

FRIEDRICH MAX MÜLLER

MEMORIES: A STORY OF
GERMAN LOVE

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of German Love

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The translation of any work is at best a difficult task, and must inevitably be prejudicial to whatever of beauty the original possesses. When the principal charm of the original lies in its elegant simplicity, as in the case of the "Deutsche Liebe," the difficulty is still further enhanced. The translator has sought to reproduce the simple German in equally simple English, even at the risk of transferring German idioms into the English text.

The story speaks for itself. Without plot, incidents or situations, it is nevertheless dramatically constructed, unflagging in interest, abounding in beauty, grace and pathos, and filled with the tenderest feeling of sympathy, which will go straight to the heart of every lover of the ideal in the world of humanity, and every worshipper in the world of nature. Its brief essays upon theology, literature and social habits, contained in the dialogues between the hero and the heroine, will commend themselves to the thoughtful reader by their clearness and beauty of statement, as well as by their freedom from prejudice. "Deutsche Liebe"

is a poem in prose, whose setting is all the more beautiful and tender, in that it is freed from the bondage of metre, and has been the unacknowledged source of many a poet's most striking utterances.

As such, the translator gives it to the public, confident that it will find ready acceptance among those who cherish the ideal, and a tender welcome by every lover of humanity.

The translator desires to make acknowledgments to J. J. Lalor, Esq., late of the *Chicago Tribune* for his hearty co-operation in the progress of the work, and many valuable suggestions; to Prof. Feuling, the eminent philologist, of the University of Wisconsin, for his literal version of the extracts from the "Deutsche Theologie," which preserve the quaintness of the original, and to Mrs. F. M. Brown, for her metrical version of Goethe's almost untranslatable lines, "Ueber allen Gipfeln, ist Ruh," which form the keynote of the beautiful harmony in the character of the heroine.

G.P.U.

Chicago, November, 1874.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Who has not, at some period of his life, seated himself at a writing-table, where, only a short time before, another sat, who now rests in the grave? Who has not opened the drawers, which for long years have hidden the secrets of a heart now buried in the holy peace of the church-yard? Here lie the letters which were so precious to him, the beloved one; here the pictures, ribbons, and books with marks on every leaf. Who can now read and interpret them? Who can gather again the withered and scattered leaves of this rose, and vivify them with fresh perfume? The flames, in which the Greeks enveloped the bodies of the departed for the purpose of destruction; the flames, into which the ancients cast everything once dearest to the living, are now the securest repository for these relics. With trembling fear the surviving friend reads the leaves no eye has ever seen, save those now so firmly closed, and if, after a glance, too hasty even to read them, he is convinced these letters and leaves contain nothing which men deem important, he throws them quickly upon the glowing coals—a flash and they are gone.

From such flames the following leaves have been saved. They were at first intended only for the friends of the deceased, yet they have found friends even among strangers, and, since it is so to be, may wander anew in distant lands. Gladly would the compiler have furnished more, but the leaves are too much

scattered and mutilated to be rearranged and given complete.

FIRST MEMORY

Childhood has its secrets and its mysteries; but who can tell or who can explain them! We have all roamed through this silent wonder-wood—we have all once opened our eyes in blissful astonishment, as the beautiful reality of life overflowed our souls. We knew not where, or who, we were—the whole world was ours and we were the whole world's. That was an infinite life—without beginning and without end, without rest and without pain. In the heart, it was as clear as the spring heavens, fresh as the violet's perfume—hushed and holy as a Sabbath morning.

What disturbs this God's-peace of the child? How can this unconscious and innocent existence ever cease? What dissipates the rapture of this individuality and universality, and suddenly leaves us solitary and alone in a clouded life?

Say not, with serious face. It is sin! Can even a child sin? Say rather, we know not, and must only resign ourselves to it.

Is it sin, which makes the bud a blossom, and the blossom fruit, and the fruit dust?

Is it sin, which makes the worm a chrysalis, and the chrysalis a butterfly, and the butterfly dust?

And is it sin, which makes the child a man, and the man a gray-haired man, and the gray-haired man dust? And what is dust?

Say rather, we know not, and must only resign ourselves to it.

Yet it is so beautiful, recalling the spring-time of life, to look

back and remember one's self. Yes, even in the sultry summer, in the melancholy autumn and in the cold winter of life, there is here and there a spring day, and the heart says: "I feel like spring." Such a day is this—and so I lay me down upon the soft moss of the fragrant woods, and stretch out my weary limbs, and look up, through the green foliage, into the boundless blue, and think how it used to be in that childhood.

Then, all seems forgotten. The first pages of memory are like the old family Bible. The first leaves are wholly faded and somewhat soiled with handling. But, when we turn further, and come to the chapters where Adam and Eve were banished from Paradise, then, all begins to grow clear and legible. Now if we could only find the title-page with the imprint and date—but that is irrevocably lost, and, in their place, we find only the clear transcript—our baptismal certificate—bearing witness when we were born, the names of our parents and godparents, and that we were not issued *sine loco et anno*.

But, oh this beginning! Would there were none, since, with the beginning, all thought and memories alike cease. When we thus dream back into childhood, and from childhood into infinity, this bad beginning continually flies further away. The thoughts pursue it and never overtake it; just as a child seeks the spot where the blue sky touches the earth, and runs and runs, while the sky always runs before it, yet still touches the earth—but the child grows weary and never reaches the spot.

But even since we were once there—wherever it may be,

where we had a beginning, what do we know now? For memory shakes itself like the spaniel, just come out of the waves, while the water runs in, his eyes and he looks very strangely.

I believe I can even yet remember when I saw the stars for the first time. They may have seen me often before, but one evening it seemed as if it were cold. Although I lay in my mother's lap, I shivered and was chilly, or I was frightened. In short, something came over me which reminded me of my little Ego in no ordinary manner. Then my mother showed me the bright stars, and I wondered at them, and thought that she had made them very beautifully. Then I felt warm again, and could sleep well.

Furthermore, I remember how I once lay in the grass and everything about me tossed and nodded, hummed and buzzed. Then there came a great swarm of little, myriad-footed, winged creatures, which lit upon my forehead and eyes and said, "Good day." Immediately my eyes smarted, and I cried to my mother, and she said: "Poor little one, how the gnats have stung him!" I could not open my eyes or see the blue sky any longer, but my mother had a bunch of fresh violets in her hand, and it seemed as if a dark-blue, fresh, spicy perfume were wafted through my senses. Even now, whenever I see the first violets, I remember this, and it seems to me that I must close my eyes so that the old dark-blue heaven of that day may again rise over my soul.

Still further do I remember, how, at another time, a new world disclosed itself to me—more beautiful than the star-world or the violet perfume. It was on an Easter morning, and my mother had

dressed me early. Before the window stood our old church. It was not beautiful, but still it had a lofty roof and tower, and on the tower a golden cross, and it appeared very much older and grayer than the other buildings. I wondered who lived in it, and once I looked in through the iron-grated door. It was entirely empty, cold and dismal. There was not even one soul in the whole building, and after that I always shuddered when I passed the door. But on this Easter morning, it had rained early, and when the sun came out in full splendor, the old church with the gray sloping roof, the high windows and the tower with the golden cross glistened with a wondrous shimmer. All at once the light which streamed through the lofty windows began to move and glisten. It was so intensely bright that one could have looked within, and as I closed my eyes the light entered my soul and therein everything seemed to shed brilliancy and perfume, to sing and to ring. It seemed to me a new life had commenced in myself and that I was another being, and when I asked my mother what it meant, she replied it was an Easter song they were singing in the church. What bright, holy song it was, which at that time surged through my soul, I have never been able to discover. It must have been an old church hymn, like those which many a time stirred the rugged soul of our Luther. I never heard it again, but many a time even now when I hear an adagio of Beethoven's, or a psalm of Marcellus, or a chorus of Handel's, or a simple song in the Scotch Highlands or the Tyrol, it seems to me as if the lofty church windows again glistened and the organ-tones once

more surged through my soul, and a new world revealed itself—more beautiful than the starry heavens and the violet perfume.

These things I remember in my earliest childhood, and intermingled with them are my dear mother's looks, the calm, earnest gaze of my father, gardens and vine leaves, and soft green turf, and a very old and quaint picture-book—and this is all I can recall of the first scattered leaves of my childhood.

Afterwards it grows brighter and clearer. Names and faces appear—not only father and mother, but brothers and sisters, friends and teachers, and a multitude of *strange people*. Ah! yes, of these *strange people* there is so much recorded in memory.

SECOND MEMORY

Not far from our house, and opposite the old church with the golden cross, stood a large building, even larger than the church, and having many towers. They looked exceedingly gray and old and had no golden cross, but stone eagles tipped the summits and a great white and blue banner fluttered from the highest tower, directly over the lofty doorway at the top of the steps, where, on either side, two mounted soldiers stood sentinels. The building had many windows, and behind the windows you could distinguish red-silk curtains with golden tassels. Old lindens encircled the grounds, which, in summer, overshadowed the gray masonry with their green leaves and bestrewed the turf with their fragrant white blossoms. I had often looked in there, and at evening when the lindens exhaled their perfumes and the windows were illuminated, I saw many figures pass and repass like shadows. Music swept down from on high, and carriages drove up, from which ladies and gentlemen alighted and ascended the stairs. They all looked so beautiful and good! The gentlemen had stars upon their breasts, and the ladies wore fresh flowers in their hair; and I often thought,—Why do I not go there too?

One day my father took me by the hand and said: "We are going to the castle; but you must be very polite if the Princess speaks to you, and kiss her hand."

I was about six years of age and as delighted as only one can be at six years of age. I had already indulged in many quiet fancies about the shadows which I had seen evenings through the lighted windows, and had heard many good things at home of the beneficence of the Prince and Princess; how gracious they were; how much help and consolation they brought to the poor and sick; and that they had been chosen by the grace of God to protect the good and punish the bad. I had long pictured to myself what transpired in the castle, so that the Prince and Princess were already old acquaintances whom I knew as well as my nut-crackers and leaden soldiers.

My heart beat quickly as I ascended the high stairs with my father, and just as he was telling me I must call the Princess "Highness," and the Prince "Serene Highness," the folding-door opened and I saw before me a tall figure with brilliantly piercing eyes. She seemed to advance and stretch out her hand to me. There was an expression on her countenance which I had long known, and a heavenly smile played about her cheeks. I could restrain myself no longer, and while my father stood at the door bowing very low—I knew not why—my heart sprang into my throat. I ran to the beautiful lady, threw my arms round her neck and kissed her as I would my mother. The beautiful, majestic lady willingly submitted, stroked my hair and smiled; but my father took my hand, led me away, and said I was very rude, and that he should never take me there again. I grew utterly bewildered. The blood mounted to my cheeks, for I felt that my father had been

unjust to me. I looked at the Princess as if she ought to shield me, but upon her face was only an expression of mild earnestness. Then I looked round upon the ladies and gentlemen assembled in the room, believing that they would come to my defense. But as I looked, I saw that they were laughing. Then the tears sprang into my eyes, and out of the door, down the stairs, and past the lindens in the castle yard, I rushed home, where I threw myself into my mother's arms and sobbed and wept.

"What has happened to you?" said she.

"Oh! mother!" I cried; "I was at the Princess', and she was such a good and beautiful woman, just like you, dear mother, that I had to throw my arms round her neck and kiss her."

"Ah!" said my mother; "you should not have done that, for they are strangers and high dignitaries."

"And what then are strangers?" said I.

"May I not love all people who look upon me with affectionate and friendly eyes?"

"You can love them, my son," replied my mother, "but you should not show it."

"Is it then something wrong for me to love people?" said I.
"Why cannot I show it?"

"Well, perhaps you are right," said she, "but you must do as your father says, and when you are older you will understand why you cannot embrace every woman who regards you with affectionate and friendly eyes."

That was a sad day. Father came home, agreed I had been very

uncivil. At night my mother put me to bed, and I prayed, but I could not sleep, and kept wondering what these strange people were, whom one must not love.

* * * * *

Thou poor human heart! So soon in the spring are thy leaves broken and the feathers torn from the wings! When the spring-red of life opens the hidden calyx of the soul, it perfumes our whole being with love. We learn to stand and to walk, to speak and to read, but no one teaches us love. It is inherent in us like life, they say, and is the very deepest foundation of our existence. As the heavenly bodies incline to and attract each other, and will always cling together by the everlasting law of gravitation, so heavenly souls incline to and attract each other, and will always cling together by the everlasting law of love. A flower cannot blossom without sunshine, and man cannot live without love. Would not the child's heart break in despair when the first cold storm of the world sweeps over it, if the warm sunlight of love from the eyes of mother and father did not shine upon him like the soft reflection of divine light and love? The ardent yearning, which then awakes in the child, is the purest and deepest love. It is the love which embraces the whole world; which shines resplendent wherever the eyes of men beam upon it, which exults wherever it hears the human voice. It is the old, immeasurable love, a deep well which no plummet has ever sounded; a fountain

of perennial richness. Whoever knows it also knows that in love there is no More and no Less; but that he who loves can only love with the whole heart, and with the whole soul; with all his strength and with all his will.

But, alas, how little remains of this love by the time we have finished one-half of our life-journey! Soon the child learns that there are strangers, and ceases to be a child. The spring of love becomes hidden and soon filled up. Our eyes gleam no more, and heavy-hearted we pass one another in the bustling streets. We scarcely greet each other, for we know how sharply it cuts the soul when a greeting remains unanswered, and how sad it is to be sundered from those whom we have once greeted, and whose hands we have clasped. The wings of the soul lose their plumes; the leaves of the flower fast fall off and wither; and of this fountain of love there remain but a few drops. We still call these few drops love, but it is no longer the clear, fresh, all-abounding child-love. It is love with anxiety and trouble, a consuming flame, a burning passion; love which wastes itself like rain-drops upon the hot sand; love which is a longing, not a sacrifice; love which says "Wilt thou be mine," not love which says, "I must be thine." It is a most selfish, vacillating love. And this is the love which poets sing and in which young men and maidens believe; a fire which burns up and down, yet does not warm, and leaves nothing behind but smoke and ashes. All of us at some period of life have believed that these rockets of sunbeams were everlasting love, but the brighter the glitter, the darker the night which follows.

And then when all around grows dark, when we feel utterly alone, when all men right and left pass us by and know us not, a forgotten feeling rises in the breast. We know not what it is, for it is neither love nor friendship. You feel like crying to him who passes you so cold and strange: "Dost thou not know me?" Then one realizes that man is nearer to man than brother to brother, father to son, or friend to friend. How an old, holy saying rings through our souls, that strangers are nearest to us. Why must we pass them in silence? We know not, but must resign ourselves to it. When two trains are rushing by upon the iron rails and thou seest a well-known eye that would recognize thee, stretch out thy hand and try to grasp the hand of a friend, and perhaps thou wilt understand why man passes man in silence here below.

An old sage says: "I saw the fragments of a wrecked boat floating on the sea. Only a few meet and hold together a long time. Then comes a storm and drives them east and west, and here below they will never meet again. So it is with mankind. Yet no one has seen the great shipwreck."

THIRD MEMORY

The clouds in the sky of childhood do not last long, and disappear after a short, warm tear-rain. I was shortly again at the castle, and the Princess gave me her hand to kiss and then brought her children, the young princes and princesses, and we played together, as if we had known each other for years. Those were happy days when, after school—for I was now attending school—I could go to the castle and play. We had everything the heart could wish. I found playthings there which my mother had shown me in the shop-windows, and which were so dear, she told me, that poor people could live a whole week on what they cost. When I begged the Princess' permission to take them home and show them to my mother, she was perfectly willing. I could turn over and over and look for hours at a time at beautiful picture books, which I had seen in the book stores with my father, but which were made only for very good children. Everything which belonged to the young princes belonged also to me—so I thought, at least. Furthermore, I was not only allowed to carry away what I wished, but I often gave away the playthings to other children. In short, I was a young Communist, in the full sense of the term. I remember at one time the Princess had a golden snake which coiled itself around her arm as if it were alive, and she gave it to us for a plaything. As I was going home I put the snake on my arm and thought I would give my mother a real fright with it. On the

way, however, I met a woman who noticed the snake and begged me to show it to her; and then she said if she could only keep the golden snake, she could release her husband from prison with it. Naturally I did not stop to think for a minute, but ran away and left the woman alone with the golden serpent-bracelet. The next day there was much excitement. The poor woman was brought to the castle and the people said she had stolen it. Thereupon I grew very angry and explained with holy zeal that I had given her the bracelet and that I would not take it back again. What further occurred I know not, but I remember that after that time, I showed the Princess everything I took home with me.

It was a long time before my conceptions of Meum and Tuum were fully settled, and at a very late period they were at times confused, just as it was a long time before I could distinguish between the blue and red colors. The last time I remember my friends laughing at me on this account was when my mother gave me some money to buy apples. She gave me a groschen. The apples cost only a sechser, and when I gave the woman the groschen, she said, very sadly as it seemed to me, that she had sold nothing the whole livelong day and could not give me back a sechser. She wished I would buy a groschen's worth. Then it occurred to me that I also had a sechser in my pocket, and thoroughly delighted that I had solved the difficult problem, I gave it to the woman and said: "Now you can give me back a sechser." She understood me so little however that she gave me back the groschen and kept the sechser.

At this time, while I was making almost daily visits to the young princes at the castle, both to play as well as to study French with them, another image comes up in my memory. It was the daughter of the Princess, the Countess Marie. The mother died shortly after the birth of the child and the Prince subsequently married a second time. I know not when I saw her for the first time. She emerges from the darkness of memory slowly and gradually—at first like an airy shadow which grows more and more distinct as it approaches nearer and nearer, at last standing before my soul like the moon, which on some stormy night throws back the cloud-veils from across its face. She was always sick and suffering and silent, and I never saw her except reclining upon her couch, upon which two servants brought her into the room and carried her out again, when she was tired. There she lay in her flowing white drapery, with her hands generally folded. Her face was so pale and yet so mild, and her eyes so deep and unfathomable, that I often stood before her lost in thought and looked upon her and asked myself if she was not one of the "strange people" also. Many a time she placed her hand upon my head and then it seemed to me that a thrill ran through all my limbs and that I could not move or speak, but must forever gaze into her deep, unfathomable eyes. She conversed very little with us, but watched our sports, and when at times we grew very noisy and quarrelsome, she did not complain but held her white hands over her brow and closed her eyes as if sleeping. But there were days when she said she felt better, and on such days she sat

up on her couch, conversed with us and told us curious stories. I do not know how old she was at that time. She was so helpless that she seemed like a child, and yet was so serious and silent that she could not have been one. When people alluded to her they involuntarily spoke gently and softly. They called her "the angel," and I never heard anything said of her that was not good and lovely. Often when I saw her lying so silent and helpless, and thought that she would never walk again in life, that there was for her neither work nor joy, that they would carry her here and there upon her couch until they laid her upon her eternal bed of rest, I asked myself why she had been sent into this world, when she could have rested so gently on the bosom of the angels and they could have borne her through the air on their white wings, as I had seen in some sacred pictures. Again I felt as if I must take a part of her burden, so that she need not carry it alone, but we with her. I could not tell her all this for I knew it was not proper. I had an indefinable feeling. It was not a desire to embrace her. No one could have done that, for it would have wronged her. It seemed to me as if I could pray from the very bottom of my heart that she might be released from her burden.

One warm spring day she was brought into our room. She looked exceedingly pale; but her eyes were deeper and brighter than ever, and she sat upon her couch and called us to her. "It is my birth-day," said she, "and I was confirmed early this morning. Now, it is possible," she continued as she looked upon her father with a smile, "that God may soon call me to him, although I

would gladly remain with you much longer. But if I am to leave you, I desire that you should not wholly forget me; and, therefore, I have brought a ring for each of you, which you must now place upon the fore-finger. As you grow older you can continue to change it until it fits the little finger; but you must wear it for your lifetime."

With these words she took the five rings she wore upon her fingers, which she drew off, one after the other, with a look so sad and yet so affectionate, that I pressed my eyes closely to keep from weeping. She gave the first ring to her eldest brother and kissed him, the second and third to the two princesses, and the fourth to the youngest prince, and kissed them all as she gave them the rings. I stood near by, and, looking fixedly at her white hand, saw that she still had a ring upon her finger; but she leaned back and appeared wearied. My eyes met hers, and as the eyes of a child speak so loudly, she must have easily known my thoughts, I would rather not have had the last ring, for I felt that I was a stranger; that I did not belong to her, and that she was not as affectionate to me as to her brothers and sisters. Then came a sharp pain in my breast as if a vein had burst or a nerve had been severed, and I knew not which way to turn to conceal my anguish.

She soon raised herself again, placed her hand upon my forehead and looked down into my heart so deeply that I felt I had not a thought invisible to her. She slowly drew the last ring from her finger, gave it to me and said; "I intended to have taken this with me, when I went from you, but it is better you should wear

it and think of me when I am no longer with you. Read the words engraved upon the ring: 'As God wills.' You have a passionate heart, easily moved. May life subdue but not harden it." Then she kissed me as she had her brothers and gave me the ring.

All my feelings I do not truly know. I had then grown up to boyhood, and the mild beauty of the suffering angel could not linger in my young heart without alluring it. I loved her as only a boy can love, and boys love with an intensity and truth and purity which few preserve in their youth and manhood; but I believed she belonged to the "strange people" to whom you are not allowed to speak of love. I scarcely understood the earnest words she spoke to me. I only felt that her soul was as near to mine as one human soul can be to another. All bitterness was gone from my heart. I felt myself no longer alone, no longer a stranger, no longer shut out. I was by her, with her and in her. I thought it might be a sacrifice for her to give me the ring, and that she might have preferred to take it to the grave with her, and a feeling arose in my soul which overshadowed all other feelings, and I said with quivering voice: "Thou must keep the ring if thou dost not wish to give it to me; for what is thine is mine." She looked at me a moment surprised and thoughtfully. Then she took the ring, placed it on her finger, kissed me once more on the forehead, and said gently to me: "Thou knowest not what thou sayest. Learn to understand thyself. Then shall thou be happy and make many others happy."

FOURTH MEMORY

Every life has its years in which one progresses as on a tedious and dusty street of poplars, without caring to know where he is. Of these years nought remains in memory but the sad feeling that we have advanced and only grown older. While the river of life glides along smoothly, it remains the same river; only the landscape on either bank seems to change. But then come the cataracts of life. They are firmly fixed in memory, and even when we are past them and far away, and draw nearer and nearer to the silent sea of eternity, even then it seems as if we heard from afar their rush and roar. We feel that the life-force which yet remains and impels us onward still has its source and supply from those cataracts.

School time was ended, the first fleeting years of university life were over, and many beautiful life-dreams were over also. But one of them still remained: Faith in God and man. Otherwise life would have been circumscribed within one's narrow brain. Instead of that, a nobler consecration had preserved all, and even the painful and incomprehensible events of life became a proof to me of the omnipresence of the divine in the earthly. "The least important thing does not happen except as God wills it." This was the brief life-wisdom I had accumulated.

During the summer holidays I returned to my little native city. What joy in these meetings again! No one has explained it, but

in this seeing and finding again, and in these self-memories, lie the real secrets of all joy and pleasure. What we see, hear or taste for the first time may be beautiful, grand and agreeable, but it is too new. It overpowers, but gives no repose, and the fatigue of enjoying is greater than the enjoyment itself. To hear again, years afterward, an old melody, every note of which we supposed we had forgotten, and yet to recognize it as an old acquaintance; or, after the lapse of many years, to stand once more before the Sistine Madonna at Dresden, and experience afresh all the emotions which the infinite look of the child aroused in us for years; or to smell a flower or taste a dish again which we have not thought of since childhood—all these produce such an intense charm that we do not know which we enjoy most, the actual pleasure or the old memory. So when we return again, after long absence, to our birth-place, the soul floats unconsciously in a sea of memories, and the dancing waves dreamily toss themselves upon the shores of times long passed. The belfry clock strikes and we fear we shall be late to school, and recovering from this fear feel relieved that our anxiety is over. The same dog runs along the street on whose account we used to go far out of our way. Here sits the old huckster whose apples often led us into temptation, and even now, we fancy they must taste better than all other apples in the world, notwithstanding the dust on them. There one has torn down a house and built a new one. Here the old music-teacher lived. He is dead—and yet how beautiful it seemed as we stood and listened on summer evenings under the

window while the True Soul, when the hours of the day were over, indulged in his own enjoyment and played fantasies, like the roaring and hissing engine letting off the steam which has accumulated during the day. Here in this little leafy lane, which seemed at that time so much larger, as I was coming home late one evening, I met our neighbor's beautiful daughter. At that time I had never ventured to look at or address her, but we school-children often spoke of her and called her "the Beautiful Maiden," and whenever I saw her passing along the street at a distance I was so happy that I could only think of the time when I should meet her nearer. Here in this leafy walk which leads to the church-yard, I met her one evening and she took me by the arm, although we had never spoken together before, and asked me to go home with her. I believe neither of us spoke a word the whole way; but I was so happy that even now, after all these years, I wish it were that evening, and that I could go home again, silently and blissfully, with "the Beautiful Maiden."

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