ГАНС ХРИСТИАН АНДЕРСЕН

O. T., A DANISH ROMANCE

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Содержание

H. C. Andersen
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CHAPTER I

"Quod felix faustumque sit!"

There is a happiness which no poet has yet properly sung, which no lady-reader, let her be ever so amiable, has experienced or ever will experience in this world. This is a condition of happiness which alone belongs to the male sex, and even then alone to the elect. It is a moment of life which seizes upon our feelings, our minds, our whole being. Tears have been shed by the innocent, sleepless nights been passed, during which the pious mother, the loving sister, have put up prayers to God for this critical moment in the life of the son or the brother.

Happy moment, which no woman, let her be ever so good, so beautiful, or intellectual, can experience—that of becoming a student, or, to describe it by a more usual term, the passing of the first examination!

The cadet who becomes an officer, the scholar who becomes an academical burgher, the apprentice who becomes a journeyman, all know, in a greater or less degree, this loosening of the wings, this bounding over the limits of maturity into the

lists of philosophy. We all strive after a wider field, and rush thither like the stream which at length loses itself in the ocean.

Then for the first time does the youthful soul rightly feel her freedom, and, therefore, feels it doubly; the soul struggles for activity, she comprehends her individuality; it has been proved and not found too light; she is still in possession of the dreams of childhood, which have not yet proved delusive. Not even the joy of love, not the enthusiasm for art and science, so thrills through all the nerves as the words, "Now am I a student!"

This spring-day of life, on which the ice-covering of the school is broken, when the tree of Hope puts forth its buds and the sun of Freedom shines, falls with us, as is well known, in the month of October, just when Nature loses her foliage, when the evenings begin to grow darker, and when heavy winter-clouds draw together, as though they would say to youth,—"Your spring, the birth of the examination, is only a dream! even now does your life become earnest!" But our happy youths think not of these things, neither will we be joyous with the gay, and pay a visit to their circle. In such a one our story takes its commencement.

CHAPTER II

"At last we separate:
To Jutland one, to Fünen others go;
And still the quick thought comes,
—A day so bright, so full of fun,
Never again on us shall rise."

—CARL BAGGER.

It was in October of the year 1829. Examen artium had been passed through. Several young students were assembled in the evening at the abode of one of their comrades, a young Copenhagener of eighteen, whose parents were giving him and his new friends a banquet in honor of the examination. The mother and sister had arranged everything in the nicest manner, the father had given excellent wine out of the cellar, and the student himself, here the rex convivii, had provided tobacco, genuine Oronoko-canaster. With regard to Latin, the invitation —which was, of course, composed in Latin—informed the guests that each should bring his own.

The company, consisting of one and twenty persons—and these were only the most intimate friends—was already assembled. About one third of the friends were from the provinces, the remainder out of Copenhagen.

"Old Father Homer shall stand in the middle of the table!" said

one of the liveliest guests, whilst he took down from the stove a plaster bust and placed it upon the covered table.

"Yes, certainly, he will have drunk as much as the other poets!" said an older one. "Give me one of thy exercise-books, Ludwig! I will cut him out a wreath of vine-leaves, since we have no roses and since I cannot cut out any."

"I have no libation!" cried a third,—"Favete linguis." And he sprinkled a small quantity of salt, from the point of a knife, upon the bust, at the same time raising his glass to moisten it with a few drops of wine.

"Do not use my Homer as you would an ox!" cried the host. "Homer shall have the place of honor, between the bowl and the garland-cake! He is especially my poet! It was he who in Greek assisted me to laudabilis et quidem egregie. Now we will mutually drink healths! Jörgen shall be magister bibendi, and then we will sing 'Gaudeamus igitur,' and 'Integer vitae.'"

"The Sexton with the cardinal's hat shall be the precentor!" cried one of the youths from the provinces, pointing toward a rosy-cheeked companion.

"O, now I am no longer sexton!" returned the other laughing. "If thou bringest old histories up again, thou wilt receive thy old school-name, 'the Smoke-squirter.'"

"But that is a very nice little history!" said the other. "We called him 'Sexton,' from the office his father held; but that, after all, is not particularly witty. It was better with the hat, for it did, indeed, resemble a cardinal's hat. I, in the mean time, got my

name in a more amusing manner."

"He lived near the school," pursued the other; "he could always slip home when we had out free quarters of an hour: and then one day he had filled his mouth with tobacco smoke, intending to blow it into our faces; but when he entered the passage with his filled cheeks the quarter of an hour was over, and we were again in class: the rector was still standing in the doorway; he could not, therefore, blow the smoke out of his mouth, and so wished to slip in as he was. 'What have you there in your mouth?' asked the rector; but Philip could answer nothing, without at the same time losing the smoke. 'Now, cannot you speak?' cried the rector, and gave him a box on the ear, so that the smoke burst through nose and mouth. This looked quite exquisite; the affair caused the rector such pleasure, that he presented the poor sinner with the nota bene."

"Integer vitae!" broke in the Precentor, and harmoniously followed the other voices. After this, a young Copenhagener exhibited his dramatic talent by mimicking most illusively the professors of the Academy, and giving their peculiarities, yet in such a good-natured manner that it must have amused even the offended parties themselves. Now followed the healths—"Vivant omnes hi et hae!"

"A health to the prettiest girl!" boldly cried one of the merriest brothers. "The prettiest girl!" repeated a pair of the younger ones, and pushed their glasses toward each other, whilst the blood rushed to their cheeks at this their boldness, for they had

never thought of a beloved being, which, nevertheless, belonged to their new life. The roundelay now commenced, in which each one must give the Christian name of his lady-love, and assuredly every second youth caught a name out of the air; some, however, repeated a name with a certain palpitation of the heart. The discourse became more animated; the approaching military exercises, the handsome uniform, the reception in the students' club, and its pleasures, were all matters of the highest interest. But there was the future philologicum and philosophicum—yes, that also was discussed; there they must exhibit their knowledge of Latin.

"What do you think," said one of the party, "if once a week we alternately met at each other's rooms, and held disputations? No Danish word must be spoken. This might be an excellent scheme."

"I agree to that!" cried several.

"Regular laws must be drawn up."

"Yes, and we must have our best Latin scholar, the Jutlander, Otto Thostrup, with us! He wrote his themes in hexameters."

"He is not invited here this evening," remarked the neighbor, the young Baron Wilhelm of Funen, the only nobleman in the company.

"Otto Thostrup!" answered the host. "Yes, truly he's a clever fellow, but he seems to me so haughty. There is something about him that does not please me at all. We are still no dunces, although he did receive nine prae caeteris!"

"Yet it was very provoking," cried another, "that he received the only Non in mathematics. Otherwise he would have been called in. Now he will only have to vex himself about his many brilliant characters."

"Yes, and he is well versed in mathematics!" added Wilhelm "There was something incorrect in the writing; the inspector was to blame for that, but how I know not. Thostrup is terribly vehement, and can set all respect at defiance; he became angry, and went out. There was only a piece of unwritten paper presented from him, and this brought him a cipher, which the verbal examination could not bring higher than non. Thostrup is certainly a glorious fellow. We have made a tour together in the steamboat from Helsingöer to Copenhagen, and in the written examination we sat beside each other until the day when we had mathematics, and then I sat below him. I like him very much, his pride excepted; and of that we must break him."

"Herr Baron," said his neighbor, "I am of your opinion. Shall not we drink the Thou-brotherhood?"

"To-night we will all of us drink the Thou!" said the host; "it is nothing if comrades and good friends call each other *you*."

"Evoe Bacchus!" they joyously shouted. The glasses were filled, one arm was thrown round that of the neighbor, and the glasses were emptied, whilst several commenced singing "dulce cum sodalibus!"

"Tell me what thou art called?" demanded one of the younger guests of his new Thou-brother.

"What am I called?" replied he. "With the exception of one letter, the same as the Baron."

"The Baron!" cried a third; "yes, where is he?"

"There he stands talking at the door; take your glasses! now have all of us drank the Thou-brotherhood?"

The glasses were again raised; the young Baron laughed, clinked his glass, and shouted in the circle, "Thou, Thou!" But in his whole bearing there lay something constrained, which, however, none of the young men remarked, far less allowed themselves to imagine that his sudden retreat, during the first drinking, perhaps occurred from the sole object of avoiding it. But soon was he again one of the most extravagant; promised each youth who would study theology a living on his estate when he should once get it into his own hands; and proposed that the Latin disputations should commence with him, and on the following Friday. Otto Thostrup, however, should be of the party —if he chose, of course being understood; for he was a capital student, and his friend they had made a journey together and had been neighbors at the green table.

Among those who were the earliest to make their valete amici was the Baron. Several were not yet inclined to quit this joyous circle. The deepest silence reigned in the streets; it was the most beautiful moonlight. In most houses all had retired to rest—only here and there was a light still seen, most persons slept, even those whose sense of duty should leave banished the god of sleep: thus sat a poor hackney-coachman, aloft upon his coach-

box, before the house where he awaited his party, and enjoyed, the reins wound about his hand, the much-desired rest. Wilhelm (henceforth we will only call the young Baron by his Christian name) walked alone through the street. The wine had heated his northern blood—besides which it never flowed slowly; his youthful spirits, his jovial mood, and the gayety occasioned by the merry company he had just quitted did not permit him quietly to pass by this sleeping Endymion. Suddenly it occurred to him to open the coach-door and leap in; which having done, he let the glass fall and called out with a loud voice, "Drive on!" The coachman started up out of his blessed sleep and asked, quite confused, "Where to?" Without reflecting about the matter, Wilhelm cried, "To the Ship in West Street." The coachman drove on; about half-way, Wilhelm again opened the coach-door, a bold spring helped him out, and the coach rolled on. It stopped at the public-house of the Ship. The coachman got down and opened the door; there was no one within; he thrust his head in thoroughly to convince himself; but no, the carriage was empty! "Extraordinary!" said the fellow; "can I have dreamed it? But still I heard, quite distinctly, how I was told to drive to the Ship! Lord preserve us! now they are waiting for me!" He leaped upon the box and drove rapidly back again.

In the mean time Wilhelm had reached his abode in Vineyard Street; he opened a window to enjoy the beautiful night, and gazed out upon the desolate church-yard which is shut in by shops. He had no inclination for sleep, although everything in

the street, even the watchmen not excepted, appeared to rejoice the gift of God. Wilhelm thought upon the merry evening party, upon his adventure with the poor hackney-coachman, then took down his violin from the wall and began to play certain variations.

The last remaining guests from the honorable carousal, merrier than when Wilhelm left them, now came wandering up the street. One of them jodeled sweetly, and no watchman showed himself as a disturbing principle. They heard Wilhelm violin and recognized the musician.

"Play us a Française, thou up there!" cried they.

"But the watchman?" whispered one of the less courageous.

"Zounds, there he sits!" cried a third, and pointed toward a sleeping object which leaned its head upon a large wooden chest before a closed booth.

"He is happy!" said the first speaker. "If we had only the strong Icelander here, he would soon hang him up by his bandelier upon one of the iron hooks. He has done that before now; he has the strength of a bear. He seized such a lazy fellow as this right daintily by his girdle on one of the hooks at the weighing-booth. There hung the watchman and whistled to the others; the first who hastened to the spot was immediately hung up beside him, and away ran the Icelander whilst the two blew a duet."

"Here, take hold!" cried one of the merry brothers, quickly opening the chest, the lid of which was fastened by a peg. "Let us put the watchman into the chest; he sleeps indeed like a horse!" In a moment, the four had seized the sleeper, who certainly awoke

during the operation, but he already lay in the chest. The lid flew down, and two or three of the friends sprang upon it whilst the peg was stuck in again. The watchman immediately seized his whistle and drew the most heart-rending tones from it. Quickly the tormenting spirits withdrew themselves; yet not so far but that they could still hear the whistle and observe what would take place.

The watchmen now came up.

"The deuce! where art thou?" cried they, and then discovered the place.

"Ah, God help me!" cried the prisoner. "Let me out, let me out! I must call!"

"Thou hast drunk more than thy thirst required, comrade!" said the others. "If thou hast fallen into the chest, remain lying there, thou swine!" And laughing they left him.

"O, the rascals!" sighed he, and worked in vain at opening the lid. Through all his powerful exertions the box fell over. The young men now stepped forth, and, as though they were highly astonished at the whole history which he related to them, they let themselves be prevailed upon to open the box, but only upon condition that he should keep street free from the interference of the other watchmen whilst they danced a Française to Wilhelm's violin.

The poor man was delivered from his captivity, and must obligingly play the sentinel whilst they arranged them for the dance. Wilhelm was called upon to play, and the dance

commenced; a partner, however, was wanting. Just then a quiet citizen passed by. The gentleman who had no partner approached the citizen with comic respect, and besought him to take part in the amusement.

"I never dance!" said the man, laughing, and wished to pursue his way.

"Yes," replied the cavalier, "yet you must still do me this pleasure, or else I shall have no dance." Saying this he took hold of him by the waist and the dance commenced, whether the good man would or no.

"The watchman should receive a present from every one!" said they, when the Française was at an end. "He is an excellent man who thus keeps order in the street, so that one can enjoy a little dance."

"These are honest people's children!" said the watchman to himself, whilst he with much pleasure thrust the money into his leathern purse.

All was again quiet in the street; the violin was also silent.

CHAPTER III

"Who looks into the shadowy realm of my heart?"
A. V. CHAMISSO.

In the former chapter we heard mention made of a young student, Otto Thostrup, a clever fellow, with nine prae caeteris, as his comrades said, but also of a proud spirit, of which he must be broken. Not at the disputations, which have been already mentioned, will we make his acquaintance, although there we must be filled with respect for the good Latin scholar; not in large companies, where his handsome exterior and his speaking, melancholy glance must make him interesting; as little in the pit of the Opera although his few yet striking observations there would show him to be a very intellectual young man; but we will seek him out for the first time at the house of his friend, the young Baron Wilhelm. It is the beginning of November: we find them both with their pipes in their mouths; upon the table lie Tibullus and Anacreon, which they are reading together for the approaching philologicum.

In the room stands a piano-forte, with a number of music-books; upon the walls hang the portraits of Weyse and Beethoven, for our young Baron is musical, nay a composer himself.

"See, here we have again this lovely, clinging mist!" said

Wilhelm. “Out of doors one can fairly taste it; at home it would be a real plague to me, here it only Londonizes the city.”

“I like it!” said Otto. “To me it is like an old acquaintance from Vestervovov. It is as though the mist brought me greetings from the sea and sand-hills.”

“I should like to see the North Sea, but the devil might live there! What town lies nearest to your grandfather’s estate?”

“Lernvig,” answered Otto. “If any one wish to see the North Sea properly, they ought to go up as far as Thisted and Hjörring. I have travelled there, have visited the family in Börglum-Kloster; and, besides this, have made other small journeys. Never shall I forget one evening; yes, it was a storm of which people in the interior of the country can form no conception. I rode—I was then a mere boy, and a very wild lad—with one of our men. When the storm commenced we found ourselves among the sand-hills. Ah! that you should have seen! The sand forms along the strand high banks, which serve as dikes against the sea; these are overgrown with sea-grass, but, if the storm bursts a single hole, the whole is carried away. This spectacle we chanced to witness. It is a true Arabian sand-storm, and the North Sea bellowed so that it might be heard at the distance of many miles. The salt foam flew together with the sand into our faces.”

“That must have been splendid!” exclaimed Wilhelm, and his eyes sparkled. “Jutland is certainly the most romantic part of Denmark. Since I read Steen-Blicher’s novels I have felt a real interest for that country. It seems to me that it must greatly

resemble the Lowlands of Scotland. And gypsies are also found there, are they not?"

"Vagabonds, we call them," said Otto, with an involuntary motion of the mouth. "They correspond to the name!"

"The fishermen, also, on the coast are not much better! Do they still from the pulpit pray for wrecks? Do they still slay shipwrecked mariners?"

"I have heard our preacher, who is an old man, relate how, in the first years after he had obtained his office and dignity, he was obliged to pray in the church that, if ships stranded, they might strand in his district; but this I have never heard myself. But with regard to what is related of murdering, why, the fishermen—sea-geese, as they are called—are by no means a tender-hearted people; but it is not as bad as that in our days. A peasant died in the neighborhood, of whom it was certainly related that in bad weather he had bound a lantern under his horse's belly and let it wander up and down the beach, so that the strange mariner who was sailing in those seas might imagine it some cruising ship, and thus fancy himself still a considerable way from land. By this means many a ship is said to have been destroyed. But observe, these are stories out of the district of Thisted, and of an elder age, before my power of observation had developed itself; this was that golden age when in tumble-down fishers' huts, after one of these good shipwrecks, valuable shawls, but little damaged by the sea, might be found employed as bed-hangings. Boots and shoes were smeared with the finest pomatum. If such things now

reach their hands, they know better how to turn them into money. The Strand-commissioners are now on the watch; now it is said to be a real age of copper."

"Have you seen a vessel stranded?" inquired Wilhelm, with increasing interest.

"Our estate lies only half a mile from the sea. Every year about this time, when the mist spreads itself out as it does to-day and the storms begin to rage, then was it most animated. In my wild spirits, when I was a boy, and especially in the midst of our monotonous life, I truly yearned after it. Once, upon a journey to Börglum-Kloster, I experienced a storm. In the early morning; it was quite calm, but gray, and we witnessed a kind of Fata Morgana. A ship, which had not yet risen above the horizon, showed itself in the distance, but the rigging was turned upside down; the masts were below, the hull above. This is called the ship of death, and when it is seen people are sure of bad weather and shipwreck. Later, about midday, it began to blow, and in an hour's time we had a regular tempest. The sea growled quite charmingly; we travelled on between sand-hills—they resemble hills and dales in winter time, but here it is not snow which melts away; here never grows a single green blade; a black stake stands up here and there, and these are rudders from wrecks, the histories of which are unknown. In the afternoon arose a storm such as I had experienced when riding with the man between the sand-hills. We could not proceed farther, and were obliged on this account to seek shelter in one of the huts which the

fishermen hail erected among the white sand-hills. There we remained, and I saw the stranding of a vessel: I shall never forget it! An American ship lay not a musket-shot from land. They cut the mast; six or seven men clung fast to it in the waters. O, how they rocked backward and forward in the dashing spray! The mast took a direction toward the shore; at length only three men were left clinging to the mast; it was dashed upon land, but the returning waves again bore it away; it had crushed the arms and legs of the clinging wretches—ground them like worms! I dreamed of this for many nights. The waves flung the hull of the vessel up high on the shore, and drove it into the sand, where it was afterward found. Later, as we retraced our steps, were the stem and sternpost gone: you saw two strong wooden walls, between which the road took its course. You even still travel through the wreck!"

"Up in your country every poetical mind must become a Byron," said Wilhelm. "On my parents' estate we have only idyls; the whole of Funen is a garden. We mutually visit each other upon our different estates, where we lead most merry lives, dance with the peasant-girls at the brewing-feast, hunt in the woods, and fish in the lakes. The only melancholy object which presents itself with us is a funeral, and the only romantic characters we possess are a little hump-backed musician, a wise woman, and an honest schoolmaster, who still firmly believes, as Jeronimus did, that the earth is flat, and that, were it to turn round, we should fall, the devil knows where!"

"I love nature in Jutland!" exclaimed Otto. "The open sea, the brown heath, and the bushy moorland. You should see the wild moor in Vendsyssel—that is an extent! Almost always wet mists float over its unapproachable interior, which is known to no one. It is not yet fifty years since it served as an abode for wolves. Often it bursts into flames, for it is impregnated with sulphuric gas,—one can see the fire for miles."

"My sister Sophie ought to hear all this!" said Wilhelm. "You would make your fortune with her! The dear girl! she has the best head at home, but she loves effect. Hoffman and Victor Hugo are her favorites. Byron rests every night under her pillow. If you related such things of the west coast of Jutland, and of heaths and moors, you might persuade her to make a journey thither. One really would not believe that we possessed in our own country such romantic situations!"

"Is she your only sister?" inquired Otto.

"No," returned Wilhelm, "I have two—the other is named Louise; she is of quite an opposite character: I do not know of which one ought to think most. Have you no brothers or sisters?" he asked of Otto.

"No!" returned the latter, with his former involuntary, half-melancholy expression. "I am an only child. In my house it is solitary and silent. My grandfather alone is left alive. He is an active, strong man, but very grave. He instructed me in mathematics, which he thoroughly understands. The preacher taught me Latin, Greek, and history: two persons, however,

occupied themselves with my religious education—the preacher and my old Rosalie. She is a good soul. How often have I teased her, been petulant, and almost angry with her! She thought so much of me, she was both mother and sister to me, and instructed me in religion as well as the preacher, although she is a Catholic. Since my father's childhood she has been a sort of governante in the house. You should have seen her melancholy smile when she heard my geography lesson, and we read of her dear Switzerland, where she was born, and of the south of France, where she had travelled as a child. The west coast of Jutland may also appear very barren in comparison with these countries!"

"She might have made you a Catholic! But surely nothing of this still clings to you?"

"Rosalie was a prudent old creature; Luther himself need not have been ashamed of her doctrine. Whatever is holy to the heart of man, remains also holy in every religion!"

"But then, to erect altars to the Madonna!" exclaimed Wilhelm; "to pray to a being; whom the Bible does not make a saint!—that is rather too much. And their tricks with burning of incense and ringing of bells! Yes, indeed, it would give me no little pleasure to cut off the heads of the Pope and of the whole clerical body! To purchase indulgence!—Those must, indeed, be curious people who can place thorough faith in such things! I will never once take off my hat before the Madonna!"

"But that will I do, and in my heart bow myself before her!" answered Otto, gravely.

"Did I not think so? she has made you a Catholic!"

"No such thing! I am as good a Protestant as you yourself: but wherefore should we not respect the mother of Christ? With regard to the ceremonials of Catholicism, indulgence, and all these additions of the priesthood, I agree with you in wishing to strike off the heads of all who, in such a manner, degrade God and the human understanding. But in many respects we are unjust: we so easily forget the first and greatest commandment, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself!' We are not tolerant. Among our festivals we have still one for the Three Kings—it is yet celebrated by the common people; but what have these three kings done? They knelt before the manger in which Christ lay, and on this account we honor them. On the contrary, the mother of God has no festival-day; nay, the multitude even smile at her name! If you will only quietly listen to my simple argument, we shall soon agree. You will take off your hat and bow before the Madonna. Only two things are to be considered—either Christ was entirely human, or He was, as the Bible teaches us, a divine being. I will now admit the latter. He is God Himself, who in some inexplicable manner, is born to us of the Virgin Mary. She must therefore be the purest, the most perfect feminine being, since God found her worthy to bring into the world the Son, the only one; through this she becomes as holy as any human being can, and low we must bow ourselves before the pure, the exalted one. Take it for granted that Christ was human, like ourselves, otherwise He cannot, according to my belief, call upon

us to imitate Him; neither would it be great, as God, to meet a corporeal death, from which He could remove each pain. Were He only a man, born of Mary, we must doubly admire Him; we must bow in the dust before His mighty spirit, His enlightening and consoling doctrine. But can we then forget how much the mother has must have influenced the child, how sublime and profound the soul must have been which spoke to His heart? We must reverence and honor her! Everywhere in the Scriptures where she appears we see an example of care and love; with her whole soul she adheres to her Son. Think how uneasy she became, and sought for Him in the temple—think of her gentle reproaches! The words of the Son always sounded harsh in my ears. 'Those are the powerful expressions of the East!' said my old preacher. The Saviour was severe, severe as He must be! Already there seemed to me severity in His words! She was completely the mother; she was it then, even as when she wept at Golgotha. Honor and reverence she deserves from us!"

"These she also receives!" returned Wilhelm; and striking him upon the shoulder he added, with a smile, "you are, according to the Roman Catholic manner, near exalting the mother above the Son! Old Rosalie has made a proselyte; after all, you are half a Catholic!"

"That am I not!" answered Otto, "and that will I not be!"

"See! the thunder-cloud advances!"

resounded below in the court: the sweet Neapolitan song reached the ears of the friends. They stepped into the adjoining

room and opened the window. Three poor boys stood below in the wind and rain, and commenced the song. The tallest was, perhaps, fourteen or fifteen years old, his deep, rough voice seemed to have attained its strength and depth more through rain and bad weather than through age. The dirty wet clothes hung in rags about his body; the shoes upon the wet feet, and the hat held together with white threads, were articles of luxury. The other two boys had neither hat nor shoes, but their clothes were whole and clean. The youngest appeared six or seven years old; his silvery white hair formed a contrast with his brown face, his dark eyes and long brown eyelashes. His voice sounded like the voice of a little girl, as fine and soft, beside the voices of the others, as the breeze of an autumnal evening beside that of rude November weather.

"That is a handsome boy!" exclaimed the two friends at the same time.

"And a lovely melody!" added Otto.

"Yes, but they sing falsely!" answered Wilhelm: "one sings half a tone too low, the other half a tone too high!"

"Now, thank God that I cannot hear that!" said Otto. "It sounds sweetly, and the little one might become a singer. Poor child!" added he gravely: "bare feet, wet to the very skin; and then the elder one will certainly lead him to brandy drinking! Within a month, perhaps, the voice will be gone! Then is the nightingale dead!" He quickly threw down some skillings, wrapped in paper.

"Come up!" cried Wilhelm, and beckoned. The eldest of the

boys flew up like an arrow; Wilhelm, however, said it was the youngest who was meant. The others remained standing before the door; the youngest stepped in.

"Whose son art thou?" asked Wilhelm. The boy was silent, and cast down his eyes in an embarrassed manner. "Now, don't be bashful! Thou art of a good family—that one can see from thy appearance! Art not thou thy mother's son? I will give thee stockings and—the deuce! here is a pair of boots which are too small for me; if thou dost not get drowned in them they shall be thy property: but now thou must sing." And he seated himself at the piano-forte and struck the keys. "Now, where art thou?" he cried, rather displeased. The little one gazed upon the ground.

"How! dost thou weep; or is it the rain which hangs in thy black eyelashes?" said Otto, and raised his head: "we only wish to do thee a kindness. There—thou hast another skilling from me."

The little one still remained somewhat laconic. All that they learned was that he was named Jonas, and that his grandmother thought so much of him.

"Here thou hast the stockings!" said Wilhelm; "and see here! a coat with a velvet collar, a much-to-be-prized keepsake! The boots! Thou canst certainly stick both legs into one boot! See! that is as good as having two pairs to change about with! Let us see!"

The boy's eyes sparkled with joy; the boots he drew on, the stockings went into his pocket, and the bundle he took under his arm.

"But thou must sing us a little song!" said Wilhelm, and the little one commenced the old song out of the "Woman-hater," "Cupid never can be trusted!"

The lively expression in the dark eyes, the boy himself in his wet, wretched clothes and big boots, with the bundle under his arm; nay, the whole had something so characteristic in it, that had it been painted, and had the painter called the picture "Cupid on his Wanderings," every one would have found the little god strikingly excellent, although he were not blind.

"Something might be made of the boy and of his voice!" said Wilhelm, when little Jonas, in a joyous mood, had left the house with the other lads.

"The poor child!" sighed Otto. "I have fairly lost my good spirits through all this. It seizes upon me so strangely when I see misery and genius mated. Once there came to our estate in Jutland a man who played the Pandean-pipes, and at the same time beat the drum and cymbals: near him stood a little girl, and struck the triangle. I was forced to weep over this spectacle; without understanding how it was, I felt the misery of the poor child. I was myself yet a mere boy."

"He looked so comic in the big boots that I became quite merry, and not grave," said Wilhelm. "Nevertheless what a pity it is that such gentle blood, which at the first glance one perceives he is, that such a pretty child should become a rude fellow, and his beautiful voice change into a howl, like that with which the other tall Laban saluted us. Who knows whether little Jonas might not

become the first singer on the Danish stage? Yes, if he received education of mind and voice, who knows? I could really have, pleasure in attempting it, and help every one on in the world, before I myself am rightly in the way!"

"If he is born to a beggar's estate," said Otto, "let him as beggar live and die, and learn nothing higher. That is better, that is more to be desired!"

Wilhelm seated himself at the piano-forte, and played some of his own compositions. "That is difficult," said he; "every one cannot play that."

"The simpler the sweeter!" replied Otto.

"You must not speak about music!" returned the friend "upon that you know not how to pass judgment. Light Italian operas are not difficult to write."

In the evening the friends separated. Whilst Otto took his hat, there was a low knock at the door. Wilhelm opened it. Without stood a poor old woman, with pale sharp features; by the hand she led a little boy—it was Jonas: thus then it was a visit from him and his grandmother.

The other boys had sold the boots and shoes which had been given him. They ought to have a share, they maintained. This atrocious injustice had induced the old grandmother to go immediately with little Jonas to the two good gentlemen, and relate how little the poor lad had received of flint which they had assigned to him alone.

Wilhelm spoke of the boy's sweet voice, and thought that by

might make his fortune at the theatre; but then he ought not now to be left running about with bare feet in the wind and rain.

"But by this means he brings a skilling home," said the old woman. "That's what his father and mother look to, and the skilling they can always employ. Nevertheless she had herself already thought of bringing him out at the theatre,—but that was to have been in dancing, for they got shoes and stockings to dance in, and with these they might also run home; and that would be an advantage."

"I will teach the boy music!" said Wilhelm; "he can come to me sometimes."

"And then he will, perhaps, get a little cast-off clothing, good sir," said the grandmother; "a shirt, or a waistcoat, just as it happens?"

"Become a tailor, or shoemaker," said Otto, gravely, and laid his hand upon the boy's head.

"He shall be a genius!" said Wilhelm.

CHAPTER IV

"Christmas-tide,
When in the wood the snow shines bright."

OEHLENSCHLÄGER'S Helge

We again let several weeks pass by; it was Christmas Eve, which brings us the beautiful Christmas festival. We find the two friends taking a walk.

Describe to an inhabitant of the south a country where the earth appears covered with the purest Carrara marble, where the tree twigs resemble white branches of coral sprinkled with diamonds, and above a sky as blue as that belonging to the south, and he will say that is a fairy land. Couldst thou suddenly remove him from his dark cypresses and olive-trees to the north, where the fresh snow lies upon the earth, where the white hoar-frost has powdered the trees over, and the sun shines down from the blue heaven, then would he recognize the description and call the north a fairy land.

This was the splendor which the friends admired. The large trees upon the fortification-walls appeared crystallized when seen against the blue sky. The Sound was not yet frozen over; vessels, illuminated by the red evening sun, glided past with spread sails. The Swedish coast seemed to have approached

nearer; one might see individual houses in Landskrona. It was lovely, and on this account there were many promenaders upon the walls and the Langelinie.

"Sweden seems so near that one might swim over to it!" said Wilhelm.

"The distance would be too far," answered Otto; "but I should love to plunge among the deep blue waters yonder."

"How refreshing it is," said Wilhelm, "when the water plays about one's cheeks! Whilst I was at home, I always swam in the Great Belt. Yes, you are certainly half a fish when you come into the water."

"I!" repeated Otto, and was silent; but immediately added, with a kind of embarrassment which was at other times quite foreign to him, and from which one might infer how unpleasant confessing any imperfection was to him, "I do not swim."

"That must be learned in summer!" said Wilhelm.

"There is so much to learn," answered Otto; "swimming will certainly be the last thing." He now suddenly turned toward the fortress, and stood still. "Only see how melancholy and quiet!" said he, and led the conversation again to the surrounding scenery. "The sentinel before the prison paces so quietly up and down, the sun shines upon his bayonet! How this reminds me of a sweet little poem of Heine's; it is just as though he described this fortress and this soldier, but in the warmth of summer: one sees the picture livingly before one, as here; the weapon glances in the sun, and the part ends so touchingly,—'Ich wollt', er schösse

mich todt!' It is here so romantically beautiful! on the right the animated promenade, and the view over the Sund; on the left, the desolate square, where the military criminals are shot, and close upon it the prison with its beam-fence. The sun scarcely shines through those windows. Yet, without doubt, the prisoner can see us walking here upon the wall."

"And envy our golden freedom!" said Wilhelm.

"Perhaps he derides it," answered Otto. "He is confined to his chamber and the small courts behind the beam-lattice; we are confined to the coast; we cannot fly forth with the ships into the mighty, glorious world. We are also fastened with a chain, only ours is somewhat longer than that of the prisoner. But we will not think of this; let us go down to where the beautiful ladies are walking."

"To see and to be seen," cried Wilhelm. "'Spectatum veniunt; veniunt spectentur ut ipsae,' as Ovid says."

The friends quitted the wall.

"There comes my scholar, little Jonas!" cried Wilhelm. "The boy was better dressed than at his last appearance; quickly he pulled his little cap off and stood still: a young girl in a wretched garb held him by the hand.

"Good day, my clever lad!" said Wilhelm, and his glance rested on the girl: she was of a singularly elegant form; had she only carried herself better she would have been a perfect beauty. It was Psyche herself who stood beside Cupid. She smiled in a friendly manner; the little lad had certainly told her who the

gentlemen were; but she became crimson, and cast down her eyes when Wilhelm looked back after her: he beckoned to Jonas, who immediately came to him. The girl was his sister, he said, and was called Eva. Wilhelm nodded to her, and the friends went on.

"That was a beautiful girl!" said Wilhelm, and looked back once more. "A rosebud that one could kiss until it became a full blown rose!"

"During the experiment the rosebud might easily be broken!" answered Otto; "at least such is the case with the real flower. But do not look back again, that is a sin!"

"Sin?" repeated Wilhelm; "no, then it is a very innocent sin! Believe me, it flatters the little creature that we should admire her beauty. I can well imagine how enchanting a loving look from a rich young gentleman may be for a weak, feminine mind. The sweet words which one can say are as poison which enters the blood. I have still a clear conscience. Not ONE innocent soul have I poisoned!"

"And yet you are rich and young enough to do so," returned Otto, not without bitterness. "Our friends precede us with a good example: here come some of our own age; they are acquainted with the roses!"

"Good evening, thou good fellow!" was the greeting Wilhelm received from three or four of the young men.

"Are you on Thou-terms with all these?" inquired Otto.

"Yes," answered Wilhelm; "we became so at a carouse. There all drank the Thou-brotherhood. I could not draw myself back.

At other times I do not willingly give my 'thou' to any but my nearest friends. *Thou* has something to my mind affectionate and holy. Many people fling it to the first person with whom they drink a glass. At the carouse I could not say no."

"And wherefore not?" returned Otto; "that would never have troubled me."

The friends now wandered on, arm-in-arm. Later in the evening we again meet with them together, and that at the house of a noble family, whose name and rank are to be found in the "Danish Court Calendar;" on which account it would be wanting in delicacy to mention the same, even in a story the events of which lie so near our hearts.

Large companies are most wearisome. In these there are two kinds of rank. Either you are riveted to a card-table, or placed against the wall where you must stand with your hat in your hand, or, later in the evening, with it at your feet, nay, even must stand during supper. But this house was one of the most intellectual. Thou who dost recognize the house wilt also recognize that it is not to be reckoned with those,—

> "Where each day's gossiping stale fish
> Is served up daily for thy dish."

This evening we do not become acquainted with the family, but only with their beautiful Christmas festival.

The company was assembled in a large apartment; the shaded

lamp burned dimly, but this was with the intention of increasing the effect when the drawing-room doors should open and the children joyfully press in together.

Wilhelm now stepped to the piano-forte; a few chords produced stillness and attention. To the sounds of low music there stepped forth from the side-doors three maidens arrayed in white; each wore a long veil depending from the back of her head,—one blue, the other red, and the third white. Each carried in her arms an urn, and thus they represented fortune-tellers from the East. They brought good or ill luck, which each related in a little verse. People were to draw a number, and according to this would he receive his gift from the Christmas-tree. One of the maidens brought blanks—but which of them? now it was proved whether you were a child of fortune. All, even the children, drew their uncertain numbers: exception was only made with the family physician and a few elderly ladies of the family; these had a particular number stuck into their hands—their presents had been settled beforehand.

"Who brings me good luck?" inquired Otto, as the three pretty young girls approached him. The one with a white veil was Wilhelm's eldest sister, Miss Sophie, who was this winter paying a visit to the family. She resembled her brother. The white drapery about her head increased the expression of her countenance. She rested her gaze firmly upon Otto, and, perhaps, because he was the friend of her brother, she raised her finger. Did she wish to warn or to challenge him? Otto regarded it as a

challenge, thrust his hand into the urn, and drew out number 33. All were now provided. The girls disappeared, and the folding-doors of the drawing-room were opened.

A dazzling light streamed toward the guests. A splendid fir-tree, covered with burning tapers, and hung over with tinsel-gold, gilt eggs and apples, almonds and grapes, dazzled the eye. On either side of the tree were grottoes of fir-trees and moss, hung with red and blue paper lamps. In each grotto was an altar; upon one stood John of Bologna's floating Mercury; upon the other, a reduced cast in plaster of Thorwaldsen's Shepherd-boy. The steps were covered with presents, to which were attached the different numbers.

"Superbe! lovely!" resounded from all sides; and the happy children shouted for joy. People arranged themselves in a half-circle, one row behind the other. One of the cousins of the family now stepped forth, a young poet, who, if we mistake not, has since then appeared among the Anonymouses in "The New Year's Gift of Danish Poets." He was appareled this evening as one of the Magi, and recited a little poem which declared that, as each one had himself drawn out of the urn of Fate, no one could be angry, let him have procured for himself honor or derision—Fate, and not Merit, being here the ruler. Two little boys, with huge butterfly wings and in flowing garments, bore the presents to the guests. A number, which had been purposely given to one of the elder ladies, was now called out, and the boys brought forward a large, heavy, brown earthen jug. To the same hung

a direction the length of two sheets of paper, upon which was written, "A remedy against frost." The jug was opened, and a very nice boa taken out and presented to the lady.

"What number have you?" inquired Otto of Wilhelm's sister, who, freed from her long veil, now entered the room and took her place near him.

"Number 34," she answered. "I was to keep the number which remained over when the others had drawn."

"We are, then, neighbors in the chain of Fate," returned Otto; "I have number 33."

"Then one of us will receive something very bad!" said Sophie. "For, as much as I know, only every other number is good." At this moment their numbers were called out. The accompanying poem declared that only a poetical, noble mind deserved this gift. It consisted of an illuminated French print, the subject a simple but touching idea. You saw a frozen lake, nothing but one expanse of ice as far as the horizon. The ice was broken, and near to the opening lay a hat with a red lining, and beside it sat a dog with grave eyes, still and expectant. Around the broken opening in the ice were seen traces of the dog having scratched into the hard crust of ice. "Il attend toujours" was the simple motto.

"That is glorious!" exclaimed Otto. "An affecting thought! His master has sunk in the depth, and the faithful log yet awaits him. Had that picture only fallen to my lot!"

"It is lovely!" said Sophie, and a melancholy glance made the

young girl still more beautiful.

Soon after Wilhelm's turn came.

> "Open the packet, thou shalt see
> The very fairest gaze on thee!"

ran the verse. He opened the packet, and found within a small mirror. "Yes, that was intended for a lady," said he; "in that case it would have spoken the truth! in my hands it makes a fool of me.

"For me nothing certainly remains but my number!" said Otto to his neighbor, as all the gifts appeared to be distributed.

"The last is number 33," said the cousin, and drew forth a roll of paper, which had been hidden among the moss. It was unrolled. It was an old pedigree of an extinct race. Quite at the bottom lay the knight with shield and armor, and out of his breast grew the many-branched tree with its shields and names. Probably it had been bought, with other rubbish, at some auction, and now at Christmas, when every hole and corner was rummaged for whatever could be converted into fun or earnest, it had been brought out for the Christmas tree. The cousin read the following verse:—

> "Art thou not noble?—then it in far better;
> This tree unto thy father is not debtor;
> Thyself alone is thy ancestral crown.
> From thee shall spring forth branches of renown,
> And if thou come where blood gives honor's place,

This tree shall prove thee first of all thy race!
From this hour forth thy soul high rank hath won her,
Not will forget thy knighthood and thy honor."

"I congratulate you," said Wilhelm, laughing. "Now you will have to pay the nobility-tax!"

Several of the ladies who stood near him, smiling, also offered a kind of congratulation. Sophie alone remained silent, and examined the present of another lady—a pretty pincushion in the form of a gay butterfly.

The first row now rose to examine more nearly how beautifully the Christmas tree was adorned. Sophie drew one of the ladies away with her.

"Let us look at the beautiful statues," said she; "the Shepherd-boy and the Mercury."

"That is not proper," whispered the lady; "but look there at the splendid large raisins on the tree!"

Sophie stepped before Thorwaldsen's Shepherd-boy. The lady whispered to a friend, "It looks so odd that she should examine the figures!"

"Ah!" replied the other, "she is a lover of the fine arts, as you well know. Only think! at the last exhibition she went with her brother into the great hall where all the plaster-casts stand, and looked at them!—the Hercules, as well as the other indecent figures! they were excellent, she said. That is being so natural; otherwise she is a nice girl."

“It is a pity she is a little awry.”

Sophie approached them; both ladies made room for her, and invited her most lovingly to sit clown beside them. “Thou sweet girl!” they flatteringly exclaimed.

CHAPTER V

"Hark to trumpets and beaten gongs,
Squeaking fiddles, shouts and songs.
Hurra! hurra!
The Doctor is here;
And here the hills where fun belongs."

J. L. HEIBERG.

We will not follow the principal characters of our story step for step, but merely present the prominent moments of their lives to our readers, be these great or small; we seize on them, if they in any way contribute to make the whole picture more worthy of contemplation.

The winter was over, the birds of passage had long since returned; the woods and fields shone in the freshest green, and, what to the friends was equally interesting, they had happily passed through their examen philologicum. Wilhelm, who, immediately after its termination, had accompanied his sister home, was again returned, sang with little Jonas, reflected upon the philosophicum, and also how he would thoroughly enjoy the summer,—the summer which in the north is so beautiful, but so short. It was St. John's Day. Families had removed from Copenhagen to their pretty country-seats on the coast, where people on horseback and in carriages rushed past, and where

the highway was crowded with foot-passengers. The whole road presented a picture of life upon the Paris Boulevard. The sun was burning, the dust flew up high into the air; on which account many persons preferred the pleasanter excursion with the steamboat along the coast, from whence could be seen the traffic on the high-road without enduring the annoyance of dust and heat. Boats skimmed past; brisk sailors, by the help of vigorous strokes of the oar, strove to compete with the steam-packet, the dark smoke from which, like some demon, partly rested upon the vessel, partly floated away in the air.

Various young students, among whom were also Wilhelm and Otto, landed at Charlottenlund, the most frequented place of resort near Copenhagen. Otto was here for the first time; for the first time he should see the park.

A summer's afternoon in Linken's Bad, near Dresden, bears a certain resemblance to Charlottenlund, only that the Danish wood is larger; that instead of the Elbe we have the Sound, which is here three miles broad, and where often more than a hundred vessels, bearing flags of all the European nations, glide past. A band of musicians played airs out of "Preciosa;" the white tents glanced like snow or swans through the green beech-trees. Here and there was a fire-place raised of turf, over which people boiled and cooked, so that the smoke rose up among the trees. Outside the wood, waiting in long rows, were the peasants' vehicles, called "coffee-mills," completely answering ho the couricolo of the Neapolitan and the coucou of the

Parisian, equally cheap, and overladen in the same manner with passengers, therefore forming highly picturesque groups. This scene has been humorously treated in a picture by Marstrand. Between fields and meadows, the road leads pleasantly toward the park; the friends pursued the foot-path.

"Shall I brush the gentlemen?" cried five or six boys, at the same time pressing upon the friends as they approached the entrance to the park. Without waiting for an answer, the boys commenced at once brushing the dust from their clothes and boots.

"These are Kirsten Piil's pages," said Wilhelm, laughing; "they take care that people show themselves tolerably smart. But now we are brushed enough!" A six-skilling-piece rejoiced these little Savoyards.

The Champs Elysées of the Parisians on a great festival day, when the theatres are opened, the swings are flying, trumpets and drums overpowering the softer music, and when the whole mass of people, like one body, moves itself between the booths and tents, present a companion piece to the spectacle which the so-called Park-hill affords. It is Naples' "Largo dei Castello," with its dancing apes, shrieking Bajazzoes, the whole deafening jubilee which has been transported to a northern wood. Here also, in the wooden booths, large, tawdry pictures show what delicious plays you may enjoy within. The beautiful female horse-rider stands upon the wooden balcony and cracks with her whip, whilst Harlequin blows the trumpet. Fastened to a perch, large, gay

parrots nod over the heads of the multitude. Here stands a miner in his black costume, and exhibits the interior of a mine. He turns his box, and during the music dolls ascend and descend. Another shows the splendid fortress of Frederiksteen: "The whole cavalry and infantry who have endured an unspeakable deal; here a man without a weapon, there a weapon without a man; here a fellow without a bayonet, here a bayonet without a fellow; and yet they are merry and contented, for they have conquered the victory."[1] Dutch wafer-cake booths, where the handsome Dutch women, in their national costume, wait on the customers, entice old and young. Here a telescope, there a rare Danish ox, and so forth. High up, between the fresh tree boughs, the swings fly. Are those two lovers floating up there? A current of air seizes the girl's dress and shawl, the young man flings his arm round her waist; it is for safety: there is then less danger. At the foot of the hill there is cooking and roasting going on; it seems a complete gypsy-camp. Under the tree sits the old Jew—this is precisely his fiftieth jubilee; through a whole half-century has he sung here his comical Doctor's song. Now that we are reading this he is dead; that characteristic countenance is dust, those speaking eyes are closed, his song forgotten tones. Oehlenschläger, in his "St. John's Eve," has preserved his portrait for us, and it will continue to live, as Master Jakel (Punch), our Danish Thespis, will continue to live. The play and the puppets were transferred from father to son, and every quarter of an hour in the day the

[1] Note: Literal translation of the real words of a showman.

piece is repeated. Free nature is the place for the spectators, and after every representation the director himself goes round with the plate.

This was the first spectacle which exhibited itself to the friends. Not far off stood a juggler in peasant's clothes, somewhat advanced in years, with a common ugly countenance. His short sleeves were rolled up, and exhibited a pair of hairy, muscular arms. The crowd, withdrawing from Master Jakel when the plate commenced its wanderings, pushed Otto and Wilhelm forward toward the low fence before the juggler's table.

"Step nearer, my gracious gentlemen, my noble masters!" said the juggler, with an accentuation which betrayed his German birth. He opened the fence; both friends were fairly pushed in and took their places upon the bench, where they, at all events, found themselves out of the crowd.

"Will the noble gentleman hold this goblet?" said the juggler, and handed Otto one from his apparatus. Otto glanced at the man: he was occupied with his art; but Otto's cheek and forehead were colored with a sudden crimson, which was immediately afterward supplanted by a deathly paleness: his hand trembled, but this lasted only a moment; he gathered all his strength of mind together and appeared the same as before.

"That was a very good trick!" said Wilhelm.

"Yes, certainly!" answered Otto; but he had seen nothing whatsoever. His soul was strangely affected. The man exhibited several other tricks, and then approached with the plate. Otto

laid down a mark, and then rose to depart. The juggler remarked the piece of money: a smile played about his mouth; he glanced at Otto, and a strange malicious expression lay in the spiteful look which accompanied his loudly spoken thanks: "Mr. Otto Thostrup is always so gracious and good!"

"Does he know you?" asked Wilhelm.

"He has the honor!" grinned the juggler, and proceeded.

"He has exhibited his tricks in the Jutland villages, and upon my father's estate," whispered Otto.

"Therefore an acquaintance of your childhood?" said Wilhelm.

"Of my childhood," repeated Otto, and they made themselves a way through the tumult.

They met with several young noblemen, relatives of Wilhelm, with the cousin who had written the verses for the Christmas tree; also several friends from the carouse, and the company increased. They intended, like many others, to pass the night in the wood, and at midnight drink out of Kirsten Piil's well. "Only with the increasing darkness will it become thoroughly merry here," thought they: but Otto had appointed to be in the city again toward evening. "Nothing will come out of that!" said the poet; "if you wish to escape, we shall bind you fast to one of us."

"Then I carry him away with me on my back," replied Otto; "and still run toward the city. What shall I do here at night in the wood?"

"Be merry!" answered Wilhelm. "Come, give us no follies, or

I shall grow restive."

Hand-organs, drums, and trumpets, roared against each other; Bajazzo growled; a couple of hoarse girls sang and twanged upon the guitar: it was comic or affecting, just as one was disposed. The evening approached, and now the crowd became greater, the joy more noisy.

"But where is Otto?" inquired Wilhelm. Otto had vanished in the crowd. Search after him would help nothing, chance must bring them together again. Had he designedly withdrawn himself? no one knew wherefore, no one could dream what had passed within his soul. It became evening. The highway and the foot-path before the park resembled two moving gay ribbons.

In the park itself the crowd perceptibly diminished. It was now the high-road which was become the Park-hill. The carriages dashed by each other as at a race; the people shouted and sung, if not as melodiously as the barcarole of the fisher men below Lido, still with the thorough carnival joy of the south. The steamboat moved along the coasts. From the gardens surrounding the pretty country-houses arose rockets into the blue sky, the Moccoli of the north above the Carnival of the Park.

Wilhelm remained with his young friends in the wood, and there they intended, with the stroke of twelve, to drink out of Kirsten's well. Men and women, girls and boys of the lower class, and jovial young men, meet, after this manner, to enjoy St. John's Eve. Still sounded the music, the swings were in motion, lamps hung out, whilst the new moon shone through the thick

tree boughs. Toward midnight the noise died away; only a blind peasant still scratched upon the three strings which were left on his violin; some servant-girls wandered, arm-in-arm, with their sweethearts, and sang. At twelve o'clock all assembled about the well, and drank the clear, ice-cold water. From no great distance resounded, through the still night, a chorus of four manly voices. It was as if the wood gods sang in praise of the nymph of the well.

Upon the hill all was now deserted and quiet. Bajazzo and il Padrone slept behind the thin linen partition, under a coverlid. The moon set, but the night was clear; no clear, frosty winter night has a snore beautiful starry heaven to exhibit. Wilhelm's party was merry, quickly flew the hours away; singing in chorus, the party wandered through the wood, and down toward the strand. The day already dawned; a red streak along the horizon announced its approach.

Nature sang to them the mythos of the creation of the world, even as she had sung it to Moses, who wrote down this voice from God, interpreted by Nature. Light banished the darkness, heaven and earth were parted; at first birds showed themselves in the clear air; later rose the beasts of the field; and, last of all, appeared man.

"The morning is fairly sultry," said Wilhelm; "the sea resembles a mirror: shall we not bathe?"

The proposal was accepted.

"There we have the Naiades already!" said one of the party, as a swarm of fishermen's wives and daughters, with naked feet,

their green petticoats tucked up, and baskets upon their backs, in which they carried fish to Copenhagen, came along the road. The gay young fellows cast toward the prettiest glances as warm and glowing as that cast by the sun himself, who, at this moment, came forth and shone over the Sound, where a splendid three-masted vessel had spread all her sails to catch each breeze. The company reached the strand.

"There is some one already swimming out yonder," said Wilhelm. "He stands it bravely. That is an excellent swimmer!"

"Here lie his clothes," remarked another.

"How!" exclaimed Wilhelm: "this is Otto Thostrup's coat! But Otto cannot swim; I have never been able to persuade him to bathe. Now, we will out and make a nearer acquaintance."

"Yes, certainly it is he," said another; "he is now showing his skill."

"Then he must have been all night in the wood," exclaimed Wilhelm. "Yes, indeed, he's a fine bird. Does he fly us? He shall pay for this. Good night in the water, or in any other improper place? To quit friends without saying a word does not appertain to the customs of civilized people. Since you, therefore, show yourself such a man of nature, we will carry away your garments; it cannot annoy you in puris naturalibus to seek us out in the wood."

Otto raised his head, but was silent.

"Now, will you not come forth?" cried Wilhelm. "Only kneeling before each of us can you receive the separate articles

of your dress, so that you may again appear as a civilized European." And saying this he divided the clothes among the others; each one held an article in his hand.

"Leave such jokes!" cried Otto with singular earnestness. "Lay down the clothes, and retire!"

"Aye, that we will, presently," returned Wilhelm. "You are a fine fellow! You cannot swim, you say. Now, if you should not kneel"—

"Retire!" cried Otto, "or I will swim out into the stream, and not return again!"

"That might be original enough," answered Wilhelm. "Swim forth, or come and kneel here!"

"Wilhelm!" cried Otto, with an affecting sigh, and in a moment swam forth with quick strokes.

"There he shoots away," said one of the party. "How he cuts the waves! He is a splendid swimmer!"

Smiling they gazed over the expanse; Otto swam even farther out.

"But where will he swim to?" exclaimed, somewhat gravely, one of the spectators. "He will certainly lose his strength before he returns the same distance."

They unmoored the boat. Otto swam far out at sea; with quick strokes of the oars they rowed after him.

"Where is he now?" cried Wilhelm shortly afterwards; "I see him no longer."

"Yes, there he comes up again," said another; "but his strength

is leaving him."

"On! on!" cried Wilhelm; "he will be drowned if we do not come to his help. Only see—he sinks!"

Otto had lost all power; his head disappeared beneath the water. The friends had nearly reached him; Wilhelm and several of the best swimmers flung from themselves boots and coats, sprang into the sea, and dived under the water. A short and noiseless moment passed. One of the swimmers appeared above water. "He is dead!" were the first words heard. Wilhelm and the three others now appeared with Otto; the boat was near oversetting as they brought him into it. Deathly pale lay he there, a beautifully formed marble statue, the picture of a young gladiator fallen in the arena.

The friends busied themselves about him, rubbing his breast and hands, whilst two others rowel toward the land.

"He breathes!" said Wilhelm.

Otto opened his eyes; his lips moved; his gaze became firmer; a deep crimson spread itself over his breast and countenance; he raised himself and Wilhelm supported him. Suddenly a deep sigh burst from his breast; he thrust Wilhelm from him, and, like a madman, seized an article of dress to cover himself with; then, with a convulsive trembling of the lips, he said to Wilhelm, who held his hand, "I HATE YOU!"

CHAPTER VI

—"Art thou Prometheus, pierced with wounds?
The Vulture thou that tugs at his heart?"

J. CHR. V. ZEDLITZ'S Todtenkränze.

Not half an hour after this adventure a carriage rolled toward the city—a large carriage, containing three seats, but, beside the coachman, there was only one person within. This was Otto; his lips were pale; death, it is true, had touched them. Alone he dashed forward; his last words to Wilhelm had been his only ones.

"He has lost his wits," said one of the friends.

"It is a fit of madness," answered another, "such as he was seized with at the examination, when he only sent in a scrap of white paper for the mathematical examination, because he felt himself offended by the inspector."

"I could quite vex myself about my stupid joke," said Wilhelm. "I ought to have known him better; he is of a strange, unhappy character. Give me your hands! We will mention to no one what has occurred; it would only give occasion to a deal of gossip, and wound him deeply, and he is an excellent, glorious fellow."

They gave their hands upon it, and drove toward the city.

The same day, toward evening, we again seek Otto. We find him in his chamber. Silent, with crossed arms, he stands before a print, a copy of Horace Vernet's representation of Mazeppa, who, naked and bound upon a wild horse, rushes through the forest. Wolves thrust forth their heads and exhibit their sharp teeth.

"My own life!" sighed Otto. "I also am bound to this careering wild horse. And no friend, not a single one! Wilhelm, I could kill thee! I could see you all lying in your blood! O, Almighty God!" He pressed his hands before his face and threw himself into a seat; his eyes, however, again directed themselves toward the picture; it exhibited a moment similar to the condition of his own mind.

The door now opened, and Wilhelm stood before him.

"How do you find yourself, Thostrup?" he inquired. "We are still friends as before?" and he wished to give his hand. Otto drew back his. "I have done nothing which could so much offend you," said Wilhelm; "the whole was merely a joke! Give me your hand, and we will speak no more of the affair!"

"To the man whom I hate, I never reach my hand," replied Otto and his lips were white like his cheeks.

"A second time to-day you speak these words to me," said Wilhelm, and the blood rushed to his face. "We were friends, wherefore cannot we be so still? Have people slandered me to you? Have they told lies about me? Only tell me faithfully, and I shall be able to defend myself."

"You must fight with me!" said Otto; and his glance became more gloomy. Wilhelm was silent; there reigned a momentary stillness. Otto suppressed a deep sigh. At length Wilhelm broke silence, and said, with a grave and agitated voice,—"I am so thoughtless, I joke so often, and regard everything from the ridiculous side. But for all that I have both heart and feeling. You must have known how much dearer you were to me than most other people. You are so still, although you offend me. At this moment your blood is in a fever; not now, but after a few days, you yourself will best see which of us is the offended party. You demand that I fight with you; I will if your honor requires this satisfaction: but you must lay before me an acceptable reason. I will know wherefore we risk our lives. Let some days pass by; weigh all with your understanding and your heart! It will still depend upon yourself whether we remain friends as before. Farewell!" And Wilhelm went.

Each of his words had penetrated to Otto's heart. A moment he stood silent and undecided, then his limbs trembled involuntarily, tears streamed from his eyes—it was a convulsive fit of weeping; he pressed his head back. "God, how unfortunate I am!" were his only words.

So passed some minutes; he had ceased to weep, and was calm; suddenly he sprang up, shot the bolt in the door, drew down the blinds, lighted his candle, and once more looked searchingly around: the key-hole was also stopped up. He then flung his coat away from him and uncovered the upper part of his body.

CHAPTER VII

"The towers pass by, even before we perceive them."
OEHLENSCHLÄER'S Journey to Fünen.

Early the following morning, whilst Wilhelm still slept and dreamed of his beloved sisters, well-known footsteps sounded on the stairs, the door opened, and Otto stepped into the sleeping-room. Wilhelm opened his eyes. Otto was pale; a sleepless night and sorrow of heart had breathed upon his brow and eyes.

"Thostrup!" cried Wilhelm, with joyous surprise, and stretched forth his hand toward him, but it again sank; Otto seized it, and pressed it firmly in his own, adding at the same time, with gravity,—"You have humbled me! Is that sufficient satisfaction for you?"

"We are then friends!" said Wilhelm. "Friends must be very indulgent toward each other. Yesterday you were a little strange, to-morrow I may be so; that is the way in which one retaliates."

Otto pressed his hand. "We will never speak again of the occurrence of yesterday!"

"Never!" repeated Wilhelm, affected by the strange gravity of his friend.

"You are a noble, a good creature!" said Otto, and bent over him; his lips touched Wilhelm's forehead.

Wilhelm seized his hand, and gazed frankly into his eye. "You

are not happy!" exclaimed he. "If I cannot assist you, I can, at least, dear Otto, honestly share the grief of a friend!"

"Even on that very point we may never speak!" replied Otto. "Farewell! I have determined on travelling home; we have only vacation for a few weeks, and I have not been in Jutland since I became a student. Even a month's sojourn there cannot throw me back; I am well prepared for the philosophicum."

"And when will you set out?" asked Wilhelm.

"To-morrow, with the steamboat. It is hot and sultry here in the city: my blood becomes heated: it will, also, soon be a year since I saw my family."

"Thostrup!" exclaimed Wilhelm, through whom a thought suddenly flashed, "I should also like to see my family; they have written to me to come. Listen: make your journey through Funen, and only remain three or four days with us. My mother's carriage shall convey you then to Middelfart. Say 'Yes,' and we will set out this evening."

"That cannot be done!" replied Otto; but half an hour later, as both sat together over the tea-table, and Wilhelm repeated his wish, Otto consented, but certainly more through a feeling of obligation than through any pleasure of his own. Toward evening, therefore, they set out in the beautiful summer night to travel through Zealand.

Smartly dressed families wandered pleasantly through the city gate toward the summer theatre and Fredericksberg. The evening sun shone upon the column of Liberty; the beautiful

obelisk, around which stand Wiedewelt's statues, one of which still weeps,

> "In white marble clothing,
> Hand upon the breast,
> Ever grief-oppressed,
> Looking down upon the gloomy sea,"

where were closed the eyes of the artist. Was it the remembrance which here clouded Otto's glance, as his eye rested upon the statues as they drove past, or did his own soul, perhaps, mirror itself in his eyes?

"Here it is gay and animated!" said Wilhelm, wishing to commence a conversation. "Vesterbro is certainly your most brilliant suburb. It forms a city by itself,—a little state! There upon the hill lies the King's Castle, and there on the left, between the willows, the poet's dwelling, where old Rahbek lived with his Kamma!"

"Castle and poet's dwelling!" repeated Otto; "the time will be when they will inspire equal interest!"

"That old place will soon be pulled down!" said Wilhelm; "in such a beautiful situation, so near the city, a splendid villa will be raised, and nothing more remind one of Philemon and Baucis!"

"The old trees in the park will be spared!" said Otto; "in the garden the flowers will scent the air, and remind one of Kamma's flowers. Rahbek was no great poet, but he possessed a true poet's soul, labored faithfully in the great vineyard, and loved flowers

as Kamma loved them."

The friends hail left Fredericksberg behind them. The white walls of the castle glanced through the green boughs; behind Söndermark, the large, wealthy village stretched itself out. The sun had set before they reached the Dam-house, where the wild swans, coming from the ocean, build in the fresh water fake. This is the last point of beauty; nothing but lonely fields, with here and there a cairn, extend to the horizon.

The clear summer's night attracted their gaze upward; the postilion blew his horn, and the carriage rolled toward the town of Roeskilde, the St. Denis of Denmark, where kings turn to dust; where Hroar's spring still flows, and its waters mingle with those of Issefjords.

They drove to a public-house to change horses. A young girl conducted the friends into the public room; she lighted the way for them. Her slender figure and her floating gait drew Wilhelm's attention toward her; his hand touched her shoulder, she sprang aside and fixed her beautiful grave eyes upon him; but their expression became milder, she smiled and colored at the same time.

"You are the sister of little Jonas!" cried Wilhelm, recognizing the young girl he had seen with him at Christmas.

"I must also thank you," said she, "for your kindness toward the poor boy!" She quickly placed the lights on the table, and left the room with a gentle glance.

"She is beautiful, very beautiful!" exclaimed Wilhelm. "That

was really quite a pleasant meeting."

"Is it then you, Herr Baron, who honor me thus?" cried the host, stepping in—an elderly man with a jovial countenance. "Yes, the Baron will doubtless visit his dear relations in hunch? It is now some little time since you were there."

"This is our host!" said Wilhelm to Otto. "He and his wife were born upon my parent's estate."

"Yes," said the host, "in my youth I have shot many a snipe and wild duck with the Herr Baron's father. But Eva should spread the table; the gentlemen will certainly take supper, and a glass of good punch the Herr Baron will certainly not despise, if he is like his blessed father."

The young girl spread the cloth in an adjoining room.

"She is pretty!" Wilhelm whispered to the old man.

"And just as pious and innocent as she is pretty!" returned he; "and that is saying much, as she is a poor girl, and from Copenhagen. She is of good service to us, and my wife says Eva shall not leave us until she is well married."

Wilhelm invited the host to join them at a glass. The old man became more animated, and now confided to him, half mysteriously, what made Eva so honorable in the eyes of his wife, and what was, indeed, really very nice of her. "My old woman," said he, "was in Copenhagen, in search of a waiting-girl. Yes, there are enough to be had, and they are fine girls; but mother has her own thoughts and opinions: she has good eyes—that she has! Now, there came many, and among others Eva; but, good

Lord! she was very poorly clad, and she looked feeble and weak, and what service could one get out of her! But she had a good countenance, and the poor girl wept and besought mother to take her, for she was not comfortable at home, and would not remain at Copenhagen. Now, mother knows how to make use of her words: it is unfortunate that she is not at home to-night; how pleased she would have been to see the Herr Baron! Yes, what I would say is, she so twisted her words about, that Eva confessed to her why she wished to leave home. You see the girl is petty; and the young gallant gentlemen of Copenhagen had remarked her smooth face,—and not alone the young, but the old ones also! So an old gentleman—I could easily name him, but that has nothing to do with the affair—a very distinguished man in the city, who has, besides, a wife and children, had said all sorts of things to her parents; and, as eight hundred dollars is a deal of money to poor people, one can excuse them: but Eva wept, and said she would rather spring into the castle-ditch. They represented all sorts of things to the poor girl; she heard of the service out here with us. She wept, kissed my old woman's hand, and thus came to us; and since then we have had a deal of service from Eva, and joy also!"

Some minutes after Eva stepped in, Otto's eye rested with a melancholy expression upon the beautiful form: never had he before so gazed upon a woman. Her countenance was extraordinarily fine, her nose and forehead nobly formed, the eyebrows dark, and in the dark-blue eyes lay something pensive, yet happy: one might employ the Homeric expression, "smiling

through tears," to describe this look. She announced that the carriage was ready.

A keen observer would soon have remarked what a change the host's relation had worked in the two friends. Wilhelm was no longer so free toward poor Eva. Otto, on the contrary, approached her more,—and at their leave-taking they offered her a greater present than they would otherwise have given.

She stood with Otto at the door, and assisted him on with his travelling cloak.

"Preserve your heart pure!" said he, gravely; "that is more than beauty!"

The young girl blushed, and gazed at him with astonishment; in such a manner had no one of his age ever before spoken to her.

"The poor girl!" said Otto; "but I think she is come to good people."

"She has a strange glance!" said Wilhelm. "Do you know that there is really a certain affinity between you and her? It was to me quite striking."

"That is a compliment which I cannot accept," returned Otto, smiling. "Yet, perhaps, I might resemble her."

It was not yet three o'clock when the friends reached Ringsted.

"I have never before been so far in Zealand," said Otto.

"Shall I be your guide?" returned Wilhelm. "Ringsted has a street and an inn, and one is very badly served there, as you will soon both see and experience yourself. Meanwhile, one can think of Hagbarth and Signe; not far from here, at Sigersted,

he hung his mantle on the oak, and Signelil's abode stood in flames. Now only remain fields and meadows, a cairn, and the old popular song. Then we rush past the friendly Soroe, that mirrors itself with the wood in the lake, which forms itself into so many bays; but we do not see much of it. We have here another romantic spot, an old castle converted into a church, high up on the hill near the lake, and close to it the dismal place of execution. We then reach Slagelse, an animated little town; with the Antvorskov convent, the poet Frankenau's grave, and a Latin school, celebrated on account of its poets. It was there Baggesen and Ingemann learned their Latin. When I once questioned the hostess regarding the lions of the town, she would only acknowledge two,—Bastholm's library, and the English fire-engine. The curtain in the theatre represents an alley with a fountain, the jets of which are painted as if spouting out of the prompter's box; or is this, perhaps, the English fire-engine? I know not. The scene-decoration for towns represents the market-place of Slagelse itself, so that the pieces thus acquire a home-feeling. This is the modern history of the little town; and, with regard to its older and romantic history, learn that the holy Anders was preacher here! Yes, indeed, that was a man! He has been also sung of by our first poets. We end with Korsöer, where Baggesen was born and Birckner lies buried. In the more modern history of this town, King Solomon and Jörgen the hatter play a considerable rôle. Besides this, I know that the town is said once to have possessed a private theatre; but this soon was done for,

and the decorations were sold; a miller bought them, and patched his windmill sails with them. Upon one sail was a piece of a wood, upon another a shred of a room, or a street; and so they rushed round one after the other. Perhaps this is mere slander, for I have my information from Slagelse; and neighboring towns never speak well of each other."

In this manner Wilhelm gossiped on, and the friends travelled over the way he had described. Slagelse, and the peasant village of Landsgrav, they had already behind them, when Wilhelm ordered the coachman to diverge from the high-road toward the right.

"Where will you take us to?" asked Otto.

"I will give you a pleasure!" returned Wilhelm. "We shall reach the weariful Korsöer early enough: the steamboat leaves at ten, and it is not yet seven. You shall be surprised—I know well that you are half a Catholic; I will conduct you where you may believe yourself carried back several centuries, and may imagine yourself in a Catholic country. That is right pleasant, is it not?"

Otto smiled. The friends alighted from the coach and walked over a corn-field. They found themselves upon a hill, the whole landscape spread itself out before them—they saw the Belt, with Sprogöe and Funen. The surrounding country was certainly flat, but the variety of greens, the near meadow, the dark stretch of wood in the neighborhood of Korsöer, the bay itself, and all this seen in a warm morning light, produced effect. The friends diverged to the right; and before them, upon a hill, stood a large

wooden cross, with the figure of the Crucified One. Above the cross was built a small roof to carry off the rain,—such as one may yet find in Bavaria. The figure of the Redeemer was of wood, painted with strong, tawdry colors; a withered garland of corn-flowers still hung around his bowed head.

"It is extraordinary," said Otto, "to find in our time, in the year 1830, such a Catholic symbol in Lutheran Denmark! And yet—yes, you will laugh at me, but I find it lovely: it affects me, moves me to worship."

"That tawdry, tasteless figure!" cried Wilhelm. "Only see how coarse! the hair is covered with tar to keep off the rain! The peasants here have their peculiar superstition. If they allow the cross to fall they have no luck with their lands. It was upon this hill that the holy Anders, the celebrated preacher of Slagelse, awoke. He visited the sepulchre of Christ, but through praying there too long the ship sailed without him, and he was forced to stay behind. Then came a man and took him upon his horse, and they would ride to Joppa: the holy Anders fell asleep; but when he awoke he lay here, and heard the bells ringing in Slagelse. Upon a foal, only one night old, he rode round the extensive city lands, whilst King Waldemar lay in his bath. He could hang his glove upon the beams of the sun. This hill, where he awoke, was called Rest-hill; and the cross, with the figure of the Redeemer erected upon it, which still stands here, reminds us of the legend of the holy Anders."

A little peasant girl at this moment mounted the hill, but

paused when she perceived the strangers.

"Don't be afraid, my child!" said Wilhelm. "What hast thou there? a garland! shall it hang here upon the cross? Only come, we will help thee."

"It should hang over our Lord," said the little one, holding, in an embarrassed manner, the garland of pretty blue cornflowers in her hand. Otto took the garland, and hung it up in place of the faded one.

"That was our morning adventure!" said Wilhelm, and soon they were rolling in the deep sand toward Korsöer, toward the hill where the poet watched the sun and moon sink into the sea, and wished that he had wings that he might catch them.

Melancholy and silent lies the town on the flat coast, the old castle turned into a farm-house—high grass grows upon the walls. In a storm, when the wind blows against the city, the surf beats against the outermost houses. High upon the church stands a telegraph; the black wooden plates resemble mourning-flags hung above the sinking town. Here is nothing for the stranger to see, nothing except a grave—that of the thinker Birckner. The friends drove to the public-house on the strand. No human being met them in the street except a boy, who rung a hand-bell.

"That calls to church," said Wilhelm. "Because there are no bells in the tower, they have here such a wandering bell-ringer as this. Holla! there lies the inn!"

"Baron Wilhelm!" cried a strong voice, and a man in a green jacket with pockets in the breast, the mighty riding-boots

splashed above the tops, and with whip in hand, approached them, pulled his horse-hair cap, and extended his hand to Wilhelm.

"The Kammerjunker from Funen!" said Wilhelm; "my mother's neighbor, one of the most industrious and rich noblemen in all Funen."

"You will come one of the first days to me!" said the Kammerjunker; "you shall try my Russian steam-bath: I have erected one upon my estate. All who visit me, ladies and gentlemen without any exception, must try it!"

"And do the cherry-trees bear well this year?" asked Wilhelm.

"No, no," answered the Kammerjunker, "they are good for nothing; but the apples are good! All the old trees in the hill-garden stand in full splendor: I've brought them into condition! Two years ago there was not, on all the trees together, a bushel of fruit. But I had all the horses which had to be bled led under the trees, and had the warm blood sprinkled upon the roots; this happened several times, and it has been a real inoculation for life."

"The wind is certainly favorable," said Otto, whom this conversation began to weary.

"No, just the contrary!" said the Kammerjunker. "The vane upon the little house yonder lies; it points always to Nyborg, always shows a good wind for us when we want to leave. In Nyborg is also a vane, which stands even as firmly as this, and prates to the folk there of good wind. I regard both vanes as a

kind of guide-post, which merely says, There goes the way! No, if we had had a wind I should have gone with the boat, and not with the little splashing thing, as the seamen call the steamboat. The carriage is doubtless awaiting the young gentleman in Nyborg?" pursued he. "I will join company with you—my brown horse waits for me at Schalburg. You should see him! He has sinews like steel springs, and legs like a dancing-master! He is my own brown."

"No one knows that we are coming," answered Wilhelm. "We shall, therefore, take a carriage from Nyborg."

"We will join company," said the Kammerjunker, "and then you will pay me a visit with the young gentleman. You shall sleep in the black chamber! Yes, you will give me the pleasure?" said he to Otto. "If you are a lover of the antique, my estate will afford you pleasure; you find there moats, towers, guard-rooms, ghosts, and hobgoblins, such as belong to an old estate. The black chamber! after all, it is not quite secure there; is it, Herr Baron?"

"No, the deuce remain a night with you!" said Wilhelm; "one gets to bed late, and even then it is not permitted one to close one's eyes. You, your sister, and the Mamsell,—yes, you are a pretty clover-leaf! Yes, Thostrup, you cannot believe what pranks are hatched upon the Kammerjunker's estate! One must be prepared for it! It is said to be haunted, but if the dead will not take that trouble the living do. The Kammerjunker is in the plot with his women-folk. They sewed me lately live cockchafers into my pillow, and they crawled and scrambled about till I did

not know what the deuce it could be! A live cock they had also placed under my bed, and just in the morning, when I would go to sleep, the creature began to crow!"

"The women-folk had done that," said the Kammerjunker. "Did they not the very same night fasten a door-bell to the head of my bed? I never thought of it; fat Laender slept in the same room, and had fastened along the wall a string to the bell. I awoke with the ringing. 'What the devil is that bell?' said I, and glanced about the room, for I could not conceive what it was. 'Bell?' asked Laender—'there is no bell here!' The ringing also ceased. I thought I must have dreamed, or that our merry evening must have left some buzzing in my ears. Again it began to ring. Laender looked so innocent all the time, I could not comprehend myself; I thought it must be my imagination. I became quite fainthearted, I denied my own hearing, and said, 'No, I have only dreamed!' and commenced reckoning and counting to employ my mind; but that did no good, and it nearly drove me mad! I sprang out of bed, and then I found out the trick: but how Laender grinned! he was swollen and red in the face with his mirth."

"Do you play such jokes on your estate?" inquired Otto, addressing himself to Wilhelm.

"No, not such refined ones!" returned the Kammerjunker; "perhaps a piece of wood, or a silly mask, is laid in your bed. Miss Sophie gives us other clever things for amusement—tableaux and the magic-lantern. I was once of the party. Yes, what was it I represented? Ah, I played, Heaven help me! King Cyrus: had a

paper crown on my head, and Miss Sophie's cloak about me, the wrong side turned outward, for it is lined with sable. I looked like Satan!"

The steamboat passengers were summoned on board, the company went down to the vessel, and soon it was cutting through the waves of the Belt.

CHAPTER VIII

"See now, Fünen signifieth fine,
And much in that word lies;
For Fünen is the garden fine,
Where Denmark glads its eyes."

The nakedness which the last aspect of Zealand presents occasions one to be doubly struck by the affluent abundance and luxuriance with which Funen steps forth. Green woods, rich corn-fields, and, wherever the eye rests, noblemen's seats and churches. Nyborg itself appears a lively capital in comparison with the still melancholy Korsöer. One now perceives people upon the great bridge of boats, on the ramparts, and in the broad streets with their high houses; one sees soldiers, hears music, and, what is especially animating upon a journey, one comes to an excellent inn. The drive out through the arched gateway is an astonishment; it is the same length and breadth as one of the gates of Copenhagen. Villages and peasants' houses here assume a more well-to-do aspect than in Zealand, where one often on the way-side imagines one sees a manure-heap heaped upon four poles, which upon nearer examination one finds is the abode of a family. On the highroads in Funen one perceives only clean houses; the window-frames are painted; before the

doors are little flower-gardens, and wherever flowers are grown, as Bulwer strikingly remarks, the peasant is in a higher state of civilization; he thinks of the beautiful. In the ditches along the highway one sees lilac with their white and lilac flowers. Nature herself has here adorned the country with a multitude of wild poppies, which for splendor of color might vie with the most admired and beautiful in a botanic garden. Especially in the neighborhood of Nyborg do they grow in exceeding abundance.

"What a dazzling color!" exclaimed Otto, as the friends rolled past these beautiful red flowers.

"That is a proud color!" said the Kammerjunker, who rode near them upon his brown steed, "a proud color! but they are manured with the blood of Andalusian horses. It was just here where the battle between these beasts took place. You know that sit the year 1808 the Spaniards lay in Funen; the English ships were cruising about in the Belt, and Romana fled with his whole army on board, but they could net take their horses with them. These were the most splendid Andalusian creatures that eyes ever saw. The Spaniards took off their bridles, and left them here to scamper about the fields like wild horses. The horses of Nyborg chanced also to graze here, and as soon as the Andalusian steeds became aware of ours they arranged themselves in a row, and fell upon the Danish horses: that was a combat! At length they fell upon each other, and fought until they fell bleeding to earth. Whilst still a boy I saw little skull of one of these beasts. This is the last adventure left us from the visit of the

Spaniards to Denmark. In the village through which we shall now pass are some outer remembrances. Remark the young lads and lasses,—they are of a darker complexion than the inhabitants of other Funen valleys; that is Spanish blood, it is said. It was in this village that the story took its rise of the preacher's servant-girl, who wept and was so inconsolable at the departure of the Spaniards. But not on account of her bridegroom did she weep, —not over her own condition. The preacher consoled her, and then she said she only wept to think that if the innocent child resembled its father it certainly would speak Spanish, and then not a soul would understand it! Yes, such histories as this have we in Funen!" said he laughingly to Otto.

With similar relations, and some agricultural observations, according as they were called forth by surrounding objects, did our excellent landed proprietor amuse our young gentlemen. They were already distant several miles from Nyborg, when he suddenly broke off in the midst of a very interesting discourse upon a characteristic of a true inhabitant of Funen, which is, that whenever he passes a field of buckwheat he moves his mouth as if chewing, and made Wilhelm observe a Viennese carriage, which approached them by a neighboring road. To judge from the coachman and the horses, it must be the family from the hall.

This was the case—they returned from paying a visit. Where the roads crossed they met each other. Otto immediately recognized Miss Sophie, and near to her sat an elderly lady, with a gentle, good-humored countenance; this was the mother. Now

there was surprise and joy. Sophie blushed—this blush could not have reference to the brother; was it then the Kammerjunker? No: that appeared impossible! therefore, it must concern Otto. The mother extended her hand to him with a welcome, whilst at the same time she invited the Kammerjunker to spend the afternoon with them. There lay, in the manner with which she proposed this, so much attention and consideration, that Otto felt the man was here held in greater esteem, and was otherwise regarded than he, during their short acquaintance, had imagined possible.

Sophie added, smiling, "You must stay!" To which the Kammerjunker replied with an apology for his travelling-dress.

"We are not strangers!" said the mother; "it is only a family meal! You see the usual circle. You, Mr. Thostrup," added she, with a most obliging manner, "I know so well from Wilhelm's letters, that we are no strangers. The gentlemen are acquainted with each other!"

"I accept the invitation," said the Kammerjunker, "and I will now show you into what a gallop I can put my steed! It is Carl Rise,[2] as you see, young lady—you called him so yourself!"

"Yes, ride forward," said Sophie, smiling. "By that means you will oblige my sister. She might otherwise be quite frightened, did she see such a mighty caravan approach the house, did she had not properly prepared the dinner-table."

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[2] Translator's Note: Name of one of the heroes in Waldemar the Conqueror, a romance by Ingemann.

"As my gracious young lady commands!" said the rider, and sprang forward.

The country became more woody; the road passed various small lakes, almost overgrown with water-lilies and shaded by old trees; the old-fashioned, indented gable-ends of the hall now peeped forth. They drove through an avenue of wild chestnut-trees; the stone pavement here threatened to smash the carriage axles. On the right lay the forge, through the open door of which flew the sparks. A little girl, with bare feet, opened a gate, and they now found themselves in a large open space before the red-painted out-buildings. The ground was covered with straw, and all the cows of the farm were collected here for milking. Here they were obliged to drive, step by step, until by the gateway they reached the larger courtyard, which was inclosed by the barns and the principal building itself. This was surrounded by broad ditches, almost grown over with reeds. Over a solid bridge, resting upon pillars of masonry, and through a principal wing which bore the armorial bearings and initials of the old possessor, they arrived in the innermost court, which was shut in by three wings, the antique one already mentioned, and two others: the fourth side was inclosed by a low trellis-work which adjoined the garden, where the canals lost themselves in a small lake.

"That is an interesting old court!" exclaimed Otto.

"O, that is not to be compared with the Kammerjunker's!" returned Wilhelm: "you should first see his!"

"Yes, you must come over some of these days," said the

Kammerjunker. “Silence, Fingal! Silence, Valdine!” cried he to the barking dogs. A couple of turkey-cocks spread their feathers out, and gobbled with all their might. Men and women servants stood at the door: that was their reception!

“Thostrup will have the red room, will he not?” said Wilhelm, and the friends ascended the stairs together.

A pale young girl, not free from freckles, but with eyes full of soul, hastened toward them; this was Wilhelm’s youngest sister. She pressed her brother to her breast, and took Otto’s hand with kindness. She is not beautiful! was the first impression she made upon him. His chamber was vaulted, and the walls painted in the style of Gobelin tapestry; they represented the whole of Olympus. On the left was an old fire-place, with decorations and a gilt inscription; on the right stood an antiquated canopy-bed, with red damask hangings. The view was confined to the moat and the interior court. But a few minutes and Otto and Wilhelm were summoned to table. A long gallery through two wings of the hall, on one side windows, on the other entrances to the rooms, led to the dining-room. The whole long passage was a picture-gallery. Portraits the size of life, representing noble knights and ladies shining forth in red powdered periwigs, children adorned like their elders, with tulips in their hands, and great hounds by their sides, together with some historical pieces, decorated the walls.

“Have we no garland on the table?” asked Sophie, as she entered the dining-room with the others.

"Only a weak attempt to imitate my sister!" said Louise, smiling.

"But there is not a single flower in the garland! What economy! And yet it is sweet!"

"How tasteful!" exclaimed Otto, examining the garland which Louise had laid.

All kinds of green leaves, with their innumerable shades, a few yellow linden-leaves, and some from the copper-beech, formed, through their varied forms and colors, a tasteful garland upon the white table-cloth.

"You receive a thistle and a withered leaf!" whispered Wilhelm, as Otto seated himself.

"But yet the most beautiful!" answered he. "The copper beech contrasts so sweetly with the whitish-green thistle and the yellow leaf."

"My sister Sophie," said Louise, "lays us each day a different garland;—it is such a pretty decoration! If she is not here we get none; that would have been the case to-day, but when I learned that Wilhelm was coming, and that we," she added, with a friendly glance, "should have two other guests, I in great haste, made an attempt, and"—

"And wished to show how nicely it could be made without robbing your flowers!" interrupted Sophie, laughing. "In reality, I am very cruel! I cut all the heads of her favorites off. To-morrow, as a parody upon her garland of to-day, will I make one of green cabbage and pea-shells!"

“Madeira or port wine?” asked the Kammerjunker, and led the conversation from flowers to articles of food and drink.

“One feels one’s self comfortable here at the hall! Miss Louise cares for the body, and Miss Sophie for the soul!”

“And mamma bestows a good cup of coffee,” said the mother; “you must also praise me a little!”

“I give music after dinner!” cried Wilhelm; “and thus the whole family will have shown their activity!”

“But no voluntaries!” said the Kammerjunker; “no voluntaries, dear friend! No, a brisk song, so that one can hear what it is! but none of your artificial things!” A right proper blow on the shoulders was intended to soften his expression.

CHAPTER IX

"She sees if the cloth is clean and white
—If the bed has pillows and sheets;
If the candle fits in the candlestick....
"Modest she is, although you know
She makes the whole of the place;
And in she slips in the evening glow,
To light the room with her merry face "

—OEHLENSCHLÄGER

A quiet, busy house-fairy was Louise; the beautiful, fragrant flowers were her favorites. Good-humoredly she smiled at the raillery of her sister, quietly listened to each thoughtless jest; but if any one, in joke, touched upon what was holy to her soul, she was aroused from her calmness and attained a certain eloquence.

We will now become more nearly acquainted with the sisters, and on this account pass over to one of the following days.

An abode together of a week, at a country-seat, will often bring about a greater intimacy than if, throughout a whole winter, people had met in large companies in cities. Otto soon felt himself at home; he was treated as a near relative. Wilhelm related all he knew of the beautiful Eva, and Sophie discovered that she was a romantic character. Mamma pitied the poor child, and Louise wished she had her on the estate: an inn was, after

all, no proper place for a respectable girl. They then spoke of the winter enjoyments in Copenhagen, of art, and the theatre. Louise could not speak much with them upon these subjects, although she had seen one play, "Dyveke:" the amiable nature of the actress had spoken deeply to her heart.

Several days had passed; the sky was gray; the young people assembled round the table; they were at no loss for a subject of conversation. All those who have brothers or sons who study well, have remarked how much they are especially fascinated by the lectures on natural philosophy and astronomy; the world, as it were, expands itself before the intellectual eye. We know that the friends, during the past summer, had participated in these lectures, and, like the greater number, were full of these subjects, from the contemplation of a drop of water, with its innumerable animalculae, to the distance and magnitude of stars and planets.

To most of us these are well-known doctrines; to the ladies, also, this was nothing entirely new: nevertheless, it interested them; perhaps partly owing to Otto's beautiful eloquence. The gray, rainy weather led the conversation to the physical explanation of the origin of our globe, as the friends, from Orsted's lectures, conceived it to have been.

"The Northern and Grecian myths agree also with it!" sail Otto. "We must imagine, that in infinite space there floated an eternal, unending mist, in which lay a power of attraction. The mist condensed itself now to one drop—our globe was one enormous egg-shaped drop; light and warmth operated upon

this huge world egg, and hatched, not alone ONE creature, but millions. These must die and give way to new ones, but their corpses fell as dust to the centre: this grew; the water itself condensed, and soon arose a point above the expanse of ocean. The warmth of the sun developed moss and plants; fresh islands presented themselves; for centuries did a more powerful development and improvement show themselves, until the perfection was attained which we now perceive!"

"But the Bible does not teach us thus!" said Louise.

"Moses invented his account of the creation," answered Otto; "we keep to Nature, who has greater revelations than man."

"But the Bible is to you a holy book?" asked Louise, and colored.

"A venerable book!" returned Otto. "It contains the profoundest doctrines, the most interesting histories, but also much which belongs not at all to a holy book."

"How can you say such things?" exclaimed Louise.

"Do not touch upon religion in her presence," said Sophie; "she is a pious soul, and believes, without desiring to know wherefore."

"Yes," said Wilhelm, "this winter she became quite angry, and, as I believe, for the first time angry with me, because I maintained that Christ was a man."

"Wilhelm!" interrupted the young girl, "do not speak of that; I feel myself unhappy at this thought; I can and will not see the Holy brought down to my level, and to that of every-day life. It

lies in my nature that I commit a sin if I think otherwise than I have learned and than my heart allows me. It is profane, and if you speak longer of religion in this strain I shall leave the room."

At this moment the mother entered. "The festival has commenced," said she; "I have been forced to give my brightest silver skilling. Does Mr. Thostrup know the old custom which is observed here in the country, when beer is brewed for the mowing-feast?"

A piercing cry, as from a horde of savages, at this moment reached the ears of the party.

The friends descended.

In the middle of the brew-house stood a tub, around which danced all the female servants of the estate, from the dairymaids down to the girl who tended the swine; their iron-bound wooden shoes dashed against the uneven flag-stones. The greater number of the dancers were without their jackets, but with their long chemise-sleeves and narrow bodices. Some screamed, others laughed, the whole was blended together in a howl, whilst they danced hand in hand around the tub in which the beer should be brewed. The brewing-maid now flung into it the silver skilling, upon which the girls, like wild Maenades, tore off each other's caps, and with bacchanalian wildness whirled round the tub. By this means should the beer become stronger, and work more intoxicatingly at the approaching mowing-feast.

Among the girls, one especially distinguished herself by her Strong frame of body, and her long black hair, which, now that

her cap was torn off, hung in disorder over her red face. The dark eyebrows were grown together. All seemed to rage most violently within her, and in truth she assumed something wild, nay almost brutal. Both arms she raised high in the air, and with outstretched fingers she whirled around.

"That is disgusting!" whispered Otto: "they all look like crazy people."

Wilhelm laughed at it. The wild merriment was lost in a joyous burst of laughter. The girl with the grown-together eyebrows let fall her arms; but still there lay in her glance that wild expression, which the loose hair and uncovered shoulders made still more striking. Either one of the others had had the misfortune to scratch her lip, or else she herself had bitten it in bacchanalian wildness until it bled: she accidentally glanced toward the open door where stood the friends. Otto's countenance became clouded, as was ever the case when anything unpleasant affected him. She seemed to guess his thoughts, and laughed aloud. Otto stepped aside; it was as though he in anticipation felt the shadow which this form would one day cast across his life.

When he and Wilhelm immediately afterward returned to Sophie and Louise, he related the unpleasant impression which the girl had made upon him.

"O, that is my Meg Merrilies!" exclaimed Sophie. "Yes, spite of her youth, do you not find that she has something of Sir Walter Scott's witch about her? When she grows older, she will be excellent. She has the appearance of being thirty, whereas

she is said not to be more than twenty years old: she is a true giantess."

"The poor thing!" said Louise; "every one judges from the exterior. All who are around her hate her, I believe, because her eyebrows are grown together, and that is said to be a sign that she is a nightmare:[3]

they are angry with her, and how could one expect, from the class to which she belongs, that she should return scorn with kindness? She is become savage, that she may not feel their neglect. In a few days, when we have the mowing-feast, you yourself will see how every girl gets a partner; but poor Sidsel may adorn herself as much as she likes, she still stands alone. It is truly hard to be born such a being!"

"The unfortunate girl!" sighed Otto.

"O, she does not feel it!" said Wilhelm: "she cannot feel it; for that she is too rude, too much of an animal."

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[3] Note: This superstition of the people is mentioned in Thieles's Danish traditions: "When a girl at midnight stretches between four sticks the membrane in which the foal lies when it is born, and then creeps naked through it, she will bear her child without pains; but all the boys she conceives will become were-wolves, and all the girls nightmares. You will know them in the daytime by their eyebrows grown together over the nose. In the night she creeps in through the key-hole, and places herself upon the sleeper's bosom. The same superstition is also found in German Grimm speaks thus about it: If you say to the nightmare,— Old hag, come to-morrow,And I from you will borrow,it retreats directly, and comes the next morning in the shape of a man to borrow something."

CHAPTER X

"Were the pease not tender, and the vegetables fresh and sweet as sugar What was the matter with the hams, the smoked goose-breasts, and the herrings? What with the roasted lamb, and the refreshing red-sprinkled head-lettuce? Was not the vinegar sharp, and the nut-oil balmy? Was not the butter as sweet as a nut, the red radishes tender? What?"—VOSS'S Louise.

"Mr. Thostrup shall see the Kammerjunker's old country-seat; to-morrow we must go over."

Louise could not go with them, a hundred small duties chained her to the house. The most important of them all was ironing.

"But that the house-maid can do," said Sophie. "Do come with us."

"When thou seest thy linen nice and neat in thy drawers," returned Louise, "thou wilt certainly pardon me for remaining at home."

"Yes, thou art a glorious girl!" said Sophie; "thou dost deserve to have been known by Jean Paul, and made immortal in one of his books. Thou dost deserve the good fortune of being sung of by such a poet."

"Dost thou call it good fortune," answered the sister, "when the whole world directs its attention to one person?—that must be painful! unhappy! No, it is much better not to be remarked at

all. Take my greetings with you, and ask for my Claudius back; they have had it now a whole half year."

"There, they have kept half my sister's library," said Sophie, smiling to Otto. "You must know she has only two books: Mynster's Sermons, and the 'Wandsbecker Boten.'"

The carriage rolled away through the chestnut avenue. "There upon the hill, close by the wood, did I act the elf-maiden," said Sophie. "I was not yet confirmed; there were strangers staying with us at the hall, and we wandered in the beautiful moonlight through the wood. Two of my friends and I hastened toward the hill, took hold of each other's hands and danced in a ring. The day after, two persons of the congregation told the preacher about three elfin-maidens, clad in white, who had danced upon the hill in the moonlight. The elfin-maidens were we; but that our backs were hollow as baking-troughs, and that the hill glanced like silver, was their own invention."

"And in this oak," exclaimed Wilhelm, "when a boy, I killed the first bird which fell from my shot. It was a crow, and was very honorably interred."

"Yes, beneath my sister's weeping-willow," said Sophie. "We buried it in an old chapeaubras, adorned with white bows; the grave was decorated with peony-leaves and yellow lilies. Wilhelm, who was then a big boy, made an oration, and Louise strewed flowers."

"You were little fools!" said the mother. "But see, who comes here?"

"O, my little Dickie, my dwarf of Kenilworth!" exclaimed Sophie, as a little hump-backed man, with thin legs and an old face, approached. He was dressed as a peasant, and bore upon his back a little knapsack of red calfskin, the hairy side turned outward: in this he carried his violin.

"Is he called Dickie?" asked Otto.

"No, that is only a joke of Sophie's," pursued Wilhelm; "she must always make suitable people romantic. He is called commonly 'Musikanti.' The inhabitant of Funen Italianizes most names; otherwise he is called Peter Cripple."

"You will hear his tones," said Sophie. "The day after to-morrow, when we have the mowing-feast, he will he number one. He understands music with which you are scarcely acquainted; he will play you the 'Shoemaker's Dance' as well as 'Cherry-soup:' such dances as these have people here in the country."

"We are now beyond my lands, and upon our neighbor's," said the old lady. "You will see a thorough old mansion."

"Now, I should like to know how the inhabitants will please Mr. Thostrup," said Sophie. "The Kammerjunker you know; he is an excellent country gentleman. His sister, on the contrary, is a little peculiar: she belongs to that class of people who always, even wily the best intentions, say unpleasant things. She has for this quite a rare talent—you will soon experience this; but she does not intend anything so bad. She can also joke! Thank God that you will not remain there over night, otherwise you would experience what she and the Mamsell can invent!"

"Yes, the Mamsell is my friend!" said Wilhelm. "You will see her work-box with all the curiosities. That little box plays a great part: it is always taken out with her when she pays a visit—for the sake of conversation it is brought out; all is then looked through, and every article goes the round of the company. Yes, there are beautiful things to be seen: a little wheelbarrow with a pincushion, a silver fish, and the little yard-measure of silk ribbon."

"Yes, and the amber heart!" said Sophie; "the little Napoleon of cast iron, and the officer who is pasted fast to the bottom of the box: that is a good friend in Odense, she lately told to me in confidence."

"See what beautiful stone fences the Kammerjunker has made!" said the mother. "And how beautifully the cherry-trees grow! He is an industrious man!"

They approached the garden. It was laid out in the old French style, with straight walks, pyramids of box, and white painted stone figures: satyrs and goddesses peeped through the green foliage. You now caught sight of a high tower with a spire; and soon the whole of the old mansion presented itself to view. The water was conveyed away from the broad moats, where the weeping willows with bowed heads and uncovered roots stood in the warm sunshine. A number of work-people were busily employed in clearing the moats of mud, which was wheeled in barrows on both sides.

They soon reached the principal court-yard. The barns and the

out-buildings lay on the opposite side. A crowd of dogs rushed forth barking toward the carriage—all possible races, from the large Danish hound, which is known to the Parisian, down to the steward's little pug-dog, which had mixed with this company. Here stood the greyhound, with his long legs, beside the turnspit. You saw all varieties, and each had its peculiar and melodious bark. A couple of peacocks, with bright outspread tails, raised at the same time a cry, which must have made an impression. The whole court-yard had a striking air of cleanliness. The grass was weeded from between the stones; all was swept and arranged in its appointed order. Before the principal flight of steps grew four large lime-trees; their tops, from youth bent together and then clipped short, formed in spring and summer two large green triumphal arches. On the right stood upon an upright beam, which was carved and formed into a pillar, a prettily painted dove-cot; and its gay inhabitants fluttered and cooed around. The peacock-pigeon emulated the peacock in spreading its tail; and the cropper-pigeon elevated itself upon its long legs, and drew itself up, as though it would welcome the strangers with the air of a grand gentleman. The reddish-brown tiles and the bright window-panes were the only things which had a modern air. The building itself, from the stone window-seats to the old-fashioned tower through which you entered, proclaimed its antiquity. In the vaulted entrance-hall stood two immense presses: the quantity of wood which formed them, and the artistical carving, testified to their great age. Above the door were fastened a couple of antlers.

The Kammerjunker's sister, Miss Jakoba, a young lady of about thirty, neither stout nor thin, but with a strange mixture of joviality and indolence, approached them. She appeared to rejoice very much in the visit.

"Well, you are come over, then!" said she to Wilhelm. "I thought you had enough to do with your examination."

Wilhelm smiled, and assured her that after so much study people required relaxation.

"Yes, you doubtless study in handsome boots!" said the young lady, and in a friendly manner turned toward Sophie. "Good heavens, miss!" she exclaimed, "how the sun has burnt your nose! That looks horrible! Don't you ever wear a veil? you, who otherwise look so well!"

Otto was a stranger to her. He escaped such unpleasant remarks. "They should spend the whole day there," insisted Miss Jakoba; but mamma spoke of being at home by noon.

"Nothing will come of that!" said Jakoba. "I have expected you; and we have cooked a dinner, and made preparations, and I will not have had all this trouble in vain. There are some especial dishes for you, and of these you shall eat." This was all said in such a good-humored tone that even a stranger could not have felt himself offended. The Kammerjunker was in the fields looking after his flax; he would soon be back. Squire Wilhelm could in the mean time conduct Mr. Thostrup about the premises: "he would otherwise have nothing to do," said she.

No one must remain in the sitting-room; it was so gloomy

there! The walls were still, as in by-gone days, covered with black leather, upon which were impressed gold flowers. No, they should go to the hall—that had been modernized since the Baroness was last there. The old chimney-piece with carved ornaments was removed, and a pretty porcelain stove had taken its place. The walls were covered with new paper from Paris. You could there contemplate all the public buildings of that city,—Notre Dame, Saint Sulpice, and the Tuileries. Long red curtains, thrown over gilt rods, hung above the high windows. All this splendor was admired.

"I prefer the antique sitting-room, after all," said Sophie; "the old chimney-piece and the leather hangings. One fairly lives again in the days of chivalry!"

"Yes, you have always been a little foolish!" said Jakoba, but softened her words by a smile and a pressure of the hand. "No, the hall is more lively. Ah!" she suddenly exclaimed; "Tine has placed her work-box in the window! That is disorder!"

"O, is that the celebrated work-box, with its many fool's tricks?" inquired Wilhelm, as he laughingly took it up.

"There are neither fools nor tricks in the box," said Jakoba. "But only look in the mirror in the lid, and then you will perhaps see one of the two."

"No rude speeches, my young lady!" said Wilhelm; "I am an academical burgher!"

The Kammerjunker now entered, attired in the same riding dress in which we made his acquaintance. He had visited his

hay and oats, had seen after the people who were working at the fences, and had been also in the plantation. It had been a warm forenoon.

"Now, Miss Sophie," said he, "do you see how I am clearing out the court? It costs me above five hundred dollars; and still they are the peasants of the estate who clear away the mud. But I shall get a delicate manure-heap, so fit and rich that it's quite a pleasure. But, Jakoba, where is the coffee?"

"Only let it come in through the door," said Jakoba, somewhat angrily. "You certainly ate something before you went from home. Let me attend to the affairs of the ladies, and do thou attend to the gentlemen, so that they may not stand and get weary."

The Kammerjunker conducted the friends up the winding stone stairs into the old tower.

"All solid and good!" said he. "We no longer build in this manner. The loop-holes here, close under the roof, were walled up already in my father's time. But only notice this timber!"

The whole loft appeared a gigantic skeleton composed of beams, one crossing the other. On either side of the loft was a small vaulted chamber, with a brick fire-place. Probably these chambers had been used as guard-rooms; a kind of warder's walk led from these, between the beam-palisade and the broad wall.

"Yes, here," said the Kammerjunker, "they could have had a good lookout toward the enemy. Look through my telescope. You have here the whole country from Vissenberg to

Munkebobanke, the Belt, and the heights of Svendborg. Only see! The air is clear. We see both Langeland and Zealand. Here one could, in 1807, have well observed the English fleet."

The three climbed up the narrow ladder and came past the great clock, the leaden weights of which, had they fallen, would have dashed through the stone steps, and soon the gentlemen sat on the highest point. The Kammerjunker requested the telescope, placed it and exclaimed:—

"Did I not think so? If one has not them always under one's eyes they begin playing pranks! Yes, I see it very well! There, now, the fellows who are working at the fences have begun to romp with the girls! they do nothing! Yes, they don't believe that I am sitting here in the tower and looking at them!"

"Then a telescope is, after all, a dangerous weapon!" exclaimed Wilhelm. "You can look at people when they least expect it. Fortunately, our seat lies hidden behind the wood: we are, at all events, safe."

"Yes, that it is, my friend," returned the other; "the outer sides of the garden are still bare. Did I not, last autumn, see Miss Sophie quite distinctly, when she was gathering service-berries in her little basket? And then, what tricks did she not play? She certainly did not think that I sat here and watched tier pretty gambols!"

They quitted the tower, and passed through the so-called Knight's Hall, where immense beams, laid one on the other, supported the roof. At either end of the hall was a huge fireplace,

with armorial bearings painted above: the hall was now used as a granary; they were obliged to step over a heap of corn before reaching the family pew in the little chapel, which was no longer used for divine service.

"This might become a pretty little room," said the Kammerjunker, "but we have enough, and therefore we let this, for curiosity's sake, remain in its old state. The moon is worth its money!" and he pointed toward the vaulted ceiling, where the moon was represented as a white disk, in which the painter, with much naïveté, had introduced a man bearing a load of coals upon his back; in faithful representation of the popular belief regarding the black spot in the moon, which supposes this to be a man whom the Lord has sent up there because he stole his neighbor's coal. "That great picture on the right, there," pursued he, "is Mrs. Ellen Marsviin; I purchased it at an auction. One of the peasants put up for it; I asked him what he would do with this big piece of furniture—he could never get it in through his door. But do you know what a speculation he had? It was not such a bad one, after all. See! the rain runs so beautifully off the painted canvas, he would have a pair of breeches made out of it, to wear in rainy weather behind the plough; they would keep the rain off! I thought, however, I ought to prevent the portrait of the highly honorable Mrs. Ellen Marsviin being so profaned. I bought it: now she hangs there, and looks tolerably well pleased. The peasant got a knight instead—perhaps one of my own ancestors, who was now cut up into breeches. See, that is what one gets by

being painted!"

"But the cupboard in the pillar there?" inquired Otto.

"There, certainly, were Bibles and Prayer-books kept. Now I have in it what I call sweetmeats for the Chancery-counselor Thomsen: old knives of sacrifice, coins and rings, which I have found in the horse-pond and up yonder in the cairns: not a quarter of a yard below the turf we found one pot upon another; round each a little inclosure of stones—a flat stone as covering, and underneath stood the pot, with burnt giants' bones, and a little button or the blade of a knife. The best things are already gone away to Copenhagen, and should the Counselor come, he will, God help me! carry away the rest. That may be, then, willingly, for I cannot use the stuff, after all."

After coffee, the guests wandered through the old garden: the clearing away of the mud was more closely observed, the dairy and pig-sty visited, the new threshing-machine inspected. But now the Russian bath should be also essayed; "it was heated!" But the end of the affair was, that only the Kammerjunker himself made use of it. The dinner-table was prepared, and then he returned. "But here something is wanting!" exclaimed he; left the room, and returned immediately with two large bouquets, which he stuck into an ale-glass which he placed upon the table. "Where Miss Sophie dines, the table must be ornamented with flowers: certainly we cannot lay garlands, as you do!" He seated himself at the end of the table, and wished, as he himself said, to represent the President Lars: they had had the "Wandsbecker Boten" half

a year in the house, and it would certainly please Miss Sophie if they betrayed some acquaintance with books. This Lars and the flowers, here, meant quite as much as in the south a serenade under the windows of the fair one.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.