out to Roland the place where he was to begin reading that day, and what he was to read every day; but always secretly, whether his tutor should be a believer or an unbeliever.

"Isn't Eric coming back any more?" asked Roland.

"Your father had written to him a decided refusal before I came, and the letter has been put into the post before this."

The boy sat upon the bench in the park, and stared fixedly, the book open in his hand.

CHAPTER IX.

DEJECTION AND COURAGE IN A CHILD'S HEART

At the table, Frau Ceres thought that her son looked very pale; she besought the Chevalier not to tax him so severely, and especially not to let him draw so long out of doors.

The Chevalier entirely coincided with this; it was his plan to have Roland draw from plaster-models, and after that, he would take him out into the free air.

"Taken out into free air?" said Roland to himself; and it seemed to strike him that there was a contradiction in the idea of being taken into the free air.

Sonnenkamp was unusually cheerful at dinner; his contempt for men had to-day received new confirmation, and he had fresh conviction of his ability to play with them. He enjoyed a special sense of freedom in the thought that this Herr Dournay, who undertook to dictate matters for him and for so many other people, was now done with. Yet he must acknowledge to himself, that he could, probably, have made no better choice for his son.

After dinner, Pranken allowed the Justice, who was in a hurry, to be driven to town in Sonnenkamp's carriage; he himself remained in very confidential conversation with Sonnenkamp, who admired the art with which a young man, who was a suitor for a wealthy maiden, worked himself into a state of enthusiasm thereat.

After Pranken had departed, Sonnenkamp went to the conservatory, where Roland soon came to him and said: —

"Father, I have a request."

"I shall be glad, if it is a request that I can grant."

"Father, I promise to learn everyday the names of twenty plants, if you will give me Herr Eric again."

"Very nice of Herr Dournay to teach you to promise me that."

The boy looked at his father, as if confounded, his lips swelled, and gazing timidly around upon the plants, as if he called upon them to bear testimony that he was speaking the truth, he cried: —

"Eric has not said to me anything of the kind, any more than those plants have; he has not taught me to say that; but if he had, I would learn it from him, and from nobody but him."

"Not even from me?" exclaimed Sonnenkamp.

The boy was silent, and his father repeated the question: —

"Not even from me?"

His tone was vehement, and he doubled up his great fist.

"Not even from me?" he asked the third time.

The boy drew back, and cried with a thrilling voice: —

"Father!"

Sonnenkamp's fist unclosed, and with forced composure he said: —

"I didn't mean to punish you, Roland – come here – nearer – nearer yet."

The boy went to him, and his father placed his hand upon his forehead, which, was hot, while the father's hand was cold.

"I love you more than you can understand," said the father. He bent down his head, but the boy stretched out both hands, crying with a voice full of anguish: —

"Ah, father! I beseech you – father, I beseech you, not to kiss me now."

Sonnenkamp turned and went away. He expected that the boy would follow him, and clasp him round the neck, but he did not come.

Sonnenkamp stood in the hot-house near the palms; he felt chilly; then he asked himself: "Why does not the child love you? Is that crack-brained German revolutionist, that Doctor Fritz, in the

right, who used the words in a published letter: Thou who extirpatest filial and parental love in thy fellow human beings, how canst thou hope for the love of thine own children?"

He could not comprehend how these words, which were uttered in a contest long gone by, and which he wished to forget, now came into his mind. Suddenly a loud cry made the strong man shudder.

"God bless you, massa! God bless you, massa!" seemed to be uttered by the voice of a spirit.

He searched about, and found his wife's parrot, which had been brought in its cage to the hot-house. The gardener, when summoned, informed him that Frau Ceres had ordered the parrot to be brought here, as the dwelling-house was too cold for it.

"God bless you, massa! God bless you, massa!" cried the parrot behind Sonnenkamp, as he was leaving the palm-house.

Roland, in the meanwhile, stood as if rooted at the spot where his father had left him; the park, the house, everything swam round before his eyes. Joseph then came. Roland was rejoiced that there was yet one human being with whom he could lament over Eric's expulsion. He told him what had happened, and made complaint about his father.

"Don't say anything to me that I cannot repeat to your father," interposed Joseph. He was a prudent and faithful servant, who would have nothing to do with secrets, or with tale-bearing. His father had impressed that upon him, when he went away from his home, and he had resolutely and faithfully kept his counsel.

Roland asked Joseph if he was not going to return soon to his native city; Joseph replied in the negative, but went on to tell, with great animation, how splendid it was the first time he had leave to go home. He described very minutely the road, and whom he met at this place and at that, and how his mother was peeling potatoes when he stepped into the house, and how then his father came in, and all the neighbors, and expected to see him wearing golden clothes, because he was in the service of so rich a man. Joseph laughed at this simplicity, but Roland did not. He went back to the house, and it seemed to him as if the whole house thrust him out. He went into Manna's chamber; he thought it would seem homelike here, but the pictures on the wall, and the flowers in the chimney-place, looked at him so strange and so inquiring. He wished to write to Manna, and tell her of all his troubles, but he could not write.

He left the house and went into the court; here he stood for a while, looking round dreamily. The Chevalier came out and asked him if he did not want to do something; Roland stared at him, as if he did not recognize who he was, and made no reply. He took his cross-bow, but he did not draw the string. The sparrows and doves flew about hither and thither; the handsome dogs crowded up to him and sniffed around him, but Roland was like one bewildered.

He went to the river-bank, followed by his great dog, Devil, and there he sat down under the huge, tall willows, putting his hat on the ground near him, for his head seemed on fire. He bathed his brow with water, but his brow was no cooler. He did not know how long he had been sitting there, gazing fixedly into vacancy without any conscious thought, when he heard some one call him by name. He involuntarily clapped his hand upon the muzzle of the dog lying near him, scarcely breathing himself, in order not to betray his place of concealment. The voice grew fainter, and ceased to be heard. He still sat quiet, and cautioned the dog in a low tone to be still also; the dog seemed to understand him.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.