AUERBACH BERTHOLD

WALDFRIED: A NOVEL

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Содержание

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BOOK FIRST

CHAPTER I

In a letter bringing me his greetings for the New Year, 1870, my eldest son thus wrote to me from America:

"We have been sorely tried of late. Wolfgang, our only remaining child, lay for weeks at death's door. I avoided mentioning this to you before; but now he is out of danger.

"'Take me to your father in the forest,' were the first distinct words he uttered after his illness. He is a lusty youth, and inherits his mother's hardy Westphalian constitution.

"In his feverish wanderings, he often spoke of you, and also of a great fire, in strange phrases, none of which he can now recall.

"He has awakened my own heartfelt desire to return, and now we shall come. We have fully determined to leave in the spring. I lose no time in writing to you of this, because I feel that the daily thought of our meeting again will be fraught with pleasure for both of us.

"Ah, if mother were still alive! Oh, that I had returned in time

to have seen her!

"Telegraph to me as soon as you receive tidings of brother Ernst. I am anxious once again to behold Germany, which is at last becoming a real nation. We who are out here in America are beginning to feel proud of our Fatherland.

> "We are surely coming! Pray send word to my brothers and sisters.
> *"Your Son Ludwig."*

The postscript was as follows:

> "Dear Father, – I shall soon be able to utter those dear words to you in person.
> *"Your Daughter Constance."*
>
> "Dear Grandfather, – I can now write again, and my first words are to you. We shall soon join you at 'grandfather's home.'
> *"Your Grandson Wolfgang."*

* * * * *

I had not seen Ludwig since the summer of 1849, and now I was to see him, his wife, and his son. I instructed Martella to send the news to my children and sons-in-law; and to my sister who lives in the Hagenau forest I wrote in person.

Joyous answers were returned from every quarter. But the happiest of all was Rothfuss, our head servant. And well he might

be, for no one had loved and suffered so much for Ludwig's sake as he had done.

Rothfuss is my oldest companion. We have known each other so long that, last spring, we might have celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of our first meeting. When that occurred, we were both of the same age-he a soldier in the fortress in which I was confined as a political prisoner. For one hour every day I was permitted to leave my cell for a short walk on the parapet. On those occasions a soldier with loaded musket walked behind me; and it often happened that this duty was assigned to Rothfuss. His orders were not to speak to me; but he did so, nevertheless. He was constantly muttering to himself in an indistinct manner. This habit of talking to himself has clung to him through life, and I doubt if any human being has a greater fund of curses than he.

One day, while he was thus walking behind me, I heard him say quite distinctly: "Now I know who you are! Oh!" – and then came fearful oaths-"O! to imprison such a man! You are the son of the forest-keeper of our district! Why, we are from the very same part of the country! I have often worked with your father. He was a hard man, but a just one; a German of the old sort."

"I am not allowed to accept money from you, but if you were to happen to lose some, there would be no harm in my finding it."

"Of course you smoke? I shall buy a pipe, tobacco, and a tinder-box for you, and what you give me over the amount will not be too much for me."

From that day, Rothfuss did me many a service. He knew how

to circumvent the jailer, – a point on which we easily silenced our scruples. Five years later I regained my freedom, and when I settled on this estate, Rothfuss, as if anticipating my wishes, was at my side. Since that time he has been with us constantly, and has proved a faithful servant to me, as well as the favorite of my children.

I had inherited the estate and the grand house upon it from my father-in-law. As I was a forester's son, I found but few difficulties in attending to the timber land, but the two saw-mills and the farm that belonged to the estate gave me much trouble. For this reason, so faithful and expert an assistant as Rothfuss was doubly welcome to me.

He is a wheelwright by trade, and can attend to anything that requires to be done about the house. Near the shed, he built a little smithy, and my boys were his faithful apprentices. They never asked for toys, for they were always helping him in making some article of use. But my son Richard had no liking for manual labor. He was a dreamy youth, and at an early age manifested a great love of study.

Of my daughters, Bertha was Rothfuss' favorite. Johanna avoided him. She had a horror of his oaths, which, after all, were not so seriously meant.

While quite young she evinced much religious enthusiasm, and Rothfuss used to call her "The little nun," at which she was always very angry, for she was quite proud of her Protestantism. While preparing for confirmation she even went so far as to make

repeated attempts to convert both myself and my wife.

While Richard was yet a mere student at the Gymnasium of our capital, Rothfuss dubbed him "The Professor;" but when Ludwig came home from the Polytechnic School to spend his holidays with us, he and Rothfuss were inseparable companions. He taught Rothfuss all of the students' songs, and insisted that this servant of ours was the greatest philosopher of our century.

Ludwig had settled in the chief town as a master builder. He was also known as "The King of the Turners." He was President of his section, and his great agility and strength gained him many a prize. He was of a proud disposition, and followed his convictions, regardless of consequences. Older persons remarked that in appearance and bearing he was the very picture of what I had been in my youth.

I am glad that all of my children are of a large build. Ludwig resembles me most of all. Fortunately his nose is not so large as mine, but more like the finely chiselled nose of his mother. His eloquence, however, is not inherited. His oratorical efforts were powerful and convincing, and his voice was so agreeable that it was a pleasure to listen to it. He had very decided musical talent, but not enough to justify him in adopting music as his profession. In spite of the advice of his music teachers, he determined on a more practical calling. His refined and easy manner soon won all hearts; and he was beloved by those who were high in station as well as by the lowly laborers.

In the year 1849, Ludwig was laying out a portion of the

great road which was being built along the low land beyond the mountain. He was the idol of his workmen, and always said, "For me they will climb about the rocks that are to be blasted, like so many lizards, just because I can myself show them how it is done." The road was divided into many so-called tasks, each of which was assigned to a separate group of workmen who had agreed to finish it by a certain day. As one of these gangs was unfortunate enough to chance upon springs at every few steps, the soft soil gave it much trouble, and greatly prolonged its labors.

The other engineers avoided the soft places when making their surveys. But Ludwig, with his high boots, stepped right into the midst of the laborers, and helped those who were working with their shovels and spades.

He had also arranged the fire service of the whole valley, and had so distinguished himself at the fire in the little town that he received a medal in recognition of his having saved a life. The more excited members of our political party were of the opinion that he ought to refuse it, alleging that it was wrong for him to receive so princely a decoration; but he replied: "For the present the Prince is the representative of the popular voice." He accepted the badge, but fastened it to the fireman's banner.

CHAPTER II

I had been elected a member of the Frankfort Parliament.

September's days of terror were doubly terrible to me. I had been told that my son Ludwig was leading a body of Turners who had joined the malcontents, and that they had determined to reverse the decision of the majority of the popular delegates, and to break up the Parliament.

At the imminent peril of my life, I climbed from barricade to barricade, hoping to be able to induce the Turners to retreat, and perhaps to find my son.

One of the leaders, who accompanied me as a herald, called out at the top of his voice, "Safe-conduct for the father of Ludwig Waldfried!"

My son's fair fame was my best protection; but T could not find Ludwig.

I have suffered much, but those hours when, with my wife and my next son Ernst, then six years old, I heard the rattling of muskets without the door, were the most wretched that I can now recollect.

In the following spring, when the Parliament was dissolved, the revolution had already begun with our neighbors in the next state.

For a long time the fortunes of battle seemed doubtful. I never believed that the uprising would succeed; but yet I could not

recall my son. At that time we no longer heard the rattling of musketry, and I can hardly bear to think of how we sat at home in sad but fearful suspense. One thing, however, I would not efface from my memory. My wife said, "We cannot ask for miracles. When the hailstorm descends upon the whole land, our well-tilled fields must suffer with the rest." Oh, that I could recall more of the sayings of that wise and pure hearted being!

The uprising had been quelled; but of Ludwig we had no tidings. We knew not whether he was lost, had been taken prisoner, or had escaped into Switzerland.

One day a messenger came to me with a letter from my wife's nephew, who was the director of the prison in the low country. He wrote to me to come to him at once, to bring Rothfuss also, and not to omit bringing passports for both of us. He could tell me no more by letter, and cautioned me to burn his epistle as soon as I had read it.

"It is about our Ludwig: he lives!" said my wife. The event proved that she was right. She induced me to take my daughter Bertha with me. She was then but sixteen years old-a determined, courageous girl, and as discreet withal as her mother. For to a woman paths often become smooth which to men present insurmountable obstacles. Bertha was glad to go; and when in the cool of the morning she stood at the door ready to depart, with her mother's warm hood on her head, and her face all aglow with health and youth, she said to me roguishly: "Father, why do you look at me so strangely?"

"Because you look just as your mother did when she was a bride."

Her bright merry laughter at these words served in a measure to raise our depressed spirits.

Terror and excitement reigned on every hand. When we reached the first village of the next state, we found that the side nearest the river bank had been destroyed by artillery. I learned that Ludwig had been in command there, and had shown great bravery.

On the way, Bertha's constant cheerfulness lightened our sorrow. To know a child thoroughly, you must travel with one alone. When Bertha saw that I sat brooding in silence, she knew how to cheer me up with her childish stories, and by engaging me in memories of an innocent past, to dispel my sad thoughts. At that early day she gave an earnest of what she was so well able to accomplish later in life.

In spite of our having the proper passports, we were everywhere regarded with suspicion, until I at last fortunately met the son of the commandant of our fortress. While he was yet a lad, and I a prisoner at the fortress, I had been his teacher, and he had remained faithful and attached to me. I met him at an outlying village where he was stationed with a portion of his regiment.

He recognized me at once, and exclaimed, "I am doubly glad to see you again. So you were not with the volunteers? I heard your name mentioned as one of the leaders."

I was about to reply, "That was my son;" but Bertha quickly anticipated me, and said, "That was not my father."

CHAPTER III

After that the young officer bestowed but little attention upon me; his glances were now all for Bertha, to whom he addressed most of his remarks.

Who can foretell what germs may awaken into life in the midst of the storm? My young pupil, who had but the day before been appointed first lieutenant, gravely delivered himself of the opinion that there was no real military glory in conquering volunteers. When speaking of me to Bertha, he was profuse in his assurances of gratitude and esteem.

Bertha, generally so talkative, was now silent. The young officer procured a safe-conduct for us, and we continued on our journey.

I have never yet seen the ocean, but the country, as it then appeared to me, awakened impressions similar to those which must be aroused when the tide has ebbed and the objects which before that dwelt in the depths of the sea are left lying upon the strand.

At last we reached my nephew's. He conducted me to his official residence, where I followed him through numerous apartments, until I at last reached his room, where we were closeted under lock and key.

He then told me that, while walking through the town the day but one before, he had met a young peasant with a rake on his

shoulder, who, while passing, had hurriedly said to him, "Follow me, cousin; I have something to tell you."

The director followed, but not without first making sure of his revolver.

When they had got into the thicket, the peasant suddenly turned about and said to him, while he removed his hat, "Don't you know me? I am Ludwig Waldfried." The director's heart was filled with terror. Ludwig continued, "You, and you alone, can save me. Put me in prison until I have a chance to run away. Our cause is lost; but for my parents' sake as well as my own, I must escape."

The cousin was not unwilling to assist Ludwig, but was at a loss how to go about it. Ludwig, however, had studied strategy. He had carefully considered every step in advance, and now caused the director to enter him on the list of prisoners under the name of Rothfuss.

A state of siege, dissolving as it does all forms of civil procedure, made it possible to carry out so irregular a proceeding; aside from which there was the inspiring effect of being engaged in a task that required shrewd and delicate manœuvring. It was this, too, that helped to relieve my meeting with Ludwig of much of its sadness.

Still it could not but pain me to find that in order to save one person it was necessary to victimize others. Ludwig guessed my thoughts, and said to me, "I am sorry, father, that I am obliged to drag you into this trouble. I know that such affairs are not to

your taste; but there is no help for it."

Rothfuss looked upon the whole affair as a merry farce. He did not see the least harm in outwitting and deceiving the officers and the state. And in those days there were many thousands who felt just as he did. It is a fit subject for congratulation, and perhaps an evidence of the indestructible virtue of the German people, that in spite of Metternich's soul-corrupting teachings there is yet so much righteousness left in our land.

When Ludwig had donned the Rothfuss' clothes, one could hardly recognize him. The transformation afforded Rothfuss great delight.

"They can do no more than lock me up by myself, and I have always said that 'he who is wet to the skin need not dread the rain.'"

This was a favorite saying of his. He had but one regret, and that was that he would not be allowed to smoke in the prison; but, for Ludwig's sake, he would gladly make that sacrifice.

We departed, taking Ludwig with us. My heart trembled with fear. The knowledge that I was committing a breach of the law, even though it was only caused by necessity and for the sake of rescuing my son, filled me with alarm. I felt as if every one knew what I was doing; but it seemed as if the people we met along the road did not care to interfere.

Here again Bertha proved a great treasure to us. She had a wonderfully cheerful flow of spirits; and perhaps, after all, women are greater adepts in the arts of self-control and

deception than we are.

When we arrived near the borders of the Palatinate, Ludwig met a companion who had been hiding there. He was a man of about my age. It now became my turn to take part in the dangerous game. I was obliged to remain behind and allow the fugitive to take my place at Bertha's side. Bertha was equal to the situation, and at once addressed the stranger as "father."

I followed on foot, imagining that every step would be my last.

I passed the border without mishap, and in the first village found the rescued ones awaiting me. As our old comrade had already become drunk on French wine, we left him behind at the village and took up our journey to my sister, the wife of the forester at Hagenau.

The most difficult task of all was to endure the vainglorious boasting of the Frenchmen. My brother-in-law treated us as if he were a gracious nobleman, who had taken us under his protection. His neighbors soon joined the party, and proud words were heard on every hand: the French were the great nation-theirs was the republic-their country the refuge of the oppressed and persecuted. And we-what were we? Rent asunder and bound down, while our Rhine provinces were happy in the faith that they would soon become a portion of proud and beautiful France. Another brother-in-law, the pastor of Hünfeld, who had studied at Erlangen, gave us some little consolation, for he said that in science the Germans were the greatest of nations.

"Father," said Ludwig, "I cannot endure this; I shall not remain

here another day."

I felt as he did, and we took our departure for Strasburg. At the Gutenberg Platz we were obliged to halt our horses, for the guard were just marching by. All seemed as happy if a piece of good fortune had just befallen them. All was as merry as a wedding-feast, while with our neighbors beyond the line there was funereal sadness.

Strasburg was crowded with fugitives, by some of whom Ludwig was at once recognized. We went with a party of them to the Grape Vine Tavern, and whom should we meet at the door but the very comrade we had left behind.

He had a curious contrivance about his throat. It was a simple rope with a knot tied in it; and he called out to Ludwig that he too was entitled to wear this grand cordon. He conducted us into the room where, at a table apart from the rest, were seated young men and old, all of whom had ropes around their necks.

"Ah! here comes the father of 'the King of the Turners'!" were the words with which a large and powerfully built man welcomed me. I recognized him as the man who had been my guide during the September riots. "Hurrah, comrades! Here comes another companion. This way, Ludwig; this is the seat of honor. All who are seated here are under sentence of death, and as a badge we wear this rope about our necks." And they sang:

> Should princes ask: "Where's Absalom?"
> And seek to learn his plight-

Just tell them he is hanging high;
The poor, unlucky wight.
And though he's dead, he hangeth not
From tree, nor yet from beam.
He dreamt that he could Germans free
And 'twas a fatal dream.

Their ribald jokes disgusted me, and I was therefore glad to chance upon one who had been a fellow-member of the Frankfort Parliament, and who shared my feelings at such distorted views of an unsuccessful attempt at revolution.

I have known many pure-hearted, unselfish men, but never have I met with one whose love of freedom was greater than that of our friend Wilhelmi. Over and above that, he had a genuine love for his fellow-men. There are, unfortunately, many lovers of freedom who are not lovers of mankind, a contradiction which I have never been able to understand.

Friend Wilhelmi gave me an insight as to the character of the old refugee, who was by nature of a peaceable disposition, but, giving way to the frenzy which in those days seemed to fill the very air, had lost all self-control. He was unable to endure the sufferings of exile. A deep longing for home preyed upon his spirits. To drown his grief, he indulged in wine, and the result of his copious draughts was that he became bold and noisy. This seemed to be his daily experience. In his sober moments he sat brooding in silence, and was often seen to weep. Wilhelmi had of course painted his picture in mild colors.

I must add that the refugee at last died in a mad-house in America. It is sad to think of the many noble beings who were ruined and sacrificed during those terrible days.

There was something inspiring in the words and thoughts of Doctor Wilhelmi. When I heard his voice I felt as if in a temple. And at this very moment memory revives the impression then made upon me.

Meanness and detraction were without any effect upon him; for he could look over and beyond them. He had determined to emigrate to America with his wife, who was his equal in courage and confidence. Bertha, who found but little to her fancy in the rude and dreary life that here environed us, and who was especially indignant that the soldiers who had simply done their duty were referred to so contemptuously, spent most of her time in Madame Wilhelmi's room. She was constantly urging our speedy return. And Wilhelmi could endure neither the mockery of one class of Frenchmen nor the pity of the others. Ludwig determined to join his friend. Wilhelmi had a serious task with his comrades, for nearly all of them were firmly convinced that the troubles in Germany would be renewed with the morrow, and that it was their duty to remain on the borders so that they might be at hand when needed. Wilhelmi, on the other hand, warned them against such self-deception, which, if persisted in, would only lead to the destruction of the mere handful that was left of them. He often declared to me that he at last acknowledged that our German nation is not fitted for revolution. It has too many

genial traits, and is devoid of the passion of hate. He felt assured that, when the crisis arrived, the German monarchs would of themselves see that, both for their own sakes and that of their people, it would be necessary to introduce an entire change in our political system. But when and how this was to be done (whether in our lifetime or afterwards), who could foretell?

"We should not forget," said Wilhelmi, "the significance of the fact that the German people, so long bound down by a system of police espionage, has at last become aroused; nor will its oppressors forget it. Now they are furious against the evil-doers; but a second generation will not find so much to blame in their deeds, and, as you well know, my dear friend, for you are a forester, there is an old proverb which tells us that 'vermin cannot destroy a healthy tree.' The May beetles would rather prey on the oak than on any other tree, but although they destroy every leaf, and cause the tree to look like a dry broom, it renews its leaves with the following year."

In olden times when men swore eternal friendship, a man would sometimes say, "This is my friend, and without knowing what he intends to say, I will swear that it is the truth, for he cannot tell a lie." In my own heart I had just such faith in Wilhelmi.

I found it as sad to part from him as from Ludwig, and this circumstance overshadowed the grief I felt when saying "farewell" to my son.

"What does fate intend by driving such men away from home,

and far beyond the seas?" These were the parting words of my friend Wilhelmi. They moved me deeply; but I could not answer his question.

I felt as if beholding a hail-storm beating down a field of ripened grain. How many a full ear must have fallen to the ground?

I also met a young schoolmaster by the name of Funk. Although there had been no real reason for his leaving home, he had fled with the rest. I easily persuaded him to return with me.

He was full of gratitude and submissiveness. In spite of this, however, my daughter even then, with true foresight, concluded that he was deceitful. I was for a long while unwilling to believe this, but was at last forced to do so.

Funk had done nothing more than attend to some of the writing in the ducal palace which the revolutionists had taken possession of. But it was with great self-complacency that he spoke of his having dwelt in the very palace which, during his student years, he had never passed without a feeling of awe.

I often thought of my son, but quite as frequently of that good old fellow, Rothfuss. Ludwig is free, but how does Rothfuss endure his captivity? And as it was just harvest time, it was doubly inconvenient to be without him.

We were bringing home our early barley. I had walked on ahead and the loaded wagon was to follow. I opened the barn door, the wagon approached, and on it was seated Rothfuss, who call out at the top of his voice, "Here I am on a wagon full of beer.

So far it is only in the shape of barley. Hurrah for freedom!"

As Rothfuss had been imprisoned by mistake, he was soon set at liberty, and it was both affecting and diverting to listen to his accounts of his experience as a prisoner.

He told us how good it is to be in jail and yet innocent. While he was there, he was reminded of all the sins he had ever committed, and he at last began to believe that he deserved to be locked up.

"By rights," said he, "every one ought to spend a couple of years in jail, just because of what he has done. When we meet a man who has just got out of prison we ought to say to ourselves: 'Be kind to him for it is mere luck that you have not been there yourself.'" Thus spoke Rothfuss. He had thought he would find it pleasant to be sitting in his cell while the other folks were hard at work with the harvest, but it had proved terribly monotonous. The meals were not to his taste, nor could he enjoy his sleep. He could not endure such idleness, and after the second day, he begged the inspector to set him at chopping wood; a request which was not granted.

And was not Rothfuss the happiest fellow in the world, when he heard the news of Ludwig's return?

He complained that it was rather hard to know of a thing so long beforehand. Impatience at the delay would make one angry at every day that intervened.

When I consoled him with the idea that the chief part of enjoyment lies in anticipation, his face lighted up with smiles,

and he said, "He is right." When he praises me, he always turns away from me as if talking to some one in the distance, and as if determined to tell the whole world how wise I am. "He is perfectly right. It is just so. It is a pleasant thirst when you know that there are just so many steps to the next inn, and that the cooling drink which is to wash your insides and make you jolly, lies in the cellar there, waiting for you."

Rothfuss had already started for the village, when he came running up the steps and called out: "I have found another nest; the locksmith's Lisbeth and our three Americans will be happiest of all when they hear the news. It is well to drink, but if one can first pour out a joyous cup for another, it is still better. I shall be back soon," he called out as he hurried up the road.

The widow of Blum the locksmith lived in the back street. Her husband had settled in the village, intending to follow his trade, and also to till a small piece of land. Partly by his own fault, and partly through misfortune, he had not succeeded.

He then desired to emigrate to America. His wife, however, had been unwilling to do so until she could feel assured of their being able to get along in the new world.

At home she had her own little house and her three children. For some time the locksmith worked at the factory in the neighboring town, returning to his home only on Sundays. His idea of emigrating had, however, not been given up, and at last he departed for America with the hope of mending his fortunes, and then sending for his wife and children.

When he arrived there, the war between the North and the South was at its height. He heard my son's name mentioned as that of one of the leaders, and at once enlisted under him. Ludwig was delighted to have one at his side who was both a countryman of his and a good artilleryman.

It was not until after the locksmith had enlisted that he spoke of his having left a family at home. At the battle of Bull Run he lost his life, and his wife and children, who are still living down in the village, are in regular receipt of the pension which Ludwig secured for them.

When the widow heard the news, she came to me at once, and told me with tears in her eyes, that she could hardly await Ludwig's return. She speedily acquainted the whole village with the event that was to prove a festival to my household, and when I went out of doors every one whom I met wished me joy; especially happy was one of the villagers who had been among Ludwig's volunteers in 1848, and was quite proud of his having been able to lie himself out of that scrape.

CHAPTER IV

Before I proceed further, I must tell you of Martella.

It were of course better if I could let her speak for herself; for her voice, though firm, has an indescribably mellow and touching tone, and seems to hold the listener as if spell-bound. She had thick, unmanageable brown hair, and brown eyes in which there was hardly any white to be seen. She was not slender, but rather short, although there were moments when she would suddenly seem as if quite tall. Her manner was not gentle, but rather domineering, as if she would say, "Get out of the way there! I am coming!" In disposition she was wayward and passionate, vain and conceited. It was only in our house that she became pliant and yielding, and acquired mild and modest ways. I do not mean modest in the current acceptation of the word; she had genuine respect for those who were higher and better than she. My wife effected a miraculous change in her without ever attempting to instruct, but simply by commanding her. She was the betrothed of my son Ernst, who, as I have already mentioned, was with us at Frankfort in the year 1848.

It is difficult, and to us of an older generation perhaps impossible, to discover what impression the events of 1848 must have made on a child's mind.

For my part, I have learned through this son, that failure on the part of the parents induces in their offspring a feeling which can

best be described as pity mingled with a want of respect. Like William Tell, we had long carried the arrow of revolution in our bosoms, but when we sent it forth it missed the mark.

In the autumn of 1848 my wife came to visit me at Frankfort and brought Ernst with her.

Old Arndt was particularly fond of the lad, and often took him on his knee and called him his "little pine-tree." When the Regent, on the day after his triumphal entry, appeared in public, he met Ernst and kissed him.

During the summer Ernst attended a preparatory school in the neighboring town. But he seemed to have no real love for study, while the teachers were over-indulgent with the handsome lad, who was always ready with his bold glances and saucy remarks.

When I asked him what he intended to become, he would always answer me, "Chief forester of the state."

To my great horror, I learned that he often repeated the party cries with which members of the different factions taunted each other. I sent him home after September, for I saw that his intercourse with those who were high in station was making him haughty and disrespectful.

I am unable to judge as to the proper period at which a youthful mind should be induced to interest itself in political questions. I am sure, however, that if such participation in the affairs of the country be chiefly in the way of opposition, it must prove injurious, for its immediate effect is to destroy every feeling of veneration.

Years passed on, Ernst was educated at the house of my wife's nephew, who was a professor at the Gymnasium at the capital. He also spent much of his time with his sister Bertha, who had married Captain Von Carsten.

I must here remark that my son-in-law, in spite of the obstinate opposition of his haughty family, and the strongly marked disapproval of all of his superiors, up to the Prince himself, had married the daughter of a member of the opposition, and had become the brother-in-law of a refugee who was under sentence of death. He is a man of sterling character.

When it was time for Ernst to leave for the university, or, as he had always desired, to attend the forester's school, he declared quite positively that it was his wish to enter the army. He remained there but one year. "The army of the lesser states," he said, "is either mere child's play, or else all the horrors of civil war lurk behind it." He visited the university only to remain there two terms, after which he entered himself with Hartriegel, the district forester.

Ernst's unsteadiness gave us much concern, and I was especially shocked by the sarcastic, mocking manner, in which he spoke of those objects which we of the older generation held in reverence.

He was disputatious, and maintained that it was one's duty to doubt everything. Indeed he did not even spare his parents in that regard, and was bold enough to tell me and my wife which of our qualities he most admired.

He once uttered these wicked words: "The present generation does not look upon the fifth commandment as really a command: but I have a reason for honoring my parents; and I am especially grateful to you, father, for the good constitution I have inherited from you."

My hand itched when I heard Ernst's words; but a glance from my wife pacified me, and I shall forever be grateful to her that I succeeded in controlling myself. Had I given way to my just anger, I would have had myself to blame for Ernst's desperate course and his lost life. That would have been adding guilt to misfortune, and would have been insupportable.

I had yet much to learn. As a father I was sadly deficient in many respects. But, with every desire to improve herself, my wife was already a perfect being, and could therefore be more to the children than I was. I was disposed to neglect my family on account of what was due my office. She was vigilant and severe, and supplied what was lacking on my part. But although she was sterner than I was, the children were more attached to her than to me.

Although Ernst's views of life gave me deep concern, he was often kind and affectionate; for his good-nature was, at times, stronger than his so-called principles.

I sought consolation in the thought that children will always see the world in a different light from that in which it appears to their parents. Even that which is ideal is subject to constant change, and we should therefore be careful not to imagine that the

form which is pleasing to us, and to which we have accustomed ourselves, will endure forever. And, moreover, was it not our wish to educate our children as free moral agents, and was it not our duty to accord full liberty even to those who differed with us?

I have often seen it verified that a perfect development cannot take place with those who, either through birth or adverse circumstances, are deficient in any important moral faculty. With all of Ernst's love of freedom, he was entirely wanting in respect or regard for the feelings of others. Piety, in its widest sense, he was utterly devoid of. From his stand-point, his actions were perfectly just; as to their effects upon others, he was indifferent.

On the Wiesenplatz in Frankfort, during the autumn of 1848, I had gone through a heart-rending experience. And now, after many years, I returned to the same spot only to be reminded of my former grief by painful and conflicting emotions. I had gone to Frankfort to attend the Schützenfest. The city was alive with joy; a spirit of unity had for the first time become manifest. I was standing close by the temple for the distribution of the prizes. Although surrounded by a gay and laughing crowd, I was quite absorbed in my own reflections, when suddenly a voice thus addressed me:

"Ah, father! Are you here, too?" I looked around to see who it was, and beheld my son Ernst. He carried his rifle on his shoulder, and the rewards for his well-aimed shots were fastened under the green ribbon of his hat. Before I could get a chance to congratulate him, he had said to me, "Father, you should not

have come; I am sorry that I meet you here."

"Why so?"

"Why! Because this is for us young lads. We are here for the purpose of gaining prize-goblets by our lucky shots; and the great speeches that are being held in yonder hall are nothing more than a mere flash in the pan. They are trying to persuade each other that they are all heroes and willing to bear arms for their Fatherland, and their talk is, after all, a mere sham. The good marksmen have not come here for the sake of their Fatherland and such stuff: all they desire is simply to gain the prize-that, and nothing more."

"Do you not know that I, too, made a speech in there yesterday?"

"No. I was informed that some one named Waldfried had been speaking; but I could not imagine it was you. One should have nothing to do with such inflammable thoughts when fire-arms are at hand. If we were to govern ourselves by your speeches, our brotherly-feeling would very soon be at an end, and there would be naught but violence and murder among us riflemen."

I tried to explain to him that our hope lay in our able-bodied youth, and that we would not rest content until we had a real, united Fatherland. To which he answered:

"Ah, yes. The students, those of brother Richard's sort, live on yesterday: the politicians live on to-morrow: we live in the present."

His features trembled, and it was with an effort that he added,

"Forgive me, father; perhaps I, too, will have as much confidence in mankind as you have, when I am as old as you are."

What could I answer to this? While all about me was loud with joy, my soul was filled with sorrow. My youngest son denied the gods to whom I offered up my prayers.

And yet, when I saw him among a group of riflemen, my fatherly pride was aroused. His proud, lithe form towered above the rest. New-comers saluted him, and the eyes of all seemed to rest upon Ernst with serene satisfaction.

CHAPTER V

One day Ernst visited us and went about for a long while in silence, – now going out to Rothfuss in the stable, and then again joining us in the room; but here again he uttered no word. Although I could see that he was agitated, I did not ask him the reason. I had been obliged to accustom myself to allow him to speak when it suited him, and to avoid any advances on my part until it pleased him to seek them.

We were just about to rise from the dinner-table when he said to us in a hurried manner, "Before you hear it from others, I must announce it to you myself: – I am engaged to be married."

We looked at each other in silence. Not a sound was heard, save the ticking of the two Black Forest clocks in our room. At last my wife asked: "And with whom?"

I could tell by the tone of her voice how many heavy thoughts had preceded these words.

"With a healthy girl. I-I know all about selection in breeding," answered Ernst, while he lit his cigar.

I reprimanded him severely for his tone. Without changing a feature, he allowed me to finish my remarks. After that he arose, threw his rifle over his shoulder, put on his green hat, and left the house. I wanted to call him back, but my wife prevented me. I reproached myself for the violent manner in which I had spoken to him. Now he will rush into misfortune-who knows what he

may do next? With mild words, I might have been able to direct him on the right path; but now he may, perhaps, not return, and will even persuade himself to hate me.

My wife consoled me with the words: "He will return before nightfall."

And it was so. In the evening he returned, and addressing me with a voice full of emotion, said: "Father, forgive me!"

Rothfuss was in the room at the time, and I beckoned to him to leave; but Ernst requested that he should remain, and continued:

"I have done wrong. I am heartily sorry for it. I have also done wrong to Martella. I should not have acted as I have done, but ought to have brought her to you first of all. She deserves quite different treatment-better indeed than I do. I beg of you, give back the words that I uttered! Forgive me! and, above all things, do not make Martella suffer for what I have said."

He uttered these words with a trembling voice. Rothfuss had left the room. I held out my hand to Ernst, and he continued firmly:

"You have so often told me, and as I am always forgetting it, you will have to tell it to me many a time again, that there is something in me which causes me at times to express myself quite differently from the way in which I intended to. I also know, dear father, that such a word lingers in your memory like a smouldering spark, especially when the word is uttered by your own child; and that in your grief you picture to yourself the utter ruin of a character that can indulge in such expressions. I

understand you, do I not? Trust in me: I am not so bad, after all.

"I do not believe in the possessed; and yet there must be something of that kind. Enough on that point, however. Though I seemed cheerful, I had a heavy heart; but now I am one of the happiest beings alive; and if I were obliged to be a wood-cutter for the rest of my days, I could still content myself. O mother, I would not have believed that I could have found such a creature in a world in which all others are mere pretence and rouge, lies and deceit.

"She is in perfect health, and as pure and as fresh as a dewdrop. Although she has learned nothing, she knows everything. She cannot couch it in words, but her eyes speak it. Her heart is so thoroughly good, – so strong, – so pure, – indeed, I cannot find the right word for it. She has no parents, no brothers or sisters. She is a child of the woods, and as pure and as holy as the primeval forest itself.

"O, forgive me all! I cannot describe my emotions. Now I understand and believe everything. They tell us that in the olden time, a Prince once lost his way while hunting in the forest, and that he found a maiden whom he placed upon his horse and led to his castle and then made her his queen. Those stories are all true. I cannot make a queen of Martella, but through her I am ennobled; and it grieves me that it will not do to have our wedding at once. But I will wait. I can wait. Or, if you like it better, we will wander forth to America, and, far from the world, shall live there as our first parents did in Paradise. Believe me, there is

indeed a paradise.

"O mother! You are certainly all that a human being can be, but still you have one fault; – yes, yes; you have wept-and the first commandment should be, 'Man, thou shalt not weep.' And, just think of it, mother, Martella has never yet wept! She is as healthy as a doe, and I swear it to you, she shall never know what it is to weep. O mother! O father! in the depths of the forest I have found this pure, innocent child, so wise and clever, so strong and brave. This flower has blossomed in the hidden depths of the forest; no human eye had ever seen her before. I am not worthy of her, but I will try to become so."

His voice became thick. He beat his breast with both hands, and drew a long deep breath. I have never yet seen a being so refulgent with happiness. Thus, in the olden time, must they have looked who thought they were beholding a miracle; and even now, when I write of these things, feeble as my words seem, I tremble with emotion.

And could this be my child, my son, my madcap, who now felt so humble and contrite. I had lost all memory of his former rudeness and sarcasm. It was some time before we could answer his words.

The sun was going down in the west, its last broad rays fell into the room, shedding a glow of light over all, and as we sat we heard the evening chimes.

CHAPTER VI

"I believe in your love," said my wife at last.

"O mother!" cried Ernst, throwing himself at her feet; and then kissing her hands, he wept and sobbed while he rested his head on her knee.

I lifted him up and said, "We are independent enough not to ask where our daughter-in-law comes from, so that she be but good and will make our child happy."

Ernst grasped both of my hands and said, "I knew it. I do not deserve your love, but now I shall try to be worthy of it."

"But where have you been since dinner-time?" said my wife, trying to change the conversation.

Ernst replied that he had left the road and had wandered far into the forest, where he had lain down and fallen asleep; and that within him two sorts of spirits had been battling. The spiteful spirit had urged him not to take back the rude words, and desired him, without heeding father or mother, to wander forth into the wide world with his Martella; she would follow him wherever he led.

The humble spirit had, however, warned him to return and undo the harm he had done. The conflict had been a long one. At last he rose to his feet and ran home as if sent by a messenger of happiness.

My wife listened attentively, and regarded him with that

glance of hers which seemed to penetrate the deepest recesses of the soul. No other being can listen so attentively as she could, and no glance is as soothing as hers was. She would not attempt to assist you when at a loss for words, or by her manner imply that she knew what you meant. She patiently permitted you to explain yourself, to stop or to continue; and when she was listening, you could not but feel wiser than you really were. Her glance illumined your very soul.

When Ernst had finished she said to him: "You are on the right path at last. I know that you think you have already reached the goal, and that all is done. But, believe me, and do not forget what I now tell you, – the spiteful spirit will return again; now he only feigns death. But rest content, for from this day you will be his master. I see this as clearly as I see your very eyes. The best possession in the world is now yours-pure, righteous love. Yes, you may well laugh, for now it is your goodness that laughs."

Rothfuss came to tell me that the Alsatian cattle-dealer who wanted to purchase our fat oxen, wished to see me. I was about to send word to him to wait or to come some other time, but I understood my wife's glance, which told me that I had better leave her alone with Ernst.

I left the room, and, while going, I heard her say, "Ernst, you must now eat and drink something; such emotions as you have felt awaken hunger and thirst."

When I returned, Ernst sat at the table eating his supper. He called out to me, "Father, mother has arranged everything nicely,

and if you are satisfied, why-"

"Eat now, and let me speak," said my wife. And then she continued:

"From all that Ernst has told me-and we depend upon his truthfulness-I am convinced that Martella is a real treasure-trove. No one but such a girl could banish this spirit of unrest. We are, thank God, so circumstanced that besides a good family name we can also bestow worldly goods upon our children. Ernst and his bride[1] are both young and can work for themselves. He loves in her the child of nature; but he understands that there is much of good which she can and must yet take up into this pure nature of hers. He used to say that he could never be happy except with a woman who sang beautifully, but now he no longer finds singing a necessity. But he cannot do without spiritual sympathy and harmony in his higher life. She need not learn French; I have forgotten what I once knew of it. But Ernst is accustomed to a refined home; and when he goes home to his wife in his forest house, he should be able to find refreshment and rest in noble and elevating thoughts.

"If a forester is denied the proper delights of home and married life, there is nothing left him but the pleasures of the tavern; and they will certainly ruin him.

"Martella must not be confused or taught in school-girl fashion. That which is noble and refined in life cannot be

[1] Throughout, the translator will, according to the German custom, use the word "bride" to designate a woman who is only betrothed.

imparted by precept or command. It must become a necessity to her, just as it has become to our own son, and not until then can they both be happy.

"Neither will the world be satisfied with mere nature and forest manners. Does it not seem the very thing that she of her own accord has said to Ernst, 'Let me spend a year as a servant to your sister, the captain's wife, or what would be still better, with your mother, and then come for me? If you do not object, I think we had better do this. Early to-morrow morning I shall drive over into the valley with Ernst, and in the evening I shall return with Martella, who will remain with us until all is arranged and she has become used to our ways and customs, so that Ernst may live happily with her, not only in his youth, but until his eighty-third year-for my father lived to that age."

I do not know which to admire most in my wife-her shrewdness or her kindness. She always had the right word at the right time.

I, of course, approved of her plan, and on the morrow she started off with Ernst in the wagon. Rothfuss drove the two bays.

Towards evening, I walked down the road to meet them on their return.

The sun was going down behind the Vosges Mountains. The rosy sunset shed its glow over the rocks and the waters of the brook.

The Englishman stood at the bank angling. He never saluted those whom he met, but lived entirely for himself. Every year,

as soon as the snows began to melt, he came to our valley, and remained until the winter returned. He dwelt with Lerz the baker, and was always fishing up and down the valley. He gathered up his complicated fishing-tackle and departed, followed by a day laborer carrying a fish basket.

CHAPTER VII

I waited down by the village saw-mill, where they already knew that Ernst's bride was coming to live with us. With all his gentleness and candor, Ernst had announced this in order that we should be bound by it. I met Rautenkron the forester, who was known in the whole neighborhood as "The wild huntsman."

He was the best of shots, and could endure no living object. The people thought he merely avoided men, but I knew that he hated them. He always considered it a piece of good fortune when he heard bad news of any one. He lived in solitude, for whenever he had been seduced into helping some one he had always repented of it afterward. A ball had once passed through his hat, and, during the examination, the magistrate had said to the officer, "If he should ever be killed by a shot, you had better examine the whole village, for we shall all have had a share in it." He lived strictly within the law, however. He did not want to be beloved: it was his boast that every one could say, "He is severe, but just." He had no consideration either for rich or poor.

He was in the vigor of life, with a gray beard, aquiline nose, and wondrously clear liquid blue eyes, of a piercing brilliancy.

He came up to me with a friendly air, that was quite unusual on his part, and told me that Ernst had been with him that day.

Ernst had said nothing to me of this. Rautenkron declared that he did not concern himself about other people, but that he was

really sorry that Ernst was about to throw himself away. Here was another young man who was fit for heroic deeds, but was ruined in this good-for-nothing age, and was about to sacrifice his life to a coquettish forest girl. It was unpardonable that we should countenance him in this, and consent to take a creature from out of the thicket into a house which had always borne so honorable a name.

"Mark my words! She will be just like a young fox that is caught before he has finished his growth, – he will never be perfectly tamed, but will run away to his home when you least expect it, and be right in doing so."

It is always galling to hear pure affection thus abused and misconstrued.

I endeavored to change the subject, but Rautenkron affected not to hear me, and indulged in the most violent language against the stranger. Indeed, he prophesied that our thoughtless conduct would drag us into misfortune, and called the miller to bear witness to what he thus told me.

I abruptly refused to continue the subject, and now Rautenkron called out to me, his eyes beaming with joy, "Enough. Let us speak of something else. I have to-day done one of the prettiest deeds of my life. Shall I tell you what? All right! You know Wollkopf the wood dealer. He has such a mild, insinuating way about him, but always eyed me as the usurer does a suspicious-looking pledge. He did not trust me. 'But,' thought I to myself, 'just wait! I will bide my time; he will come yet.' And

he has come at last, within shooting distance too. At the last sale of wood in my district, he had bought a large lot of logs, and then came up to me and said that he wanted to speak plain German with me. Now listen to what the honored town-councillor-you know that is his position-the acknowledged man of honor, calls plain speaking! He offered me a bribe if I would keep such and such logs out of his lot. Of course I agreed. Smoking our cigars, we went on walking through the woods. I quickly cut down an oak sapling, pulled the branches from it, and with the green wood beat the lean man of honor to my heart's content. He cried out with all his might, but no one heard him save the cuckoo, and I enjoyed beating him until he was black and blue; just as the cuckoo enjoys swallowing the caterpillar which poisons the fingers of your soft-skinned gentry. I tell you there is no greater pleasure than administering personal chastisement to a sharper. Men say that the kiss of the beloved one is good; perhaps it is, but this is better.

"And when I was satisfied, and he too, I suppose, had enough, I let him run, and said to him, 'Now, my sweet gentleman, you may sue me if you choose; but, if you do, it will be my turn to tell my story.'"

While Rautenkron told his story, his features acquired an uncanny expression of glee. I must admit that I did not begrudge the sharper the beating he had received; and besides that, the recital had engaged my attention, and thus had relieved me from the sad thoughts which had before that filled my mind.

It was already dusk when the wagon arrived. It halted. My wife said to the girl who was sitting at her side, "This is father. Speak to him."

"I hope you are well, father!" exclaimed the girl.

I heard Rautenkron beside me muttering angrily. His words, however, were unintelligible. Without saying more he hurried off into the forest.

"What ails the misanthrope now?" said my wife. "But why need that trouble us? My child, you had better get out here and follow with father."

I helped the child to alight. She seemed loth to obey.

CHAPTER VIII

I was obliged to halt. I felt as if trying to drag a heavily laden wagon up the hill.

But let me proceed. I have many a steep path yet to climb.

I stood with the girl on the highway. I extended my hand and uttered a few words of welcome, but they did not come from the heart. Our wayward son had imposed a great burden on us. The young maiden appeared to pay no attention to what I was saying, but looked about in every direction. As it was dusk, I could not see her distinctly. I could perceive, however, that she was a powerful creature. She did not regulate her step by mine, but I was forced to keep step with her unless I wished to be left behind.

"What dog is this running after us?" said I.

"It is my dog. Isn't it so, Pincher? Aren't you my dog?"

The dog answered with a bark, and kept running back and forth, now up the road and now down. When she whistled to him, in huntsman's style, he obeyed.

"Master," asked she, without resting a moment while speaking, "and does all as far as the eye can reach belong to you?"

"Why do you inquire?"

"Why? because I want to know. It must be jolly here in the daytime."

"Indeed it is."

"Is that the graveyard where I see the crosses and the white stones?"

"Yes."

"Can it be seen from your house?"

"It can."

"Too bad! that will never do. I can't bear to look out of the window. I can't stay there, I won't stay; you must take away that graveyard; how can one laugh or sing with that constantly before one's eyes? Or how could I eat or drink? I once found a dead man in the forest. He had been lying there ever so long, and was quite eaten away. I can't bear to have Death always staring me in the face. I won't stay here."

I was obliged to stop. I felt so oppressed that I could not move from the spot.

The oxen that I had sold the day before were just being led down the hill. When Martella saw them she cried out, "Oh what splendid beasts! are they yours?"

"They are no longer mine. I sold them yesterday, and they are to be led to France."

"A pleasant meal to you, France!" said Martella, laughing boisterously. I could not help noticing her hearty laughter, for I felt quite shocked by it. What can this child be, thought I? What will become of our tranquil household?

We arrived at the house. The room seemed lighted up more brilliantly than usual. We ascended the steps, Martella preceding me. My wife was waiting for us on the threshold, and taking both

of Martella's hands in hers, said, "Now, child, thou art at last at home."

"I am at home everywhere. And so is my dog. Isn't it so, Pincher?" said Martella in a bold tone.

We entered the room. There were three lights on the table. My wife's eloquent glance told me to have patience, and when I saw her lay her hand on her heart I felt that she was confident that she could direct everything for the best.

I now, for the first time, had a good look at Martella. In carriage and feature she seemed as wild and defiant as a gypsy. Her face was full of an expression of boldness. But she was indeed beautiful and fascinating when she spoke, and even more so when she laughed.

"Why do you have three lamps on the table?" said she.

"That is the custom," answered my wife, "when a bride comes to the house."

"How lovely!" exclaimed Martella. "The one light stands for us who are as one. The other two lights represent the parents." And she laughed most heartily. Her next question was, "Why do you have two clocks in your room?"

"You ask a great many questions," I could not avoid answering. But my wife said, "That is right. Always ask questions, and you will soon learn all that you need know."

Martella may have imagined that she had been too precipitate, for she soon said:

"To-morrow is yet another day. I am so tired. I would like

to go to sleep now. But I must have my dog with me, or else I cannot rest."

Indeed, her gentle good-night and her curtsey seemed strangely at variance with her usually bold and defiant manner.

When she had left us, my wife said to me, "Do not take this affair to heart. It is indeed no trifle. But remember that Ernst might have made a much more serious mistake. He loves the wild creature, and our duty is to help him as best we can. Let Rothfuss and me take charge of the girl. For the present, you had better treat her with an air of reserve. We two will attend to all. You may be glad that we have so faithful a servant as Rothfuss. They are friends already, and he says, 'By the time the potatoes are brought home, she will lay aside her red stockings.' I was wishing for that on our way here. But she refused so positively, that I desisted from my endeavors to persuade her."

After a little while, she continued:

"A voice in the forest helped me to bring all things about as they should be. I heard the cuckoo's cry, and was reminded by that, that he would leave his young in a strange nest, and that other birds would patiently and affectionately nurture the strange birdling. We are something like these cuckoo parents. What they do without thought, we do consciously."

When at early dawn on the following day, I looked out of my window, I saw Martella and her dog at the fountain in front of the house. Seen by day, and in her light attire, she seemed wondrously beautiful and fascinating.

She washed her face and plaited her thick brown hair. Her every movement seemed free and noble, and almost graceful enough to please an artist's eye.

She sang in a low voice, and would from time to time exclaim, "Cuckoo!"

Rothfuss, who saw that she was washing herself, called out to her that she must not do that again. "The cows drink there, and if you wash yourself in that basin, they will never go there again."

"I have already noticed," she replied, "that the cattle have the first place in this house."

When she saw me, she called out in a clear, ringing voice:

"Good-morning, master. Ernst was certainly right when he told me that it is lovely here. One can see so far in every direction. I shall yet climb every one of those hills. How good the water is! Do you, too, hear the cuckoo? He is already awake, and has bid me good-morning. Old Jaegerlies[2] has often told me that I was the cuckoo's child. And do you know that the cow got a calf during the night? A spotted cow-calf? We have already given the cow something warm to drink. The calf drank milk when it was hardly two minutes old. Rothfuss said it would be a pity to kill the calf. I am going to drive out into the fields with Rothfuss to get some clover. Yes, a cow has a good time of it in your house. But look! the cuckoo is flying over your house! That is an omen!"

She went to the stable, and I followed her a short time afterwards. She looked on dreamily while the cow was licking

[2] This name means: Lizzy, the huntress.

the new-born calf, and said at last,

"That is what you folks call kissing."

Rothfuss asked her:

"Are you fond of cows?"

"I don't know; I never had one."

He showed her our best cow and said,

"Three years ago, when she was a calf, she got the first prize at the agricultural exhibition. She puts food to the best use. Everything that she eats turns either to meat or to milk."

Rothfuss told Martella to put on a little jacket. They soon drove out to the fields, and when she held up the scythe, she exclaimed, "Cuckoo!" It seemed to me as if I were dreaming, and yet I remembered quite distinctly that my wife had spoken to me on the previous night of the cuckoo's young ones.

What a strange coincidence it seemed!

Martella returned from the fields in good spirits, and during the morning lunch was quite cheerful. She was constantly talking of the daughter-in-law, and the cow-calf that had come into the family during the night before.

I then said to her, "I will give you the cow-calf. It is yours."

She made no answer, but looked at me with an air of surprise.

Rothfuss told me that when in the stable, she had said to the calf: "You belong to me. But of course, you know nothing of it. You really belong to your mother. But your mother belongs to the master, the master belongs to Ernst, and Ernst belongs to me; and that is how it is."

When evening came, Rothfuss expressed his opinion in the following words:

"If her inside is like her outside, she need not be made any better than she already is."

Our oldest maid-servant, Balbina, seemed quite kindly disposed to the new arrival, and Martella said that Balbina had told her something with the air of imparting a secret of which she was the only possessor. And what was it? "Why, nothing more than that it is sinful to lie and steal."

I have given the story of this first day in its smallest details. It is only for the first green leaves of spring that we have an attentive eye. They go on, silently increasing, until they become so numerous that they excite no comment.

CHAPTER IX

Martella did not become attached to any one in the house except Rothfuss, whom she was constantly plying with questions about Ernst's childhood. When in pleasant evenings during the week, and on Sunday afternoons in clear weather, the youths and maidens would march through the village, with their merry songs, she would sit with Rothfuss on the bench by the stable, or, unattended by any companion save her dog, would be up in the woods that lay back of our house.

When she had any special request, she would communicate it through Rothfuss.

Among other things, she wanted to go out into the forest with the wood-cutters. From her thirteenth year she had wielded the axe, and could use it as cleverly as the men. We did not grant this wish of hers.

Her craving for knowledge was insatiable, and I marvelled at the patience and equanimity with which my wife told her everything she wanted to know.

Things to which we had become accustomed were to her occasions of the liveliest surprise. This did not seem to change, for she never could get used to what with us had, through daily habit, become a matter of course. To her all seemed a marvel.

Her glance was full of courage. Her voice seemed so full of sincerity, that her strangest utterances required no added

assurance of their truthfulness. Her laughter was so hearty that it seemed contagious.

Rothfuss was quite proud that he could control Martella, just as he did the two bays that he had raised from the time they were foals, and delighted to speak of the fact, that our youngest-as he called Ernst-was the best of marksmen. He had secured the best prize. For there could be no other girl so wise and merry as Martella. And she was so full of merry capers that the very cows looked around and lowed, as if to say, "We, too, would be glad to laugh with you, if we only could. But, alas! we cannot. We have not the bellows to do it with."

She had named her calf "Muscat." She would nurse it as if it were a younger sister. She maintained that it was a perfect marvel of health and wisdom, and that the old cow was jealous, and tried to butt her because she had noticed that the calf had greater love for Martella than for its own mother.

There was one point on which she and Rothfuss always quarrelled. She had an inexplicable aversion to America, of which Rothfuss always spoke as if it were Paradise itself. The manner in which Lisbeth, the locksmith's widow, had been provided for, was his chief argument in its favor. "None but a free state would provide so well for the families of the men killed in battle. How different our Germans are about that."

Towards my wife and myself, Martella was respectful, but diffident.

Ernst came to us but twice during the summer, remaining but

a few hours each time.

He wanted Martella to walk or drive around the neighborhood with him, but she refused, saying "that she would not leave home. She had been away long enough."

Ernst was evidently provoked that Martella refused to go with him, but kept his anger to himself.

In that summer, 1865, we had charming harvest weather, and I shall never forget Martella's saying, "I shall help gather the harvest. I was a gleaner once, and know that this is good weather for the farmers. To cut the ears in the morning and carry home the rich sheaves in the evening, without having had a storm during the day, is good for the farmer, but not so pleasant for the poor gleaner. Storms during the harvest time scatter the grain for the poor; for the farmers give nothing away of their own accord."

Rothfuss looked towards me, and nodded approval of her words.

Towards the end of summer, Richard paid us a visit.

Richard had written to us some time before, and had referred to Ernst's conduct in indignant terms. He felt shocked that one who had not yet secured a livelihood for himself, had already linked the fate of another with his own, and had inflicted her presence upon the household. But from the first moment that he saw Martella, he admired her more than any of us had done.

When he offered her his first brotherly greeting, she gazed at him with her brilliant eyes, and said,

"I can see ten years ahead."

"Have you the gift of prophecy?"

"Oh pshaw! I don't mean that. What I mean is that in ten years from now Ernst will look as you now do. But I hope that when that time comes, he will not have to use spectacles."

Richard laughed, and so did Martella quite heartily.

There is nothing better than when two people laugh together at their first meeting.

Later in the season, my daughter Johanna, who is the wife of a pastor in the Oberland who had once been Ludwig's teacher, came with her grown-up daughter to pay us a visit. Johanna's object in coming was to receive the benefit of the milk cure.

At their very first meeting, she unintentionally affronted Martella. Johanna always wore black silk netted gloves, and when, with too evident an air of assumed kindness, she offered her hand to Martella, the latter said to her:

"There is no need for a fly-net on your hand. I do not sting."

After this trifling circumstance, there was many a heart-burning between Martella and Johanna. They were always at cross purposes. Rothfuss was provoked, as he was unable to satisfy Martella that the pastor's wife had not intended to affront her. Martella refused to be convinced, and persisted in calling Johanna a "fly-net."

When she had once conceived an aversion for any one, she was immovable. And when Johanna came to the cow stables, which she did twice every day at milking-time, she would always in an ironical tone say, "Good-day, madam sister-in-law."

Johanna found in this a cause for continued ill-feeling, to which, in her discontented and susceptible condition, she readily gave way.

Johanna imagined that she had found the way to Martella's heart, by assuring her how much she pitied her. But that only served to make matters worse; for Martella resented any manifestation of pity.

As our household was conducted on a generous scale, there was much that, in Johanna's eyes, contrasted unpleasantly with her own home. She frequently alluded to the small pay her husband was earning, and often gave us cause to remember that he would have been advanced much more rapidly, if he had not been the son-in-law of a member of the party in opposition to the government. She, in fact, made no concealment of her belief that I was the cause of her husband's and her daughter's infirm health. If it were not that I was in such great disfavor with the government, they would long ago have been stationed in a more genial climate, and would thus have recovered their health.

She maintained that our mode of living was not pious enough, and thought it most atrocious that we indulged Martella in her heathenish ways.

She did not care to go to the village pastor, with whom we had but little intercourse, for she was angry at him. His position brought him little work but generous pay, and she therefore coveted it for her own husband. But then, the wife of our pastor happened to be the daughter of a member of the consistory,

which, of course, explains the whole matter.

One peculiarity of Martella's afforded Johanna many an opportunity to read us homilies on our neglect of the child. No matter whether you did her a service or gave her a present, Martella never uttered a word of thanks.

I am unable to explain the trait. It may have been the result of the simple life of nature in which she had been reared.

My son Richard, who passed a portion of the autumn holidays with us, was of that opinion.

Richard had a way of laying aside his spectacles after he had been with us for a day or two, and getting along without them until the day of his departure. He thus, with every succeeding year, did much to strengthen his overtasked eyes. I think he used to put his spectacles in the keeping of Rothfuss, who would return them to him on the day he left home.

On this occasion, however, he retained his spectacles, and spent less of his time with Rothfuss than with Martella, who seemed to have become fonder of him than of any of us. In the evenings and on Sundays, she would take long walks with him in the woods, and would talk unceasingly.

One evening Richard said:

"I received the great academical prize to-day. Martella said to me: 'I can hardly believe that you are a professor; you are so-so wise, and have so much common-sense, and can talk like-like a wood-keeper's servant.' Can you imagine greater praise than that?

"And let me tell you, moreover, that Martella is full of wisdom. She knows every creature, the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. And besides that, she can read the human heart thoroughly. I could not repeat some of her opinions to you without committing a breach of confidence. But I can tell you that she has split many a log, and knows how to swing her axe to the right spot.

"Yes, Ernst is a lucky fellow; I am only fearful that he may not understand her simple nature. She is too wayward. I trust that he may learn to see in her a real incarnation of undefiled holiness and majesty. It is true that in her case they manifest themselves in the form of a girl not given to blissful tears, but the very embodiment of joy itself.

"While walking along the road, she was chewing twigs of pine, and handed a few to me, with the words: 'Taste them; there is nothing half so good as these.'

"When I told her that, as she could get better and more regular fare, she had better give up this habit of chewing pine needles, especially as it excited her nerves, she answered: 'I think you are right. They always excite me terribly.'

"We were about to cross a meadow. I was afraid of the wet places. 'Follow me,' said she, 'and be careful to look out for the molehills, for there is always dry soil underneath them.'"

While Richard was thus discoursing with unwonted enthusiasm, Johanna had risen from the table and had beckoned to her daughter to follow her.

Richard and my wife had noticed this as well as I had done. They did not allude to it, however, but continued their conversation, agreeing that it was best for the present to let Martella have her own way. They thought that she would in due time undoubtedly awaken to a longing for life's nobler forms, and the deeper meaning that lay beneath them.

My wife had no set plan on which to educate Martella.

"She is to live with us, and that of itself will educate her. She sees every one of us attending to his appointed labor. That will, of itself, soon teach her where her duty lies, and will help to make her orderly and methodical. She sees that our lives are sincere, and that, too, must do her good."

My wife was careful to caution Richard against teaching her any generalities, as they could be of no use to her.

Martella was not gentle in her disposition. She was severe towards herself as well as towards others. She had no compassion for the sufferings of others. Her idea was that every one should help himself as best he could.

She had never cared or toiled for another being. Like the stag in the forest, she lived for herself alone. My wife nodded silent approval when Richard observed, "In a state of nature, all is egotism; gentleness, industry, and the disposition to assist others are results of culture."

On the very day on which Richard had to leave us, the Major arrived at our house. He was on a tour of inspection, and had been examining the horses which the law required the farmers to

hold ready for government uses.

Our village was not included in his district, and he had gone out of his way to pay us this visit. He was in full uniform. His athletic, hardy figure presented quite a stately appearance, and his honest, cheerful manner was quite refreshing.

He was glad to be able to inform us that the ill-will of his superior officers, in which even the minister of war had participated, had not injured him with the Prince. Although there had been three competitors for the position, the Prince had selected him, and had personally informed him of his promotion with the words, "I have great respect for your father-in-law, and believe that he is a true friend of the state."

The Major was not wanting in respect and affection for me, and his behavior to my wife was marked by a knightly grace, and filial veneration. When Richard told him how Martella had in himself seen her own betrothed with ten years added to his real age, he replied: "I have never said so, but it has often occurred to me that, when she is older, Bertha will be the very picture of her mother as we now see her."

Richard was an excellent go-between for Martella and the Major, who had brought a necklace of red beads which Bertha had sent to the new sister-in-law.

Although Martella's face became flushed with emotion, she did not utter one word of thanks. She pressed the beads to her lips, and then stepped to the mirror and fastened the necklace on. Then she turned towards us, while she counted us off on her

fingers and said, "I am a sister-in-law. Now I know everything, and have everything. I have a pastor, a professor, a major, a forester, a great farmer, and-what else is there? Ah, yes, now I know-a builder."

"Yes, we have one; but he is in America."

"I will have nothing to do with America," said Martella.

The Major ventured the remark that Ernst had acted unwisely in leaving the service; he seemed made for a soldier, and the best thing he could do would be to return to the army. But in that case he would have, for a while at least, to postpone all thoughts of marrying.

"He need not hurry on my account," interrupted Martella; "I am sure I shall put nothing in his way. I, too, shall need some time to make myself fit. I shall have to put many a thing in here," pointing to her forehead, "before I shall deserve to be a member of this family. Now I have the necklace that my sister-in-law sent me, around my neck, and do not mind being tied, and-Good-night!"

She reached out her hand to my wife, and then to each one of us. After which she again grasped my wife's hand, and then retired.

Richard explained Martella's peculiar characteristics to the Major. Both in thought and in action she was a strange compound of gentleness and rudeness.

The Major asked whether we knew anything about her parents. Richard replied that she had imparted facts to him that

bore on the subject, but that they were as yet disconnected and unsatisfactory, and that he had given her his word of honor that he would reveal naught, until she herself thought that the proper time had come.

We kept up our cheerful conversation for some time longer. Suddenly it occurred to the Major to observe that the dispute between Prussia and Austria was taking a dangerous shape, and that, according to his views, Prussia was in the right. The military system of the confederation could not last long in its present condition.

Thus we were brought face to face with serious questions.

Of what import was the transformation of a child of the forest, when such weighty matters were on the carpet.

But while the clouds pass by over our heads, and the seasons depart, the little plant quietly and steadily keeps on growing.

CHAPTER X

In the winter of 1865 I left home to attend a session of the Parliament.

My neighbor Funk, who was also a delegate, accompanied me.

It grieves me to be obliged to describe this man or even to mention him.

He caused me much sorrow. He humiliated me more than any other man has ever done, for he proved to me that I have neither worldly wisdom nor knowledge of men. How could I have so egregiously deceived myself in him? I am too hasty in determining as to the character of a man, and when I afterwards find that his actions are not in keeping with my conception of what they should be, the inconsistency torments me as if it were an unsolved enigma. In one word, I have suffered much because of a lack of reserve. Unfortunately I must give all or nothing. Even now I cannot help thinking that he must be better, after all, than he seems. I find, on comparing myself with him, that he has many an advantage over me. He is twenty years younger than I am, and yet he seems as if he had matured long ago. I shall never be that way, no matter how long I live. I am always growing.

He had failed in the examination for a degree, and, disappointed and vexed, had entered the teachers' seminary. He afterward actually became a schoolmaster, but never forgot that he had once aspired to enter a higher sphere of life.

When the revolution broke out he had hoped to find his reckoning in it. He speedily found himself in a high position, and had no trouble in accustoming himself to the princely palace in which the provisional government had located itself.

I have already mentioned that I had brought Funk home from Strasburg with me. I felt so firmly convinced of his innocence that I used all my influence in his behalf, and even deposited a considerable sum as his bondsman, in order that he might be tried without having to surrender his liberty. He was pronounced innocent.

He made me shudder one day when he told me that the judges had evidently imbibed my belief in his innocence.

Funk was a handsome man, and still retains his good looks. Annette, the friend of my daughter Bertha, called him a perfect type of lackey beauty. She was sure, she said, that he was born to wear a livery. There was something so abject and cringing about him. She was not a little proud of her discernment, when, some time after, I confirmed her judgment by the announcement that Funk was actually a son of the Duke's valet.

Funk did not resume his former position as a teacher. He became an emigration agent. For during the first years of the reaction there was a great increase in the number of emigrants from this country to America.

Besides this, he had also become an agent for Insurances of all sorts Fire, Life, Hail, and Cattle. His window-shutters were so covered with signs that they presented quite a gay appearance.

He was chosen as one of the town-council, but the government did not confirm him in office, which action of theirs gained him much credit with the people. Two years after that, when he was elected burgomaster, he knew how to bring it about that a deputation should wait upon the Prince in person to urge his confirmation.

Funk induced his wife always to wear the old-time costumes of the country people.

"That, you must know," he said to me one day, "awakens the confidence of the country people." When I reproved him for this trick, he laughed and showed his pretty teeth. There was, to me at least, always something insincere and repulsive in his laugh, and in the fact that he never wearied of repeating certain high-sounding phrases. But what was there to draw me towards this man? I will honestly admit that I have a certain admiration for combativeness, courage, and shrewdness-qualities in which I am deficient.

My unsuspecting confidence in others is a mistake. But I have been thus for seventy years, and when I reckon up results, I find that I am none the worse for it. Although over-confidence in others has brought me many a sorrow, it has also given me many a joy.

I have suffered much through others, and through Funk especially; but I still believe that there are no thoroughly bad men, but that there are thoroughly egotistical ones, and that the pushing of egotism beyond its due bounds is the source of all evil.

If I had not helped him with all my influence, Funk would not have been chosen a delegate to the Parliament. When he visited me, on the day following the election, he addressed me in a tone of unwonted and unlooked-for familiarity, much to the disgust of my wife.

After he had left she said to me, "I cannot understand you. I did not interfere when I saw that you were trying to gain votes for Funk; that, I presume, is a part of politics, and perhaps the party needs voters, and just such bold and irreverent people. They can say things that a man of honor would not permit himself to utter. But I cannot conceive how you can allow yourself to be on so familiar a footing with that man."

I assured her that the first advances had been made by him, and that although they were undesired by me I did not choose to appear proud.

She said no more. But there was yet another reproof in store for me.

When I entered the stable Rothfuss said to me, "Why did you let that grinning fellow get so near to you? Is he still calling out, 'God be with thee, Waldfried! You will come to see me soon, will you not?' Such talk from that quarter is no compliment."

I did not suffer him to go on with his remarks. My weak fear of hurting the feelings of others had already worked its own punishment on myself.

When I left home for the session of 1865, Funk was waiting for me down by the saw-mill. I found him with a young man,

the son of a schoolmaster who lived in the neighborhood. He took leave of his companion, and turning to me exclaimed with a triumphant air, "I have already saved one poor creature to-day. The simple-minded fellow wanted to become a teacher. A mere teacher in a public school! A position which is ideally elevated, but financially quite low. I convinced him that he would be happier breaking stone on the road. We ought to make it impossible for the Government to get teachers for its public schools."

When I answered that he was wantonly trifling with the education of our people, he replied, "From your point of view, perhaps you are quite right." It was in this way that I first got the idea that Funk thought he was controlling me. His subordination was a mere sham, and we were really at heart opposed to each other.

He voted as I did in the Parliament, but not for the same reasons.

If Funk had been insincere towards me, it was now my turn-and that was the worst of it-to be insincere towards him.

I was determined to break off my relations with him, and only awaited a favorable opportunity for so doing. And yet while awaiting that opportunity I kept up my usual relations with him.

It is x indeed sad, that intercourse with those who are insincere begets insincerity in ourselves.

We reached the railway station, where we found numerous delegates, and indeed two of our own party, who were cordially

disliked by Funk. One of them was a manufacturer who lived near the borders of Switzerland. He was a strict devotee, but was really sincere in his religious professions, which he illustrated by his pure and unselfish conduct. We were on the friendliest footing, although he could not avoid from time to time expressing a regret that I did not occupy the same religious stand-point that he did.

The other delegate was a proud and haughty country magistrate-a man of large possessions, who imagined it was his especial prerogative to lead in matters affecting the welfare of the state. He had been opposed to Funk during the election, and had ill-naturedly said, "Beggars should have nothing to say." Funk had not forgotten this, but nevertheless forced him, as it were, into a display of civility.

The two companions were quite reserved in their manner towards Funk, and before we had accomplished our journey I could not help observing that there was a pressure which would induce a clashing and a subsequent separation of these discordant elements.

CHAPTER XI

During the winter session of the Parliament I did not reside with my daughter Bertha.

At a future day it will be difficult to realize what a separation there then was between the different classes of our people.

There was a feeling of restraint and ill-will between those who wore the dress of the citizen and that of the soldier. The Prince was, above all things, a soldier, and when in public always appeared in uniform.

We delegates, who could not approve of all that the Government required of us, were regarded as the sworn enemies of the state, both by court circles and by the army, to whom we were nevertheless obliged to grant supplies.

An officer who would suffer himself to be seen walking in the street with a citizen who was suspected of harboring liberal opinions, or with one of the delegates of our party, might rely upon being reported at head-quarters.

Although he did not say anything about it, my son-in-law was much grieved by this condition of affairs. Whenever I visited him he treated me with respect and affection, as if he thus meant to thank me for the reserve I had maintained when we met in public, and desired to apologize for the rigid discipline he was obliged to observe.

We had a long session, full of fury and bitterness on the part

of the ministers and officers of the Government, and of the depressing consciousness of wasted effort on ours. The morning began with public debate; after that came committee-meetings, and in the evenings our party caucuses, which sometimes lasted quite late. And all of these sacrifices of strength were made with the discouraging prospect that the fate of our Fatherland still hung in doubt, that our labors would prove fruitless, and that our vain protest against the demands of our rulers would be all that we could contribute to history.

The air seemed thick as if with a coming storm. We felt that our party was on the eve of breaking up into opposing fragments. There was no longer the same confidence among its members, and here and there one could hear it said: "Yes, indeed, you are honest enough, and have no ambitious or selfish views to subserve."

Funk was one of the most zealous of all in the attempt to break up the party.

For a while he had undoubtedly aspired to the leadership. But when it was confided to a gifted man who had availed himself of the declaration of amnesty and had returned to his Fatherland some years before, Funk acted as if he had never thought of the position.

Who can recall all of the changes in the weather that help to ripen the crop!

A spirit of fellowship is praised both in war and in voyages of adventure. The life of a delegate, it seems to me, combines

the peculiar features of both of those conditions. It is no trifling matter to leave a pleasant home and to bid adieu to wife and children, and to stand shoulder to shoulder, laboring faithfully day and night for the common weal.

I have had the good fortune to gain the friendship of man. It differs somewhat from the love of woman, but is none the less blessed.

I was not only a delegate from our district but also a member of the German Parliament. I was in accord with the best men of my country, and we were true to one another at our posts. May those who in a happier period replace us act as faithfully and unselfishly as we did!

During the winter session my wife's letters were a source of great enjoyment to me. She kept me fully informed of all that happened at home, and especially in regard to Martella.

On the morning that I left home she came to my wife and said, "Mother-I may call you so, may I not? – and I shall try to be worthy of it; and when master returns, I shall call him father."

She pointed to her feet. My wife did not know what she meant by that, until she at last said, "Rothfuss said that if I were to lay aside my red stockings, I would be making a good beginning."

And after this she began again: "I shall learn all that you tell me, but not from the schoolmaster's assistant. When he was alone with me the other day, he stroked my cheeks and I slapped him for his impertinence. I shall gladly learn all that you wish me to learn."

She remained with my wife, and appeared quite pliant and docile. My wife had her sleep in her own bedchamber, and on the first night she exclaimed, with a voice full of emotion, "I have a mother at last? O Ernst, you ought to know where I am! How happy you have been to have had a mother all your life!"

I took these letters to my daughter Bertha, who thoroughly appreciated and loved Martella. She said that her own experience had been somewhat similar; for her marriage had introduced her to an aristocratic and military circle, in which she was at first considered as an interloper, and where it took some time before she could acquire the position due her. For even to this day the aristocracy retain the advantage that those who are well born can enter good society, even though they be utterly devoid of culture.

Annette, who had also married an officer, had become quite attached to her, and the result of their combined efforts was that they at last achieved quite a distinguished position. Annette, who was a Jewess by birth, and very wealthy, had at first attempted to conquer her way into society by dress and show. Yielding, however, to the counsels of Bertha, she took the better course; and by adopting a simple and dignified manner, free from any craving for admiration, the recognition she merited was accorded her.

This friend of Bertha was, I confess, not at all to my liking. She had received a good education, and even had a cultivated judgment; but she was fain to mistake these gifts for genius, and imagined herself a thoroughly superior woman-a piece of self-

deception in which flatterers encouraged her.

Her husband regarded her as a woman of superior gifts, and succeeded in this way in consoling himself for the inconvenient fact of her being of Jewish descent. His faith in her genius seemed to increase rather than diminish, and it was his constant delight to sound its praises to others.

Annette treated me with exceptional admiration, but she always seemed desirous of making a parade of her appreciation of me, or in other words, having it minister to her own glory. Mere possession or undemonstrative emotion afforded her no pleasure. Her talents and her reflections afforded her great enjoyment, and it was her constant desire that others should have the benefit of it. She was always inviting you to dine with her; and if you accepted her invitations, she was never satisfied until you had praised the dishes which she could so skilfully prepare. She sang with a powerful voice and drew very cleverly, but wanted the world to know it, and to pay her homage accordingly.

She always addressed me as "patriarch," until I at last forbade her doing so. I was, however, obliged to submit to some of the other elegant phrases in which she was wont to indulge. She had no children, and often spent the whole day in the private gallery of the House of Parliament, where she would not cease nodding to me until I at last returned her salute.

One evening there was a party at Bertha's. The wife of the Intendant-in-chief was among the guests. She was a beautiful creature, slender and undulating in form, of majestic carriage,

and yet withal simple and unaffected. She had a charming voice, and sang many pretty songs for us. She was so obliging too, that, yielding to the repeated requests of her delighted auditors, she sang song after song.

I had known her as a young girl. She was the daughter of the chief forester, and seemed to retain the woodland freshness of her childhood days. But she had always been ambitious, and had thirsted for the pleasures of city life, with which she had become acquainted while going to the school which was patronized by the reigning Princess.

At one of the public examinations she had sung so delightfully that the Princess had praised her performance; and I believe that her desire for a brilliant life dated from that incident.

She was fond of dress and show, and had married the Intendant, who was a dried-up, conceited fellow.

Her marriage had not been a happy one; and now she sang love-songs full of glowing passion, of sobs and tears.

I was thinking of this, and asking myself how it could be possible, when Annette sat down by my side and softly whispered to me:

"Do explain, if you can, how this woman, after singing such songs, can leave the company and ride home with her disagreeable husband? I could not sing a note if I had such a husband."

Annette cannot conceive of her ever having been in love. All her singing of the pleasures and the pains of love is nothing more

than poetical or musical affectation. "But how did she thus learn to simulate emotion. If she really felt all this she would either die or become crazed on her way home."

From that moment I began to like Annette. She had gone much further than I had dared even in my thoughts, and proved, at the same time, that her heart was true, and that she could not separate her feeling for art from the rest of her life.

Bertha showed my wife's letters to her friend, who conceived the most enthusiastic affection for Martella. She often inquired whether there was anything she could do for the charcoal-burner's daughter.

There was danger of offending her by refusing her gifts. Even a virtue may at times assume a repulsive form. Annette's complaint-I cannot express it otherwise-was a passion for helping others.

My wife wrote that Martella was like a fresh bubbling spring, which only needed to be kept within bounds to become a refreshing brook; but that this must be carefully done, for inconsiderate attempts to deepen the channel or divert its course might ruin the spring itself.

My wife also informed us that Ernst had been home to pay a short visit. He seemed quite pensive, and expressed his dissatisfaction with the fact that Martella was looking so pale. He approved of the education which she was receiving, but thought that her freshness and strength should not be sacrificed. He said he had formed a plan to live with Rautenkron, with whom he

intended to practice, and also said that when once in the quiet forest he would study industriously.

My wife strenuously objected to this course. She maintained that where there was a will, one could attend to his duty in any position; and moreover, that at the present time it was not well for Ernst and Martella to see each other so often.

Martella was of the same opinion; and my wife could hardly find words to express her delight that Martella was constantly acquiring gentleness and consideration for others. Although at first she had been loud and noisy, there was now something graceful and soothing in her manner. She would arise early in the morning and dress herself in silence, while my wife would feign sleep in order that Martella might become confirmed in her gentle manners.

One evening, when Martella had been the subject of protracted conversation, I returned to my room, and for the first time noticed a colored lithographic print that had been hanging there. It was the picture of a danseuse who had been quite famous some years before. It represented her in a difficult pose, and with long, flowing hair. The print startled me.

It was wonderfully like Martella; or was it simply self-deception caused by her having been in our thoughts during the whole evening?

I felt so agitated that I lit the lamp again and took another look at the picture. The likeness seemed to have vanished.

CHAPTER XII

Towards the end of November, my wife wrote to me that Ernst had been at home again, and that, several hours after his arrival, he had, in the most casual manner, mentioned that he had successfully passed his examination as forester. When my wife and Martella signified their pleasure at this piece of news, he declared that he had only passed his examination in order to prove to us and the rest of his acquaintance, that he, too, had learned something, but that he was not made to be put just where the state desired to place him, and that, in the spring, he and Martella would emigrate to America, as he had already come to an understanding with Funk in regard to the passage.

When he asked Martella why she had nothing to say on the subject, she replied:

"You know that I would go to the end of the world with you. But we are not alone. If we go, your parents and your brothers and sisters must give us their blessing at parting."

"Oh! that they will."

"I think so too. But just consider, Ernst! We are both of us quite young, and I have just begun to live. Do not look so fierce; when you do that, you do not look half so handsome as you really are. And besides, there is something yet on my mind which I must tell you, and in which I am fully resolved."

"I cannot imagine what you mean; it seems, at times, that I

really do not know you as I once did."

"You do know me, and it grieves me to be obliged to tell you so."

"What is it? What can it be? You have become quite serious all at once."

"I am glad that you can say so much in my praise, for I have need of it; and I feel quite sure that you will approve of what I am going to say.

"Just see, Ernst! I won't speak of anything else-but with mother's aid I have begun so much that is good, that I cannot bear to think of hurrying away while the work is half finished. You have passed your examination; let me pass mine too. First let mother tell me that my apprenticeship is at an end, and then I will wander with you; and we shall be two jolly gadabouts, and have lots of money for travelling expenses. Isn't it so? You will let me stay here ever so long; won't you?

"Ah, that is right. You are laughing again, and I see that you approve of what I have said. If you had not done so you should have had no peace, for my mind is made up.

"The canopied bed next to your mother's is now mine; and indeed it is a heavenly canopy that one must be slow to leave. And, as I told you before, I have just begun to live."

Ernst looked towards my wife. It seemed as if doubt and pride were struggling within him. When Martella had left the room and my wife urged him to remain with us and to afford us the joy of having such a daughter-in-law in our home, he was vanquished,

and exclaimed:

"Yes, I am indeed proud of her! I must admit I never expected so much of her. If she only does not grow over my head."

My wife wrote me that she only remembered a portion of what had happened. The wisdom and feeling evinced by the child had surprised her; and the subdued, heartfelt voice in which she had spoken had been as delightful as the loveliest music. She had been obliged to ask herself if this really was the wild creature who had entered the house but three-quarters of a year ago. The change that she had devoutly wished for had been brought about with surprising rapidity. Martella had awakened to a sense of the duties life imposes on all of us.

Nothing can be more gratifying than to find that a just course of action has produced its logical results.

Thus all was well. Ernst went out hunting with Rautenkron, and once even prevailed on him to visit our house.

Rautenkron had but little to say to Martella. He would knit his heavy eyebrows, and cast searching side-glances on the child. This was his custom with all strangers. When taking leave of my wife, he inquired whether we knew anything of Martella's parentage. All that we knew was that she had been found in the forest when four years old. Jaegerlies had cared for her until Ernst brought her to our house. Martella had told more than that to Richard, but he had firmly refused to tell us what it was. When Rautenkron had left, Martella said:

"He looks like a hedgehog, and I really believe that he could

eat mice."

In the last letter that I received before returning to my home, my wife wrote me that Martella had displayed a very singular trait.

Rothfuss had become sick, and Martella, who was as much attached to him as if she were his own child, could neither visit nor nurse him. She had an unconquerable aversion to sick people. She would stand by the door and talk to Rothfuss, but she would not enter his room. She was quite angry at herself because of this, but could not act differently.

"I cannot help it-I cannot help it," she said. "I cannot go near a sick person." He begged her to procure some wine for him; some of the red wine down in the glass house. He knew that would make him well again. Rothfuss found as much pleasure in deceiving the doctor as he usually did in outwitting the officers.

Martella cheerfully entered into his plan; she got the wine for him, and from that day he gradually improved in health.

It was quite refreshing to me to have my thoughts recalled to our life at home. While the most difficult political questions and a struggle against a system of police espionage were engaging us, a concordat with the Pope had been submitted for our approval. It was the result of deep and long-protracted intrigues, and was full of carefully veiled and delicately woven fetters. I had been appointed as one of the committee to whom the matter was referred, and after a heated debate, we succeeded in securing its abrogation. The minister who had made the treaty was disgraced.

His accomplices allowed him to fall while they saved themselves. Funk, in his own name and that of two associates, gave his reasons for declining to vote on the question. They demanded perfect freedom for every religions sect, and the abandonment on the part of the state of its right to interfere with matters of faith.

It had been proposed that my son Richard, who was Professor of History at the University, should be appointed as Minister of Education.

He had published a powerful work on this topic. My son-in-law informed me that he had heard Richard's name mentioned in Court circles. In a few days, however, the rumor proved to be an ill-founded one. A declamatory counsellor received the appointment.

Although encouraged by my success, it was with a sense of overpowering fatigue that I returned home at Christmastime. I felt as though I had not been able to enjoy a night's sleep while at the capital: it was only at home that I could breathe freely again and enjoy real repose.

CHAPTER XIII

At home I found everything in excellent order. Rothfuss was still complaining, and was not allowed to leave his bed; but he was mending, and had naught to complain of but ennui and thirst.

I cannot remember a merrier Christmas than that of 1865. We could quietly think of our children we knew how they lived. Every Christmas we would receive a long letter from Ludwig; and Johanna wrote us that affairs were improving with her husband.

On the day before Christmas, Ernst arrived. He carried a roebuck on his shoulder, and stood in front of the house shouting joyously. He waited there until Martella went out to meet him. He reached out his arms to embrace her, but she said, "Come into the house. When you get in there, I will give you an honest kiss."

When I congratulated Ernst on his success in his examination, he replied, "No thanks, father; I was lucky; that is all. I really know very little about the subjects they examined me upon. I know more about other things. But I passed nevertheless." It was delightful to listen to Richard's sensible remarks; Ernst's conversation, however, was so persuasive and so varied as to prove even more interesting than that of Richard. He expressed himself quite happily in regard to the manner in which one should, by stealth as it were, learn the laws of the forest by careful observation, and referred to a point which is even yet in dispute among foresters-whether a fertile soil or a large return in lumber

is most to be desired. I began to feel assured that my son, who had so often gone astray, would yet be able to erect a life-fabric that would afford happiness both to himself and to others.

Towards evening, when we were about to light the lamps, the Professor arrived, to Martella's great delight.

"I knew you would be glad to see me," said Richard, "and I must confess I like to come to my parents; but I have come more for the sake of seeing you than any one else."

Richard congratulated Ernst, and promised to prepare a grand poem for the wedding day.

The lights shone brightly, and joy beamed from every eye.

The Professor had brought some books for Martella, but had not been fortunate in his selections. There were children's books among them, and these Martella quietly laid aside.

Bertha had sent her a dress, Annette had contributed some furs, and Johanna had sent her an elegantly bound Bible.

"I see already," said Martella, "that naught but good things are showered down on me. Let them come. God grant that the day may arrive when I, too, can bestow gifts. But now let us be happy," she said, turning to Ernst. "When we are alone together in the wild-woods, let us remember how lovely it is here. Look at the Christmas-tree. It was out in the cold and was freezing; but now they have brought it into the warm room, and decked it with lights and all sorts of pretty gifts. And thus was I, too, out of doors and forgotten; but now I am better off; the tree is dead, but I-" Richard grasped my hand in silence, and softly whispered:

"Don't interrupt her. Always let her finish what she has begun this way. When the bird singing on the tree observes that the wanderer is looking up to it with grateful eyes, it flies away."

Martella tried on her furs, stroked them with her hand, and then lit the lights on a little Christmas-tree on which were hanging some large stockings-the first she had ever knit.

"Come along," she said to Ernst, "let us go to Rothfuss; and, Richard, you had better come with us, too, and help us sing."

Carrying the burning tree in her hand, and accompanied by Ernst and Richard, she went, singing on her way, to the room in which Rothfuss lay.

"You are the first person," she said to Rothfuss, "to whom I can give something. I only knit them; the wool was given me by my mother."

"Oh!" exclaimed Rothfuss, "no wizard can do what is impossible. Our Lord makes the wool grow on the sheep; but shearing the sheep, spinning the wool, and knitting the stockings we have to do for ourselves."

On the next day, while we were seated at table, Rothfuss entered, crying, "A proverb, and a true one; she has put me on my feet again. I have got well."

I cannot recall a merrier Christmas than the one we then enjoyed. There were no more like it, for in the following year the crown had departed.

My wife's father had, after withdrawing from his position as a teacher, employed himself in translating Göethe's Iphigenia into

Greek. He had left his task incomplete. As a Christmas present for mother, Richard had brought lovely pictures to illustrate the poem, and in the antique room of our house, in which we had casts of the best Greek and Roman statues, Richard would read aloud to my wife.

Martella always had an aversion to this large room, and when she was called in there would look around for a while, as if lost, and then with scarcely audible steps leave the apartment.

My wife loved all her children, but she was happiest of all with Richard. He seemed to have succeeded to her father's unfinished labors, and when he was in her presence she always seemed as if in a higher sphere. Richard had a thoroughly noble disposition and dignified bearing.

Mother repeatedly read Ludwig's letter, and said:

"The Free-thinkers could not bring about what we are now experiencing: that on a certain evening and at an appointed hour all mankind are united in the same feeling. Do you believe, Richard, that you philosophers could bring about such a result?"

Richard thought not; but added that the forms assumed by higher intellectual truth were constantly changing, and that just as they had given the church in heathen ages a different character, so they might at some future time effect changes in later forms of religious belief.

Martella entered the room at that moment, and my wife's significant glance reminded Richard that he had better not prolong the discussion. We were a happy circle, and Richard was

especially so because he had made common cause with me in the last exciting question. The future of our Fatherland, however, did not afford him a pleasant outlook. He believed that the great powers were playing a false game and were only feigning to quarrel in order that they might the more successfully divide up the lesser states among themselves. He felt sure that their plan was to divide up all the rest of Germany between Prussia and Austria. I, too, had sad thoughts in this connection, but could not picture the future to myself. This alone was certain: our present condition could not last. In the meanwhile we awaited Napoleon's New Year's speech. His words would inform the world what was to become of it.

In our happy family circle we forgot for a little while the feeling of deep humiliation that hung over all, and the doubts that always caused us to ask ourselves, "To whom will we belong?"

It is indeed sad when one is forced to say to himself, "To-morrow you and your country may be handed over to some King."

CHAPTER XIV

Whenever I returned from Parliament, it seemed as if I had left a strange world. Although my labors there were in behalf of those dearest to me, I was too far removed from them to have them constantly in my mind. And for many a morning after my return the force of habit made me wonder why the usual amount of printed matter that had been handed me while at the capital was not forthcoming.

I found the affairs of the village in good order.

That was the only time that I can write about-the time when my wife was still …

I have been gazing out over the mountain and into the dark wood, that I, or rather she, planted, and then I lifted my eyes up to heaven. The stars are shining, and it is said that light from stars that have already perished is still travelling towards us. May the light that was once mine thus flow unto you when I am no longer here. But to proceed.

For three-and-twenty years I filled the office of burgomaster, and was of great use to our parish. Above all things, I built up its credit. To accomplish this I was obliged to be severe and persistent in prosecuting the suit. But now things have so far improved that the people at Basle regret that no one in our village desires to borrow money from them.

The two chief benefits that I have procured for our village are

good credit and pure water.

Just as credit is the true measure of economical condition, so is water the measure of physical well-being.

I converted the heath into a woodland. It was twenty-three years ago, and I was the youngest member of the town council; but, aided by my cousin Linker, I induced the people of our parish to plant trees in the old meadow, and to this day every one of our people derives a moderate profit from the little piece of woodland that we now have there. Its value increases from year to year.

My cousin Linker had been a book-keeper in the glass-house down in the valley. He married a daughter of the richest farmer in the village, and became quite a farmer himself.

I learnt a great deal from him. In business matters he was greatly my superior, for he was shrewder, or in other words, more distrustful, than I.

Until about five years ago, we were partners in an extensive lumber business. We built the first large saw-mill in the valley. It had three saws, and all the new appliances, and a part of our business was to saw up logs and beams. I also built a saw-mill, which is conducted on the co-operative system, for the benefit of the villagers.

When the Parliament had determined upon having a fortress erected in our neighborhood, our business friends offered us their congratulations. They well knew that this would require so much lumber as to give rise to a profitable business. And this, I must

confess, is a point which I would like to forget. But who, after all, leads a life which is entirely pure, and without being in the slightest spoiled with intercourse with the world.

Cousin Linker conducted a large business in his name and mine. I did not take any active part in the negotiations, although I was responsible for what was done. He would often say, "You are absurdly virtuous. One like you will never get on in the world."

Joseph, my cousin's only son, and of the same age as our Ludwig, had married my daughter Martina, who died shortly after the birth of their first child. Her son Julius was a forester's apprentice. Joseph married again, but he is still faithful to me and mine, while we are quite attached to his second wife and her three daughters.

Joseph is now burgomaster, and I hope he will one day occupy my position as a member of the Parliament. He works zealously for the public good, and has one great advantage that did not exist in my time. For nowadays there are numerous good burgomasters in the neighborhood, and it is therefore easier to carry out desirable measures.

Last winter, Joseph induced the people of Brauneck, the next village, to combine with ours in laying out a road through the common woods, and the wood taken out was worth more than twice the cost of the labor.

Joseph inherited my cousin's shrewd business notions. He caused hundreds of little branches to be gathered up and prepared for Christmas-trees, and at the proper time would send

them to the railway, and have them sent down the country. I did my share in building the road, for it passes right by my land, and is of great use to me. I do not think of cutting down any of the lumber. The red pine may stand for another twenty years. I could almost wish that this wood might remain forever, for it is hers!

In the following spring, a gust of wind tore away some of the finest branches, and the first planks made of them were used to construct a coffin.

But I will not anticipate. It was in the third year after our marriage that I returned home one evening with a large load of red-pine saplings. I was sitting on the balcony with my wife, later in the evening, and was telling her that I intended to set the five-year-old shoots down by the stone wall, and that I had therefore chosen hardy plants, in which the root was in proper proportion to the crown, but that it was always difficult to find conscientious workmen, who would look out for one's interest while attending to the matter.

My wife listened patiently while I explained the manner in which the shoots should be planted.

"Let me attend to this work," said she. "It is well that forest-trees do not require the same care as animals, or fruit-trees. Rude nature protects itself. But it will afford me pleasure to tend the shoots with great care."

"But it is fatiguing."

"I know that, but I can do something for the forest that brings us so many blessings."

I gladly consented. And thus we have a fine grove down by the stone wall.

While the children were growing up, my wife knew how to invest the planting of trees with a festive character. Richard and Johanna soon grew tired of it. But Bertha, Ludwig, Martella, and at a later day Ernst, were full of zeal, and had an especial affection for the trees which they had planted with their own hands.

My wife was perfectly familiar with every nook in the woods, and when the new road was laid out she pointed out to Joseph a clear and fresh spring which had remained undisturbed, while we in the village were often poorly supplied with good drinking water. She persuaded him to alter its course so that it would flow towards the village; and now, thanks to her, we have a splendid spring which even in the heat of summer furnishes us with an abundance of cool and pure water.

To this day we call it the Gustava spring.

Every year, at my wife's birthday, it is decorated by the youth of the village.

She seemed to live with the woods that she had planted. Without a trace of sentimentality, I mean exaggerated susceptibility, she rejoiced in the sunshine and the rain, the mists and the snow, because they helped the plants, and this state of mind contributed to the quiet grace and dignity which so well became her.

On Christmas afternoon we could, in our sleighs, ride as far as the wood and the village beyond it.

Martella told us that she, too, had planted thousands of white and red pines, but that there was not a tree that she could call her own.

She called out unto the snow-covered plantation: "Say: Mother."

"Mother," answered the distant echo.

"And now say: Waldfried."

"Waldfried" was the answer. We returned home, happy and light-hearted. Ernst remained with us until New Year's Day, and seemed to have regained his wonted cheerfulness.

It was with pleasure not unmixed with jealousy, that Ernst saw how Martella hung on Richard's lips while listening to his calm and clear remarks on the topics that arose from day to day. His explanations were such that the simplest intellect could comprehend them. I cannot help thinking that Ernst's glances at Martella often were intended to convey some such words as these: "Oh, I know all that, too, but I am not always talking about it!"

"I did not know that you could talk so well," said Martella on one occasion. At times we had quite heated discussions.

With my sons it cost me quite an effort to defend my faith in the people.

Ernst and Richard, who rarely agreed on any question, united in their low opinion of the people.

Ernst despised the farmers, and said he would not confide the charge of the woods to them, as they would inconsiderately

destroy the whole forest if they had the chance.

Richard adduced this as a proof that it would always be necessary to teach the people what, for their own good, should be done as well as left undone.

He dwelt particularly on that severe sentence, terrent nisi metuant. The mass of the people is terrible unless held in subjection by fear. History, which was his special science, furnished him with potent proofs, that the people should always be ruled with a firm hand.

Joseph listened silently to the discussions carried on by the brothers. He was always glad to hear what those who were educated had to say. He never took part when generalities were discussed. It was not until they began to conjecture as to what Napoleon, the ruler of the world, might say in his next New Year's address, that his anger found vent in sharp words.

Later generations will hardly be able to understand this. These men were seated together in a well-ordered house in the depths of the forest; and even there the spirit of doubt and questioning, that could not be banished, was constantly at their side, and pouring wormwood into their wine.

There was no unalloyed happiness left us-no freedom from care. Will not the Emperor of the French hurl his bottles at us in the morning! What will he not attempt for the sake of securing his dynasty and gratifying the theatrical cravings of his people! The whole world was in terror. Everything was in a state of morbid excitement, and, as Ernst said, "watching like a dog for

the morsel that the great Parisian theatrical manager might throw to it;" and here Richard interrupted him.

Richard had a great love for established forms. He always expressed himself with moderation. Ernst, however, would allow his feelings to run away with him, and would often find that he had gone too far.

Richard, who had had his younger brother at his side during the years spent at the Gymnasium, still regarded himself as a sort of teacher and guide to Ernst, and could hardly realize how that youth could have been so self-reliant as to get himself a bride under such peculiar circumstances.

Richard confessed that he desired to achieve a career. "My time will come. Perhaps I may have to wait until I have gray hairs, or none at all; but I shall, at all events, not allow love to interfere with my plans. I shall not marry, unless under circumstances that will help to secure the end I have in view."

I had accustomed myself to leave both sons undisturbed in their views of life. They both agreed in regarding me as an idealist, although their reasons for reaching this conclusion were dissimilar.

I love to recall the passage in Plutarch's Lycurgus. The old men are singing, "We were once powerful youths;" the men sing, "But we are now strong;" and the youths sing, "But we will be still stronger than you are!"

The world progresses, and every new generation must develop the old ideas and introduce new ones. It will go hard with us old

folks to admit that these are better than ours; but they are so, nevertheless.

When Richard was alone with me, he expressed his great delight in regard to his youngest brother; and as the journals of that day contained a call for participants in the German Expedition to the North Pole, Richard would gladly have seen Ernst take a part in the enterprise. He maintained that Ernst was endowed with qualities that would gain him distinction as a student of nature, and that a voyage of discovery would make a hero of him. For he had invincible courage, fertility of invention, fine perception, and much general knowledge, combined with the ability to see things as they are.

Ernst was full of youthful buoyancy, just as he had been in the earliest years of his student life. He was the life of the house, constantly singing and yodling; and his special enthusiastic friend, Rothfuss, one day said to me while in the stable, "I knew it. I knew all about it. Our Ernst cannot come to harm. Why, just listen to his singing. A tree where a bird builds its nest is in no danger from vermin."

CHAPTER XV

At a meeting of the burgomasters of the neighborhood, held on New Year's day, it was determined to call a general meeting of electors, to assemble in the chief town of the district, and to receive a report in regard to the last session of the Parliament.

On New Year's Day Ernst left us, as the Prince and his ministers intended to hunt during the next few days in the district which was in charge of his chief.

When he was about to leave, Martella said to him, "You have good reason to feel happy. The walls have heard you with joy, and every being in there thinks well of you and me."

"And you?" asked he.

"I need not be thinking of you. For you are my other self."

It was a clear, mild, winter day when, accompanied by Joseph and Richard, I drove to the neighboring town in which the meeting was to be held. It was Richard's intention to return to the University at the close of the meeting.

Rothfuss had fully recovered. Displaying his new stockings, and wearing his forester's coat, he sat up on the driver's box, while he managed the bays. Although he entertained a deep contempt for mankind in general, and for that portion of it that lived in our neighborhood in particular, he was always willing to take part in anything that was done in my honor.

He often remarked that the people did not deserve that one

should walk three steps for their sake. He would never forget the way in which they had treated the chieftains of 1848; or that a man like Ludwig, to whom he always accorded most generous praise, was obliged to leave his home, while no one had a thought for him, or for the one who had suffered himself to be imprisoned for his sake.

The road led through the valley, and was cheerful with the sound of the sleigh-bells. Rothfuss cracked his whip, and soon distanced all the other drivers.

Here and there, sleighs might be seen coming down the hillside. At the village taverns, teams were resting, and from every window, as well as from passers on the highway, came respectful greetings, and at times even enthusiastic cheers.

In token of his thanks, Rothfuss cracked his whip still more loudly.

He would look around from time to time, as if noting how much pleasure these tokens of respect afforded me. But once he said to Richard, "It is all very well, Mr. Professor; but if the weather were to change, all these cheers would freeze in the mouths that are now uttering them. We have known something of that kind already."

I must admit, however, that these attentions did my heart good. There is nothing in the associations of home that is more grateful than to be able to say to one's self, "I live in the midst of my voters. I do my duty without fear or favor, and without my asking for office, my fellow-citizens select me as their representative in

the councils of the nation."

Like the breath of the woods such homage has a fragrance peculiarly its own. I cannot believe in the sincerity of one who, from so-called modesty, or affected indifference to the opinions of his fellow-citizens, would refuse office when thus offered to him. I frankly admit that it is not so unpleasant to me to find that others think at least as well, or even better of me, than I do.

This of course brings to mind Rautenkron the forester, who would stoutly combat my opinion in this matter, for he thinks that a love of such honors is the worst sort of dependence.

When I arrived at the meeting, I made my report in a quiet matter-of-fact manner. It is time for our people to learn that the affairs of the state should have a higher use than merely to serve as the occasion for fine speeches. Funk was sitting on the front bench, with a follower of his on either side of him. One of them was known as Schweitzer-Schmalz. He was a fat, puffed up farmer, who, to use his own words, took great delight in "trumping" the students and public officials.

But a few words as to Schmalz. A man of his dimensions requires more space than I have just given him. He was one of those men who, when prosperous, continually eat and drink of the best. A red vest decked with silver buttons covered his fat paunch, and was generally unbuttoned.

His name was Schmalz, but he had been dubbed Schweitzer-Schmalz, because of his having once said, "I do not see why we should not be as good as our neighbors the Swiss."

He hated the Prussians; first and foremost, for the reason that one ought to hate them. This is the first article of faith in the catechism of the popular journals. And although questions as to the religious catechism might be tolerated, this article must be received without a murmur. Besides, they were impertinent enough to speak high German; and he knew, moreover, that abuse of the Prussians was relished in certain high quarters.

He attempted by his boasting to provoke every one, and was himself at last provoked to find that the whole world laughed at him. He had a habit of rattling the silver coins in his pocket while uttering his unwelcome remarks.

Funk aided and encouraged him in his swaggering ways. Funk's other follower was a lawyer of extremely radical views. Funk always acted as if he were their servant, although, as he himself said, he was the bear-leader.

In his confidential moments, he would often say: "The people is really a stupid bear; fasten a ring in its nose, and you can lead it about as you would a sheep, and the best nose-ring for your purpose is the church."

The question of extending a branch of the valley road into the neighboring state, gave rise to a lively debate. I declared that no private association would undertake the enterprise, unless interest on the investment were guaranteed, and that I would oppose it, because its promised advantages were not sufficient to justify us in voting the money of the state for the purpose, instead of spending our own.

The effect of this was a very perceptible diminution of the favor with which I had been regarded. And when, afterward, a vote of thanks to me was proposed, it was coldly received.

I was just about to descend from the tribune, when I heard Funk say to Schmalz, who was sitting by his side, "Speak out! It is your own affair." Schmalz now asked me why I had voted for the abolition of the freedom of the woods, or, in other words, the privilege of gathering up the moss, and the small sticks of wood with which to cover the floor of the stables. To him personally it was a matter of little concern, but humbler and poorer people could not so well afford to do without it.

This gave rise to much loud talk. All seemed to be speaking at once, and saying, "Such things should not be tolerated."

When I at last obtained an opportunity to make myself heard, I told them that the community had an interest in the preservation of the forests, and suggested that it was necessary to seek other means of gaining the object to be attained, in order that the forests need not suffer.

And when I went on to tell them that we would be unable to take proper care of our forests until we had a general law on the subject applying to the whole empire, and that the lines separating our different states ran through the midst of our woods, I heard some one call out, "Of course! He owns forests on both sides of the line." And Schmalz laughed out at the top of his voice, holding his fat paunch the while. "What a fuss the man is making about a few little sticks!" he said.

I descended from the tribune, feeling that I had not convinced my constituents.

At the banquet all was life again. Herr Von Rontheim was among the guests. He had courage enough to confess to being one of the opposition, of which he had become a member against his will. He was an impoverished member of the old nobility. In figure and in education he seemed intended for a courtier. But now he was filling an office that entailed much labor upon him. He attended to his duties punctually and carefully, but in a perfunctory manner. He had given in his adhesion to the late liberal ministry. In view of his position at Court, this was an ill-considered step; for, when the ministers were removed, he was at once ordered to the capital, and assigned to official duties that he found it hard to do justice to, for his education had better fitted him for the life of a courtier than for that of a painstaking government deputy.

Rontheim sat beside me, and assured me that the fall of the one man who had been appointed minister to the federation would soon draw that of the rest after him.

He spoke as if he knew all about the matter, and merely wanted to find out how much I knew on the subject. The artifice was too apparent, however; he knew just as little as I did. In the course of conversation, he asserted that the existence of the lesser German States does not find its justification in greater privileges than are accorded by the general government, but because they can thus secure a more perfect administration of

the minor details of government-a view on which I had touched in my report.

I was not a little astonished when he told me, in the strictest confidence, that I had been mentioned at Court with special approval. He assured me that he knew this, for he had lots of relatives there. He had indeed once been called upon to furnish information in regard to myself and my family; and he felt assured that his report had reached the ears of the Prince. He felt convinced that, with the next decided turn in affairs, it would not be my son Richard, but myself, to whom an exalted position would be offered. He said that he intended to report my behavior of that very day, in a quarter where the courage which can face popular disfavor would be appreciated. He treated me more cordially than ever, and plainly signified that he felt assured of my good-will.

I had never given him an occasion to joke with me, and when I replied that what he had told me was so great a surprise that I did not know how to answer him, he said that he fully appreciated my feelings. He furnished me with another bit of information, which was a much greater surprise. He told me that my son Ernst had, but a short time before that, applied at the office of the kreis-director[3] for permission to emigrate to America, and had requested them to furnish him with the requisite documents, at the earliest possible moment.

Ernst still owed two years of military service, and his release

[3] Director or governor of the district or department.

could only be effected as an act of grace on the part of the government. This, the director added, presented no difficulty, if I chose to exert my influence. The whole affair seemed a riddle to me.

Ernst had, in all likelihood, committed this hasty action during a sudden fit of impatience, and I determined to reprove him at the first opportunity. It seemed very strange that he should be so careful to prevent me from knowing of an undertaking which he would be unable to accomplish without my assistance.

I must have looked very serious, for several old friends of mine approached me and assured me that in spite of the popular opposition they still were true and faithful to me.

I feel tempted to give the names of a large number of wealthy farmers and magistrates, who are of much more consequence than Schweitzer-Schmalz, and who represent the very backbone of our country life. But when I have said that they are conscientious in public affairs and just and honorable in private ones, I have told all that is necessary.

Among the guests there was the so-called "peace captain," a tall and well-dressed wealthy young dealer in timber. While still an officer, he had fallen in love with a daughter of the richest saw-mill owner in the valley. The father refused his consent to the marriage unless the lieutenant would give him a written promise to resign from the army as soon as a war should break out. The lieutenant did not care to do this and preferred resigning at once, which he did with the rank of captain. He had become quite

conversant with his business, although there was something in his manner that made it seem as if he had just laid off his uniform.

He still retained one trait of his military life, and that was an utter indifference to politics. It was merely to honor me that he attended the banquet; and besides, was I not the father-in-law of an officer in active service? The captain, whose name was Rimminger, seated himself at my side.

CHAPTER XVI

The banquet seemed to be drawing to a close, and conversation had become loud and general, when we were suddenly called to order and told that Funk was about to address us. I ought to mention, in passing, that Funk belonged to the next district, and was therefore not one of our voters. He ascended the platform. He generally seemed loth to ascend the tribune; but when there, his fluent discourse and ready wit enabled him to control the most obstinate audience.

He began, as usual, by saying that it hardly became him to speak on this occasion. He was not a voter, and if he were to express the praise and the thanks due me, to whom he owed his present position, it might appear as if he were endeavoring to make his private feelings the sentiment of the audience.

He repeatedly referred to me as the "estimable noble patriarch," and inveighed in fierce terms against those who would, by a vote of want of confidence, express their disapproval of the actions of their representative, who had followed his honest convictions instead of the opinions of this or that constituent.

He then indulged in an explanation of his reasons for having voted with the opposition. He possessed the art of repeating the speeches of others as if they were his own. He repeatedly used the expression "a free church in a free state," and several times used the word "republic," when he would immediately correct

himself in an ironical manner, and to the great delight of many of his auditors.

Funk's words filled me with indignation.

When I beheld him standing up before this audience and expressing such sentiments, I felt as if it were a punishment that I had richly deserved; for in his case I had assisted a man in whom I had not full confidence, to a position of honor and importance. I was so occupied with thoughts of the speaker that I hardly noticed what he was saying, until I was aroused by hearing him defend me against the charge of being a Prussian.

"And even if he were a Prussian, we should not forget that the Prussians are Germans as well as the rest of us. We are far ahead of them, and for that very reason it is our duty to help them." And then he began to praise me again, and told them what a noble action it was that a man who had a pastor for one son-in-law, and one of the first nobles in the land for another, whose son was to-day a professor, and might to-morrow be a minister, to receive into his house a girl who had come to him naked and destitute.

Uproarious laughter followed these words, and Funk exclaimed:

"O you rogues! you know well enough that when I said 'naked and destitute,' I only meant poor and without family connections."

He described me and my wife as the noblest of beings, and repeatedly referred to Martella.

I asked myself what could have been his reason for introducing

Martella's name before this audience; and then it occurred to me that he had cherished hopes that my son Ernst would have married his daughter, who was at that time receiving her education at a school in Strasburg.

He closed by proposing cheers in my honor. They were immediately followed by cries of "Hurrah for citizen Funk!"

Funk was impudent enough to walk up to me afterwards and offer me his hand, while he assured me that he had put a quietus on the opposition of the stupid bushmen, a term which he was fond of using when referring to the farmers.

I declined to shake hands, and ascended the tribune without looking at him. "We have had enough speeches," cried several of the audience, while others began to stamp their feet and thus prevent me from speaking. Silence was at last restored, and I began. I am naturally of a timid disposition, but when in danger, I am insensible to fear, and quietly and firmly do that which is needed.

I told them that Herr Funk had spoken as if he were a friend of mine, but that I here publicly declared that he was not my friend, and that I was no friend of his; and that if he and his consorts really believed the opinions that they professed, I had nothing in common with them. For reasons best known to himself, Herr Funk had dragged my family affairs before the assembly. I was happy to say that I had done nothing which I need conceal. And further, as Herr Funk had found it proper to defend me against the charge of being a friend of Prussia, I wished it known that I

was a friend of Prussia, on whose future course I based all my hopes for the welfare of Germany.

I should not give up my office until the term for which I was elected expired: when that time came they might reelect me, or replace me by another, as they thought best.

Virtuous indignation aided me in my effort, and when I finished my remarks, Richard told me that he had never heard me speak so well. I am by nature soft-hearted, perhaps indeed too much so; but I can deal unmerciful blows when they are needed. There is an old saying that a rider should alight and kill the mole-cricket that he sees while on his way, for it destroys the roots of the grass. It was a similar feeling that made me refer to Funk in the way I had done.

To the best of my knowledge, I had never before that had an enemy; now I knew that I had one. And an enemy may be likened to a swamp with its miasmatic vapors and noisome vermin. It had been reserved for my later years to teach me what it is to have enemies and how to meet their works.

The worst of all is, that a fear of committing injustice makes us insincere. And when at last this fear gives way to one's horror of wickedness, they say, "He was not truthful; he was hypocritical, and simulated friendship for one whom he despised."

Be that as it may, I was, at all events, glad that I would not again have to take Funk by the hand. It has been my great fault and misfortune that I could never learn to believe in the utility of falsehood. Perhaps it was nothing more than a love of comfort

that actuated me; for it is very troublesome to be always on one's guard. Where I might have done myself good through shrewdness and foresight, I had simply made myself an object of pity.

It seemed that the affair was not to pass over without a fracas. The anger which I had controlled found vent through another channel, none other than Rothfuss.

I saw him standing in the midst of a crowd, and heard Schmalz cry out, "Let me talk; I would not soil my hands to beat the servant of that man!"

"What?" cried Rothfuss; "I want nothing to do with the 'fat Switzer,' for wherever his shadow falls you can find a grease-spot."

Uproarious laughter followed this sally. Funk forced himself into the midst of the crowd, and placing himself before Schmalz called out, "You had better hold your tongue, Rothfuss, or you will have to deal with me."

"With you?" said Rothfuss, "with you? I have but one word to tell you."

"Out with it!"

"Yes," said Rothfuss, "I will tell you something that no human being has ever yet said to you."

"Out with it!"

"What I mean to tell you has never before been said to you- You are an honest man."

Contemptuous laughter and wild shouts followed this sally, and, when it looked as if blows were about to fall, and the kreis-

director approached and ordered them to desist, Rothfuss called out, "Herr Director, would you call that an insult? I said Herr Funk was an honest man. Is that an insult?"

The officer succeeded in restoring order and we departed, taking Rothfuss with us.

I had paid the full penalty of my acquaintance with Funk, but felt so much freer and purer than when I entered the banqueting room, that I did not regret what had occurred.

Richard wanted to meet his train, and Joseph left for a point down the Rhine in order to close a contract for railroad ties. I went to the station with them, and when the train had left, I accepted the invitation of Rontheim, who had walked down to the railroad with us, and went home with him.

CHAPTER XVII

There are houses in which you never hear a loud word, not because of any previous agreement on the part of its inmates, but as a natural result of their character. He who enters there is at once affected, both in mood and in the tones of his voice, by his surroundings. Such is the peaceful household in which kind and gentle aspirations fill all hearts and where every one works faithfully in his own allotted sphere.

I felt as if entering a new and strange phase of life when Rontheim ushered me into the richly carpeted and tastefully furnished drawing-room. I was cordially received by his wife, a graceful and charming woman, and his two beautiful and distinguished-looking daughters.

Although in exile, as it were, the mother and the daughters had succeeded in creating a pure and lovely home, and had held aloof from the petty jealousies and small doings of the little town in which they were residing. Although they saw but little company, they exchanged visits with some of the so-called gentry. They had paid several visits to our village, and a friendly intimacy with my wife had been the result. She did not allow this, however, to induce her to visit the town more frequently than had been her wont. She carefully avoided excursions of any kind, from a fear that they might interrupt the quiet tenor of her life or render society a necessity.

Rontheim's wife and daughters had been used to the life of a court, and even now acted as if with the morrow they might be recalled to court. When they accompanied the director, on his frequent official journeys, they would discover every spot in which there were natural beauties. Scenes that we had become indifferent to, through habit, or in which we saw nothing but the uses to which they might be put, had in their eyes quite a different meaning. They would spend whole days in the valleys where no one resorted but the harvesters, or on the mountains where they would meet no one but the foresters. They sketched and gathered flowers and mosses, and their tables and consoles were decorated with lovely wreaths of dried leaves and wild flowers. They would often assist the poor children who were gathering wild berries, and show them how to weave pretty baskets out of pine twigs. They were in frequent intercourse with our schoolmaster's wife, who was quite a botanist.

The second daughter, who was interested in drawing, asked me about the new paintings in the Parliament House; and the elder daughter jokingly declared that it was a pity that one could never find out what had been played at the theatre until the day after the performance.

I was forcibly impressed by the evident effort with which Herr Von Rontheim endeavored to suppress any sign of a consciousness of superior birth. He showed me a recently restored picture of one of his ancestors, who had been a comrade of Ulrich Von Hutten, and had distinguished himself during the

Reformation. He intimated that although the noble families had built up the state, he cheerfully admitted that its preservation had fallen into other hands.

His kind manner did not quite serve to veil a certain air of condescension.

During the course of our rather desultory conversation, Madame Rontheim had rung for the servant, and had given her orders to him in a whisper, of which I heard the last words, "Please tell Herr Ernst to come in."

The words startled me. Could she have meant my son?

A few moments afterward, a bright-cheeked and erect-looking ensign entered the room, and saluted us in military fashion. I had forgotten that Rontheim's only son was also named Ernst, and I now recalled the fact of his being in my son-in-law's regiment. The ensign referred to the fact, and also told me that all of his comrades had regretted my son's leaving the army. His constant flow of spirits and fertility of invention, had won him the admiration of all of his companions.

Madame Rontheim spoke of my daughter Bertha in the kindest terms, and praised the tact she had displayed in introducing a new element into their circle.

The eldest daughter ventured to speak in disparagement of Bertha's friend, Annette, but the mother adroitly changed the subject, and began talking about Martella.

As I felt that, in all probability, there had been all sorts of false tales in regard to Martella, I told them her story. When I

ended, Madame Rontheim said to me, "In taking such a child of nature into a well-ordered and cultured home, you have pursued the very best plan. I feel assured that the result of your wife's quiet and sensible course will both surprise and delight you. Pray tell your wife that I have for some time intended to visit her, but have concluded to wait until it may be convenient to her and her charge to receive me."

While seated with this charming circle at their tea-table-an institution which this family had introduced in our forest neighborhood-I had quite forgotten that Rothfuss was outside taking charge of the sleigh. But now I heard the loud crack of his whip, and bade my hosts a hasty farewell.

When I got into the sleigh, Rothfuss said, "Madame, the baroness, has sent out a hot jug as a foot-warmer for you."

On our way down the hill, Rothfuss walked at the side of the sleigh, and said to me, "She sent me some tea: it is by no means a cooling drink, but does not taste so bad after all; it warmed me thoroughly. Before I drank it, I felt as wet as a drenched goat. Ah, yes! One of your people of rank is worth more than seventy-seven of your stupid voters. In all of the crowd that we met to-day there were not a dozen people with whom I would care to drink a glass of wine."

Rothfuss judged of all persons by their fitness as boon companions. He would drink gladly with this one, but would not care to drink with the next; and he would often say that there were some whose very company sours the wine they pay for.

I felt sure that he had heard some one abusing me.

When I left home in the morning, I felt as if supported by the consciousness of the respect and confidence of my fellow-citizens, but now-

Suddenly the remarks of the kreis-director recurred to me.

Had the confidence of one party been withdrawn from me, because it was suspected that the others were trying to lure me to their side? I have neither the desire nor the proper qualifications for a more exalted position in the service of the State.

And what could Ernst's notion of emigrating have meant? "Who knows," thought I to myself, "what I may yet have to witness on the part of this son who is always flying the track?"

The night was bitter cold; the snow which had melted during the day had frozen hard, and our sleigh creaked and rattled as we hurried along the road.

CHAPTER XVIII

I have always discouraged a belief in omens, and yet when I saw the strange cloud-forms that floated before the face of the moon that night, shadowy forebodings filled my soul. The ringing of the sleigh-bells was full of a strange melody, and, down in the valley, I could hear the raging of the torrent which seemed as if angered at the thought that the frost king would soon again bind it with his fetters.

The sleigh halted at the saw-mill. When I looked up towards the house I saw that there was a light in the room.

"What are you doing?" I asked Rothfuss.

"I am taking the bells off, so that the mistress may not hear us."

Although we had supposed that no one had noticed our coining, we heard soft steps advancing to meet us when we reached the house. Martella opened the door for us.

I entered the room. It was nicely warmed and lighted. The meal which had been prepared for me was still on the table.

Rothfuss drew off his boots and went off to his room on tiptoe.

"Do you not want to go to bed, Martella? Have you been sitting up all this time?"

"Indeed I have; and oh, do take it from me!"

"What ails you?"

"Oh, what a night I have passed! I do not know how it all came

about; but mother had gone to bed, and I sat here quite alone in this great, big house. I looked at the meal that was waiting for our master; at the bread that had once been grain, the meat that had once been alive, and the wine that had once been grapes in the vineyard.

"It seemed to me as if the fields and the beasts all came up to me and asked, 'Where are you? What has become of you?' And then I could not help thinking to myself, 'You have so many people here-a father, a mother, one brother who is so learned, and another who is in another world, a sister who is a major's wife, and one who is a pastor's, and besides this, my own Ernst; and all these say: "We are yours and you are ours."' When I thought of that, I felt so happy and yet so sad. And then the two clocks kept up their incessant ticking. It seemed as if they were talking to me all the time. The fast one said to me, 'How did you get here, you simple, forlorn child, whom they found behind the hedge? Run away as fast as you can! Run away! you cannot stay here; you must go off. All these people about you have made a prisoner of you; they feel kindly towards you, but you cannot stay. Run, run away! Run, child, run!'

"But the other clock, with its quiet and steady tick, would always say, 'Be thankful, be thankful, be thankful! You are snugly housed with kindly hearts; do what you can to earn their kindness by your goodness.'

"They kept it up all the time. All at once I heard the cry of an owl. I had often heard them in the forest, and I am not afraid of

any of the birds or beasts. Then the owl went away and all was still. I don't know how it happened, but all at once I thought of summer and cried out 'Cuckoo!' quite loud. I was frightened at the sound of my own voice, for fear that I might wake up the mistress; and when I thought of that I felt as if I could die for grief. And then again I felt so happy to think that the heart that was sleeping there was one that had taken me up as its own. When the large clock would say 'Quite right, quite right,' the busy little one would interrupt with 'Stupid stuff, stupid stuff; run away, run away!'

"When the hour struck midnight, I opened the window and looked out towards the graveyard. I am no longer afraid of it; the dead lie there; they are now resting and were once just as happy and just as sad as I now am.

"I do not know how all these things should have come into my mind. I felt cheered up at last, and closed the window. Everything seemed so lovely in the room, and I felt as if I were at home. At home in eternity, and could now die. I did not fear death. I had fared so well in the world-better than millions-and master," said she, kneeling down before me and clasping my knee, "I will surely do all in my power to deserve this happiness. If I only knew of something good and hard that I might do. Tell me if there is such a thing; I will do it gladly."

It seemed that night as if an inexhaustible spring had begun to bubble up in the heart of the child.

She sat down quite near me and told me, with a pleased

smile, that mother had bidden her to go to bed; but that she had stealthily gotten up, had sent Balbina, the servant, to bed, and had herself watched for me; and that she now felt as if she did not care to sleep again.

"I am living in eternity, and in eternity there is no sleep," she repeated several times.

The child was so excited that I thought it best to engage her mind in some other direction. I asked her about Ernst's plan of emigration. She told me that he had had that in view some time ago, but had now given up the idea.

We remained together for some time longer, and when I told her that she should always call me father now, she cried out with a happy voice:

"That fills my cup of joy! Now I shall go to bed. He whom you have once addressed as 'father' can never find it in his heart to send you out into the world. I shall stay here until they carry me over to the graveyard yonder; but may it be a long while before that happens! Father, good night!"

How strange things seem linked together! On the very day that Funk had so unfeelingly dragged the child's name before the public, her heart had awakened to a grateful sense of the world's kindness.

CHAPTER XIX

Nothing so nerves a man for the battle with the outer world as the consciousness of his having a pleasant home, not merely a large and finely arranged household, but a home in which there reigns an atmosphere of hope and affection, and where, in days of sorrow, that which is best in us is met by the sympathy of those who surround us. Through Gustava, all this fell to my lot. Although the battle with the world would, at times, almost render me distracted, she would again restore my wonted spirits; and it is to her faithful and affectionate care that I ascribe the fact that the long struggle did not exhaust me. She judged of men and actions with never-failing equanimity, and her very glances seemed to beautify what they rested upon. Where I could see naught but spite or malice, she only beheld the natural selfishness of beings in whom education and morals had not yet gained complete ascendancy.

She judged everything by her own lofty standard, but strange to say, instead of belittling men, this seemed to make them appear better. When she found that she could not avoid assenting to evil report in regard to any one, she did so with an humble air that plainly signified how grieved she was that men could be thus.

Speaking of Funk, she would say, "I have no desire to hurt any one's feelings. In nature there is nothing that can properly be called aristocratic. In botany the nettle is related to hemp and to

hops; and if Funk seems to have somewhat of the nettle in his composition, one should be careful to handle him tenderly, and thus avoid pricking one's fingers."

It was during that very winter, in 1866, that the purity and dignity that were inborn with her seemed more than ever infused with new and added grace. She always lived as if in a higher presence.

It soon proved that my anticipations of evil were overwrought. My compatriots were, for the greater part, in accord with me. On every hand I received assurances of that fact; and, above all, Joseph omitted no opportunity of repeating to me the respectful terms in which he had heard my name mentioned among the people. I really think that he was instrumental in causing others to bring these good reports to my notice. Martella had become the blessing, the life and the light, I may say, of our house. Her readiness to oblige, her adaptability and her desire for self-improvement, had so increased that we felt called upon to restrain rather than to urge their exercise.

My wife had learned of Funk's attempt to injure us by dragging the child's name into publicity. Perhaps the news had been carried even further; for a letter reached us from my daughter, the pastor's wife, in which she informed us that the illness of her husband made such demands upon her time that she required an assistant about the house, and desired us to send Martella to her. She added that her husband joined her in this wish, because it seemed improper that Martella should remain in

our house any longer. My wife was not unwilling to send Martella to her for a while; but I insisted that she should stay with us in spite of all idle talk.

About that time we received letters from the major and from Richard, both of whom wrote without the other's knowledge, and to the effect that Prussia's proposal to the German Diet might lead to a conflict, the consequences of which it was impossible to foretell. Thus public and private affairs kept us in unusual excitement, when an unexpected event claimed our attention.

A rumor had long been current in our family that we had relatives of high rank living in Vienna. Up to the year 1805, our village and the whole district had belonged to Austria. All of the more ambitious and talented among our people had been drawn to Vienna, either by their own desire to advance themselves, or by the inducements the government held out to them; for it was the constant aim of Austria to gain the attachment of the landed interests.

At the beginning of the last century, an uncle of my father had moved to the Imperial city, where he attained a high position. He had embraced the Catholic religion, and had been ennobled. Ernst, who always called that branch of the family "the root brood," had long cherished the plan of hunting up our relatives, in the hope of thus finding a better opening for himself.

Towards spring we received a visit from our neighbor, Baron Arven. He was accompanied by a young bridal couple. He introduced the husband, who was an officer at the garrison of

Mayence, as a relative of mine. The wife belonged to the family of the Baroness Arven, and was from Bohemia. They seemed sociable and charming people, and both sides were inclined to make friends with each other, but without success. Our thoughts and feelings were pitched in different keys.

The young couple left us in order to repair to the capital. On their departure, I gave them a letter to Bertha, and the Major. They wrote to me in the kindest manner, and remarked that they would be pleased if Ernst could assume the charge of the forests on their estate in Moravia.

CHAPTER XX

Spring had come, and the air was filled with the resinous odor of the pines. I was sitting by the open window, and reading in a newspaper that Bismarck had asked the Diet for a constituent national assembly, to be voted for directly by the people. Could it be possible? I took up the country journals: they reviled this proposal, and could not conceal their fear that the most powerful weapon of the revolutionary party had been destroyed.

While I was sitting there, buried in thought, I heard a rider rapidly approaching. It was Ernst. He hurriedly greeted us, and showed us an order recalling him to his regiment.

Martella cried out aloud. Ernst pacified her. He told us that he was no longer a subject of this country. He had given notice of his intention to emigrate, and that would protect him. It was spring-time, and the best season of the year to go forth into the wide world. I could only tell him that I doubted whether he would be allowed to leave the confederation.

"Confederation!" he exclaimed; "what a glorious name!"

He gave me a look that I shall, alas! never forget. He seemed to be collecting his senses, and as if struggling with his thoughts, and then said: "As far as I am concerned, my life is of no consequence to me. But, father, there will be war, in which what the books call Germans will be fighting against Germans. Have you raised me for this? Is this all that you are in the world for-

that your son should perish, or even conquer, in a war between brethren? Either issue is equally disgraceful. I do not know what I would not rather do than take part in that."

I endeavored to pacify Ernst, and told him that these were diplomatic quarrels, that would not lead so far after all. I could not conceive of the possibility of war. However, I consented to Ernst's request to accompany him to the borough town, in order to confer with the kreis-director in regard to the steps that were necessary. I sincerely hoped to obtain further particulars there, and felt that all would again be peacefully arranged.

My wife had sent for Joseph and had asked him to accompany us, for she saw how fearfully excited Ernst was, and desired us to have a mediator with us. She judged wisely.

"I shall return to-morrow," said Ernst to Martella, when all was ready for our departure.

"And if you do not return to-morrow," she answered, "and even if you must go to war at once, nothing will happen to you. You are the cleverest of all; and if you care to become a major, do so; and I shall learn how to be a major's wife-for I can learn anything."

She was wondrously cheerful; she seemed to have vanquished her fears, and thus, both for herself and Ernst, lightened the pain of parting.

Joseph informed me that Funk was everywhere joyously proclaiming that now at last the crash must come, and that proud Prussia with its Junkers would be cut to pieces, or, to use his

own words, demolished. Ernst beat the bays so unmercifully and drove so furiously, that I ordered him to halt, and insisted on Joseph's taking the reins. Ernst, in a sullen mood, seated himself beside me.

In the valley we a saw lumber wagon halting on the road, and from afar recognized the horses as Joseph's.

Carl, a servant of Joseph's, and son to the spinner who lived up on the rock, was surrounded by a group of raftsmen, woodsmen, and teamsters, who were all gesticulating in the wildest manner.

We halted as soon as we reached the team. Carl, a handsome, light-haired fellow, with a cheerful face and good-natured eyes, came up to us and told us that this would be his last load; he had been summoned as a conscript, and would have to leave that very evening and walk all night, in order to reach the barracks in time.

The old meadow farmer, who had joined the crowd exclaimed, "Yes, Napoleon is master. When he fiddles, Prussia and Austria must dance as he chooses, and the small folk will soon follow suit. Yes, there is a Napoleon in the world again. I knew the old one."

We did not think it necessary to answer the man. While Joseph was giving his servant money to use by the way, others approached and declared that they, too, had been conscripted, and requested us to tell them why there was war.

"You simple rogues," cried out Ernst, "that is none of your business! If you didn't wish it, there could be no war. You are fools, fearful fools, if you obey the conscription!"

I snatched the whip from Joseph's hand, and beat the horses

furiously while I called out to the crowd:

"He was only joking!"

Joseph assumed the task of bringing Ernst to reason. He declared that if I had not been present, he would have written the answer that Ernst deserved in his face.

"Do so, you trusty Teuton!" replied Ernst.

Speedily controlling himself, Joseph added, "Forgive me; but you are most exasperating. How can you bear to drag yourself and your father to the very brink of ruin with such idle speeches? You are unworthy of such a father."

"Or of such a Fatherland," answered Ernst.

I felt so oppressed that I could hardly breathe.

We rode on for a little while, and at last Ernst inquired, in a submissive tone, "Will you permit me to smoke a cigar?" I nodded approval, and from that time until we reached the town, not a word was uttered.

On the road that led up to the kreis-director's house, we saw the young iron merchant, Edward Levi, an honorable and well-educated young man. He was standing at the door of his warehouse, and saluted us in military fashion.

Ernst beckoned to him to approach.

"Have you not already received your discharge?"

"I have; and you, I suppose, will now soon be an officer?"

"So I have heard."

We reached the director's house. The director could of course only confirm the fact that Ernst's notice of his intention to

emigrate was as yet without legal effect. He furnished us with a certified copy of it, and added that he might be able to procure Ernst's discharge; but that, at all events, Ernst would be obliged for the present to join the troops.

Rontheim believed that war was imminent, and I could not help noticing an expression of deep emotion in the features of the man whose face was always veiled in diplomatic serenity. In those days I heard the sad question which so often afterward would seem to rend our hearts:

"What will become of Germany-what will become of the world-if Austria be successful?"

I could easily see that it was as painful to him as it was to me to have a son go forth to war.

On our way down the steps we met the director's daughter.

She extended her hand to Ernst, while she said, "I congratulate you."

"For what, may I inquire?"

"Your betrothal."

"Ah, yes; I thank you."

"I presume your intended is full of sad thoughts now."

"She does not do much thinking on the subject."

"Is your nephew obliged to join the army?"

"My nephew! Who can you mean?"

"Julius Linker," blushingly answered the young girl.

"No; he is not yet liable to military duty."

"Will you be good enough to give my kindest greetings to my

brother?"

"With pleasure."

On our way Ernst seemed quite amused, and indulged in jokes at the thought of Julius' being such a child of fortune. His life was evidently moving in a smooth current, for the half-fledged youth had already been lucky enough to win the love of so charming a girl.

I felt quite reassured to find that Ernst's thoughts had taken another direction. He emphatically declared himself ready to join his regiment, and asked me to let him have some money. He thought there was no need of my accompanying him to the capital, but I felt loth to leave him, and, although I should not have done so, I promised to endeavor to procure his discharge.

We again met Joseph, who expressed his regret that the conscription of his valuable servant Carl would oblige him to return to his home, for he had intended to accompany us to the capital.

It was necessary for him, however, to go to the fortress, for he had accepted a contract to furnish fence rails.

Joseph is a very active patriot, but he is quite as active as a business man. He has the art of combining both functions, and Richard once said of him with justice: "With Joseph, everything is a stepping stone, and all events contribute to the success of his business plans."

We were seated in the garden of the Wild Man Tavern, when we heard a great uproar in front of the house of Krummkopf,

the lumber merchant.

A company of conscripts had marched up before the house, in which there resided a young man who had purchased his discharge from military service, and they cursed and swore that they who were poor were obliged to go to war, while the rich ones could remain at home.

Joseph, who recognized many of his workmen among the young folks, succeeded in pacifying them.

We accompanied Ernst to the railway. At the depot I found Captain Rimminger, the lumber merchant, who was just superintending the loading of some planks. When I told him that he ought to feel glad that he was no longer a soldier, he silently nodded assent. He did not utter a word, for he was always exceedingly careful to avoid committing himself.

At the depot we saw conscripts who were shouting and cheering, mothers who were weeping, and fathers who bit their lips to control their emotion.

At every station where Ernst left the train, I feared that he would not come back; but he did return and sat by my side quietly, speaking only in reply to my questions. For a while he would sit absorbed in thought, and then he would stand up and lean against the side of the railway coach, in which position he would remain immovable. I felt much grieved that the heart of this child had become a mystery to me.

We arrived at the capital. I had lost sight of Ernst in the crowd, but afterwards found him talking with the ensign, the director's

son. Ernst desired to go to the barracks at once. I accompanied him to the gate, which he entered without once turning to look back.

CHAPTER XXI

I remained standing near the gate and saw constant arrivals of more young men. Men and women desired to accompany them inside the barracks, but were always ordered back by the guard.

Carl, the son of the spinner who lived on the rock, was also among the arrivals. Without any solicitation on my part, he promised to keep an eye on Ernst.

It had become night; the gas-lamps were lit, and yet I stood there so buried in thought, that the lamp-lighter was obliged to tell me to move on.

There I was, in the capital in which there lived so many of my friends, and my own child; indeed, two of my children.

Where should I go first? Our club-house was in the vicinity, and I went there. They praised me for having come so soon, for while I had been at the borough town they had telegraphed for me.

They were in hourly expectation of a government order, convoking the Parliament. What we were expected to discuss no one knew; but every one felt that it was necessary for us to assemble. I could not bring myself to believe that war was really possible, and there were many who shared my opinion.

Funk was there also. He offered me his hand in a careless manner, and, feeling that in such times enmity should be at an end, I shook hands with him.

Funk rejoiced that the grand crash was at last to come. Prussia would have to be beaten to pieces, and a federation founded; for the present, with a monarchical head.

The minister, who was well known as an arch-enemy of Prussia, had sent word to the committee of our party that he would come to us that same evening, and bring the order convoking us with him. He did not come in person, but contented himself with sending the written order. Of what use could we be when the harm had already been done. What were we? Nothing but a flock without any will of our own.

I went to Bertha's house. I found her alone; her husband was at his post, busy day and night. It had suddenly been discovered that the troops were not fully prepared.

I had not been there long, before her friend Annette entered, from whom as usual I was obliged to endure much praise. Annette found it quite-she was about to say "patriarchal," but checked herself in time-that I had come to assist Bertha.

"Only think of it," she continued, putting all her remarks in the form of questions, as was her wont: "Would you have thought that Bertha would be much less resigned than I? I have always wished that I might be so gentle and self-controlled as Bertha; and now I am the quieter of the two. Have I not as much love for my husband as any woman can have for hers? Have I not given up everything for his sake? Now I say to myself, 'Did you not know what you were doing when you married a soldier? Is the uniform merely for the parade and the court ball? Therefore, rest content.

In this world everything must be paid for. It is necessary to accept the consequences of one's actions.' Am I right or wrong?"

Annette always closed with a note of interrogation, and of course I was obliged to respond affirmatively.

Bertha smiled sadly, and said in a weary voice: "Yes, father, I must admit it; I have always thought that war was one of those things of which one only learned in the hour devoted at school to history. I only knew of the Punic wars and the Peloponnesian war-for we never got as far as modern history-and thought of these things as of what had once been. But I honestly admit that I did not think they would come to pass again in our time."

"Just think of it, Bertha," said Annette, while she drew a thick volume from her satchel, "this is the Bible. You know that I never take quotations at second-hand, but prefer looking them up myself. This morning while the hairdresser was with me, it occurred to me that the Bible says the wife should leave her father and her mother for his sake. So I sent for the Bible, the very one that the dowager princess presented me with when I was christened. I hunted up the passage, but what did I find? Why, that for this the 'man would leave his father and mother,'-the man. Now just look, it says the man; and why should it say the man? He is not a domestic plant, like us girls!"

The vivacity of the pretty and graceful woman cheered me, and I must admit that from that time my opinion of Annette changed. She seems imbued with much of that power of self-reliance which is a peculiar characteristic of the Jews; they are

nothing by inheritence, and are obliged to make themselves what they are.

But Annette seemed to guess at my silent thoughts, and continued, "Do not praise me, I beg of you! I do not deserve it. I am quite different when I am alone; then I am tormented with horrible fancies. And let me tell you, Bertha, when our husbands leave, you must keep me with you. I cannot be alone. I am beginning to hate my piano already. I do not go into the room in which it stands. Ah, here come our husbands!"

We heard advancing steps. The Major entered, and greeted me politely, but seemed quite gloomy.

I told him that I had brought Ernst.

"I hope he will do himself credit," said the Major in a hard voice.

I told him that the Parliament was about to reassemble, whereupon the Major with great emphasis said, "Dear father, I beg of you do not let us talk politics now. I have the greatest respect for your patriotism, your liberalism, and for all your opinions. But now it is my uniform alone that speaks; what is inside of it has not a word to say."

He pressed both hands to his heart, and continued:

"Pshaw! I, too, once believed in 'German unity,' as they are fond of calling it… and even had hopes of Prussia. But now we will show these impudent, mustachioed Prussian gentlemen what we are made of."

I was careful not to reply to his remarks, in which I could easily

notice the struggle that was going on within him. He was on duty; and it is wrong to talk to a man who is at his post.

What sort of a war is it in which they know no other cry but "Let us show them what we are made of!"

And if the victory is achieved, what then? An invisible demon sat crouching on the knapsack of every soldier, making his load heavier by a hundred-fold.

We seated ourselves at the table. The Major seemed to feel that he had been harsh towards me, and was now particularly polite. He asked about mother, Martella, and Rothfuss. He told us that he had that day heard from our newly discovered cousin, in a letter from Mayence, in which he had expressed the hope that they might stand side by side on the battle-field, and thus again become bound to each other.

The Major had nothing more to say. He poured out a glass of wine for me, and drank my health in silence. Annette used every exertion to dispel the dark cloud under which we were laboring.

She asserted that her saddle horse seemed to know that it would soon be led forth to battle, and told us a number of marvellous stories about that clever animal. She was very fond of telling anecdotes, and had considerable dramatic talent.

"Dear father," said the Major, "I believe I have not yet acquainted you with my darling wish."

"I do not remember your having done so."

"My request is, that when we leave, Bertha and the children should remain with you until the end of the campaign, which

from present indications will not extend to your neighborhood.

"They are now, at last, constructing a telegraph line through your valley-it has been deemed a military necessity, and that will enable us to hear from each other with dispatch."

"And will you accept an unbidden guest?" interposed Annette. "I know that you will say 'yes,' and I promise you that I will be quite good and docile."

I extended my hand to her, while she continued:

"You know that it has for a long while been my wish to be permitted to spend some time with your wife. Iphigenia in the forest, in the German pine forest! Oh, how charming it was of your father-in-law to name his daughter so! Are pretty names only intended for books? Of course, Grecian Iphigenia should not knit stockings. Did not your father-in-law begin to translate Goethe's 'Iphigenia' into Greek, but fail to complete it? Is not Iphigenia too long a name for daily use? How do you address your wife?"

"By her middle name, Gustava."

"Ah, how lovely! 'Madame Gustava.' And the forest child? I presume she is still with you? And now I shall at last become acquainted with your noble and faithful servant, Rothfuss, who said that 'one who is drenched to the skin need not dread the rain.'"

As far as our all-engrossing anxiety would permit it, Annette's volubility and liveliness contributed greatly to our relief.

We had just left the table when Rolunt, the Major's most

intimate friend, entered. He had at one time been an officer in the service of the Duke of Augustenberg, and had thence returned to his home, where he was now professor at the military school.

Now political conversation could not be restrained, although the Major refrained from taking part in it.

Rolunt was furious that, no matter how the war might end, Germany would be obliged to give an indemnity, in the shape of Nice, to France.

We had the galling consciousness that one nation presumed to decide the affairs of another, with as much freedom as it would regulate the taxes or the actions of its own citizens.

We remained together until it was quite late, and when we separated, it was with crushed hearts.

The Major insisted on my staying at his house; the war, he said, had done away with all minor considerations.

On the following day there was another session of the Parliament. The government demanded an extraordinary credit, which was accorded, although it was hoped that we might escape being drawn into war; for both the government and the legislature fondly expected that our troubles might be arranged by diplomacy.

Who, after all, was the enemy that we were fighting against?

I went to the barracks. I was refused admission. Fortunately, I saw the ensign approaching, and, under his protection, I was allowed to enter. Ernst, who had already donned the uniform, was lying on a bench. He seemed surprised to see me.

"Pray do not say a word until we get outside."

He received permission to go out for half an hour, and soon stood before me in his smart attire. There was something graceful and yet determined in his bearing.

When we gained the street, he asked me whether there was any chance of his discharge.

I was in a sad dilemma. I had taken no steps, because it was only too evident that my efforts would have been of no avail.

It was this that made me hesitate in answering him, and Ernst exclaimed, "All right. I know all about it."

My very heart bled, pierced as it was by the same sword that rent my Fatherland in twain.

I endeavored to persuade my son that there are times when our own wills and thoughts are of no avail against the great current of Fate.

"Thanks, father, thanks," answered Ernst, in a strangely significant tone.

I could only add, "I feel assured that you will do your duty. Do not forget that you have parents and a bride."

He seemed to pay but little attention to my words.

He took off his helmet, and said, "This presses me so: I am unused to it. It seems to crush my brain."

He looked very handsome, but very sad. We were standing before the office of the State Gazette, when suddenly the street seemed filled with groups of excited people, listening to a man who had climbed to the top of a wagon and was reading off a

dispatch just received from Berlin, to the effect that there had been an attempt to shoot Bismarck, but that the ball had missed aim.

"Curse him!" cried Ernst; "I would not have missed aim."

I reproved him with great severity, but he insisted that one had a right to commit murder. I replied that no one would ever have that right, and that this deed had been as culpable as the assassination of Abraham Lincoln; for if any one man has the right to be both the judge and the executioner of his enemies, you will have to accord the privilege to the democrat as well as to the aristocrat.

"Let us cease this quarrelling," he answered; "I have no desire to dispute with you. I am firm in my belief that one is justified in doing wrong for the sake of bringing about a good result. But, I beg of you, father, let us now and forever cease this quarrelling."

His face showed his conflicting emotions, and he kissed my hand when I gently stroked his face.

The crowd had dispersed in the meanwhile, and we proceeded on our way.

Ernst suddenly stopped and said to me: "Farewell, father. Give my love to mother and Martella."

He held on to my hand quite firmly for a moment or two longer, and then said, "I must go to the barracks."

His eyes plainly told me that he would like to say more that he could not express; but he merely nodded, and then turning on his heel, departed.

"Write to us often!" I called out to him. He did not look back.

I followed after him for a while, keeping near enough to hear his firm step and the rattling of his spurs. I fondly hoped that he would yet return to me, and tell me of the thoughts that oppressed his heart.

I met many acquaintances on the way, who saluted me and extended their hands. They wanted me to stop and talk with them, but I merely nodded and passed on.

In my eager haste I ran against many people, for I did not want to lose sight of my son. There he goes! Now he stands still-now he turns. Surely- At that moment a company of soldiers marched down the street to the sound of lively music; we were now separated. I could not see my son again. I returned to Bertha and the Major, and the latter promised me to keep a watchful eye on Ernst, and to send us frequent tidings in regard to him, in case he should neglect to write.

I rode to the depot. I was fearfully tired, and felt as if I could not walk another step.

As the trains were quite irregular, I was obliged to wait there for a long while.

I felt-no, I cannot-I dare not-revive the painful emotions that rent my bosom. Of what avail would it be? My son was going forth to war, and I had brought him here, myself.

"Brother fighting against brother." I fancied that I had been talking to myself and had uttered these words; but I found that they were frequently repeated by the excited groups that were

scattered about the depot. All about me there was ceaseless turmoil. People were rushing to and fro, yelling, shouting, cursing, and laughing. I sat there absorbed in thought, not caring to see or hear anything more of the world, when a familiar voice said to me, "How charming, father, that I should meet you here!"

My son Richard stood before me; he had finished his lectures and was about to return home.

Accompanied by him, I started for home.

Richard informed me of the political divisions among the professors, and thus afforded me a glimpse of a sphere of life entirely different from my own. Even the immovable altars of science were now trembling, and personal feeling had become so violent that the friends of Prussia, of whom Richard was one, could not appear in public without being subjected to insults. On our way home, we stopped for dinner at the garrison town, where we heard the most contemptuous allusions to the "Prussian braggarts," as they were termed.

It was said that they had no officers who had ever smelt powder. That what had been done in Schleswig-Holstein had been achieved by the Austrians; and that if they ever dared go so far as to fight, they would be sent home in disgrace.

I do not know whether they really believed what they said, or whether they were simply trying to keep up their courage. But, on every hand, one could hear them say, "They will not let matters proceed so far; they are loud talkers and nothing else."

I was quite beside myself; but Richard begged me to remain

silent. He thought it was well that matters had come to this pass.

Whoever had brought on this war had assumed a great, but perhaps unavoidable, responsibility. It was the sad fiat of fate, and none could foretell where the sacrifice and suffering would end. History would march on in its appointed path, even though sin and suffering be its steppingstones.

And then he pointed to our surroundings, and added, "Such fellows as these will never be converted by speeches; nothing but a thorough beating will teach them reason."

I have found that sober history tells us very little of all those things. She brings the harvest under shelter and enters the result; but who stops to ask how the weather may have changed while the grain was ripening?

But to us who live in the present, such things are not trifles; and I cannot help maintaining that the war of 1866 was forced on the people against their will, as far as I can judge, and I have spoken to many on the subject. The Prussians did not desire war; the conservatives did certainly not wish for it, for Austria was, spite of all, the bulwark of their principles. The liberals did not want it; nor did the soldiers go forth with cheerful hearts. But necessity had become incarnate in the brain of a single statesman: separation from Austria was the end to be gained, and though it went hard, that result must be achieved.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.