Butterworth Hezekiah

Zigzag Journeys in Northern Lands. The Rhine to the Arctic. A Summer...

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Содержание

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PREFACE

This fifth volume of the Zigzag books, in which history is taught by a supposed tour of interesting places, might be called a German story-book.

It was the aim of "Zigzag Journeys in Europe" and "Zigzag Journeys in Classic Lands" to make history interesting by stories and pictures of places. It was the purpose of "Zigzag Journeys in the Orient" to explain the Eastern Question, and of "Zigzag Journeys in the Occident" to explain Homesteading in the West.

The purpose of this volume is the same as in "Europe" and

"Classic Lands." A light narrative of travel takes the reader to the places most conspicuously associated with German history, tradition, literature, and art, and in a disconnected way gives a view of the most interesting events of those Northern countries that once constituted a great part of the empire of Charlemagne.

It is the aim of these books to stimulate a love of history, and to *suggest* the best historical reading. To this end popular stories and pictures are freely used to adapt useful information to the tastes of the young. But in every page, story, and picture, right education and right influence are kept in view.

In this volume many German legends and fairy stories have been used, but they are so introduced and guarded as not to leave a wrong impression upon the minds of the young and immature.

H. B.

CHAPTER I.
THE RIVER OF STORY AND SONG

THE Rhine! River of what histories, tragedies, comedies, legends, stories, and songs! Associated with the greatest events of the history of Germany, France, and Northern Europe; with the Rome of Cæsar and Aurelian; with the Rome of the Popes; with the Reformation; with the shadowy goblin lore and beautiful fairy tales of the twilight of Celtic civilization that have been evolved through centuries and have become the household stories of all enlightened lands!

A journey down the Rhine is like passing through wonderland; wild stories, quaint stories, legendary and historic stories, are associated with every rood of ground from the Alps to the ocean. It is a region of the stories of two thousand years. The Rhine is the river of the poet; its banks are the battle-fields of heroes; its forests and villages the fairy lands of old.

When Rome was queen of the world, Cæsar carried his eagles over the Rhine; Titus sent a part of his army which had conquered Jerusalem to the Rhine; Julian erected a fortress on the Rhine; and Valentinian began the castle-building that was to go on for a thousand years.

The period of the Goths, Huns, Celts, and Vandals came, – the conquerors of Rome; and the Rhine was strewn with Roman

ruins. Charlemagne cleared away the ruins, and began anew the castle-building. A Christian soldier in one of the legions that destroyed Jerusalem and tore down the temple, first brought the Gospel to the Rhine. His name was Crescaitius. He was soon followed by missionaries of the Cross. Christianity was established upon the Rhine soon after it entered Rome.

The great conquests of modern history are directly or indirectly associated with the wonderful river; Cæsar, who conquered the world, crossed the Rhine; Attila, who conquered the city of the Cæsars; Clovis, who founded the Christian religion in France; and Charlemagne, who established the Christian church in Germany. Frederick Barbarossa and Frederick the Great added lustre to its growing history, and Napoleon gave a yet deeper coloring to its thrilling scenes.

When the Northern nations shattered the Roman power, people imagined that the dismantled castles of the Rhine became the abodes of mysterious beings: spirits of the rocks, forests, fens; strange maidens of the red marshes; enchanters, demons; the streams were the abodes of lovely water nymphs; the glens of the woods, of delightful fairies.

Into these regions of shadow, mystery, of heroic history, of moral conflicts and Christian triumphs, it is always interesting to go. It is especially interesting to the American traveller, for his form of Christianity and republican principles came from the Rhine. Progress to him was cradled on the Rhine, like Moses on the Nile. In the Rhine lands Luther taught, and Robinson of

Leyden lived and prayed; and from those lands to-day comes the great emigration that is peopling the golden empire of America in the West. “I would be proud of the Rhine were I a German,” said Longfellow. “I love rivers,” said Victor Hugo; “of all rivers I prefer the Rhine.”

It is our purpose in this story-telling volume to relate why the Zigzag Club was led to make the Rhine the subject of its winter evening study, and to give an account of an excursion that some of its members had made from Constance to Rotterdam and into the countries of the North Sea.

> “All hail, thou broad torrent, so golden and green,
> Ye castles and churches, ye hamlets serene,
> Ye cornfields, that wave in the breeze as it sweeps,
> Ye forests and ravines, ye towering steeps,
> Ye mountains e’er clad in the sun-illumed vine!
> Wherever I go is my heart on the Rhine!
>
> “I greet thee, O life, with a yearning so strong,
> In the maze of the dance, o’er the goblet and song.
> All hail, beloved race, men so honest and true,
> And maids who speak raptures with eyes of bright blue!
> May success round your brows e’er its garlands entwine!
> Wherever I go is my heart on the Rhine!
>
> “On the Rhine is my heart, where affection holds sway!
> On the Rhine is my heart, where encradled I lay,
> Where around me friends bloom, where I dreamt away youth,

Where the heart of my love glows with rapture and truth!
May for me your hearts e'er the same jewels enshrine.
Wherever I go is my heart on the Rhine!"

Wolfgang Müller.

CHAPTER II.
GHOST STORIES

The Zigzag Club again. – Some "Ghost" Stories

THE Academy had opened again. September again colored the leaves of the old elms of Yule. The Blue Hills, as lovely as when the Northmen beheld them nearly nine hundred years ago, were radiant with the autumn tinges of foliage and sky, changing from turquoise to sapphire in the intense twilight, and to purple as the shades of evening fell.

The boys were back again, all except the graduating class, some of whom were at Harvard, Brown, and Yale. Master Lewis was in his old place, and Mr. Beal was again his assistant.

The Zigzag Club was broken by the final departure of the graduating class. But Charlie Leland, William Clifton, and Herman Reed, who made a journey on the Rhine under the direction of Mr. Beal, had returned, and they had been active members of the school society known as the Club.

We should say here, to make the narrative clear to those who have not read "Zigzag Journeys in Classic Lands" and "Zigzag Journeys in the Orient," that the boys of the Academy of Yule had been accustomed each year to form a society for the study of

the history, geography, legends, and household stories of some chosen country, and during the long summer vacation as many of the society as could do so, visited, under the direction of their teachers, the lands about which they had studied. This society was called the Zigzag Club, because it aimed to visit historic places without regard to direct routes of travel. It zigzagged in its travels from the associations of one historic story to another, and was influenced by the school text-book or the works of some pleasing author, rather than the guide-book.

The Zigzag books have been kindly received; and we may here remark parenthetically that they do not aim so much to present narratives of travel as the histories, traditions, romances, and stories of places. They seek to tell stories at the places where the events occurred and amid the associations of the events that still remain. The Zigzag Club go seeking what is old rather than what is new, and thus change the past tense of history to the present tense.

More than one hundred thousand volumes have been sold.

Charlie Leland was seated one day on the piazza of the Academy, after school, reading Hawthorne's "Twice-Told Tales." Master Lewis presently took a seat beside him; and "Gentleman Jo," whom we introduced to our readers in "Zigzags in the Occident," was resting on the steps near them.

Gentleman Jo was the janitor. He was a relative of Master Lewis, and a very intelligent man. He had been somewhat disabled in military service in the West, and was thus compelled

to accept a situation at Yule that was quite below his intelligence and personal worth. The boys loved and respected him, sought his advice often, and sometimes invited him to meetings of their Society.

"Have you called together the Club yet?" asked Master Lewis of Charlie, when the latter had ceased reading.

"We had an informal meeting in my room last evening."

"What is your plan of study?"

"We have none as yet," said Charlie. "We are to have a meeting next week for the election of officers, and for literary exercises we have agreed to relate historic *ghost stories*. We asked Tommy Toby to be present, and he promised to give us for the occasion his version of 'St. Dunstan and the Devil and the Six Boy Kings.' I hardly know what the story is about, but the title sounds interesting."

"What made you choose ghost stories?" asked Master Lewis, curiously.

"You gave us Irving and Hawthorne to read in connection with our lessons on American literature. 'Rip Van Winkle,' 'Sleepy Hollow,' and 'Twice-Told Tales' turned our thoughts to popular superstitions; and, as they made me chairman, I thought it an interesting subject just now to present to the Club."

"More interesting than profitable, I am thinking. Still, the subject might be made instructive and useful as well as amusing."

"Did you ever see a ghost?" asked Charlie of Gentleman Jo, after Master Lewis left them.

"We thought we had one in our house, when I was living with my sister in Hingham, before the war. Hingham used to be famous for its ghost stories; an old house without its ghost was thought to lack historic tone and finish."

Gentleman Jo took a story-telling attitude, and a number of the pupils gathered around him.

GENTLEMAN JO'S GHOST STORY

I shall never forget the scene of excitement, when one morning Biddy, our domestic, entered the sitting-room, her head bobbing, her hair flying, and her cap perched upon the top of her head, and exclaimed: "Wurrah! I have seen a ghoust, and it's lave the hoose I must. Sich a night! I'd niver pass anither the like of it for the gift o' the hoose. Bad kick to ye, an' the hoose is haunted for sure."

"Why, Biddy, what have you seen?" asked my sister, in alarm.

"Seen? An' sure I didn't see nothin'. I jist shet me eyes and hid mesilf under the piller. But it was awful. An' the way it clanked its chain! O murther!"

This last remark was rather startling. Spirits that clank their chains have a very unenviable reputation.

"Pooh!" said my uncle. "What you heard was nothing but rats." Then, turning to me, he asked: "Where is the steel trap?"

"Stolen, I think," said I. "I set it day before yesterday, and when I went to look to it it was gone."

"An' will ye be givin' me the wages?" said Biddy, "afore I bid ye good-marnin'?"

"Going?" asked my sister, in astonishment.

"An' sure I am," answered Biddy. "Ye don't think I'd be afther stayin' in a house that's haunted, do ye?"

In a few minutes I heard the front door bang, and, looking out, saw our late domestic, with a budget on each arm, trudging off as though her ideas were of a very lively character.

A colored woman, recently from the South, took Biddy's place that very day, and was assigned the same room in which the latter had slept.

We had invited company for that evening, and some of the guests remained to a very late hour.

The sound of voices subsided as one after another departed, and we were left quietly chatting with the few who remained. Suddenly there was a mysterious movement at one of the back parlor doors, and we saw two white eyes casting furtive glances into the room.

"What's wanted?" demanded my sister, of the object at the door.

Our new domestic appeared in her night clothes.

"O missus, I've seen de debble, I done have," was her first exclamation.

This, certainly, was not a sight that we should wish any one to see in our house, as desirable as a dignified spectre might have been.

"Pooh!" said my sister. "What a silly creature! Go back to bed and to sleep, and do not shame us by appearing before company in your night clothes."

"I don't keer nothing about my night clothes," she replied, with spirit. "Jes' go to de room and git de things dat belong to me, an' I'll leave, and never disturb you nor dis house any more. It's dreadful enough to be visited by dead folks, any way, but when de spirits comes rattling a chain it's a dreadful bad sign, you may be sure."

"What did you see?" asked I.

"See? I didn't see nothin'. 'Twas bad enough to hear it. I wouldn't hav' seen it for de world. I'll go quick – jest as soon as you gets de things."

We made her a bed on a lounge below stairs. The next morning she took her bundles and made a speedy exit.

We had a maiden aunt who obtained a livelihood by visiting her relations. On the morning when our last domestic left she arrived, bag and baggage, greatly to our annoyance. We said nothing about the disturbances to her, but agreed among ourselves that she should sleep in the haunted chamber.

That night, about twelve o'clock, the household were awakened by a piercing scream above stairs. All was silent for a few minutes, when the house echoed with the startling cry of "Murder! Mur*der*! Murder!" The accent was very strong on the last syllable in the last two words, as though the particular force of the exclamation was therein contained.

I hurried to the chamber and asked at the door what was the matter.

"I have seen an apparatus," exclaimed my aunt. "Mur*der*! Oh, wait a minute. I'm a dead woman."

She unlocked the door in a delirious way and descended to the sitting-room, where she sat sobbing for a long time, declaring that she was a dead woman. *She* had heard his chain rattle.

And the next morning she likewise left.

We now felt uneasy ourselves, and wondered what marvel the following night would produce. I examined the room carefully during the day, but could discover no traces of anything unusual.

That night we were again awakened by noises that proceeded from the same room. They seemed like the footfalls of a person whose feet were clad in iron. Then followed sounds like a scuffle.

I rose, and, taking a light, went to the chamber with shaky knees and a palpitating heart. I listened before the door. Presently there was a movement in the room as of some one dragging a chain. My courage began to ebb. I was half resolved to retreat at once, and on the morrow advise the family to quit the premises.

But my better judgment at last prevailed, and, opening the door with a nervous hand, I saw an "apparatus" indeed.

Our old cat, that I had left accidentally in the room, had in her claws a large rat, to whose leg was attached the missing trap, and to the trap a short chain.

"I knew the story would end in that way," said Charlie. "But that is not a true colonial ghost story, if it did happen in old

Hingham."

The sun was going down beyond the Waltham Hills. The shadows of the maples were lengthening upon the lawns, and the chirp of the crickets was heard in the old walls. Charlie seemed quite dissatisfied with Gentleman Jo's story. The latter noticed it.

"My story does not please you?" said Gentleman Jo.

"No; I am in a different mood to-night."

Master Lewis smiled.

Just then a quiet old lady, who had charge of a part of the rooms in the Academy, appeared, a bunch of keys jingling by her side, much like the wife of a porter of a lodge in an English castle.

"Grandmother Golden," said Charlie, – the boys were accustomed to address the chatty, familiar old lady in this way, – "you have seen ghosts, haven't you? What is the most startling thing that ever happened in your life?"

Grandmother Golden had seated herself in one of the easy piazza chairs. After a few minutes she was induced to follow Gentleman Jo in an old-time story.

GRANDMOTHER GOLDEN'S ONLY GHOST STORY

The custom in old times, when a person died, was for some one to sit in the room and watch with the dead body in the night, as long as it remained in the house. A good, pious custom it was,

in my way of thinking, though it is not common now.

Jemmy Robbin was a poor old man. They used to call him "Auld Robin Gray," after the song, and he lived and died alone. His sister Dorothea – Dorothy she was commonly called – took charge of the house after his death, and she sent for Grandfather Golden to watch one night with the corpse.

We were just married, grandfather and I, and he wanted I should watch with him, for company; and as I could not bear that he should be out of my sight a minute when I could help it, I consented. I was young and foolish then, and very fond of grandfather, – we were in our honeymoon, you know.

We didn't go to the house at a very early hour of the evening; it wasn't customary for the watchers to go until it was nearly time for the family to retire.

In the course of the evening there came to the house a traveller, – a poor Irishman, – an old man, evidently honest, but rather simple, who asked Dorothy for a lodging.

He said he had travelled far, was hungry, weary, and footsore, and if turned away, knew not where he could go.

It was a stormy night, and the good heart of Dorothy was touched at the story of the stranger, so she told him that he might stay.

After he had warmed himself and eaten the food she prepared for him, she asked him to retire, saying that she expected company. Instead of going with him to show where he was to sleep, as she ought to have done, she directed him to his room,

furnished him with a light, and bade him good-night.

The Irishman, as I have said, was an old man and not very clear-headed. Forgetting his directions, and mistaking the room, he entered the chamber where lay the body of poor Jemmy Robbin. In closing the door the light was blown out. He found there was what seemed to be some other person in the bed, and, supposing him a live bedfellow, quietly lay down, covered himself with a counterpane, and soon fell asleep.

About ten o'clock grandfather and I entered the room. We just glanced at the bed. What seemed to be the corpse lay there, as it should. Then grandfather sat down in an easy-chair, and I, like a silly hussy, sat down in his lap.

We were having a nice time, talking about what we would do and how happy we should be when we went to housekeeping, when, all at once, I heard a snore. It came from the bed.

"What's that?" said I.

"That?" said grandfather. "Mercy! that was Jemmy Robbin."

We listened nervously, but heard nothing more, and at last concluded that it was the wind that had startled us. I gave grandfather a generous kiss, and it calmed his agitation wonderfully.

We grew cheerful, laughed at our fright, and were chatting away again as briskly as before, when there was a noise in bed. We were silent in a moment. The counterpane certainly moved. Grandfather's eyes almost started from his head. The next instant there was a violent sneeze.

I jumped as if shot. Grandfather seemed petrified. He attempted to ejaculate something, but was scared by the sound of his own voice.

"Mercy!" says I.

"What was it?" said grandfather.

"Let's go and call Dorothy," said I.

"She would be frightened out of her senses."

"I shall die with fright if I hear anything more," I said, half dead already with fear.

Just then a figure started up in the bed.

"And wha – and wha – and wha – " mumbled the object, gesticulating.

I sprang for the door, grandfather after me, and, reaching the bottom of the stairs at one bound, gave vent to my terrors by a scream, that, for aught I know, could have been heard a mile distant.

Both of us ran for Dorothy's room. There was a sound of feet and a loud ejaculation of "Holy Peter! The man is dead!"

"It's comin'," shouted grandfather, and, sure enough, there were footsteps on the stairs.

"Dorothy! Dorothy!" I screamed. Dorothy, startled from her sleep, came rushing to the entry in her night-dress.

"I have seen a ghost, Dorothy," said I.

"A what?"

"I have seen the awfullest – "

"It's comin'," said grandfather.

"Holy Peter!" said an object in the darkness. "There's a dead man in the bed!"

"Why, it's that Irishman," said Dorothy, as she heard the voice.

"What Irishman?" asked I. "A murdered one?"

"No; he – there – I suspect that he mistook his room and went to bed with poor Jemmy."

The mystery now became quite clear. Grandfather looked anything but pleased, and declared that he would rather have seen a ghost than to have been so foolishly frightened.

"Is that all?" asked Charlie.

"That is all," said Grandmother Golden. "Just hear the crickets chirp. Sounds dreadful mournful."

"I have been twice disappointed," said Charlie. "Perhaps, Master Lewis, you can tell us a story before we go in. Something fine and historic."

"In harmony with books you are reading?"

"And the spirit of Nature," added Charlie.

"How fine that there boy talks," said Grandmother Golden. "Get to be a minister some day, I reckon."

"How would the *True* Story of Macbeth answer?" asked Master Lewis.

"That would be excellent: Shakspeare. The greatest ghost story ever written."

"And if you don't mind, I'll just wait and hear that story, too," said good-humored Grandmother Golden.

MASTER LEWIS'S STORY OF MACBETH

More than eight hundred years ago, when the Roman wall divided England from Scotland, when the Scots and Picts had become one people, and when the countries of Northern Europe were disquieted by the ships of the Danes, there was a king of the Scots, named Duncan. He was a very old man, and long, long after he was dead, certain writers discovered that he was a very good man. He had two sons, named Malcolm and Donaldbain.

Now, when Duncan was enfeebled by years, a great fleet of Danes, under the command of Suene, King of Denmark and Norway, landed an army on the Scottish coast. Duncan was unable to take the field against the invaders in person, and his sons were too young for such a trust. He had a kinsman, who had proved himself a brave soldier, named Macbeth. He placed this kinsman at the head of his troops; and certain writers, long, long after the event, discovered that this kinsman appointed a relation of his own, named Banquo, to assist him. Macbeth and Banquo defeated the Danes in a hard-fought battle, and then set out for a town called Forres to rest and to make merry over their victory.

A thane was the governor of a province. The father of Macbeth was the thane of Glamis.

There lived at Forres three old women, whom the people believed to be witches. When these old women heard that Macbeth was coming to the place they went out to meet him, and

awaited his coming on a great heath. The first old woman saluted him on his approach with these words: "All hail, Macbeth – hail to thee, thane of Glamis!"

And the second: "All hail, Macbeth – hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!"

And the third: "All hail, Macbeth – thou shalt be king of Scotland!"

Macbeth was very much astonished at these salutations; he expected to become thane of Glamis some day, and he aspired to be king of Scotland, but he had never anticipated such a disclosure of his destiny as this. The old women told Banquo that he would become the father of kings, and then they vanished, according to Shakspeare, "into the air."

Macbeth and Banquo rode on very much elevated in spirits, when one met them who informed them that the thane of Glamis was dead. The melancholy event was not unwelcome to Macbeth; his spirits rose to a still higher pitch; one thing that the old women had foretold had speedily come to pass, – he was indeed thane of Glamis.

As Macbeth drew near the town, a glittering court party came out to welcome the army. They hailed Macbeth as thane of Cawdor. He was much surprised at this, and asked the meaning. They told him that the thane of Cawdor had rebelled, and that the king had bestowed the province upon him. Macbeth was immensely delighted at this intelligence, feeling quite sure that the rest of the prophecy would come to pass, and that he would

one day wear the diadem.

Now the wife of Macbeth was a very wicked woman, and the prophecy of the witches quite turned her head, so that she could think of nothing but becoming queen. She was much concerned lest the nature of her husband should prove "too full of the milk of human kindness" to come to the "golden round." So she decided that should an opportunity offer itself for an interview with the king, she would somewhat assist in the fulfilment of the last prophecy.

Then Macbeth made a great feast in the grand old castle of Inverness, and invited the king. Lady Macbeth thought this a golden opportunity for accomplishing the decrees of destiny, and when the old king arrived she told Macbeth that the time had come for him to strike boldly for the crown. As Shakspeare says:—

> "*Macbeth.* My dearest love, Duncan comes here to-night.
> *Lady M.* And when goes hence?
> *Macbeth.* To-morrow.
> *Lady M.* O never shall sun that morrow see."

When this dreadful woman had laid her plot for the taking off of Duncan, she went to the banquet-hall and greeted the royal guest with a face all radiant with smiles, and called him sweet names, and told him fine stories, and brimmed his goblet with wine, so that he thought, we doubt not, that she was the most charming creature in all the world.

It was a stormy night, that of the banquet; it rained, it

thundered, and the wind made dreadful noises in the forests, which events, we have noticed in the stories of the old writers, were apt to occur in early times when something was about to happen. We are also informed that the owls hooted, which seems probable, as owls were quite plenty in those days.

Duncan was conducted to a chamber, which had been prepared for him in great state, when the feast was done. Before retiring he sent to "his most kind hostess" a large diamond as a present; he then fell asleep "in measureless content."

When all was still in the castle Lady Macbeth told her husband that the hour for the deed had come. He hesitated, and reminded her of the consequences if he should fail. She taunted him as being a coward, and told him to "screw his courage up to the sticking-place, and he would not fail." Then he took his dagger, and, according to Shakspeare, made a long speech over it, a speech which, I am sorry to say, stage-struck boys and girls have been mouthing in a most unearthly manner ever since the days of Queen Bess.

Macbeth "screwed his courage up to the sticking-place" indeed, and then and there was the end of the life of Duncan. When the deed was done, he put his poniard into the hand of a sentinel, who was sleeping in the king's room, under the influence of wine that Lady Macbeth had drugged.

When the meal was prepared on the following morning, Macbeth and his lady pretended to be much surprised that the old king did not get up. Macduff, the thane of Fife, who was one of

the royal party, decided at last to go to the king's apartment to see if the king was well. He returned speedily in great excitement, as one may well suppose. As Shakspeare continues the interesting narrative: —

> "*Macduff.* O horror! horror! horror!
> *Macbeth.* What's the matter?
> *Macd.* Confusion now hath made his masterpiece. Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope the Lord's anointed temple and stole thence the life o' the building.
> *Macb.* What is 't you say? the life?"

Macbeth appeared to be greatly shocked by the event, and, with a great show of fury and many hot words, he despatched the sentinels of the king, whom he feigned to believe had done the deed. Lady Macbeth fell upon the floor, pretending, of all things in the world for a woman of such mettle, to faint.

So Macbeth came to the throne. But he remembered that the weird women had foretold that Banquo should become the father of kings, which made him fear for the stability of his throne. He thought to correct the tables of destiny somewhat, and so he induced two desperate men to do by Banquo as he had done by Duncan. The spirit of Banquo was not quiet like Duncan's, but haunted him, and twice appeared to him at a great feast that he gave to the thanes.

Now Banquo had a son named Fleance, whom the murderers were instructed to kill, but who, on the death of his father, eluded his enemies and fled to France. The story-writers say that the

line of Stuart was descended from this son.

Macbeth, like all wicked people who accomplish their ends, was very unhappy. He lived in continual fear lest some of his relations should do by him as he had done by Duncan and Banquo. He became so miserable at last that he decided to consult the witches who had foretold his elevation, to hear what they would say of the rest of his life.

He found them in a dark cave, in the middle of which was a caldron boiling. The old women had put into the pot a toad, the toe of a frog, the wool of a bat, an adder's tongue, an owl's wing, and many other things, of which you will find the list in Shakspeare. Now and then they walked around the pot, repeating a very sensible ditty: —

> "Double, double, toil and trouble;
> Fire, burn; and, caldron, bubble."

They at last called up an apparition, who said that Macbeth should never be overcome by his enemies until Birnam wood should come to the castle of Dunsinane, the royal residence, to attack it.

> "Macbeth shall never vanquished be until
> Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
> Shall come against him."

Now, Birnam wood was twelve miles from Dunsinane

(pronounced Dunsnan), and Macbeth thought that the language was a mystical way of saying that he always would be exempt from danger.

Malcolm, the son of Duncan, the rightful heir to the throne, was a man of spirit, and he went to England to solicit aid of the good King Edward the Confessor against Macbeth. Macduff, having quarrelled with the king, joined Malcolm, and the English king, thinking favorably of their cause, sent a great army into Scotland to discrown Macbeth.

When this army reached Birnam wood, on its way to Dunsinane, Macduff ordered the men each to take the bough of a tree, and to hold it before him as he marched to the attack, that Macbeth might not be able to discover the number and the strength of the assailants. Thus Birnam wood came against Dunsinane. When Macbeth saw the sight his courage failed him, and he saw that his hour had come. A battle ensued, in which he was conquered and killed.

Such is the story, and it seems a pity to spoil so good a story; but I fear that Shakspeare made his wonderful plot of much the same "stuff that dreams are made of."

Duncan was a grandson of Malcolm II. on his father's side, and Macbeth was a grandson of the same king, though on the side of his mother. On the death of Malcolm, in 1033, each claimed the throne. Macbeth, according to rule of Scottish succession, had the best claim, but Duncan obtained the power. Macbeth was naturally dissatisfied, and the insolence of Malcolm, the son of

Duncan, who placed himself at the head of an intriguing party in Northumberland, changed his dissatisfaction to resentment, and he slew the king. He once had a dream, which he deemed remarkable, in which three old women met him and hailed him as thane of Cromarty, thane of Moray, and finally as king. Upon this light basis genius has built one of the most powerful tales of superstition in the language.

Duncan was slain near Elgin, and not in the castle of Inverness. Malcolm avenged his father's death, slaying Macbeth at a place called Lumphanan, and not at Dunsinane, as recorded in the play.

And then Sir Walter Scott finds that "Banquo and his son Fleance" never had any real existence, which leaves no material out of which to construct a ghost.

"So there were no witches, after all?" said Charlie.

"No; no witches."

"No Banquo?"

"No Banquo."

"No ghost?"

"No ghost. Banquo never lived."

"Is that all?" asked Grandmother Golden.

"That is all."

CHAPTER III.
A STORY-TELLING JOURNEY

The Club Reorganized. – The Rhine and the Lands of the Baltic. – Tommy Toby's Story of the Six Boy Kings

AT the first formal meeting of the Club Charlie Leland was chosen President. He was the intellectual leader among the boys, now that the old Class had gone; he was a lad of good principles, bright, generous, and popular. As may be judged from the somewhat discursive dialogue on the piazza, he had a subject well matured in his mind for the literary exercises of the Club.

"We all like stories," he said, "and the Rhine lands are regions of stories, as are the countries of the Baltic Sea. The tales and traditions of the Rhine would give us a large knowledge of German history, and, in fact, of the great empire of Europe, over which Charlemagne ruled, and which now is divided into the kingdoms of Northern Europe. The stories of haunted castles, spectres, water nymphs, sylvan deities, and fairies, if shapes of fancy, are full of instruction, and I know of no subject so likely to prove intensely interesting as the Rhine and the Baltic; and I would like to propose it to the Club for consideration, although,

owing to my position as President, I do not make a formal motion that it be adopted."

Charlie's picturesque allusion to the myths of the Rhine and the Baltic seemed to act like magic on the minds of the Club; and a formal motion that the Rhine and the Baltic be the subject of future literary meetings was at once made, seconded, and unanimously adopted.

Master Lewis had entered the room quietly while the business of the Club was being thus happily and unanimously carried forward. The boys had asked him to be present at the meeting, and to give them his opinions of their plans.

"I think," he said, "that your choice of a subject for your literary evenings is an excellent one, but I notice a tendency to place more stress on the fine old fictions of Germany and the North than upon actual history. These fictions for the most part grew out of the disturbed consciences of bad men in ignorant and barbarous times. They were shapes of the imagination."

He continued: —

"Let me prepare your minds a little for a proper estimate of these alluring and entertaining stories."

MASTER LEWIS ON POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS

The front of Northumberland House, England, used to be ornamented with the bronze statue of a lion, called Percy. A

humorist, wishing to produce a sensation, placed himself in front of the building, one day, and, assuming an attitude of astonishment, exclaimed: —

"It wags, it wags!"

His eyes were riveted on the statue, to which the bystanders readily observed that the exclamation referred. Quite a number of persons collected, each one gazing on the bronze figure, expecting to see the phenomenon. Their imagination supplied the desired marvel, and presently a street full of people fancied that they could see the lion Percy wag his tail!

An old distich runs something as follows: —

> "Who believe that there are witches, there the witches are;
> Who believe there aren't no witches, aren't no witches there."

There is much more good sense than poetry in these lines. The marvels of superstition are witnessed chiefly by those who believe in them.

The sights held as supernatural are usually not more wonderful than those that arise from a disordered imagination. The spectres of demonology are not more fearful than those shapes of fancy produced by opium and dissipation; and the visions of the necromancer are not more wonderful than those that arise from a fever, or even from a troubled sleep.

Yet it is a fact, and a very singular one, that, however at random the fancies of unhealthy intellects may appear

on ordinary subjects, those fancies obtain a greater or less credit when they touch upon supernatural things. Instances of monomaniacs (persons insane on a single subject) who have imagined things quite as marvellous as the most superstitious, but whose illusions have been treated with the greatest ridicule, might be cited almost without limit.

I once knew of an elderly lady, who thought that she was a goose. Making a nest in one corner of the room, she put in it a few kitchen utensils, which she supposed to be eggs, and began to incubate. She found the process of incubation, in her case, a very slow one; and her friends, fearing for her health, called in a doctor. He endeavored to reason with her, but she only replied to his philosophy by stretching out her neck, which she seemed to think was a remarkably long one, and hissing. The old lady had a set of gilt-band china cups and saucers, which, in her eyes, had been a sort of household gods. The knowledge of the fact coming to the ears of the physician, he advised her friends to break the precious treasures, one after another, before her eyes. The plan worked admirably. She immediately left her nest, and ran to the rescue of the china, and the excitement brought her back to her sense of the proprieties of womanhood.

Another old lady, who also resided in a neighboring town, fancied she had become a veritable teapot. She used to silence those who attempted to reason with her by the luminous argument, "See, here (crooking one arm at her side) is the handle, and there (thrusting upward her other arm) is the spout!" What

could be more convincing than that?

Another lady, whose faculties had begun to decline, thought her toes were made of glass; and a comical figure she cut when she went abroad, picking up and putting down her feet with the greatest caution, lest she should injure her precious toes.

Now these cases provoke a smile; but, had these ancient damsels fancied that they were bewitched, or that they were haunted, or that they held communion with the spirits of the invisible world, instead of exciting laughter and pity, they would have occasioned no small excitement among the simple-minded people of the neighborhood in which each resided.

A young Scottish farmer, having been to a fair, was riding homeward on horseback one evening over a lonely road.

He had been drinking rather freely at the fair, according to the custom, and his head was far from steady, and his conscience far from easy.

It was moonlight, and he began to reflect what a dreadful thing it would be to meet a ghost. His fears caused him to look very carefully about him. As he was approaching the old church in Teviotdale, he saw a figure in white standing on the wall of the churchyard, by the highway.

The sight gave him a start, but he continued his journey, hoping that it was his imagination that had invested some natural object with a ghostly shape. But the nearer he approached, the more ghostlike and mysterious did the figure appear.

He stopped, hesitating what to do, and then concluded to ride

slowly. There was no other way to his home than the one he was following. He knew well enough that his mind was somewhat unsettled by drinking, and what he saw might, after all, he thought, be nothing but an illusion. He would approach the object slowly and cautiously, and, when very near it, would put spurs to his horse and dash by.

As he drew near, however, the figure showed unmistakable signs of life, gesticulating mysteriously, and uttering gibberish, that, although odd, sounded surprisingly human.

It was a ghostly night: the dim moonlight filled the silent air, and the landscape was flecked with shadows; it was a ghostly place, – Teviotdale churchyard; and, in perfect keeping with the time and place, stood the figure, doing as a ghost is supposed to do, – talking gibberish to the moon.

The young man's nerves were quite unstrung as he put spurs to his horse for a rush by the object of his fright. As he dashed past, his hair almost bristling with apprehension, the supposed phantom leaped upon the back of the horse and clasped the frightened man about his waist. His apprehensions were startling enough before, but now he was wrought to the highest pitch of terror.

He drove his spurs into his horse, and the animal flew over the earth like a phantom steed. Such riding never before was seen in the winding road of Teviotdale.

In a wonderfully short time the reeking animal stood trembling and panting before his master's gate. The young man

called lustily for his servants, who, coming out, were commanded in frantic tones to "Tak aff the ghaist, tak aff the ghaist!" And "tak aff the ghaist" they did, which proved to be a young lady well known in Teviotdale for her unfortunate history.

She had married an estimable young man, to whom she was very strongly attached, and the brightest worldly prospects seemed opening before her. Her husband was taken ill, and suddenly died. She had confided in him so fondly that the world lost its attractions for her on his decease, and she moodily dwelt upon her misfortune until she became deranged.

Her husband was buried in Teviotdale churchyard, and she was in the habit of stealing away from her friends at night, to weep over his grave. These melancholy visits had the effect of giving a new impetus to her malady, making her for a time the victim of any fancy that chanced to enter her mind.

On the night of our story she imagined that the young farmer was her husband, and awaited his approach with great exhilaration of spirits, determined to give him an affectionate greeting.

The fright came near costing the young man his life. He was taken from his saddle to his bed, where he lay for weeks prostrated by a high nervous fever.

An eminent writer, after relating the above authentic story, remarks: —

"If this woman had dropped from the horse unobserved by the rider, it would have been very hard to convince the honest

farmer that he had not actually performed a part of his journey with a ghost behind him."

True. Teviotdale churchyard would have obtained the reputation of being haunted, and would have been a terror to weak-minded people for many years to come.

The ignorant and simple are not alone subject to illusions of fancy. The great and learned Pascal, than whom France has produced no more worthy philosopher, believed that an awful chasm yawned by his side, into which he was in danger of being thrown. This dreadful vision, with other fancies as gloomy, cast a shadow over an eventful period of his life, and gave a dark coloring to certain of his writings. Yet Pascal, on most subjects, was uncommonly sound in judgment. How unfavorable might have been the influence, had his disorder assumed a different form, and placed before him the delusion of a ghost!

Before giving credit to stories of supernatural events, even from sources that seem to be trustworthy, I hope my young friends will consider duly how liable to error are an unhealthy mind and an excited imagination. Every man is not a knave or a cheat who claims to have witnessed unnatural phenomena, but the judgment of very excellent persons is liable to be infected by illusions of the imagination.

I do not say that we may not receive impressions from the spiritual world. As the geologist, the botanist, the chemist, sees things in nature that the unschooled and undeveloped do not see, so it may be that a spiritually educated mind may know more

of the spiritual world than the gross and selfish mind. I will not enlarge upon this topic or discuss this question; it might not be proper for me so to do.

Master Lewis had aimed to make clear to the boys that it is easy to start a superstitious story, and to suggest that such stories in ignorant times became *legends*.

"I propose," said Willie Clifton, "that the first seven meetings of the Club be devoted to the Rhine."

"We might call this series of meetings *Seven Nights on the Rhine*," added Herman Reed.

"The old members of the Club who made the Rhine journey with Mr. Beal might give us an account of that journey," suggested one of the new boys.

The plans suggested by these remarks met with approval, and a committee was appointed to arrange the literary exercises for seven meetings of the Club, to be known as *Seven Nights on the Rhine*.

The literary exercises for the present evening consisted of the relation of historic ghost stories, chiefly by members of the old Club. Among these were the Province House Stories of Hawthorne, the tradition of Mozart's Requiem, the Cock Lane Ghost, and several incidents from Scott's novels.

The principal story, however, was given by Tommy Toby, an old member of the Club, and a graduate of the Academy.

TOMMY TOBY'S STORY OF ST. DUNSTAN AND THE DEVIL AND THE SIX BOY KINGS

A splendid court had Athelstane, and foreign princes came there to be educated. Among these princes was Louis, the son of Charles the Simple, of France, who, by his long residence in England, obtained the pretty name of *Louis d'Outremer*.

Splendid weddings were celebrated there. The king married one of his sisters to the King of France, another to the Emperor of Germany, another to Hugo the Great, Count of Paris, and another to the Duke of Aquitaine.

After the fight with the Cornish men, all of the land was at peace for many years, and the nobility became very scholarly and the people very polite.

Athelstane had a favorite, a friar, who made more mischief in his day and generation than any other man. This man is known in history by the name of St. Dunstan.

When Dunstan was a boy, he was taken very ill of a fever. One night, being delirious, he got up from his bed, and walked to Glastonbury church, which was then repairing, and ascended the scaffolds and went all over the building; and because he did not tumble off and break his neck, people said that he had performed the feat under the influence of inspiration, being directed by an angel.

This was called Dunstan's first miracle.

When he recovered from the fever, and heard of the miracle that he was said to have wrought, he was greatly pleased, and thought to turn the good opinion of people to his own advantage by performing other miracles.

So he made a harp that played in the wind, – now soft, now loud; now sweet, now solemn. He said that the harp played itself. The people heard the sounds, full of seeming expression, as though touched by airy fingers, and, as they could not discredit the evidence of their own ears, they too reported that the harp played itself. And great was the fame of Dunstan's harp.

But Dunstan, according to old history, became a very bad man; so bad that I cannot tell you the worst things that he did. He discovered his true character at last, notwithstanding his sweetly playing harp.

He pretended to be a magician. Now a magician, in those old times, was one who was supposed to know things beyond the reach of common minds, who pretended to calculate the influence of the stars on a person's destiny, and who understood the effects of poisonous vegetables and minerals. The Saxon magicians were chiefly nobles and monks, and all of their great secrets which are worth knowing are now understood as simple matters of science, even by schoolboys.

Athelstane's conscience must have been rather restless, I fancy, concerning young Edwin, his brother, whom he caused to be drowned; and people with unquiet conscience are usually very superstitious. At any rate, he made a bosom friend of

Dunstan, after the latter took up the black art, and became greatly interested in magic, much to the sorrow of the people.

At last a party of the king's friends resolved that the bad influence of the wily prelate should come to an end. They waylaid him one dark night, in an unfrequented place, and, binding him hand and foot, threw him into a miry marsh. But the water was shallow, and Dunstan kept his nose above the mire, and, after shouting lustily for help, and floundering about for a long time, he succeeded in getting out, to make a great deal of noise and trouble in the world, and we have some strange stories to tell you about him yet.

Athelstane died in the year 940, and he was succeeded upon the throne by his half-brother, Edmund, who was the first of the six boy kings.

Edmund was eighteen years of age when he took his place on the honorable Saxon throne of Alfred the Great. He was a high-spirited young man, warm-hearted and brave. He conquered Cumberland from the Ancient Britons, and protected his kingdom against the fierce sea-kings of the North. Like his great ancestor, King Alfred, he was fond of learning and art. He improved and adorned public places and buildings. He made a very elegant appearance, and held a showy court, and they called him the Magnificent.

But Edmund was fond of convivial suppers, and used himself to drink deeply of wine. He lived fast, and his friends lived fast, though they appeared to live very happily and merrily.

But young men given to festive suppers and to wine are not apt to make a long history; and the history of Edmund the Magnificent, the first boy king, was a short one.

Edmund was succeeded in the year 946 by Edred, his brother, a well-meaning youth, who was the second of the six boy kings of England.

Dunstan had become abbot of Glastonbury Abbey, the church where he performed the miracle when he was sick of the fever. He was very ambitious to meddle in affairs of state, but his bad name had weakened his influence with Edmund, and it seemed likely to do the same with well-intentioned Edred. He desired to create a public impression again that he was a saint.

He retired to a cell and there spent his time working very hard as a smith, and – so the report went – in devotion.

Then the people said: "How humble and penitent Dunstan is! He has the back-ache all day, and the leg-ache all night, and he suffers all for the cause of purity and truth."

Then Dunstan told the people that the Devil came to tempt him, which, with his aches for the good cause, made his situation very trying.

The Devil, he said, wanted him to lead a life of selfish gratification, but he would not be tempted to do a thing like that; he never thought of himself, – oh, no, good soul, not he.

The people said that Dunstan must have become a very holy man, or the Devil would not appear to him bodily.

One day a great noise was heard issuing from the retreat of this

man, and filling all the air for miles, the like of which was never known before. The people were much astonished. Some of them went to Dunstan to inquire the cause. He told them a story of a miracle more marvellous than any that he had previously done.

The Devil came to him, he said, as he was at work at his forge, and tempted him to lead a life of pleasure. He quickly drew his pincers from the fire, and seized his tormentor by the nose, which put him in such pain that he bellowed so lustily as to shake the hills. The people said that it was the bellowing of the Evil One that they had heard.

This wonderful story ended to Dunstan's liking, for the artful do flourish briefly sometimes.

The boy king Edred was in ill-health, and suffered from a lingering illness for years. He felt the need of the counsel of a good man. He said to himself, —

"There is Dunstan, a man who has given up all selfish feelings and aspirations, a man whom even the Devil cannot corrupt. I will bring him to court, and will make him my adviser."

Then pure-hearted Edred brought the foxy prelate to his court, and made him – of all things in the world! – the royal treasurer.

Edred died in the year 955, having for nine years aimed to do justly and to govern well. His decease, like his brother's before him, was sincerely lamented.

He left a well-ordered government, except in the department of the treasury. Some remarkable "irregularities" – as stealing is sometimes called nowadays – had taken place there, some of the

public money having become mixed up with Dunstan's.

The next of the six boy kings of England was Edwy the Fair, – fifteen years of age when he ascended the throne.

He was the son of Edmund, – a handsome boy, and as good at heart as he was handsome. Though so young, he had married a beautiful princess, named Elgiva. So we have here a boy king and a girl queen.

As if one bad prelate were not enough, there was, besides Dunstan, another great mischief-maker, Odo, the Dane, Archbishop of Canterbury.

The coronation of Edwy was the occasion of great rejoicing. They had a sumptuous feast in the evening, attended by all the prelates and thanes. Edwy liked the society of the girl queen better than that of these rude people, and in the midst of the festivities he retired to the queen's apartment to see her and the queen mother.

Odo, the archbishop, noticed that the boy king had left his place at the tables. He rightly guessed the reason, and deemed such conduct disrespectful to himself and to the guests. So he went and made complaint to Dunstan, and Dunstan went to look for the missing king. When the latter came to the queen's apartment, and was refused admittance, he broke open the door, upbraided Edwy for his absence from the feast, and, seizing him by the collar, dragged and pushed him roughly back to the banqueting-hall.

Edwy, of course, resented this treatment. Dunstan replied

by accusing him of great impropriety, and talked in a very overbearing way, and Edwy, though a considerate boy, and of a mild disposition, at last lost his temper.

"You have a very nice sense of propriety," he said. "You were the treasurer in the last reign, I believe. I intend to call you to account for the way that you fulfilled your trust."

Dunstan was greatly astonished, and, guilty man that he was, he began to feel very unsafe.

The boy king made the attempt which he had threatened, to call Dunstan to account for his late doings in the treasury. But the latter, when he found that Edwy was in earnest, fled to Ghent.

The nobles saw somewhat into his true character when he thus disappeared from court, and a party of men was sent in pursuit of him to put out his eyes. But he was too foxy to be caught, and arrived safely in Belgium at last, to make a great deal of trouble in the world yet.

Incited by Dunstan, Odo raised a rebellion. When he had drawn to himself a sufficient party to insure his personal safety, he proclaimed Edgar, the younger brother of Edwy, king.

Dunstan returned to England, and joined Odo, and this precious pair soon discovered the value of their piety, as you shall presently see.

Edwy the Fair loved the girl queen. She was beautiful as well as amiable, and was as devoted to her husband as she was lovely. Odo and Dunstan wished to break the spirit of Edwy, and thought to accomplish their end by capturing the queen. They caused her

to be stolen from one of the royal palaces, and her cheeks to be burned with hot irons, in order to destroy the beauty that had so enchanted the boy king. They then sent her to Ireland, and sold her as a slave.

The Irish people pitied the weeping maiden, and loved her. They healed the scars on her cheeks, that the hot irons had made. When her beauty returned, she grew light-hearted again, and all her dreams were of the king.

Then the Irish people released her from bondage, and gave her money to return to Edwy.

She entered England full of joyful anticipations, and made rapid journeys towards the place where Edwy held his court. But Odo and Dunstan, who had been apprised of her coming, intercepted her, and ordered that she should be tortured and put to death. They caused the cords of her limbs to be severed, so that she was unable to walk or move. The beautiful girl survived the cutting and maiming but a few days.

Weeping continually over her disappointments and sorrows, and shrieking at times from the acuteness of her pain, she died at Gloucester, – perhaps the most unfortunate princess who ever came to the English throne.

When Edwy heard of her death, he ceased to struggle for his right; he cared for nothing more. He grew paler and thinner day by day, his beauty faded, his thoughts turned heavenward, and he aspired to a better crown and kingdom. He died of a broken heart before he reached the age of twenty, having aimed for three

years to govern well.

Edwy's short reign was followed by that of his brother Edgar, who succeeded to the Anglo-Saxon throne in the year 959, and was an unprincipled and dissolute king.

He was fifteen years of age when he began to reign. One of his first acts was to reward the intriguing Dunstan for his crimes by bestowing upon him the archbishopric of Canterbury. Think of conferring an archbishopric as the price of a brother's ruin and death! Ah, better to be Edwy the Fair in his early grave, with the birds singing and the violets waving above him, than the cruel boy Edgar upon the throne.

He resigned the government almost wholly to Dunstan, his primate, and spent his time in gayety, pleasure, and ease. He was unstable, profligate, and vicious. He once broke into a convent and carried off a beautiful nun, named Editha. For this violation of the sanctuary, Dunstan commanded him not to wear his crown for seven years, which was no great punishment, as he could ornament his head as well in some other way.

Dunstan certainly possessed great ability as a statesman. He employed the vast armaments of England against the neighboring sovereigns, and compelled the King of Scotland and the Princes of Wales, of the Isle of Man, and of the Orkneys, to do homage to Edgar.

The boy king annually made a voyage around England in great state, accompanied by princes and nobles.

On one of these occasions, when he wished to visit the Abbey

of St. John the Baptist, on the River Dee, he appointed eight crowned kings to pull the oars of his barge, while he himself acted as steersman.

The vainglorious young sovereign then went into the grand old abbey and said his prayers, after which he returned in the same pomp, rowed by the eight subject kings.

This event is celebrated in the songs and ballads of the olden time, which tell of the glory of England, when the eight crowns glimmered on the sun-covered waters of the Dee.

Edgar, who was King of England up to the year 975, married twice, and left two sons. The elder of these was named Edward, the son of a good queen, Ethelfreda; the other was named Ethelred, the son of the bad queen, Elfrida.

Edward had the best claim to the throne, but the intriguing Elfrida endeavored to secure the succession to her own son, Ethelred, a boy about seven years old. Dunstan decided against her, and caused Edward to be crowned. The boy king was at this time thirteen years of age.

He was an amiable, susceptible boy, loving every one, and wishing every one well, and believing, with childish simplicity, that all the world was as pure at heart and as unselfish as himself.

But Elfrida hated him, and resolved that his reign should be a short one, if it was within the reach of her arts to make it so.

She retired with little Ethelred to Crofe Castle, a beautiful country seat in Dorsetshire. Green forests waved around it, and blue hills seemed to semicircle the sky. The silver horn of the

hunter often echoed through the stream-cleft woodlands, and merrily blew before the castle gate.

Edward and a youthful court party went hunting one day in the dreamy old forests of Dorsetshire. Chancing to ride near Crofe Castle, Edward thought that he would like to see Elfrida and his little brother. So he separated himself from his attendants, rode to the castle, and blew his horn.

Elfrida presently appeared, her face glowing with smiles.

"Thou art welcome, dear king," she said, in a winning way. "Pray dismount and come in, and we will have pleasant talk and good cheer."

"No, madam," said Edward. "My company would notice my absence, and think that some evil had befallen me. Please bring me a cup of wine, and I will drink to your health and to my little brother's, in my saddle, and then I must away with speed."

Elfrida turned away to order the wine. She gave another order at the same time in a whisper to an armed attendant.

The wine was brought. Elfrida filled the cup and handed it to the boy king. As he held it up it sparkled in the light. Elfrida stood in the gateway, holding little Ethelred by the hand.

"Health," said Edward, putting the bright cup to his lips.

There crept up behind him softly an armed man, whose muscles stood out like brass, and whose eyes burned like fire. He sprang upon the boy king and stabbed him in the back. The affrighted horse dashed away, dragging the bleeding body by the stirrup, – on, on, on, over rut and rock, bush and brier.

They tracked him by his blood. They found his broken body at last. They took it up tenderly and with many tears, and laid it beneath the moss and fern.

When little Ethelred saw his brother stabbed and bleeding, and dragged over the rough earth, he began to weep. Elfrida beat him and sent him to his chamber.

What a night was that when the moon silvered the forest! One boy king mangled and dead on the cold ground, and another boy king weeping in the forest castle, and beaten and bruised for being touched at heart at the murder of his bright, innocent brother.

Ethelred came to the English throne at the age of ten. He was the last of the six boy kings.

The people held him in disfavor from the first on account of his bad mother, and when Dunstan put the crown on his head at Kingston, he pronounced a curse instead of a blessing. Neither the blessing nor the curse of a man like Dunstan could be of much account, and we do not believe that the latter did the little boy Ethelred any harm.

Dunstan was now old and as full of craft and wickedness as he was full of years. He continued to practise jugglery, which he called performing miracles, whenever he found his influence declining, or had an important end to accomplish.

In the reign of Ethelred Dunstan died. As he had used politics to help the church, he was made a saint. This was in a rude and ignorant age.

Poor boy kings! Edmund was murdered; Edwy died of a broken heart; Edward was stabbed and dragged to death at his horse's heels; and Ethelred lost his kingdom. Three of them were good and three were bad. Only one of them was happy.

Edmund, eighteen years of age, reigned from 940 to 946; Edred, 946 to 955; Edwy, fifteen years of age, 955 to 958; Edgar, fifteen years of age, 958 to 975; Edward, thirteen years of age, 975 to 979; Ethelred, ten years of age, 979 to 1016.

So the boy kings reigned in all seventy-six years, and governed England in their youth for nearly fifty years.

"I like your story, Master Toby," said Master Lewis; "as a story, I mean. The historic facts are mainly as you have given them, but I think St. Dunstan's intentions may have been good, after all. He lived in an age of superstition, when it was believed that any political act was right that would increase the power of the church. Christianity then was not what it had been in the early church nor what it is to-day. Men must be somewhat regarded in the light of the times in which they lived."

The literary exercises for the evening were thus closed.

CHAPTER IV.
GERMAN STORIES

The Story of the Emperor William. – The Story of "Sneeze with Delight." – Poem-Stories

AT the first meeting of the Club to study the history and to relate stories of the Rhine and the North, Master Lewis was present, and, after the preliminary business had been transacted, said that he had some suggestions in mind which he wished to make.

"I notice," he said, "that many of you have been obtaining from the Boston Public Library English translations of the works of Hauff, Hoffman, Baron de La Motte Fouqué, Grimm, Schiller, and Tieck, and I think that there is danger that story-reading and story-telling may occupy too much of your time and thought. Let me propose that a brief history of each author be given with the story at the meetings of the Club, so that you may at least obtain some knowledge of German literature."

The suggestion met with the approval of all, and it was voted that at future meetings the biographies of authors should be given with the stories, and that only the stories of the best authors should be selected, except in the case of legends of places.

"I have another proposal to make," said Master Lewis. "You are not very familiar with German politics. Suppose you let me give you from time to time some short talks about the German Government and its ministers, – King William, Count Bismarck, and Count Von Moltke."

This kind offer was received with cheers and placed upon record with thanks.

"Perhaps you may be willing to open our exercises to-night with one of the talks you have planned," said the President. "It would be a helpful beginning, which we would appreciate."

"I am not as well prepared as I would like," said the teacher; "but as I believe in making a first meeting of this kind a sort of a model in its plan and purpose, I will in a free way tell you something of

THE STORY OF THE EMPEROR WILLIAM

The life of the Emperor of Germany has been full of thrilling and dramatic scenes.

When he was a boy, Germany – the great Germany of Charlemagne – was divided into states, each having its own ruler. His father was Frederick William III., King of Prussia, and his mother was Louise, an excellent woman; his youth was passed amid the excitements of Napoleon's conquests. Russia and Prussia combined against Napoleon; Russia was placed at a disadvantage in two doubtful battles, when she deserted the

Prussian cause, and made a treaty of peace.

Napoleon then sent for the King of Prussia, to tell him what he would leave him.

The lovely Queen Louise went with the unfortunate king to meet the French conqueror, hoping thereby to obtain more favorable terms. But Napoleon treated her with scorn, boasting that he was like "waxed cloth to rain."

He, however, offered the queen a rose, in a softer moment.

"Yes," said Louise, thinking of her kingdom, "but with Magdeburg."

"It is *I* who give, and *you* who take," answered Napoleon haughtily.

Napoleon took away from Prussia all the lands on the Elbe and the Rhine, and, uniting these to other German states, formed a kingdom for his brother Jerome.

The good Queen Louise pined away with grief and shame at her country's losses, and died two years after of a broken heart. So the boyhood of William was very sad.

It is said that children fulfil the ideals of their mothers. Poor Louise little thought that her second son would one day be crowned Emperor of all Germany in the palace of the French kings at Versailles.

William was born in 1797; he ascended the throne as King of Prussia in 1861. How widely these dates stand apart!

On the day of his coronation as King of Prussia, he exhibited his own character and religious faith by putting the crown on his

own head. "I rule," he said, "by the favor of God and no one else."

Under his vigorous rule Prussia grew in military power, and excited the jealousy of the French people. Napoleon III., on a slight pretext, declared war with Prussia. In this war Prussia was victorious.

A MEMORABLE HOUR

That was indeed a memorable hour in the emperor's life when he met the fallen Emperor of the French in the Chateau Bellevue, on a hill of the Meuse overlooking Sedan. The king and the emperor had met before; they then were equals, brother rulers of two of the most powerful nations on earth. They met now as conqueror and captive, and the one held the fate of the other in his hands.

"We were both moved at seeing each other again under such circumstances," said King William. "I had seen Napoleon only three years before, at the summit of his power. What my feelings were is more than I can describe."

The king spoke first.

"God has given victory to me in the war that has been declared against me."

"The war," said Napoleon, "was not sought by me. I did not desire it. I declared it in obedience to the public sentiment of France."

"Your Majesty," said the king, "made the war to meet public

opinion; but your ministers created that public opinion."

"Your artillery, sire, won the battle. The Prussian artillery is the finest in the world."

"Has your Majesty any conditions to propose?"

"None: I have no power; I am a prisoner."

"Where is the government in France with which I can treat?"

"In Paris: the empress and the ministers. I am powerless."

King William, as you know, marched to Paris, and at last made conditions of peace almost as hard as Napoleon I. had made with his father. The German princes in his hour of victory offered him the crown of Southern Germany, and he was crowned at Versailles, in the great hall of mirrors, Emperor of Germany.

Let me now speak of the kaiser's

MILITARY CAREER

It is rare that men and women live to celebrate their seventy-fifth birthday. The age allotted to mortals by the Psalmist is threescore and ten.

But the hale old Emperor of Germany has not only recently commemorated the completion of his eighty-sixth year, but – what is still more striking – at the same time marked the seventy-sixth year of his service as an officer in the Prussian army.

It is related that, on the 22d of March, 1807, on which day William was just ten years old, his father, then King of Prussia, called him into his study and said, —

"My son, I appoint you an officer in my army. You will serve in Company No. 1 of the First Guard Regiment."

The little prince drew himself up, gave his father a prompt military salute, and retired. An hour later he reappeared before the king, attired in the uniform of his new rank; and, repeating the salute, announced to his royal father that "he was ready for duty."

Even at so early an age, William was no fancy soldier, holding rank and title, and leaving to humbler officers the duties and hardships. He at once devoted himself to the task of a junior ensign; and from that time onward became an officer in truth, laboring zealously to master the military science, and rising step by step, not by favor, but by merit and seniority.

At the age of eighteen, William was in Blucher's army at Waterloo, taking an active part in the overthrow of Napoleon, and witnessing that mighty downfall. A little later, he was promoted to the rank of major for cool courage under heavy fire; and from that time on, for nearly half a century, William devoted himself wholly to the military profession.

When he ascended the Prussian throne, there was no more unpopular man in the kingdom. He had put down the revolutionary rising in Berlin with grim and relentless hand; and the people believed that their new monarch was a cruel and haughty tyrant.

It was not until after the great triumph over Austria, in 1866, that the Prussians began to discover that King William was not

only a valiant soldier, but an ardent lover of his country, and a kind-hearted, whole-souled father of his people.

THE STATESMAN

For the last sixteen years, no sovereign in Europe has been more devotedly beloved and revered by his subjects. Although William is autocratic, and believes in his "divine right" to rule as sturdily as did his mediæval ancestors, and has not a little contempt for popular clamors and popular rights, his reign has been on the whole brilliantly wise and successful. While this has been in a great measure due to the presence of a group of great men around him, – notably of Bismarck and Von Moltke, – the emperor himself has had no small share in promoting the power and towering fortunes of Germany.

His paternal ways with his people, his military knowledge, his fine, frank, hearty, chivalrous nature, his sound sense in the choice of his advisers, and his perception of the wisdom of their counsels, have much aided in raising Prussia and Germany to their present height in Europe.

Beneath his commanding and rugged exterior there beats a very kindly heart. Many incidents have been related to show the simple good-nature of his character. In his study, on the table at which he writes, there has long remained a rusty old cavalry helmet, the relic of some military association of the emperor.

Whenever the death-warrant of a condemned criminal is

brought to him to sign, the emperor looks at it, and then slyly slips the fatal document under the helmet. Sometimes his ministers, anxious that the warrants should be signed, take occasion, in his absence from the study, to pull the papers out from beneath the helmet, just enough to catch their master's eye.

Most often, however William, on perceiving them, quietly pushes them back again, without a word. So great is his repugnance to dooming even a hardened criminal to death, by a mere scratch of his pen.

At eighty-six, the stalwart old kaiser cannot hope to dwell much longer among his people; but it will be very long before his fine qualities, soldierly courage, and affectionate nature will grow dim in the memory of the fatherland.

The stories related at this meeting were largely from Grimm and Fouqué, and are to be found in American books.

The most pleasing of the stories, told by Herman Reed, is not so well known, and we give it here.

SNEEZE WITH DELIGHT

Many, many years ago there lived in an old German town a good cobbler and his wife. They had one child, Jamie, a handsome boy of some eight years. They were poor people; and the good wife, to help her husband, had a stall in the great market, where she sold fruit and herbs.

One day the cobbler's wife was at the market as usual, and

her little boy was with her, when a strange old woman entered the stalls.

The woman hardly seemed human. She had red eyes, a wizened, pinched-up face, and her nose was sharp and hooked, and almost reached to her chin. Her dress was made up of rags and tatters. Never before had there entered the market such a repulsive-looking person.

"Are you Hannah the herb-woman?" she asked, bobbing her head to and fro. "Eh?"

"Yes."

"Let me see, let me see; you may have some herbs I want."

She thrust her skinny hands into the herbs, took them up and smelled of them, crushing them as she did so.

Having mauled them to her heart's content, she shook her head, saying, —

"Bad stuff; rubbish; nothing I want; rubbish, rubbish, – eh?"

"You are an impudent old hag," said the cobbler's boy, Jamie; "you have crushed our herbs, held them under your ugly nose, and now condemn them."

"Aha, my son, you do not like my nose, – eh? You shall have one, too, to pay for this, – eh?"

"If you want to buy anything, pray do so at once," said the cobbler's wife; "you are keeping other customers away."

"I *will* buy something," said the hag viciously; "I *will* buy. I will take these six cabbages. Six? That is more than I can carry, as I have to lean upon my stick. You must let your boy take them

home for me."

This was but a reasonable request, and the cobbler's wife consented.

Jamie did as he was bid, and followed the hag to her home. It was a long distance there. At last the beldam stopped in an out-of-the-way part of the town, before a strange-looking house. She touched a rusty key to the door, which flew open, and, as the two entered, a most astonishing sight was revealed to Jamie's eyes.

The interior of the house was like a throne-room in a palace, the ceilings were of marble and gold, and the furniture was jewelled ebony.

The old woman took a silver whistle and blew it. Little animals – guinea pigs and squirrels – answered the call. They were dressed like children, and walked on two legs; they could talk and understand what was said to them. Was the beldam an enchantress, and were these little animals children, whom she had stolen and made victims of her enchantments?

"Sit down, child," said the old woman, in a soft voice, "sit down; you have had a heavy load to carry. Sit down, and I will make you a delicious soup; one that you will remember as long as you live. It will contain some of the herb for which I was looking in the market and did not find. Sit down."

The beldam hurried hither and thither, and with the help of the guinea pigs and squirrels quickly made the soup.

"There, my child, eat that. It contains the magic herb I could not find in the market. Why did your mother not have it?

Whoever eats that will become a magic cook."

Jamie had never tasted such delicious soup. It seemed to intoxicate him. It produced a stupor. He felt a great change coming over him. He seemed to become one of the family of guinea pigs and squirrels, and, like them, to serve their mistress. Delightful little people they were, – he came to regard them as brothers; and time flew by.

Years flew by, and other years, when one day the dame took her crutch and went out. She left her herb-room open, and he went in. In one of the secret cupboards he discovered an herb that had the same scent as the soup he had eaten years before. He examined it. The leaves were blue and the blossoms crimson. He smelt of it.

He began to sneeze, – such a delightful sneeze! He smelt, and sneezed again. Suddenly he seemed to awake, as from a dream, – as though some strange enchantment had been broken.

"I must go home," he said. "How mother will laugh when I tell her my dream! I ought not to have gone to sleep in a strange house."

He went out into the street. The children and idlers began to follow him.

"Oho, oho! look, what a strange dwarf! Look at his nose! Never the like was seen before."

Jamie tried to discover the dwarf, but could not see him.

He reached the market. His mother was there, a sad old woman, in the same place. She seemed altered; looked many

years older than when he left her. She leaned her head wearily on her hand.

"What is the matter, mother dear?" he asked.

She started up.

"What do you want of me, you poor dwarf? Do not mock me. I have had sorrow, and cannot endure jokes."

"But, mother, what has happened?"

He rushed towards her to embrace her, but she leaped into the air.

The market-women came to her and drove him away.

He went to his father's cobbler's shop. His father was there, but he looked like an old man.

"Good gracious! what is that?" said he wildly, as Jamie appeared.

"How are you getting on, master?" asked Jamie.

"Poorly enough. I'm getting old, and have no one to help me."

"Have you no son?"

"I *had* one, years ago."

"Where is he now?"

"Heaven only knows. He was kidnapped one market-day, seven years ago."

"Seven years ago!"

Jamie turned away. The people on the street stared at him, and the ill-bred children followed him. He chanced to pass a barber's shop, where was a looking-glass in the window. He stopped and saw himself.

The sight filled him with terror. He was a dwarf, *with a nose like that of the strange old woman*.

What should he do?

He remembered that the old woman had said that the eating of the magic soup that contained the magic herb would make him a magic cook.

He went to the palace of the duke and inquired for the major domo. He was kindly received, as dwarfs are in such places, and he asked to be employed in the kitchen, and allowed to show his skill in preparing some of the rare dishes for the table.

No one in the ducal palace was able to produce such food as he. He was made chief cook in a little time, and enjoyed the duke's favor for two years. He grew fat, was honored at the great feasts, and became the wonder of the town.

Now happened the strangest thing of his strange life.

(Ye that have eyes, prepare to open them now.)

One morning he went to the goose market to buy some nice fat geese, such as he knew the duke would relish. He purchased a cage of three geese, but he noticed that one of the geese did not quack and gabble like the others.

"The poor thing must be sick," he said; "I will make haste to kill her."

To his great astonishment, the goose made answer: —

"Stop my breath,
And I will cause your early death."

Then he knew that the goose was some enchanted being, and he resolved to spare her life.

"You have not always had feathers on you, as now?" said the dwarf.

"No; I am Mimi, daughter of Waterbrook the Great."

"Prithee be calm; I will be your friend; I know how to pity you. I was once a squirrel myself."

Now the duke made a great feast, and invited the prince. The prince was highly pleased with the ducal dishes, and praised the cook.

"But there is one dish that you have not provided," said the prince.

"What is that?" asked the duke.

"*Pâté Suzerain.*"

The duke ordered the dwarf to make the rare dish for the next banquet.

The dwarf obeyed.

When the prince had tasted, he pushed it aside, and said, —

"There is one thing lacking, – one peculiar herb. It is not like that which is provided for my own table."

The duke, in a towering passion, sent for the dwarf.

"If you do not prepare this dish rightly for the next banquet," he said, "you shall lose your head."

Now the dwarf was in great distress, and he went to consult with the goose.

"I know what is wanting," said the goose; "it is an herb called Sneeze with Delight. I will help you find it."

The dwarf took the goose under his arm, and asked of the guard, who had been placed over him until he should prepare the dish, permission to go into the garden.

They were allowed to go. They searched in vain for a long time; but at last the goose spied the magic leaf across the lake, and swam across, and returned with it in her bill.

"'Tis the magic herb the old woman used in the soup," said the dwarf. "Thank the Fates! we may now be delivered from our enchantment."

He took a long, deep sniff of the herb. He then sneezed with delight, and lo! he began to grow, and his nose began to shrink, and he was transformed to the handsomest young man in all the land.

He took the goose under his arm, and walked out of the palace yard. He carried her to a great magician, who delivered her from her enchantment, and she sneezed three sneezes, and became the handsomest lady in all the kingdom.

Now, Mimi's father was very rich, and he loaded Jamie with presents, which were worth a great fortune.

Then handsome Jamie married the lovely Mimi; and he brought his old father and mother to live with them in a palace, and they were all exceedingly happy.

"What is the moral of such a tale as that?" asked one of the Club.

"If you have any crookedness, to find the magic herb," said Charlie.

Charlie Leland, the President, closed the exercises with some translations of his own, which he called "Stories in Verse." We give two of them here; each relates an incident of Eberhard, the good count, whom German poets have often remembered in song.

THE RICHEST PRINCE

In a stately hall in the city of Worms,
A festive table was laid;
The lamps a softened radiance shed,
And sweet the music played.

Then the Saxon prince, and Bavaria's lord,
And the Palsgrave of the Rhine,
And Würtemberg's monarch, Eberhard,
Came into that hall to dine.

Said the Saxon prince, with pride elate,
"My lords, I have wealth untold:
There are gems in my mountain gorges great;
In my valleys are mines of gold."

"Thou hast boasted well," said Bavaria's lord,
"But mine is a nobler land:

I have famous cities, and castled towns,
And convents old and grand."

"And better still is my own fair land,"
Said the Palsgrave of the Rhine:
"There are sunny vineyards upon the hills;
In the valleys are presses of wine."

Then bearded Eberhard gently said,
"My lords, I have neither gold,
Nor famous cities, nor castled towns,
Nor convents grand and old.

"I have no vineyards upon the hills,
In the valleys no presses of wine;
But God has given a treasure to me
As noble as any of thine.

"I wind my horn on the rocky steep,
In the heart of the greenwood free,
And I safely lay me down and sleep
On any subject's knee."

Oh, then the princes were touched at heart,
And they said, in that stately hall,
"Thou art richer than we, Count Eberhard;
Thy treasure is greater than all."

EQUALITY

The banners waved, the bugles rung,
The fight was hot and hard;
Beneath the walls of Doffingen,
Fast fell the ranks of Suabian men
Led on by Eberhard.

Count Ulric was a valiant youth,
The son of Eberhard;
The banners waved, the bugles rung,
His spearmen on the foe he flung,
And pressed them sore and hard.

"Ulric is slain!" the nobles cried, —
The bugles ceased to blow;
But soon the monarch's order ran:
"My son is as another man,
Press boldly on the foe!"

And fiercer now the fight began,
And harder fell each blow;
But still the monarch's order ran:
"My son is as another man,
Press, press upon the foe!"

Oh, many fell at Doffingen
Before the day was done;
But victory blessed the Suabian men,
And happy bugles played again,
At setting of the sun.

CHAPTER V.
THE SECOND MEETING OF THE CLUB

Constance. – The Story of Huss. – Bismarck and the German Government. – The Story of the Heart of Stone. – Poem. – Seven Nights on the Rhine: Night First

THE second meeting of the Club was opened by Mr. Beal with an account of Constance, and of the great Council that convened there in 1414.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.