

ТОМАС ДЕ КВИНСИ

MEMORIALS AND OTHER
PAPERS — VOLUME 2

Томас Де Квинси

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Thomas De Quincey

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KLOSTERHEIM [1832.]

CHAPTER I

The winter of 1633 had set in with unusual severity throughout Suabia and Bavaria, though as yet scarcely advanced beyond the first week of November. It was, in fact, at the point when our tale commences, the eighth of that month, or, in our modern computation, the eighteenth; long after which date it had been customary of late years, under any ordinary state of the weather, to extend the course of military operations, and without much decline of vigor. Latterly, indeed, it had become apparent that entire winter campaigns, without either formal suspensions of hostilities, or even partial relaxations, had entered professedly as a point of policy into the system of warfare which now swept over Germany in full career, threatening soon to convert its vast central provinces—so recently blooming Edens of peace and expanding prosperity—into a howling wilderness; and which had already converted immense tracts into one universal aceldama, or human shambles, reviving to the recollection at every step the extent of past happiness in the endless memorials of its destruction. This innovation upon the old practice of war had been introduced by the Swedish armies, whose northern habits and training had fortunately prepared them to receive a German winter as a very beneficial exchange; whilst upon the less hardy soldiers from Italy, Spain, and the Southern France, to whom the harsh transition from their own sunny skies had made the very same climate a severe trial of constitution, this change of policy pressed with a hardship that sometimes [Footnote: Of which there is more than one remarkable instance, to the great dishonor of the French arms, in the records of *her* share in the Thirty Years' War.] crippled their exertions.

It was a change, however, not so long settled as to resist the extraordinary circumstances of the weather. So fierce had been the cold for the last fortnight, and so premature, that a pretty confident anticipation had arisen, in all quarters throughout the poor exhausted land, of a general armistice. And as this, once established, would offer a ready opening to some measure of permanent pacification, it could not be surprising that the natural hopefulness of the human heart, long oppressed by gloomy prospects, should open with unusual readiness to the first colorable dawn of happier times. In fact, the reaction in the public spirits was sudden and universal. It happened also that the particular occasion of this change of prospect brought with it a separate pleasure on its own account. Winter, which by its peculiar severity had created the apparent necessity for an armistice, brought many household pleasures in its train—associated immemorially with that season in all northern climates. The cold, which had casually opened a path to more distant hopes, was also for the present moment a screen between themselves and the enemy's sword. And thus it happened that the same season, which held out a not improbable picture of final restoration, however remote, to public happiness, promised them a certain foretaste of this blessing in the immediate security of their homes.

But in the ancient city of Klosterheim it might have been imagined that nobody participated in these feelings. A stir and agitation amongst the citizens had been conspicuous for some days; and on the morning of the eighth, spite of the intense cold, persons of every rank were seen crowding from an early hour to the city walls, and returning homewards at intervals, with anxious and dissatisfied looks. Groups of both sexes were collected at every corner of the wider streets, keenly debating, or angrily protesting; at one time denouncing vengeance to some great enemy; at another, passionately

lamenting some past or half-forgotten calamity, recalled to their thoughts whilst anticipating a similar catastrophe for the present day.

Above all, the great square, upon which the ancient castellated palace or *schloss* opened by one of its fronts, as well as a principal convent of the city, was the resort of many turbulent spirits. Most of these were young men, and amongst them many students of the university: for the war, which had thinned or totally dispersed some of the greatest universities in Germany, under the particular circumstances of its situation, had greatly increased that of Klosterheim. Judging by the tone which prevailed, and the random expressions which fell upon the ear at intervals, a stranger might conjecture that it was no empty lamentation over impending evils which occupied this crowd, but some serious preparation for meeting or redressing them. An officer of some distinction had been for some time observing them from the antique portals of the palace. It was probable, however, that little more than their gestures had reached him; for at length he moved nearer, and gradually insinuated himself into the thickest part of the mob, with the air of one who took no further concern in their proceedings than that of simple curiosity. But his martial air and his dress allowed him no means of covering his purpose. With more warning and leisure to arrange his precautions, he might have passed as an indifferent spectator; as it was, his jewel-hilted sabre, the massy gold chain, depending in front from a costly button and loop which secured it half way down his back, and his broad crimson scarf, embroidered in a style of peculiar splendor, announced him as a favored officer of the Landgrave, whose ambitious pretensions, and tyrannical mode of supporting them, were just now the objects of general abhorrence in Klosterheim. His own appearance did not belie the service which he had adopted. He was a man of stout person, somewhat elegantly formed, in age about three or four and thirty, though perhaps a year or two of his apparent age might be charged upon the bronzing effects of sun and wind. In bearing and carriage he announced to every eye the mixed carelessness and self-possession of a military training; and as his features were regular, and remarkably intelligent, he would have been pronounced, on the whole, a man of winning exterior, were it not for the repulsive effect of his eye, in which there was a sinister expression of treachery, and at times a ferocious one of cruelty.

Placed upon their guard by his costume, and the severity of his countenance, those of the lower rank were silent as he moved along, or lowered their voices into whispers and inaudible murmurs. Amongst the students, however, whenever they happened to muster strongly, were many fiery young men, who disdained to temper the expression of their feelings, or to moderate their tone. A large group of these at one corner of the square drew attention upon themselves, as well by the conspicuous station which they occupied upon the steps of a church portico, as by the loudness of their voices. Towards them the officer directed his steps; and probably no lover of *scenes* would have had very long to wait for some explosion between parties both equally ready to take offence, and careless of giving it; but at that moment, from an opposite angle of the square, was seen approaching a young man in plain clothes, who drew off the universal regard of the mob upon himself, and by the uproar of welcome which saluted him occasioned all other sounds to be stifled. "Long life to our noble leader!"—"Welcome to the good Max!" resounded through the square. "Hail to our noble brother!" was the acclamation of the students. And everybody hastened forward to meet him with an impetuosity which for the moment drew off all attention from the officer: he was left standing by himself on the steps of the church, looking down upon this scene of joyous welcome—the sole spectator who neither fully understood its meaning, nor shared in its feelings.

The stranger, who wore in part the antique costume of the university of Klosterheim, except where he still retained underneath a travelling dress, stained with recent marks of the roads and the weather, advanced amongst his friends with an air at once frank, kind, and dignified. He replied to their greetings in the language of cheerfulness; but his features expressed anxiety, and his manner was hurried. Whether he had not observed the officer overlooking them, or thought that the importance of the communications which he had to make transcended all common restraints of caution, there

was little time to judge; so it was, at any rate, that, without lowering his voice, he entered abruptly upon his business.

"Friends! I have seen the accursed Holkerstein; I have penetrated within his fortress. With my own eyes I have viewed and numbered his vile assassins. They are in strength triple the utmost amount of our friends. Without help from us, our kinsmen are lost. Scarce one of us but will lose a dear friend before three nights are over, should Klosterheim not resolutely do her duty."

"She shall, she shall!" exclaimed a multitude of voices.

"Then, friends, it must be speedily; never was there more call for sudden resolution. Perhaps, before to-morrow's sun shall set, the sword of this detested robber will be at their throats. For he has some intelligence (whence I know not, nor how much) of their approach. Neither think that Holkerstein is a man acquainted with any touch of mercy or relenting. Where no ransom is to be had, he is in those circumstances that he will and must deliver himself from the burden of prisoners by a general massacre. Infants even will not be spared."

Many women had by this time flocked to the outer ring of the listening audience. And, perhaps, for *their* ears in particular it was that the young stranger urged these last circumstances; adding,

"Will you look down tamely from your city walls upon such another massacre of the innocents as we have once before witnessed?"

"Cursed be Holkerstein!" said a multitude of voices.

"And cursed be those that openly or secretly support him!" added one of the students, looking earnestly at the officer.

"Amen!" said the officer, in a solemn tone, and looking round him with the aspect of one who will not suppose himself to have been included in the suspicion.

"And, friends, remember this," pursued the popular favorite; "whilst you are discharging the first duties of Christians and brave men to those who are now throwing themselves upon the hospitality of your city, you will also be acquitting yourselves of a great debt to the emperor."

"Softly, young gentleman, softly," interrupted the officer; "his serene highness, my liege lord and yours, governs here, and the emperor has no part in our allegiance. For debts, what the city owes to the emperor she will pay. But men and horses, I take it—"

"Are precisely the coin which the time demands; these will best please the emperor, and, perhaps, will suit the circumstances of the city. But, leaving the emperor's rights as a question for lawyers, you, sir, are a soldier,—I question not, a brave one,—will you advise his highness the Landgrave to look down from the castle windows upon a vile marauder, stripping or murdering the innocent people who are throwing themselves upon the hospitality of this ancient city?"

"Ay, sir, that will I, be you well assured—the Landgrave is my sovereign—"

"Since when? Since Thursday week, I think; for so long it is since your *tertia* [Footnote: An old Walloon designation for a battalion.] first entered Klosterheim. But in that as you will, and if it be a point of honor with you gentlemen Walloons to look on whilst women and children are butchered. For such a purpose no man is *my* sovereign; and as to the Landgrave in particular—"

"Nor ours, nor ours!" shouted a tumult of voices, which drowned the young student's words about the Landgrave, though apparently part of them reached the officer. He looked round in quest of some military comrades who might support him in the *voye du fait*, to which, at this point, his passion prompted him. But, seeing none, he exclaimed, "Citizens, press not this matter too far—and you, young man, especially, forbear,—you tread upon the brink of treason!"

A shout of derision threw back his words.

"Of treason, I say," he repeated, furiously; "and such wild behavior it is (and I say it with pain) that perhaps even now is driving his highness to place your city under martial law."

"Martial law! did you hear that?" ran along from mouth to mouth.

"Martial law, gentlemen, I say; how will you relish the little articles of that code? The provost marshal makes short leave-takings. Two fathom of rope, and any of these pleasant old balconies

which I see around me (pointing, as he spoke, to the antique galleries of wood which ran round the middle stories in the Convent of St. Peter), with a confessor, or none, as the provost's breakfast may chance to allow, have cut short, to my knowledge, the freaks of many a better fellow than any I now see before me."

Saying this, he bowed with a mock solemnity all round to the crowd, which, by this time, had increased in number and violence. Those who were in the outermost circles, and beyond the distinct hearing of what he said, had been discussing with heat the alarming confirmation of their fears in respect to Holkerstein, or listening to the impassioned narrative of a woman, who had already seen one of her sons butchered by this ruffian's people under the walls of the city, and was now anticipating the same fate for her last surviving son and daughter, in case they should happen to be amongst the party now expected from Vienna. She had just recited the tragical circumstances of her son's death, and had worked powerfully upon the sympathizing passions of the crowd, when, suddenly, at a moment so unseasonable for the officer, some imperfect repetition of his words about the provost martial and the rope passed rapidly from mouth to mouth. It was said that he had threatened every man with instant death at the drum-head, who should but speculate on assisting his friends outside, under the heaviest extremities of danger or of outrage. The sarcastic bow and the inflamed countenance of the officer were seen by glimpses further than his words extended. Kindling eyes and lifted arms of many amongst the mob, and chiefly of those on the outside, who had heard his words the most imperfectly, proclaimed to such as knew Klosterheim and its temper at this moment the danger in which he stood. Maximilian, the young student, generously forgot his indignation in concern for his immediate safety. Seizing him by the hand, he exclaimed,

"Sir, but a moment ago you warned me that I stood on the brink of treason: look to your own safety at present; for the eyes of some whom I see yonder are dangerous."

"Young gentleman," the other replied, contemptuously, "I presume that you are a student; let me counsel you to go back to your books. There you will be in your element. For myself, I am familiar with faces as angry as these—and hands something more formidable. Believe me, I see nobody here," and he affected to speak with imperturbable coolness, but his voice became tremulous with passion, "whom I can even esteem worthy of a soldier's consideration."

"And yet, Colonel von Aremberg, there is at least one man here who has had the honor of commanding men as elevated as yourself." Saying which, he hastily drew from his bosom, where it hung suspended from his neck, a large flat tablet of remarkably beautiful onyx, on one side of which was sculptured a very striking face; but on the other, which he presented to the gaze of the colonel, was a fine representation of an eagle grovelling on the dust, and beginning to expand its wings—with the single word *Resurgam* by way of motto.

Never was revulsion of feeling so rapidly expressed on any man's countenance. The colonel looked but once; he caught the image of the bird trailing its pinions in the dust, he heard the word *Resurgam* audibly pronounced; his color fled, his lips grew livid with passion; and, furiously unsheathing his sword, he sprung, with headlong forgetfulness of time and place, upon his calm antagonist. With the advantage of perfect self-possession, Maximilian found it easy to parry the tempestuous blows of the colonel; and he would, perhaps, have found it easy to disarm him. But at this moment the crowd, who had been with great difficulty repressed by the more thoughtful amongst the students, burst through all restraints. In the violent outrage offered to their champion and leader, they saw naturally a full confirmation of the worst impressions they had received as to the colonel's temper and intention. A number of them rushed forward to execute a summary vengeance; and the foremost amongst these, a mechanic of Klosterheim, distinguished for his herculean strength, with one blow stretched Von Aremberg on the ground. A savage yell announced the dreadful fate which impended over the fallen officer. And, spite of the generous exertions made for his protection by Maximilian and his brother students, it is probable that at that moment no human interposition could

have availed to turn aside the awakened appetite for vengeance, and that he must have perished, but for the accident which at that particular instant of time occurred to draw off the attention of the mob.

A signal gun from a watch-tower, which always in those unhappy times announced the approach of strangers, had been fired about ten minutes before; but, in the turbulent uproar of the crowd, it had passed unnoticed. Hence it was, that, without previous warning to the mob assembled at this point, a mounted courier now sprung into the square at full gallop on his road to the palace, and was suddenly pulled up by the dense masses of human beings.

"News, news!" exclaimed Maximilian; "tidings of our dear friends from Vienna! "This he said with the generous purpose of diverting the infuriated mob from the unfortunate Von Aremburg, though himself apprehending that the courier had arrived from another quarter. His plan succeeded: the mob rushed after the horseman, all but two or three of the most sanguinary, who, being now separated from all assistance, were easily drawn off from their prey. The opportunity was eagerly used to carry off the colonel, stunned and bleeding, within the gates of a Franciscan convent. He was consigned to the medical care of the holy fathers; and Maximilian, with his companions, then hurried away to the chancery of the palace, whither the courier had proceeded with his despatches.

These were interesting in the highest degree. It had been doubted by many, and by others a pretended doubt had been raised to serve the Landgrave's purpose, whether the great cavalcade from Vienna would be likely to reach the entrance of the forest for a week or more. Certain news had now arrived, and was published before it could be stifled, that they and all their baggage, after a prosperous journey so far, would be assembled at that point on this very evening. The courier had left the advanced guard about noonday, with an escort of four hundred of the Black Yagers from the Imperial Guard, and two hundred of Papenheim's Dragoons, at Waldenhausen, on the very brink of the forest. The main body and rear were expected to reach the same point in four or five hours; and the whole party would then fortify their encampment as much as possible against the night attack which they had too much reason to apprehend.

This was news which, in bringing a respite of forty-eight hours, brought relief to some who had feared that even this very night might present them with the spectacle of their beloved friends engaged in a bloody struggle at the very gates of Klosterheim; for it was the fixed resolution of the Landgrave to suffer no diminution of his own military strength, or of the means for recruiting it hereafter. Men, horses, arms, all alike were rigorously laid under embargo by the existing government of the city; and such was the military power at its disposal, reckoning not merely the numerical strength in troops, but also the power of sweeping the main streets of the town, and several of the principal roads outside, that it was become a matter of serious doubt whether the unanimous insurrection of the populace had a chance for making head against the government. But others found not even a momentary comfort in this account. They considered that, perhaps, Waldenhausen might be the very ground selected for the murderous attack. There was here a solitary post-house, but no town, or even village. The forest at this point was just thirty-four miles broad; and if the bloodiest butchery should be going on under cover of night, no rumor of it could be borne across the forest in time to alarm the many anxious friends who would this night be lying awake in Klosterheim.

A slight circumstance served to barb and point the public distress, which otherwise seemed previously to have reached its utmost height. The courier had brought a large budget of letters to private individuals throughout Klosterheim; many of these were written by children unacquainted with the dreadful catastrophe which threatened them. Most of them had been long separated, by the fury of the war, from their parents. They had assembled, from many different quarters, at Vienna, in order to join what might be called, in Oriental phrase, *the caravan*. Their parents had also, in many instances, from places equally dispersed, assembled at Klosterheim; and, after great revolutions of fortune, they were now going once more to rejoin each other. Their letters expressed the feelings of hope and affectionate pleasure suitable to the occasion. They retraced the perils they had passed during the twenty-six days of their journey,—the great towns, heaths, and forests, they had traversed

since leaving the gates of Vienna; and expressed, in the innocent terms of childhood, the pleasure they felt in having come within two stages of the gates of Klosterheim. "In the forest," said they, "there will be no more dangers to pass; no soldiers; nothing worse than wild deer."

Letters written in these terms, contrasted with the mournful realities of the case, sharpened the anguish of fear and suspense throughout the whole city; and Maximilian with his friends, unable to bear the loud expression of the public feelings, separated themselves from the tumultuous crowds, and adjourning to the seclusion of their college rooms, determined to consult, whilst it was yet not too late, whether, in their hopeless situation for openly resisting the Landgrave without causing as much slaughter as they sought to prevent, it might not yet be possible for them to do something in the way of resistance to the bloody purposes of Holkerstein.

CHAPTER II

The travelling party, for whom much anxiety was felt in Klosterheim, had this evening reached Waldenhausen without loss or any violent alarm; and, indeed, considering the length of their journey, and the distracted state of the empire, they had hitherto travelled in remarkable security. It was now nearly a month since they had taken their departure from Vienna, at which point considerable numbers had assembled from the adjacent country to take the benefit of their convoy. Some of these they had dropped at different turns in their route, but many more had joined them as they advanced; for in every considerable city they found large accumulations of strangers, driven in for momentary shelter from the storm of war as it spread over one district after another; and many of these were eager to try the chances of a change, or, upon more considerate grounds, preferred the protection of a place situated like Klosterheim, in a nook as yet unvisited by the scourge of military execution. Hence it happened, that from a party of seven hundred and fifty, with an escort of four hundred yagers, which was the amount of their numbers on passing through the gates of Vienna, they had gradually swelled into a train of sixteen hundred, including two companies of dragoons, who had joined them by the emperor's orders at one of the fortified posts.

It was felt, as a circumstance of noticeable singularity, by most of the party, that, after traversing a large part of Germany without encountering any very imminent peril, they should be first summoned to unusual vigilance, and all the most jealous precautions of fear, at the very termination of their journey. In all parts of their route they had met with columns of troops pursuing their march, and now and then with roving bands of deserters, who were formidable to the unprotected traveller. Some they had overawed by their display of military strength; from others, in the imperial service, they had received cheerful assistance; and any Swedish corps, which rumor had presented as formidable by their numbers, they had, with some exertion of forethought and contrivance, constantly evaded, either by a little detour, or by a temporary halt in some place of strength. But now it was universally known that they were probably waylaid by a desperate and remorseless freebooter, who, as he put his own trust exclusively in the sword, allowed nobody to hope for any other shape of deliverance.

Holkerstein, the military robber, was one of the many monstrous growths which had arisen upon the ruins of social order in this long and unhappy war. Drawing to himself all the malcontents of his own neighborhood, and as many deserters from the regular armies in the centre of Germany as he could tempt to his service by the license of unlimited pillage, he had rapidly created a respectable force; had possessed himself of various castles in Wirtemberg, within fifty or sixty miles of Klosterheim; had attacked and defeated many parties of regular troops sent out to reduce him; and, by great activity and local knowledge, had raised himself to so much consideration, that the terror of his name had spread even to Vienna, and the escort of yagers had been granted by the imperial government as much on his account as for any more general reason. A lady, who was in some way related to the emperor's family, and, by those who were in the secret, was reputed to be the emperor's natural daughter, accompanied the travelling party, with a suite of female attendants. To this lady, who was known by the name of the Countess Paulina, the rest of the company held themselves indebted for their escort; and hence, as much as for her rank, she was treated with ceremonious respect throughout the journey.

The Lady Paulina travelled with, her suite in coaches, drawn by the most powerful artillery horses that could be furnished at the various military posts. [Footnote: Coaches were common in Germany at this time amongst people of rank. At the reinstatement of the Dukes of Mecklenburg, by Gustavus Adolphus, though without much notice, more than four-score of coaches were assembled.] On this day she had been in the rear; and having been delayed by an accident, she was waited for with some impatience by the rest of the party, the latest of whom had reached Waldenhausen early in the afternoon. It was sunset before her train of coaches arrived; and, as the danger from Holkerstein

commenced about this point, they were immediately applied to the purpose of strengthening their encampment against a night attack, by chaining them, together with all the baggage-carts, in a triple line, across the different avenues which seemed most exposed to a charge of cavalry. Many other preparations were made; the yagers and dragoons made arrangements for mounting with ease on the first alarm; strong outposts were established; sentinels posted all round the encampment, who were duly relieved every hour, in consideration of the extreme cold; and, upon the whole, as many veteran officers were amongst them, the great body of the travellers were now able to apply themselves to the task of preparing their evening refreshments with some degree of comfort; for the elder part of the company saw that every precaution had been taken, and the younger were not aware of any extraordinary danger.

Waldenhausen had formerly been a considerable village. At present there was no more than one house, surrounded, however, by such a large establishment of barns, stables, and other outhouses, that, at a little distance, it wore the appearance of a tolerable hamlet. Most of the outhouses, in their upper stories, were filled with hay or straw; and there the women and children prepared their couches for the night, as the warmest resorts in so severe a season. The house was furnished in the plainest style of a farmer's; but in other respects it was of a superior order, being roomy and extensive. The best apartment had been reserved for the Lady Paulina and her attendants; one for the officers of most distinction in the escort or amongst the travellers; the rest had been left to the use of the travellers indiscriminately.

In passing through the hall of entrance, Paulina had noticed a man of striking and *farouche* appearance,—hair black and matted, eyes keen and wild, and beaming with malicious cunning, who surveyed her as she passed with a mixed look of insolence and curiosity, that involuntarily made her shrink. He had been half reclining carelessly against the wall, when she first entered, but rose upright with a sudden motion as she passed him—not probably from any sentiment of respect, but under the first powerful impression of surprise on seeing a young woman of peculiarly splendid figure and impressive beauty, under circumstances so little according with what might be supposed her natural pretensions. The dignity of her deportment, and the numbers of her attendants, sufficiently proclaimed the luxurious accommodations which her habits might have taught her to expect; and she was now entering a dwelling which of late years had received few strangers of her sex, and probably none but those of the lowest rank.

"Know your distance, fellow!" exclaimed one of the waiting-women, angrily, noticing his rude gaze and the effect upon her mistress.

"Good faith, madam, I would that the distance between us were more; it was no prayers of mine, I promise you, that brought upon me a troop of horses to Waldenhausen, enough in one twelve hours to eat me out a margrave's ransom. Light thanks I reckon on from yagers; and the payments of dragoons will pass current for as little in the forest, as a lady's frown in Waldenhausen."

"Churl!" said an officer of dragoons, "how know you that our payments are light? The emperor takes nothing without payment; surely not from such as you. But *à propos* of ransoms, what now might be Holkerstein's ransom for a farmer's barns stuffed with a three years' crop?"

"How mean you by that, captain? The crop's my own, and never was in worse hands than my own. God send it no worse luck to-day!"

"Come, come, sir, you understand me better than that; nothing at Waldenhausen, I take it, is yours or any man's, unless by license from Holkerstein. And when I see so many goodly barns and garners, with their jolly charges of hay and corn, that would feed one of Holkerstein's garrisons through two sieges, I know what to think of him who has saved them scot-free. He that serves a robber must do it on a robber's terms. To such bargains there goes but one word, and that is the robber's. But, come, man, I am not thy judge. Only I would have my soldiers on their guard at one of Holkerstein's outposts. And thee, farmer, I would have to remember that an emperor's grace may yet stand thee instead, when a robber is past helping thee to a rope."

The soldiers laughed, but took their officer's hint to watch the motions of a man, whose immunity from spoil, in circumstances so tempting to a military robber's cupidity, certainly argued some collusion with Holkerstein.

The Lady Paulina had passed on during this dialogue into an inner room, hoping to have found the quiet and the warmth which were now become so needful to her repose. But the antique stove was too much out of repair to be used with benefit; the wood-work was decayed, and admitted currents of cold air; and, above all, from the slightness of the partitions, the noise and tumult in a house occupied by soldiers and travellers proved so incessant, that, after taking refreshments with her attendants, she resolved to adjourn for the night to her coach; which afforded much superior resources, both in warmth and in freedom from noise.

The carriage of the countess was one of those which had been posted at an angle of the encampment, and on that side terminated the line of defences; for a deep mass of wood, which commenced where the carriages ceased, seemed to present a natural protection on that side against the approach of cavalry; in reality, from the quantity of tangled roots, and the inequalities of the ground, it appeared difficult for a single horseman to advance even a few yards without falling. And upon this side it had been judged sufficient to post a single sentinel.

Assured by the many precautions adopted, and by the cheerful language of the officer on guard, who attended her to the carriage door, Paulina, with one attendant, took her seat in the coach, where she had the means of fencing herself sufficiently from the cold by the weighty robes of minever and ermine which her ample wardrobe afforded; and the large dimensions of the coach enabled her to turn it to the use of a sofa or couch.

Youth and health sleep well; and with all the means and appliances of the Lady Paulina, wearied besides as she had been with the fatigue of a day's march, performed over roads almost impassable from roughness, there was little reason to think that she would miss the benefit of her natural advantages. Yet sleep failed to come, or came only by fugitive snatches, which presented her with tumultuous dreams,—sometimes of the emperor's court in Vienna, sometimes of the vast succession of troubled scenes and fierce faces that had passed before her since she had quitted that city. At one moment she beheld the travelling equipages and far-stretching array of her own party, with their military escort filing off by torchlight under the gateway of ancient cities; at another, the ruined villages, with their dismantled cottages,—doors and windows torn off, walls scorched with fire, and a few gaunt dogs, with a wolf-like ferocity in their bloodshot eyes, prowling about the ruins,—objects that had really so often afflicted her heart. Waking from those distressing spectacles, she would fall into a fitful doze, which presented her with remembrances still more alarming: bands of fierce deserters, that eyed her travelling party with a savage rapacity which did not confess any powerful sense of inferiority; and in the very fields which they had once cultivated, now silent and tranquil from utter desolation, the mouldering bodies of the unoffending peasants, left un-honored with the rites of sepulture, in many places from the mere extermination of the whole rural population of their neighborhood. To these succeeded a wild chaos of figures, in which the dress and tawny features of Bohemian gypsies conspicuously prevailed, just as she had seen them of late making war on all parties alike; and, in the person of their leader, her fancy suddenly restored to her a vivid resemblance of their suspicious host at their present quarters, and of the malicious gaze with which he had disconcerted her.

A sudden movement of the carriage awakened her, and, by the light of a lamp suspended from a projecting bough of a tree, she beheld, on looking out, the sallow countenance of the very man whose image had so recently infested her dreams. The light being considerably nearer to him than to herself, she could see without being distinctly seen; and, having already heard the very strong presumptions against this man's honesty which had been urged by the officer, and without reply from the suspected party, she now determined to watch him.

CHAPTER III

The night was pitch dark, and Paulina felt a momentary terror creep over her as she looked into the massy blackness of the dark alleys which ran up into the woods, forced into deeper shade under the glare of the lamps from the encampment. She now reflected with some alarm that the forest commenced at this point, stretching away (as she had been told) in some directions upwards of fifty miles; and that, if the post occupied by their encampment should be inaccessible on this side to cavalry, it might, however, happen that persons with the worst designs could easily penetrate on foot from the concealments of the forest; in which case she herself, and the splendid booty of her carriage, might be the first and easiest prey. Even at this moment, the very worst of those atrocious wretches whom the times had produced might be lurking in concealment, with their eyes fastened upon the weak or exposed parts of the encampment, and waiting until midnight should have buried the majority of their wearied party into the profoundest repose, in order then to make a combined and murderous attack. Under the advantages of sudden surprise and darkness, together with the knowledge which they would not fail to possess of every road and by-path in the woods, it could scarcely be doubted that they might strike a very effectual blow at the Vienna caravan, which had else so nearly completed their journey without loss or memorable privations;—and the knowledge which Holkerstein possessed of the short limits within which his opportunities were now circumscribed would doubtless prompt him to some bold and energetic effort.

Thoughts unwelcome as these Paulina found leisure to pursue; for the ruffian landlord had disappeared almost at the same moment when she first caught a glimpse of him. In the deep silence which succeeded, she could not wean herself from the painful fascination of imagining the very worst possibilities to which their present situation was liable. She imaged to herself the horrors of a *camisade*, as she had often heard it described; she saw, in apprehension, the savage band of confederate butchers, issuing from the profound solitudes of the forest, in white shirts drawn over their armor; she seemed to read the murderous features, lighted up by the gleam of lamps—the stealthy step, and the sudden gleam of sabres; then the yell of assault, the scream of agony, the camp floating with blood; the fury, the vengeance, the pursuit;—all these circumstances of scenes at that time too familiar to Germany passed rapidly before her mind.

But after some time, as the tranquillity continued, her nervous irritation gave way to less agitating but profound sensibilities. Whither was her lover withdrawn from her knowledge? and why? and for how long a time? What an age it seemed since she had last seen him at Vienna! That the service upon which he was employed would prove honorable, she felt assured. But was it dangerous? Alas! in Germany there was none otherwise. Would it soon restore him to her society? And why had he been of late so unaccountably silent? Or again, *had* he been silent? Perhaps his letters had been intercepted, —nothing, in fact, was more common at that time. The rarity was, if by any accident a letter reached its destination. From one of the worst solitudes incident to such a situation Paulina was, however, delivered by her own nobility of mind, which raised her above the meanness of jealousy. Whatsoever might have happened, or into whatever situations her lover might have been thrown, she felt no fear that the fidelity of his attachment could have wandered or faltered for a moment; that worst of pangs the Lady Paulina was raised above, equally by her just confidence in herself and in her lover. But yet, though faithful to her, might he not be ill? Might he not be languishing in some one of the many distresses incident to war? Might he not even have perished?

That fear threw her back upon the calamities and horrors of war; and insensibly her thoughts wandered round to the point from which they had started, of her own immediate situation. Again she searched with penetrating eyes the black avenues of the wood, as they lay forced almost into strong relief and palpable substance by the glare of the lamps. Again she fancied to herself the murderous hearts and glaring eyes which even now might be shrouded by the silent masses of forest

which stretched before her,—when suddenly a single light shot its rays from what appeared to be a considerable distance in one of the avenues. Paulina's heart beat fast at this alarming spectacle. Immediately after, the light was shaded, or in some way disappeared. But this gave the more reason for terror. It was now clear that human beings were moving in the woods. No public road lay in that direction; nor, in so unpopulous a region, could it be imagined that travellers were likely at that time to be abroad. From their own encampment nobody could have any motive for straying to a distance on so severe a night, and at a time when he would reasonably draw upon himself the danger of being shot by the night-guard.

This last consideration reminded Paulina suddenly, as of a very singular circumstance, that the appearance of the light had been followed by no challenge from the sentinel. And then first she remembered that for some time she had ceased to hear the sentinel's step, or the rattle of his bandoleers. Hastily looking along the path, she discovered too certainly that the single sentinel posted on that side of their encampment was absent from his station. It might have been supposed that he had fallen asleep from the severity of the cold; but in that case the lantern which he carried attached to his breast would have continued to burn; whereas all traces of light had vanished from the path which he perambulated. The error was now apparent to Paulina, both in having appointed no more than one sentinel to this quarter, and also in the selection of his beat. There had been frequent instances throughout this war in which by means of a net, such as that carried by the Roman *retiarius* in the contests of the gladiators, and dexterously applied by two persons from behind, a sentinel had been suddenly muffled, gagged, and carried off, without much difficulty. For such a purpose it was clear that the present sentinel's range, lying by the margin of a wood from which his minutest movements could be watched at leisure by those who lay in utter darkness themselves, afforded every possible facility. Paulina scarcely doubted that he had been indeed carried off, in some such way, and not impossibly almost whilst she was looking on.

She would now have called aloud, and have alarmed the camp; but at the very moment when she let down the glass the savage landlord reappeared, and, menacing her with a pistol, awed her into silence. He bore upon his head a moderate-sized trunk, or portmanteau, which appeared, by the imperfect light, to be that in which some despatches had been lodged from the imperial government to different persons in Klosterheim. This had been cut from one of the carriages in her suite; and her anxiety was great on recollecting that, from some words of the emperor's, she had reason to believe one, at least, of the letters which it conveyed to be in some important degree connected with the interests of her lover. Satisfied, however, that he would not find it possible to abscond with so burdensome an article in any direction that could save him from instant pursuit and arrest, she continued to watch for the moment when she might safely raise the alarm. But great was her consternation when she saw a dark figure steal from a thicket, receive the trunk from the other, and instantly retreat into the deepest recesses of the forest.

Her fears now gave way to the imminence of so important a loss; and she endeavored hastily to open the window of the opposite door. But this had been so effectually barricaded against the cold, that she failed in her purpose, and, immediately turning back to the other side, she called, loudly, —"Guard! guard!" The press of carriages, however, at this point, so far deadened her voice, that it was some time before the alarm reached the other side of the encampment distinctly enough to direct their motions to her summons. Half a dozen yagers and an officer at length presented themselves; but the landlord had disappeared, she knew not in what direction. Upon explaining the circumstances of the robbery, however, the officer caused his men to light a number of torches, and advance into the wood. But the ground was so impracticable in most places, from tangled roots and gnarled stumps of trees, that it was with difficulty they could keep their footing. They were also embarrassed by the crossing shadows from the innumerable boughs above them; and a situation of greater perplexity for effective pursuit it was scarcely possible to imagine. Everywhere they saw alleys, arched high overhead, and resembling the aisles of a cathedral, as much in form as in the perfect darkness which

reigned in both at this solemn hour of midnight, stretching away apparently without end, but more and more obscure, until impenetrable blackness terminated the long vista. Now and then a dusky figure was seen to cross at some distance; but these were probably deer; and when loudly challenged by the yagers, no sound replied but the vast echoes of the forest. Between these interminable alleys, which radiated as from a centre at this point, there were generally thickets interposed. Sometimes the wood was more open, and clear of all undergrowth—shrubs, thorns, or brambles—for a considerable distance, so that a single file of horsemen might have penetrated for perhaps half a mile; but belts of thicket continually checked their progress, and obliged them to seek their way back to some one of the long vistas which traversed the woods between the frontiers of Suabia and Bavaria.

In this perplexity of paths, the officer halted his party to consider of his further course. At this moment one of the yagers protested that he had seen a man's hat and face rise above a thicket of bushes, apparently not more than a hundred and fifty yards from their own position. Upon that the party were ordered to advance a little, and to throw in a volley, as nearly as could be judged, into the very spot pointed out by the soldier. It seemed that he had not been mistaken; for a loud laugh of derision rose immediately a little to the left of the bushes. The laughter swelled upon the silence of the night, and in the next moment was taken up by another on the right, which again was echoed by a third on the rear. Peal after peal of tumultuous and scornful laughter resounded from the remoter solitudes of the forest; and the officer stood aghast to hear this proclamation of defiance from a multitude of enemies, where he had anticipated no more than the very party engaged in the robbery.

To advance in pursuit seemed now both useless and dangerous. The laughter had probably been designed expressly to distract his choice of road at a time when the darkness and intricacies of the ground had already made it sufficiently indeterminate. In which direction, out of so many whence he had heard the sounds, a pursuit could be instituted with any chance of being effectual, seemed now as hopeless a subject of deliberation as it was possible to imagine. Still, as he had been made aware of the great importance attached to the trunk, which might very probably contain despatches interesting to the welfare of Klosterheim, and the whole surrounding territory, he felt grieved to retire without some further attempt for its recovery. And he stood for a few moments irresolutely debating with himself, or listening to the opinions of his men.

His irresolution was very abruptly terminated. All at once, upon the main road from Klosterheim, at an angle about half a mile ahead where it first wheeled into sight from Waldenhausen, a heavy thundering trot was heard ringing from the frozen road, as of a regular body of cavalry advancing rapidly upon their encampment. There was no time to be lost; the officer instantly withdrew his yagers from the wood, posted a strong guard at the wood side, sounded the alarm throughout the camp, agreeably to the system of signals previously concerted, mounted about thirty men, whose horses and themselves were kept in perfect equipment during each of the night-watches, and then advancing to the head of the barriers, prepared to receive the party of strangers in whatever character they should happen to present themselves.

All this had been done with so much promptitude and decision, that, on reaching the barriers, the officer found the strangers not yet come up. In fact, they had halted at a strong outpost about a quarter of a mile in advance of Waldenhausen; and though one or two patrollers came dropping in from by-roads on the forest-heath, who reported them as enemies, from the indistinct view they had caught of their equipments, it had already become doubtful from their movements whether they would really prove so.

Two of their party were now descried upon the road, and nearly close up with the gates of Waldenhausen; they were accompanied by several of the guard from the outpost; and, immediately on being hailed, they exclaimed, "Friends, and from Klosterheim!"

He who spoke was a young cavalier, magnificent alike in his person, dress, and style of his appointments. He was superbly mounted, wore the decorations of a major-general in the imperial service, and scarcely needed the explanations which he gave to exonerate himself from the suspicion

of being a leader of robbers under Holkerstein. Fortunately enough, also, at a period when officers of the most distinguished merit were too often unfaithful to their engagements, or passed with so much levity from service to service as to justify an indiscriminate jealousy of all who were not in the public eye, it happened that the officer of the watch, formerly, when mounting guard at the imperial palace, had been familiar with the personal appearance of the cavalier, and could speak of his own knowledge to the favor which he had enjoyed at the emperor's court. After short explanations, therefore, he was admitted, and thankfully welcomed in the camp; and the officer of the guard departed to receive with honor the generous volunteers at the outpost.

Meantime, the alarm, which was general throughout the camp, had assembled all the women to one quarter, where a circle of carriages had been formed for their protection. In their centre, distinguished by her height and beauty, stood the Lady Paulina, dispensing assistance from her wardrobe to any who were suffering from cold under this sudden summons to night air, and animating others, who were more than usually depressed, by the aids of consolation and of cheerful prospects. She had just turned her face away from the passage by which this little sanctuary communicated with the rest of the camp, and was in the act of giving directions to one of her attendants, when suddenly a well-known voice fell upon her ear. It was the voice of the stranger cavalier, whose natural gallantry had prompted him immediately to relieve the alarm, which, unavoidably, he had himself created; in a few words, he was explaining to the assembled females of the camp in what character, and with how many companions, he had come. But a shriek from Paulina interrupted him. Involuntarily she held out her open arms, and involuntarily she exclaimed, "Dearest Maximilian!" On his part, the young cavalier, for a moment or two at first, was almost deprived of speech by astonishment and excess of pleasure. Bounding forward, hardly conscious of those who surrounded them, with a rapture of faithful love he caught the noble young beauty into his arms,—a movement to which, in the frank innocence of her heart, she made no resistance; folded her to his bosom, and impressed a fervent kiss upon her lips; whilst the only words that came to his own were, "Beloved Paulina! O, most beloved lady! what chance has brought you hither?"

CHAPTER IV

In those days of tragical confusion, and of sudden catastrophe, alike for better or for worse,—when the rendings asunder of domestic charities were often without an hour's warning, when reunions were as dramatic and as unexpected as any which are exhibited on the stage, and too often separations were eternal,—the circumstances of the times concurred with the spirit of manners to sanction a tone of frank expression to the stronger passions, which the reserve of modern habits would not entirely license. And hence, not less than from the noble ingenuousness of their natures, the martial young cavalier, and the superb young beauty of the imperial house, on recovering themselves from their first transports, found no motives to any feeling of false shame, either in their own consciousness, or in the reproving looks of any who stood around them. On the contrary, as the grown-up spectators were almost exclusively female, to whom the evidences of faithful love are never other than a serious subject, or naturally associated with the ludicrous, many of them expressed their sympathy with the scene before them by tears, and all of them in some way or other. Even in this age of more fastidious manners, it is probable that the tender interchanges of affection between a young couple rejoining each other after deep calamities, and standing on the brink of fresh, perhaps endless separations, would meet with something of the same indulgence from the least interested witnesses.

Hence the news was diffused through the camp with general satisfaction, that a noble and accomplished cavalier, the favored lover of their beloved young mistress, had joined them from Klosterheim, with a chosen band of volunteers, upon whose fidelity in action they might entirely depend. Some vague account floated about, at the same time, of the marauding attack upon the Lady Paulina's carriage. But naturally enough, from the confusion and hurry incident to a nocturnal disturbance, the circumstances were mixed up with the arrival of Maximilian, in a way which ascribed to him the merit of having repelled an attack, which might else have proved fatal to the lady of his heart. And this romantic interposition of Providence on a young lady's behalf, through the agency of her lover, unexpected on her part, and unconscious on his, proved so equally gratifying to the passion for the marvellous and the interest in youthful love, that no other or truer version of the case could ever obtain a popular acceptance in the camp, or afterwards in Klosterheim. And had it been the express purpose of Maximilian to found a belief, for his own future benefit, of a providential sanction vouchsafed to his connection with the Lady Paulina, he could not, by the best-arranged contrivances, have more fully attained that end.

It was yet short of midnight by more than an hour; and therefore, on the suggestion of Maximilian, who reported the roads across the forest perfectly quiet, and alleged some arguments for quieting the general apprehension for this night, the travellers and troops retired to rest, as the best means of preparing them to face the trials of the two next days. It was judged requisite, however, to strengthen the night-guard very considerably, and to relieve it at least every two hours. That the poor sentinel on the forest side of the encampment had been in some mysterious way trepanned upon his post, was now too clearly ascertained, for he was missing; and the character of the man, no less than the absence of all intelligible temptation to such an act, forbade the suspicion of his having deserted. On this quarter, therefore, a file of select marksmen were stationed, with directions instantly to pick off every moving figure that showed itself within their range. Of these men Maximilian himself took the command; and by this means he obtained the opportunity, so enviable to one long separated from his mistress, of occasionally conversing with her, and of watching over her safety. In one point he showed a distinguished control over his inclinations; for, much as he had to tell her, and ardently as he longed for communicating with her on various subjects of common interest, he would not suffer her to keep the window down for more than a minute or two in so dreadful a state of the atmosphere. She, on her part, exacted a promise from him that he would leave his station at three o'clock in the morning. Meantime, as on the one hand she felt touched by this proof of her lover's solicitude for her safety, so,

on the other, she was less anxious on his account, from the knowledge she had of his long habituation to the hardships of a camp, with which, indeed, he had been familiar from his childish days. Thus debarred from conversing with her lover, and at the same time feeling the most absolute confidence in his protection, she soon fell placidly asleep. The foremost subject of her anxiety and sorrow was now removed; her lover had been restored to her hopes; and her dreams were no longer haunted with horrors. Yet, at the same time, the turbulence of joy and of hope fulfilled unexpectedly had substituted its own disturbances; and her sleep was often interrupted. But, as often as that happened, she had the delightful pleasure of seeing her lover's figure, with its martial equipments, and the drooping plumes of his yager barrette, as he took his station at her carriage, traced out on the ground in the bright glare of the flambeaux. She awoke, therefore, continually to the sense of restored happiness; and at length fell finally asleep, to wake no more until the morning trumpet, at the break of day, proclaimed the approaching preparations for the general movement of the camp.

Snow had fallen in the night. Towards four o'clock in the morning, amongst those who held that watch there had been a strong apprehension that it would fall heavily. But that state of the atmosphere had passed off; and it had not in fact fallen sufficiently to abate the cold, or much to retard their march. According to the usual custom of the camp, a general breakfast was prepared, at which all, without distinction, messed together—a sufficient homage being expressed to superior rank by resigning the upper part of every table to those who had any distinguished pretensions of that kind. On this occasion Paulina had the gratification of seeing the public respect offered in the most marked manner to her lover. He had retired about daybreak to take an hour's repose,—for she found, from her attendants, with mingled vexation and pleasure, that he had not fulfilled his promise of retiring at an earlier hour, in consequence of some renewed appearances of a suspicious kind in the woods. In his absence, she heard a resolution proposed and carried, amongst the whole body of veteran officers attached to the party, that the chief military command should be transferred to Maximilian, not merely as a distinguished favorite of the emperor, but also, and much more, as one of the most brilliant cavalry officers in the imperial service. This resolution was communicated to him on his taking the place reserved for him, at the head of the principal breakfast-table; and Paulina thought that he had never appeared more interesting, or truly worthy of admiration, than under that exhibition of courtesy and modest dignity with which he first earnestly declined the honor in favor of older officers, and then finally complied with what he found to be the sincere wish of the company, by frankly accepting it. Paulina had grown up amongst military men, and had been early trained to a sympathy with military merit,—the very court of the emperor had something of the complexion of a camp,—and the object of her own youthful choice was elevated in her eyes, if it were at all possible that he should be so, by this ratification of his claims on the part of those whom she looked up to as the most competent judges.

Before nine o'clock the van of the party was in motion; then, with a short interval, came all the carriages of every description, and the Papenheim dragoons as a rear-guard. About eleven the sun began to burst out, and illuminated, with the cheerful crimson of a frosty morning, those horizontal draperies of mist which had previously stifled his beams. The extremity of the cold was a good deal abated by this time, and Paulina, alighting from her carriage, mounted a led horse, which gave her the opportunity, so much wished for by them both, of conversing freely with Maximilian. For a long time the interest and animation of their reciprocal communications, and the magnitude of the events since they had parted, affecting either or both of them directly, or in the persons of their friends, had the natural effect of banishing any dejection which nearer and more pressing concerns would else have called forth. But, in the midst of this factitious animation, and the happiness which otherwise so undisguisedly possessed Maximilian at their unexpected reunion, it shocked Paulina to observe in her lover a degree of gravity almost amounting to sadness, which argued in a soldier of his gallantry some overpowering sense of danger. In fact, upon being pressed to say the worst, Maximilian frankly avowed that he was ill at ease with regard to their prospects when the hour of trial should arrive;

and that hour he had no hope of evading. Holkerstein, he well knew, had been continually receiving reports of their condition, as they reached their nightly stations, for the last three days. Spies had been round about them, and even in the midst of them, throughout the darkness of the last night. Spies were keeping pace with them as they advanced. The certainty of being attacked was therefore pretty nearly absolute. Then, as to their means of defence, and the relations of strength between the parties, in numbers it was not impossible that Holkerstein might triple themselves. The elite of their own men might be superior to most of his, though counting amongst their number many deserters from veteran regiments; but the horses of their own party were in general poor and out of condition, —and of the whole train, whom Maximilian had inspected at starting, not two hundred could be pronounced fit for making or sustaining a charge. It was true that by mounting some of their picked troopers upon the superior horses of the most distinguished amongst the travellers, who had willingly consented to an arrangement of this nature for the general benefit, some partial remedy had been applied to their weakness in that one particular. But there were others in which Holkerstein had even greater advantages; more especially, the equipments of his partisans were entirely new, having been plundered from an ill-guarded armory near Munich, or from convoys which he had attacked. "Who would be a gentleman," says an old proverb, "let him storm a town;" and the gay appearance of this robber's companions threw a light upon its meaning. The ruffian companions of this marauder were, besides, animated by hopes such as no regular commander in an honorable service could find the means of holding out. And, finally, they were familiar with all the forest roads and innumerable bypaths, on which it was that the best points lay for surprising an enemy, or for a retreat; whilst, in their own case, encumbered with the protection of a large body of travellers and helpless people, whom, under any circumstances, it was hazardous to leave, they were tied up to the most slavish dependency upon the weakness of their companions; and had it not in their power either to evade the most evident advantages on the side of the enemy, or to pursue such as they might be fortunate enough to create for themselves.

"But, after all," said Maximilian, assuming a tone of gayety, upon finding that the candor of his explanations had depressed his fair companion, "the saying of an old Swedish [Footnote: It was the Swedish General Kniphausen, a favorite of Gustavus, to whom this maxim is ascribed.] enemy of mine is worth remembering in such cases,—that, nine times out of ten, a drachm of good luck is worth an ounce of good contrivance,—and were it not, dearest Paulina, that you are with us, I would think the risk not heavy. Perhaps, by to-morrow's sunset, we shall all look back from our pleasant seats in the warm refectories of Klosterheim, with something of scorn, upon our present apprehensions.—And see! at this very moment the turn of the road has brought us in view of our port, though distant from us, according to the windings of the forest, something more than twenty miles. That range of hills, which you observe ahead, but a little inclined to the left, overhangs Klosterheim; and, with the sun in a more favorable quarter, you might even at this point descry the pinnacles of the citadel, or the loftiest of the convent towers. Half an hour will bring us to the close of our day's march."

In reality, a few minutes sufficed to bring them within view of the chateau where their quarters had been prepared for this night. This was a great hunting establishment, kept up at vast expense by the two last and present Landgraves of X——. Many interesting anecdotes were connected with the history of this building; and the beauty of the forest scenery was conspicuous even in winter, enlivened as the endless woods continued to be by the scarlet berries of mountain-ash, or the dark verdure of the holly and the ilex. Under her present frame of pensive feeling, the quiet lawns and long-withdrawing glades of these vast woods had a touching effect upon the feelings of Paulina; their deep silence, and the tranquillity which reigned amongst them, contrasting in her remembrance with the hideous scenes of carnage and desolation through which her path had too often lain. With these predisposing influences to aid him, Maximilian found it easy to draw off her attention from the dangers which pressed upon their situation. Her sympathies were so quick with those whom she loved, that she readily adopted their apparent hopes or their fears; and so entire was her confidence in the

superior judgment and the perfect gallantry of her lover, that her countenance reflected immediately the prevailing expression of his.

Under these impressions Maximilian suffered her to remain. It seemed cruel to disturb her with the truth. He was sensible that continued anxiety, and dreadful or afflicting spectacles, had with her, as with most persons of her sex in Germany at that time, unless protected by singular insensibility, somewhat impaired the firm tone of her mind. He was determined, therefore, to consult her comfort, by disguising or palliating their true situation. But, for his own part, he could not hide from his conviction the extremity of their danger; nor could he, when recurring to the precious interests at stake upon the issue of that and the next day's trials, face with any firmness the afflicting results to which they tended, under the known barbarity and ruffian character of their unprincipled enemy.

CHAPTER V

The chateau of Falkenberg, which the travellers reached with the decline of light, had the usual dependences of offices and gardens, which may be supposed essential to a prince's hunting establishment in that period. It stood at a distance of eighteen miles from Klosterheim, and presented the sole *oasis* of culture and artificial beauty throughout the vast extent of those wild tracts of sylvan ground.

The great central pile of the building was dismantled of furniture; but the travellers carried with them, as was usual in the heat of war, all the means of fencing against the cold, and giving even a luxurious equipment to their dormitories. In so large a party, the deficiencies of one were compensated by the redundant contributions of another. And so long as they were not under the old Roman interdict, excluding them from seeking fire and water of those on whom their day's journey had thrown them, their own travelling stores enabled them to accommodate themselves to all other privations. On this occasion, however, they found more than they had expected; for there was at Falkenberg a store of all the game in season, constantly kept up for the use of the Landgrave's household, and the more favored monasteries at Klosterheim. The small establishment of keepers, foresters, and other servants, who occupied the chateau, had received no orders to refuse the hospitality usually practised in the Landgrave's name; or thought proper to dissemble them in their present circumstances of inability to resist. And having from necessity permitted so much, they were led by a sense of their master's honor, or their own sympathy with the condition of so many women and children, to do more. Rations of game were distributed liberally to all the messes; wine was not refused by the old *kellermeister*, who rightly considered that some thanks, and smiles of courteous acknowledgment, might be a better payment than the hard knocks with which military paymasters were sometimes apt to settle their accounts. And, upon the whole, it was agreed that no such evening of comfort, and even luxurious enjoyment, had been spent since their departure from Vienna.

One wing of the chateau was magnificently furnished. This, which of itself was tolerably extensive, had been resigned to the use of Paulina, Maximilian, and others of the military gentlemen, whose manners and deportment seemed to entitle them to superior attentions. Here, amongst many marks of refinement and intellectual culture, there was a library and a gallery of portraits. In the library some of the officers had detected sufficient evidences of the Swedish alliances clandestinely maintained by the Landgrave; numbers of rare books, bearing the arms of different imperial cities, which, in the several campaigns of Gustavus, had been appropriated as they fell in his hands, by way of fair reprisals for the robbery of the whole Palatine library at Heidelberg, had been since transferred (as it thus appeared) to the Landgrave, by purchase or as presents; and on either footing argued a correspondence with the emperor's enemies, which hitherto he had strenuously disavowed. The picture-gallery, it was very probable, had been collected in the same manner. It contained little else than portraits, but these were truly admirable and interesting, being all recent works from the pencil of Vandyke, and composing a series of heads and features the most remarkable for station in the one sex, or for beauty in the other, which that age presented. Amongst them were nearly all the imperial leaders of distinction, and many of the Swedish. Maximilian and his brother officers took the liveliest pleasure in perambulating this gallery with Paulina, and reviewing with her these fine historical memorials. Out of their joint recollections, or the facts of their personal experience, they were able to supply any defective links in that commentary which her own knowledge of the imperial court would have enabled her in so many instances to furnish upon this martial register of the age.

The wars of the Netherlands had transplanted to Germany that stock upon which the camps of the Thirty Years' War were originally raised. Accordingly, a smaller gallery, at right angles with the great one, presented a series of portraits from the old Spanish leaders and Walloon partisans. From Egmont and Horn, the Duke of Alva and Parma, down to Spinola, the last of that distinguished school

of soldiers, no man of eminence was omitted. Even the worthless and insolent Earl of Leicester, with his gallant nephew,—that *ultimus Romanorum* in the rolls of chivalry,—were not excluded, though it was pretty evident that a Catholic zeal had presided in forming the collection. For, together with the Prince of Orange, and *Henri Quatre*, were to be seen their vile assassins—portrayed with a lavish ostentation of ornament, and enshrined in a frame so gorgeous as raised them in some degree to the rank of consecrated martyrs.

From these past generations of eminent persons, who retained only a traditional or legendary importance in the eyes of most who were now reviewing them, all turned back with delight to the active spirits of their own day, many of them yet living, and as warm with life and heroic aspirations as their inimitable portraits had represented them. Here was Tilly, the "little corporal" now recently stretched in a soldier's grave, with his wily and inflexible features. Over against him was his great enemy, who had first taught him the hard lesson of retreating, Gustavus Adolphus, with his colossal bust, and "atlantean shoulders, fit to bear the weight of mightiest monarchies." He also had perished, and too probably by the double crime of assassination and private treason; but the public glory of his short career was proclaimed in the ungenerous exultations of Catholic Rome from Vienna to Madrid, and the individual heroism in the lamentations of soldiers under every banner which now floated in Europe. Beyond him ran the long line of imperial generals,—from Wallenstein, the magnificent and the imaginative, with Hamlet's infirmity of purpose, De Mercy, etc., down to the heroes of partisan warfare, Holk, the Butlers, and the noble Papenheim, or nobler Piccolomini. Below them were ranged Gustavus Horn, Banier, the Prince of Saxe-Weimar, the Rhinegrave, and many other Protestant commanders, whose names and military merits were familiar to Paulina, though she now beheld their features for the first time. Maximilian was here the best interpreter that she could possibly have met with. For he had not only seen the greater part of them on the field of battle, but, as a favorite and confidential officer of the emperor's, had personally been concerned in diplomatic transactions with the most distinguished amongst them.

Midnight insensibly surprised them whilst pursuing the many interesting historical remembrances which the portraits called up. Most of the company, upon this warning of the advanced hour, began to drop off; some to rest, and some upon the summons of the military duty which awaited them in their turn. In this way, Maximilian and Paulina were gradually left alone, and now at length found a time which had not before offered for communicating freely all that pressed upon their hearts. Maximilian, on his part, going back to the period of their last sudden separation, explained his own sudden disappearance from Vienna. At a moment's warning, he had been sent off with sealed orders from the emperor, to be first opened in Klosterheim: the mission upon which he had been despatched was of consequence to the imperial interests, and through his majesty's favor would eventually prove so to his own. Thus it was that he had been peremptorily cut off from all opportunity of communicating to herself the purpose and direction of his journey previously to his departure from Vienna; and if his majesty had not taken that care upon himself, but had contented himself, in the most general terms, with assuring Paulina that Maximilian was absent on a private mission, doubtless his intention had been the kind one of procuring her a more signal surprise of pleasure upon his own sudden return. Unfortunately, however, that return had become impossible: things had latterly taken a turn which embarrassed himself, and continued to require his presence. These perplexities had been for some time known to the emperor; and, upon reflection, he doubted not that her own journey, undertaken before his majesty could be aware of the dangers which would beset its latter end, must in some way be connected with the remedy which the emperor designed for this difficult affair. But doubtless she herself was the bearer of sufficient explanations from the imperial ministers on that head. Finally, whilst assuring her that his own letters to herself had been as frequent as in any former absence, Maximilian confessed that he did not feel greatly astonished at the fact of none at all having reached her, when he recollected that to the usual adverse accidents of war, daily intercepting

all messengers not powerfully escorted, were to be added, in this case, the express efforts of private malignity in command of all the forest passes.

This explanation recalled Paulina to a very painful sense of the critical importance which might be attached to the papers which she had lost. As yet, she had found no special opportunity, or, believing it of less importance, had neglected it, for communicating more than the general fact of a robbery. She now related the case more circumstantially; and both were struck with it, as at this moment a very heavy misfortune. Not only might her own perilous journey, and the whole purposes of the emperor embarked upon it, be thus rendered abortive; but their common enemies would by this time be possessed of the whole information which had been so critically lost to their own party, and perhaps would have it in their power to make use of themselves as instruments for defeating their own most important hopes.

Maximilian sighed as he reflected on the probability that a far shorter and bloodier event might defeat every earthly hope, within the next twenty-four hours. But he dissembled his feelings; recovered even a tone of gayety; and, begging of Paulina to dismiss this vexatious incident from her thoughts, as a matter that after all would probably be remedied by their first communication with the emperor, and before any evil had resulted from it, he accompanied her to the entrance of her own suite of chambers, and then returned to seek a few hours' repose for himself on one of the sofas he had observed in one of the small ante-rooms attached to the library.

The particular room which he selected for his purpose, on account of its small size, and its warm appearance in other respects, was furnished under foot with layers of heavy Turkey carpets, one laid upon another (according to a fashion then prevalent in Germany), and on the walls with tapestry. In this mode of hanging rooms, though sometimes heavy and sombre, there was a warmth sensible and apparent, as well as real, which peculiarly fitted it for winter apartments, and a massy splendor which accorded with the style of dress and furniture in that gorgeous age. One real disadvantage, however, it had as often employed; it gave a ready concealment to intruders with evil intentions; and under the protecting screen of tapestry many a secret had been discovered, many robberies facilitated, and some celebrated murderers had been sheltered with circumstances of mystery that forever baffled investigation.

Maximilian smiled as the sight of the hangings, with their rich colors glowing in the fire-light, brought back to his remembrance one of those tales which in the preceding winter had made a great noise in Vienna. With a soldier's carelessness, he thought lightly of all dangers that could arise within four walls; and having extinguished the lights which burned upon a table, and unbuckled his sabre, he threw himself upon a sofa which he drew near to the fire; and then enveloping himself in a large horseman's cloak, he courted the approach of sleep. The fatigues of the day, and of the preceding night, had made this in some measure needful to him. But weariness is not always the best preface to repose; and the irritation of many busy anxieties continued for some time to keep him in a most uneasy state of vigilance. As he lay, he could see on one side the fantastic figures in the fire composed of wood and turf; on the other side, looking to the tapestry, he saw the wild forms, and the *mêlée*, little less fantastic, of human and brute features in a chase—a boar-chase in front, and a stag-chase on his left hand. These, as they rose fitfully in bright masses of color and of savage expression under the lambent flashing of the fire, continued to excite his irritable state of feeling; and it was not for some time that he felt this uneasy condition give way to exhaustion. He was at length on the very point of falling asleep, or perhaps had already fallen into its very lightest and earliest stage, when the echo of a distant door awoke him. He had some slight impression that a noise in his own room had concurred with the other and more distant one to awake him. But, after raising himself for a moment on his elbow and listening, he again resigned himself to sleep.

Again, however, and probably before he had slept a minute, he was roused by a double disturbance. A low rustling was heard in some part of the room, and a heavy foot upon a neighboring staircase. Housed, at length, to the prudence of paying some attention to sounds so stealthy, in a

situation beset with dangers, he rose and threw open the door. A corridor, which ran round the head of the staircase, was lit up with a brilliant light; and he could command from this station one flight of the stairs. On these he saw nothing; all was now wrapt in a soft effulgence of light, and in absolute silence. No sound recurring after a minute's attention, and indisposed by weariness to any stricter examination, where all examination from one so little acquainted with the localities might prove unavailing, he returned to his own room; but, before again lying down, he judged it prudent to probe the concealments of the tapestry by carrying his sabre round, and everywhere pressing the hangings to the wall. In this trial he met with no resistance at any point; and willingly believing that he had been deceived, or that his ear had exaggerated some trivial sound, in a state of imperfect slumber, he again laid down and addressed himself to sleep. Still there were remembrances which occurred at this moment to disturb him. The readiness with which they had been received at the chateau was in itself suspicious. He remembered the obstinate haunting of their camp on the preceding night, and the robbery conducted with so much knowledge of circumstances. Jonas Melk, the brutal landlord of Waldenhausen, a man known to him by repute (though not personally), as one of the vilest agents employed by the Landgrave, had been actively engaged in his master's service at their preceding stage. He was probably one of those who haunted the wood through the night. And he had been repeatedly informed through the course of the day that this man in particular, whose features were noticed by the yagers, on occasion of their officer's reproach to him, had been seen at intervals in company with others, keeping a road parallel to their own, and steadily watching their order of advance.

These recollections, now laid together, impressed him with some uneasiness. But overpowering weariness gave him a strong interest in dismissing them. And a soldier, with the images of fifty combats fresh in his mind, does not willingly admit the idea of danger from a single arm, and in a situation of household security. Pshaw! he exclaimed, with some disdain, as these martial remembrances rose up before him, especially as the silence had now continued undisturbed for a quarter of an hour. In five minutes more he had fallen profoundly asleep; and, in less than one half-hour, as he afterwards judged, he was suddenly awakened by a dagger at his throat.

At one bound he sprung upon his feet. The cloak, in which he had been enveloped, caught upon some of the buckles or ornamented work of his appointments, and for a moment embarrassed his motions. There was no light, except what came from the sullen and intermitting gleams of the fire. But even this was sufficient to show him the dusky outline of two figures. With the foremost he grappled, and, raising him in his arms, threw him powerfully upon the floor, with a force that left him stunned and helpless. The other had endeavored to pinion his arms from behind; for the body-armor, which Maximilian had not laid aside for the night, under the many anticipations of service which their situation suggested, proved a sufficient protection against the blows of the assassin's poniard. Impatient of the darkness and uncertainty, Maximilian rushed to the door and flung it violently open. The assassin still clung to his arms, conscious that if he once forfeited his hold until he had secured a retreat, he should be taken at disadvantage. But Maximilian, now drawing a petronel which hung at his belt, cocked it as rapidly as his embarrassed motions allowed him. The assassin faltered, conscious that a moment's relaxation of grasp would enable his antagonist to turn the muzzle over his shoulder. Maximilian, on the other hand, now perfectly awake, and with the benefit of that self-possession which the other so entirely wanted, felt the nervous tremor in the villain's hands; and, profiting by this moment of indecision, made a desperate effort, released one arm, which he used with so much effect as immediately to liberate the other, and then intercepting the passage to the stairs, wheeled round upon his murderous enemy, and, presenting the petronel to his breast, bade him surrender his arms if he hoped for quarter.

The man was an athletic, and, obviously, a most powerful ruffian. On his face he carried more than one large glazed cicatrix, that assisted the savage expression of malignity impressed by nature upon his features. And his matted black hair, with its elf locks, completed the picturesque effect of a face that proclaimed, in every lineament, a reckless abandonment to cruelty and ferocious passions.

Maximilian himself, familiar as he was with the faces of military butchers in the dreadful hours of sack and carnage, recoiled for one instant from this hideous ruffian, who had not even the palliations of youth in his favor, for he seemed fifty at the least. All this had passed in an instant of time; and now, as he recovered himself from his momentary shock at so hateful an expression of evil passions, great was Maximilian's astonishment to perceive his antagonist apparently speechless, and struggling with some over-mastering sense of horror, that convulsed his features, and for a moment glazed his eye.

Maximilian looked around for the object of his alarm; but in vain. In reality it was himself, in connection with some too dreadful remembrances, now suddenly awakened, that had thus overpowered the man's nerves. The brilliant light of a large chandelier, which overhung the staircase, fell strongly upon Maximilian's features; and the excitement of the moment gave to them the benefit of their fullest expression. Prostrate on the ground, and abandoning his dagger without an effort at retaining it, the man gazed, as if under a rattlesnake's fascination, at the young soldier before him. Suddenly he recovered his voice; and, with a piercing cry of unaffected terror, exclaimed, "Save me, save me, blessed Virgin! Prince, noble prince, forgive me! Will the grave not hold its own? Jesu Maria! who could have believed it?"

"Listen, fellow!" interrupted Maximilian. "What prince is it you speak of? For whom do you take me? speak truly, and abuse riot my forbearance."

"Ha! and his own voice too! and here on this spot! God is just! Yet do thou, good patron, holy St. Ermengarde, deliver me from the avenger!"

"Man, you rave! Stand up, recover yourself, and answer me to what I shall ask thee: speak truly, and thou shalt have thy life. Whose gold was it that armed thy hand against one who had injured neither thee nor thine?"

But he spoke to one who could no longer hear. The man grovelled on the ground, and hid his face from a being, whom, in some incomprehensible way, he regarded as an apparition from the other world.

Multitudes of persons had by this time streamed in, summoned by the noise of the struggle from all parts of the chateau. Some fancied that, in the frenzied assassin on the ground, whose panic too manifestly attested itself as genuine, they recognized one of those who had so obstinately dogged them by side-paths in the forest. Whoever he were, and upon whatever mission employed, he was past all rational examination; at the aspect of Maximilian, he relapsed into convulsive horrors, which soon became too fit for medical treatment to allow of any useful judicial inquiry; and for the present he was consigned to the safe-keeping of the provost-martial.

His companion, meantime, had profited by his opportunity, and the general confusion, to effect his escape. Nor was this difficult. Perhaps, in the consternation of the first moment, and the exclusive attention that settled upon the party in the corridor, he might even have mixed in the crowd. But this was not necessary. For, on raising the tapestry, a door was discovered which opened into a private passage, having a general communication with the rest of the rooms on that floor. Steps were now taken, by sentries disposed through the interior of the mansion, at proper points, to secure themselves from the enemies who lurked within, whom hitherto they had too much neglected for the avowed and more military assailants who menaced them from without. Security was thus restored. But a deep impression accompanied the party to their couches of the profound political motives, or (in the absence of those) of the rancorous personal malignity, which could prompt such obstinate persecution; by modes, also, and by hands, which encountered so many chances of failing; and which, even in the event of the very completest success for the present, could not be expected, under the eyes of so many witnesses, to escape a final exposure. Some enemy, of unusual ferocity, was too obviously working in the dark, and by agencies as mysterious as his own purpose.

Meantime, in the city of Klosterheim, the general interest in the fortunes of the approaching travellers had suffered no abatement, and some circumstances had occurred to increase the popular irritation. It was known that Maximilian had escaped with a strong party of friends from the city; but

how, or by whose connivance, could in no way be discovered. This had drawn upon all persons who were known as active partisans against the Landgrave, or liable to suspicion as friends of Maximilian, a vexatious persecution from the military police of the town. Some had been arrested; many called upon to give security for their future behavior; and all had been threatened or treated with harshness. Hence, as well as from previous irritation and alarm on account of the party from Vienna, the whole town was in a state of extreme agitation.

Klosterheim, in the main features of its political distractions, reflected, almost as in a representative picture, the condition of many another German city. At that period, by very ancient ties of reciprocal service, strengthened by treaties, by religious faith, and by personal attachment to individuals of the imperial house, this ancient and sequestered city was inalienably bound to the interests of the emperor. Both the city and the university were Catholic. Princes of the imperial family, and Papal commissioners, who had secret motives for not appearing at Vienna, had more than once found a hospitable reception within the walls. And, amongst many acts of grace by which the emperors had acknowledged these services and marks of attachment, one of them had advanced a very large sum of money to the city chest for an indefinite time; receiving in return, as the warmest testimony of confidential gratitude which the city could bestow, that *jus liberi ingressus* which entitled the emperor's armies to a free passage at all times, and, in case of extremity, to the right of keeping the city gates and maintaining a garrison in the citadel. Unfortunately, Klosterheim was not *sui juris*, or on the roll of free cities of the empire, but of the nature of an appanage in the family of the Landgrave of X——; and this circumstance had produced a double perplexity in the politics of the city; for the late Landgrave, who had been assassinated in a very mysterious manner upon a hunting party, benefited to the fullest extent both by the political and religious bias of the city—being a personal friend of the emperor's, a Catholic, amiable in his deportment, and generally beloved by his subjects. But the prince who had succeeded him in the Landgraviate, as the next heir, was everywhere odious for the harshness of his government, no less than for the gloomy austerity of his character; and to Klosterheim in particular, which had been pronounced by some of the first jurisprudents a female appanage, he presented himself under the additional disadvantages of a very suspicious title, and a Swedish bias too notorious to be disguised. At a time when the religious and political attachments of Europe were brought into collisions so strange, that the foremost auxiliary of the Protestant interest in Germany was really the most distinguished cardinal in the church of Rome, it did not appear inconsistent with this strong leaning to the King of Sweden that the Landgrave was privately known to be a Catholic bigot, who practised the severest penances, and, tyrant as he showed himself to all others, grovelled himself as an abject devotee at the feet of a haughty confessor. Amongst the populace of Klosterheim this feature of his character, confronted with the daily proofs of his entire vassalage to the Swedish interest, passed for the purest hypocrisy; and he had credit for no religion at all with the world at large. But the fact was otherwise. Conscious from the first that he held even the Landgraviate by a slender title (for he was no more than cousin once removed to his immediate predecessor), and that his pretensions upon Klosterheim had separate and peculiar defects,—sinking of course with the failure of his claim as Landgrave, but not, therefore, prospering with its success,—he was aware that none but the most powerful arm could keep his princely cap upon his head. The competitors for any part of his possessions, one and all, had thrown themselves upon the emperor's protection. This, if no other reason, would have thrown him into the arms of Gustavus Adolphus; and with this, as it happened, other reasons of local importance had then and since cooperated. Time, as it advanced, brought increase of weight to all these motives. Rumors of a dark and ominous tendency, arising no one knew whence, nor by whom encouraged, pointed injuriously to the past history of the Landgrave, and to some dreadful exposures which were hanging over his head. A lady, at present in obscurity, was alluded to as the agent of redress to others, through her own heavy wrongs; and these rumors were the more acceptable to the people of Klosterheim, because they connected the impending punishment of the hated Landgrave with the restoration of the imperial connection; for, it was still insinuated,

under every version of these mysterious reports, that the emperor was the ultimate supporter, in the last resort, of the lurking claims now on the point of coming forward to challenge public attention. Under these alarming notices, and fully aware that sooner or later he must be thrown into collision with the imperial court, the Landgrave had now for some time made up his mind to found a merit with the Swedish chancellor and general officers, by precipitating an uncompromising rupture with his Catholic enemies, and thus to extract the grace of a voluntary act from what, in fact, he knew to be sooner or later inevitable.

Such was the positive and relative aspect of the several interests which were now struggling in Klosterheim. Desperate measures were contemplated by both parties; and, as opportunities should arise, and proper means should develop themselves, more than one party might be said to stand on the brink of great explosions. Conspiracies were moving in darkness, both in the council of the burghers and of the university. Imperfect notices of their schemes, and sometimes delusive or misleading notices, had reached the Landgrave. The city, the university, and the numerous convents, were crowded to excess with refugees. Malcontents of every denomination and every shade,— emissaries of all the factions which then agitated Germany; reformed soldiers, laid aside by their original employers, under new arrangements, or from private jealousies of new commanders; great persons with special reasons for courting a temporary seclusion, and preserving a strict incognito; misers, who fled with their hoards of gold and jewels to the city of refuge; desolate ladies, from the surrounding provinces, in search of protection for themselves, or for the honor of their daughters; and (not least distinguished among the many classes of fugitives) prophets and enthusiasts of every description, whom the magnitude of the political events, and their religious origin, so naturally called forth in swarms; these, and many more, in connection with their attendants, troops, students, and the terrified peasantry, from a circle of forty miles radius around the city as a centre, had swelled the city of Klosterheim, from a total of about seventeen, to six or seven and thirty thousand. War, with a slight reserve for the late robberies of Holkerstein, had as yet spared this favored nook of Germany. The great storm had whistled and raved around them; but hitherto none had penetrated the sylvan sanctuary which on every side invested this privileged city. The ground seemed charmed by some secret spells, and consecrated from intrusion. For the great tempest had often swept directly upon them, and yet still had wheeled off, summoned away by some momentary call, to some remoter attraction. But now at length all things portended that, if the war should revive in strength after this brief suspension, it would fall with accumulated weight upon this yet unravaged district.

This was the anticipation which had governed the Landgrave's policy in so sternly and barbarously interfering with the generous purposes of the Klosterheimers, for carrying over a safe-conduct to their friends and visitors, when standing on the margin of the forest. The robber Holkerstein, if not expressly countenanced by the Swedes, and secretly nursed up to his present strength by Richelieu, was at any rate embarked upon a system of aggression which would probably terminate in connecting him with one or other of those authentic powers. In any case, he stood committed to a course of continued offence upon the imperial interests; since in that quarter his injuries and insults were already past forgiveness. The interest of Holkerstein, then, ran in the same channel with that of the Landgrave. It was impolitic to weaken him. It was doubly impolitic to weaken him by a measure which must also weaken the Landgrave; for any deduction from his own military force, or from the means of recruiting it, was in that proportion a voluntary sacrifice of the weight he should obtain with the Swedes on making the junction, which he now firmly counted on, with their forces. But a result which he still more dreaded from the cooperation of the Klosterheimers with the caravan from Vienna, was the probable overthrow of that supremacy in the city, which even now was so nicely balanced in his favor that a slight reinforcement to the other side would turn the scale against him.

In all these calculations of policy, and the cruel measures by which he supported them, he was guided by the counsels of Luigi Adorni, a subtle Italian, whom he had elevated from the post of a

private secretary to that of sole minister for the conduct of state affairs. This man, who covered a temperament of terrific violence with a masque of Venetian dissimulation and the most icy reserve, met with no opposition, unless it were occasionally from Father Anselm, the confessor. He delighted in the refinements of intrigue, and in the most tortuous labyrinths of political manuvring, purely for their own sakes; and sometimes defeated his own purposes by mere superfluity of diplomatic subtlety; which hardly, however, won a momentary concern from him, in the pleasure he experienced at having found an undeniable occasion for equal subtlety in unweaving his own webs of deception. He had been confounded by the evasion of Maximilian and his friends from the orders of the Landgrave; and the whole energy of his nature was bent to the discovery of the secret avenues which had opened the means to this elopement.

There were, in those days, as is well known to German antiquaries, few castles or fortresses of much importance in Germany, which did not communicate by subterraneous passages with the exterior country. In many instances these passages were of surprising extent, first emerging to the light in some secluded spot among rocks or woods, at the distance of two, three, or even four miles. There were cases even in which they were carried below the beds of rivers as broad and deep as the Rhine, the Elbe, or the Danube. Sometimes there were several of such communications on different faces of the fortress; and sometimes each of these branched, at some distance from the building, into separate arms, opening at intervals widely apart. And the uses of such secret communications with the world outside, and beyond a besieging enemy, in a land like Germany, with its prodigious subdivision of independent states and free cities, were far greater than they could have been in any one great continuous principality.

In many fortified places these passages had existed from the middle ages. In Klosterheim they had possibly as early an origin: but by this period it is very probable that the gradual accumulation of rubbish, through a course of centuries, would have unfitted them for use, had not the Peasants' War, in the time of Luther's reformation, little more than one hundred years before, given occasion for their use and repair. At that time Klosterheim had stood a siege, which, from the defect of artillery, was at no time formidable in a military sense; but as a blockade, formed suddenly when the citizens were slenderly furnished with provisions, it would certainly have succeeded, and delivered up the vast wealth of the convents as a spoil to the peasantry, had it not been for one in particular of these subterraneous passages, which, opening on the opposite side of the little river Ittiss, in a thick *bocage*, where the enemy had established no posts, furnished the means of introducing a continual supply of fresh provisions, to the great triumph of the garrison, and the utter dismay of the superstitious peasants, who looked upon the mysterious supply as a providential bounty to a consecrated cause.

So memorable a benefit had given to this one passage a publicity and an historical importance which made all its circumstances, and amongst those its internal mouth, familiar even to children. But this was evidently *not* the avenue by which Maximilian had escaped into the forest. For it opened externally on the wrong side of the river, whilst everybody knew that its domestic opening was in one of the chapels of the *schloss*; and another circumstance, equally decisive, was, that a long flight of stairs, by which it descended below the bed of the river, made it impassable to horses.

Every attempt, however, failed to trace out the mode of egress for the present. By his spies Adorni doubted not to find it soon; and, in the mean time, that as much as possible the attention of the public might be abstracted from the travellers and their concerns, a public proclamation was issued, forbidding all resort of crowds to the walls. These were everywhere dispersed on the ninth; and for that day were partially obeyed. But there was little chance that, with any fresh excitement to the popular interest, they would continue to command respect.

CHAPTER VI

The morning of the tenth at length arrived—that day on which the expected travellers from Vienna, and all whom they had collected on their progress, ardently looked to rejoin their long-separated friends in Klosterheim, and by those friends were not less ardently looked for. On each side there were the same violent yearnings, on each side the same dismal arid overpowering fears. Each party arose with palpitating hearts: the one looked out from Falkenberg with longing eyes, to discover the towers of Klosterheim; the other, from the upper windows or roofs of Klosterheim, seemed as if they could consume the distance between themselves and Falkenberg. But a little tract of forest ground was interposed between friends and friends, parents and children, lovers and their beloved. Not more than eighteen miles of shadowy woods, of lawns, and sylvan glades, divided hearts that would either have encountered death, or many deaths, for the other. These were regions of natural peace and tranquillity, that in any ordinary times should have been peopled by no worse inhabitants than the timid hare scudding homewards to its form, or the wild deer sweeping by with thunder to their distant lairs. But now from every glen or thicket armed marauders might be ready to start. Every gleam of sunshine in some seasons was reflected from the glittering arms of parties threading the intricacies of the thickets; and the sudden alarum of the trumpet rang oftentimes in the nights, and awoke the echoes that for centuries had been undisturbed, except by the hunter's horn, in the most sequestered haunts of these vast woods.

Towards noon it became known, by signals that had been previously concerted between Maximilian and his college friends, that the party were advanced upon their road from Falkenberg, and, therefore, must of necessity on this day abide the final trial. As this news was dispersed abroad, the public anxiety rose to so feverish a point, that crowds rushed from every quarter to the walls, and it was not judged prudent to measure the civic strength against their enthusiasm. For an hour or two the nature of the ground and the woods forbade any view of the advancing party: but at length, some time before the light failed, the head of the column, and soon after the entire body, was descried surmounting a little hill, not more than eight miles distant. The black mass presented by mounted travellers and baggage-wagons was visible to piercing eyes; and the dullest could distinguish the glancing of arms, which at times flashed upwards from the more open parts of the forest.

Thus far, then, their friends had made their way without injury; and this point was judged to be within nine miles' distance. But in thirty or forty minutes, when they had come nearer by a mile and a half, the scene had somewhat changed. A heathy tract of ground, perhaps two miles in length, opened in the centre of the thickest woods, and formed a little island of clear ground, where all beside was tangled and crowded with impediments. Just as the travelling party began to deploy out of the woods upon this area at its further extremity, a considerable body of mounted troops emerged from the forest, which had hitherto concealed them, at the point nearest to Klosterheim. They made way rapidly; and in less than half a minute it became evident, by the motions of the opposite party, that they had been descried, and that hasty preparations were making for receiving them. A dusky mass, probably the black yagers, galloped up rapidly to the front and formed; after which it seemed to some eyes that the whole party again advanced, but still more slowly than before.

Every heart upon the walls of Klosterheim palpitated with emotion, as the two parties neared each other. Many almost feared to draw their breath, many writhed their persons in the anguish of rueful expectation, as they saw the moment approach when the two parties would shock together. At length it came; and, to the astonishment of the spectators, not more, perhaps, than of the travellers themselves, the whole cavalcade of strangers swept by, without halting for so much as a passing salute or exchange of news.

The first cloud, then, which had menaced their friends, was passed off as suddenly as it had gathered. But this, by some people, was thought to bear no favorable construction. To ride past a band

of travellers from remote parts on such uncourteous terms argued no friendly spirit; and many motives might be imagined perfectly consistent with hostile intentions for passing the travellers unassailed, and thus gaining the means of coming at any time upon their rear. Prudent persons shook their heads, and the issue of an affair anticipated with so much anxiety certainly did not diminish it.

It was now four o'clock: in an hour or less it would be dark; and, considering the peculiar difficulties of the ground on nearing the town, and the increasing exhaustion of the horses, it was not judged possible that a party of travellers, so unequal in their equipments, and amongst whom the weakest was now become a law for the motion of the quickest, could reach the gates of Klosterheim before nine o'clock.

Soon after this, and just before the daylight faded, the travellers reached the nearer end of the heath, and again entered the woods. The cold and the darkness were now becoming greater at every instant, and it might have been expected that the great mass of the spectators would leave their station; but such was the intensity of the public interest, that few quitted the walls except for the purpose of reinforcing their ability to stay and watch the progress of their friends. This could be done with even greater effect as the darkness deepened, for every second horseman carried a torch; and, as much perhaps by way of signal to their friends in Klosterheim, as for their own convenience, prodigious flambeaux were borne aloft on halberds. These rose to a height which surmounted all the lower bushes, and were visible in all parts of the woods,—even the smaller lights, in the leafless state of the trees at this season of the year, could be generally traced without difficulty; and composing a brilliant chain of glittering points, as it curved and humored the road amongst the labyrinths of the forest, would have produced a singularly striking effect to eyes at leisure to enjoy it.

In this way, for about three hours, the travellers continued to advance unmolested, and to be traced by their friends in Klosterheim. It was now considerably after seven o'clock, and perhaps an hour, or, at most, an hour and a half, would bring them to the city gates. All hearts began to beat high with expectation, and hopes were loudly and confidently expressed through every part of the crowd that the danger might now be considered as past. Suddenly, as if expressly to rebuke the too presumptuous confidence of those who were thus thoughtlessly sanguine, the blare of a trumpet was heard from a different quarter of the forest, and about two miles to the right of the city. Every eye was fastened eagerly upon the spot from which the notes issued. Probably the signal had proceeded from a small party in advance of a greater; for in the same direction, but at a much greater distance, perhaps not less than three miles in the rear of the trumpet, a very large body of horse was now descried coming on at a great pace upon the line already indicated by the trumpet. The extent of the column might be estimated by the long array of torches, which were carried apparently by every fourth or fifth man; and that they were horsemen was manifest from the very rapid pace at which they advanced.

At this spectacle, a cry of consternation ran along the whole walls of Klosterheim. Here, then, at last, were coming the spoilers and butchers of their friends; for the road upon which they were advancing issued at right angles into that upon which the travellers, apparently unwarned of their danger, were moving. The hideous scene of carnage would possibly pass immediately below their own eyes; for the point of junction between the two roads was directly commanded by the eye from the city walls; and, upon computing the apparent proportions of speed between the two parties, it seemed likely enough that upon this very ground, the best fitted of any that could have been selected, in a scenical sense, as a stage for bringing a spectacle below the eyes of Klosterheim, the most agitating of spectacles would be exhibited,—friends and kinsmen engaged in mortal struggle with remorseless freebooters, under circumstances which denied to themselves any chance of offering assistance.

Exactly at this point of time arose a dense mist, which wrapped the whole forest in darkness, and withdrew from the eyes of the agitated Klosterheimers friends and foes alike. They continued, however, to occupy the walls, endeavoring to penetrate the veil which now concealed the fortunes of their travelling friends, by mere energy and intensity of attention. The mist, meantime, did not disperse, but rather continued to deepen; the two parties, however, gradually drew so much nearer,

that some judgment could be at length formed of their motions and position, merely by the ear. From the stationary character of the sounds, and the continued recurrence of charges and retreats sounded upon the trumpet, it became evident that the travellers and the enemy had at length met, and too probable that they were engaged in a sanguinary combat. Anxiety had now reached its utmost height; and some were obliged to leave the walls, or were carried away by their friends, under the effects of overwrought sensibility.

Ten o'clock had now struck, and for some time the sounds had been growing sensibly weaker; and at last it was manifest that the two parties had separated, and that one, at least, was moving off from the scene of action; and, as the sounds grew feebler and feebler, there could be no doubt that it was the enemy, who was drawing off into the distance from the field of battle.

The enemy! ay, but how? Under what circumstances? As victor? Perhaps even as the captor of their friends! Or, if not, and he were really retreating as a fugitive and beaten foe, with what hideous sacrifices on the part of their friends might not that result have been purchased?

Long and dreary was the interval before these questions could be answered. Full three hours had elapsed since the last sound of a trumpet had been heard; it was now one o'clock, and as yet no trace of the travellers had been discovered in any quarter. The most hopeful began to despond; and general lamentations prevailed throughout Klosterheim.

Suddenly, however, a dull sound arose within a quarter of a mile from the city gate, as of some feeble attempt to blow a blast upon a trumpet. In five minutes more a louder blast was sounded close to the gate. Questions were joyfully put, and as joyfully answered. The usual precautions were rapidly gone through; and the officer of the watch being speedily satisfied as to the safety of the measure, the gates were thrown open, and the unfortunate travellers, exhausted by fatigue, hardships, and suffering of every description, were at length admitted into the bosom of a friendly town.

The spectacle was hideous which the long cavalcade exhibited as it wound up the steep streets which led to the market-place. Wagons fractured and splintered in every direction, upon which were stretched numbers of gallant soldiers, with wounds hastily dressed, from which the blood had poured in streams upon their gay habiliments; horses, whose limbs had been mangled by the sabre; and coaches, or caleches, loaded with burthens of dead and dying; these were amongst the objects which occupied the van in the line of march, as the travellers defiled through Klosterheim. The vast variety of faces, dresses, implements of war, or ensigns of rank, thrown together in the confusion of night and retreat, illuminated at intervals by bright streams of light from torches or candles in the streets, or at the windows of the houses, composed a picture which resembled the chaos of a dream, rather than any ordinary spectacle of human life.

In the market-place the whole party were gradually assembled, and there it was intended that they should receive the billets for their several quarters. But such was the pressure of friends and relatives gathering from all directions, to salute and welcome the objects of their affectionate anxiety, or to inquire after their fate; so tumultuous was the conflict of grief and joy (and not seldom in the very same group), that for a long time no authority could control the violence of public feeling, or enforce the arrangements which had been adopted for the night. Nor was it even easy to learn, where the questions were put by so many voices at once, what had been the history of the night. It was at length, however, collected, that they had been met and attacked with great fury by Holkerstein, or a party acting under one of his lieutenants. Their own march had been so warily conducted after nightfall, that this attack did not find them unprepared. A barrier of coaches and wagons had been speedily formed in such an arrangement as to cripple the enemy's movements, and to neutralize great part of his superiority in the quality of his horses. The engagement, however, had been severe; and the enemy's attack, though many times baffled, had been as often renewed, until, at length, the young general Maximilian, seeing that the affair tended to no apparent termination, that the bloodshed was great, and that the horses were beginning to knock up under the fatigue of such severe service, had brought up the very *elite* of his reserve, placed himself at their head, and, making a dash expressly

at their leader, had the good fortune to cut him down. The desperateness of the charge, added to the loss of their leader, had intimidated the enemy, who now began to draw off, as from an enterprise which was likely to cost them more blood than a final success could have rewarded. Unfortunately, however, Maximilian, disabled by a severe wound, and entangled by his horse amongst the enemy, had been carried off a prisoner. In the course of the battle all their torches had been extinguished; and this circumstance, as much as the roughness of the road, the ruinous condition of their carriages and appointments, and their own exhaustion, had occasioned their long delay in reaching Klosterheim, after the battle was at an end. Signals they had not ventured to make; for they were naturally afraid of drawing upon their track any fresh party of marauders, by so open a warning of their course as the sound of a trumpet.

These explanations were rapidly dispersed through Klosterheim; party after party drew off to their quarters; and at length the agitated city was once again restored to peace. The Lady Paulina had been amongst the first to retire. She was met by the lady abbess of a principal convent in Klosterheim, to whose care she had been recommended by the emperor. The Landgrave also had furnished her with a guard of honor; but all expressions of respect, or even of kindness, seemed thrown away upon her, so wholly was she absorbed in grief for the capture of Maximilian, and in gloomy anticipations of his impending fate.

CHAPTER VII

The city of Klosterheim was now abandoned to itself, and strictly shut up within its own walls. All roaming beyond those limits was now indeed forbidden even more effectually by the sword of the enemy than by the edicts of the Landgrave. War was manifestly gathering in its neighborhood. Little towns and castles within a range of seventy miles, on almost every side, were now daily occupied by imperial or Swedish troops. Not a week passed without some news of fresh military accessions, or of skirmishes between parties of hostile foragers. Through the whole adjacent country, spite of the severe weather, bodies of armed men were weaving to and fro, fast as a weaver's shuttle. The forest rang with alarums, and sometimes, under gleams of sunshine, the leafless woods seemed on fire with the restless splendor of spear and sword, morion and breast-plate, or the glittering equipments of the imperial cavalry. Couriers, or Bohemian gypsies, which latter were a class of people at this time employed by all sides as spies or messengers, continually stole in with secret despatches to the Landgrave, or (under the color of bringing public news, and the reports of military movements) to execute some private mission for rich employers in town; sometimes making even this clandestine business but a cover to other purposes, too nearly connected with treason, or reputed treason, to admit of any but oral communication.

What were the ulterior views in this large accumulation of military force, no man pretended to know. A great battle, for various reasons, was not expected. But changes were so sudden, and the counsels of each day so often depended on the accidents of the morning, that an entire campaign might easily be brought on, or the whole burthen of war for years to come might be transferred to this quarter of the land, without causing any very great surprise. Meantime, enough was done already to give a full foretaste of war and its miseries to this sequestered nook, so long unvisited by that hideous scourge.

In the forest, where the inhabitants were none, excepting those who lived upon the borders, and small establishments of the Landgrave's servants at different points, for executing the duties of the forest or the chase, this change expressed itself chiefly by the tumultuous uproar of the wild deer, upon whom a murderous war was kept up by parties detached daily from remote and opposite quarters, to collect provisions for the half-starving garrisons, so recently, and with so little previous preparation, multiplied on the forest skirts. For, though the country had been yet unexhausted by war, too large a proportion of the tracts adjacent to the garrisons were in a wild, sylvan condition to afford any continued supplies to so large and sudden an increase of the population; more especially as, under the rumors of this change, every walled town in a compass of a hundred miles, many of them capable of resisting a sudden *coup-de-main*

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