# Famous Stories Every Child Should Know eBook

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BOOKRAGS

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## CHAPTER



## STORIES EVERY CHILD SHOULD KNOW

## I

### A CHILD'S DREAM OF A STAR

There was once a child, and he strolled about a good deal, and thought of a number of things. He had a sister, who was a child too, and his constant companion. These two

used to wonder all day long. They wondered at the beauty of the flowers; they wondered at the height and blueness of the sky; they wondered at the depth of the bright water; they wondered at the goodness and the power of God who made the lovely world.

They used to say to one another, sometimes, supposing all the children upon earth were to die, would the flowers, and the water, and the sky be sorry? They believed they would be sorry. For, said they, the buds are the children of the flowers, and the little playful streams that gambol down the hill-sides are the children of the water; and the smallest bright specks playing at hide and seek in the sky all night, must surely be the children of the stars; and they would all be grieved to see their playmates, the children of men, no more.

There was one clear shining star that used to come out in the sky before the rest, near the church spire, above the graves. It was larger and more beautiful, they thought, than all the others, and every night they watched for it, standing hand in hand at a window. Whoever saw it first cried out, “I see the star!” And often they cried out both together, knowing so well when it would rise, and where. So they grew to be such friends with it, that, before lying down in their beds, they always looked out once again, to bid it good-night; and when they were turning round to sleep, they used to say, “God bless the star!”

But while she was still very young, oh very, very young, the sister drooped, and came to be so weak that she could no longer stand in the window at night; and then the child looked sadly out by himself, and when he saw the star, turned round and said to the patient pale face on the bed, “I see the star!” and then a smile would come upon the face, and a little weak voice used to say, “God bless my brother and the star!”

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And so the time came all too soon! when the child looked out alone, and when there was no face on the bed; and when there was a little grave among the graves, not there before; and when the star made long rays down toward him, as he saw it through his tears.

Now, these rays were so bright, and they seemed to make such a shining way from earth to Heaven, that when the child went to his solitary bed, he dreamed about the star; and dreamed that, lying where he was, he saw a train of people taken up that sparkling road by angels. And the star, opening, showed him a great world of light, where many more such angels waited to receive them.

All these angels, who were waiting, turned their beaming eyes upon the people who were carried up into the star; and some came out from the long rows in which they stood, and fell upon the people's necks, and kissed them tenderly, and went away with them down avenues of light, and were so happy in their company, that lying in his bed he wept for joy.

But, there were many angels who did not go with them, and among them one he knew. The patient face that once had lain upon the bed was glorified and radiant, but his heart found out his sister among all the host.

His sister's angel lingered near the entrance of the star, and said to the leader among those who had brought the people thither:

"Is my brother come?"

And he said "No."

She was turning hopefully away, when the child stretched out his arms, and cried, "O, sister, I am here! Take me!" and then she turned her beaming eyes upon him, and it was night; and the star was shining into the room, making long rays down towards him as he saw it through his tears.

From that hour forth, the child looked out upon the star as on the home he was to go to, when his time should come; and he thought that he did not belong to the earth alone, but to the star too, because of his sister's angel gone before.

There was a baby born to be a brother to the child; and while he was so little that he never yet had spoken word he stretched his tiny form out on his bed, and died.

Again the child dreamed of the open star, and of the company of angels, and the train of people, and the rows of angels with their beaming eyes all turned upon those people's faces.

Said his sister's angel to the leader:

“Is my brother come?”

And he said “Not that one, but another.”

As the child beheld his brother’s angel in her arms, he cried, “O, sister, I am here!  Take me!” And she turned and smiled upon him, and the star was shining.

He grew to be a young man, and was busy at his books when an old servant came to him and said:

“Thy mother is no more.  I bring her blessing on her darling son!”

Again at night he saw the star, and all that former company.  Said his sister’s angel to the leader:

“Is my brother come?”

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And he said, “Thy mother!”

A mighty cry of joy went forth through all the star, because the mother was reunited to her two children. And he stretched out his arms and cried, “O, mother, sister, and brother, I am here! Take me!” And they answered him, “Not yet,” and the star was shining.

He grew to be a man, whose hair was turning gray, and he was sitting in his chair by the fireside, heavy with grief, and with his face bedewed with tears, when the star opened once again.

Said his sister’s angel to the leader: “Is my brother come?”

And he said, “Nay, but his maiden daughter.”

And the man who had been the child saw his daughter, newly lost to him, a celestial creature among those three, and he said, “My daughter’s head is on my sister’s bosom, and her arm is around my mother’s neck, and at her feet there is the baby of old time, and I can bear the parting from her, God be praised!”

And the star was shining.

Thus the child came to be an old man, and his once smooth face was wrinkled, and his steps were slow and feeble, and his back was bent. And one night as he lay upon his bed, his children standing round, he cried, as he had cried so long ago:

“I see the star!”

They whispered one to another, “He is dying.”

And he said, “I am. My age is falling from me like a garment, and I move towards the star as a child. And O, my Father, now I thank Thee that it has so often opened, to receive those dear ones who await me!”

And the star was shining, and it shines upon his grave.

## II

### THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER; OR, THE BLACK BROTHERS

I.—HOW THE AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM OF THE BLACK BROTHERS WAS INTERFERED WITH BY SOUTHWEST WIND, ESQUIRE

In a secluded and mountainous part of Stiria there was, in old time, a valley of the most surprising and luxuriant fertility. It was surrounded, on all sides, by steep and rocky mountains, rising into peaks, which were always covered with snow, and from which a number of torrents descended in constant cataracts. One of these fell westward, over the face of a crag so high, that, when the sun had set to everything else, and all below was darkness, his beams still shone full upon this waterfall, so that it looked like a shower of gold. It was, therefore, called by the people of the neighbourhood, the Golden River. It was strange that none of these streams fell into the valley itself. They all descended on the other side of the mountains, and wound away through broad plains and by populous cities. But the clouds were drawn so constantly to the snowy hills, and rested so softly in the circular hollow, that in time of drought and heat, when all the country round was burnt up, there was still rain in the little valley; and its crops were so heavy, and its hay so high, and its apples so red, and its grapes so blue, and its wine so rich, and its honey so sweet that it was a marvel to everyone who beheld it, and was commonly called the Treasure Valley.

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The whole of this little valley belonged to three brothers called Schwartz, Hans, and Gluck. Schwartz and Hans, the two elder brothers, were very ugly men, with overhanging eyebrows and small, dull eyes, which were always half shut, so that you couldn't see into *them*, and always fancied they saw very far into *you*. They lived by farming the Treasure Valley, and very good farmers they were. They killed everything that did not pay for its eating. They shot the blackbirds, because they pecked the fruit; and killed the hedgehogs, lest they should suck the cows; they poisoned the crickets for eating the crumbs in the kitchen; and smothered the cicadas, which used to sing all summer in the lime-trees. They worked their servants without any wages, till they would not work any more, and then quarrelled with them, and turned them out of doors without paying them. It would have been very odd, if with such a farm, and such a system of farming, they hadn't got very rich; and very rich they *did* get. They generally contrived to keep their corn by them till it was very dear, and then sell it for twice its value; they had heaps of gold lying about on their floors, yet it was never known that they had given so much as a penny or a crust in charity; they never went to mass; grumbled perpetually at paying tithes; and were, in a word, of so cruel and grinding a temper, as to receive from all those with whom they had any dealings the nickname of the "Black Brothers."

The youngest brother, Gluck, was as completely opposed, in both appearance and character, to his seniors as could possibly be imagined or desired. He was not above twelve years old, fair, blue-eyed, and kind in temper to every living thing. He did not, of course, agree particularly well with his brothers, or, rather, they did not agree with *him*. He was usually appointed to the honourable office of turnspit, when there was anything to roast, which was not often; for, to do the brothers justice, they were hardly less sparing upon themselves than upon other people. At other times he used to clean the shoes, floors, and sometimes the plates, occasionally getting what was left on them, by way of encouragement, and a wholesome quantity of dry blows, by way of education.

Things went on in this manner for a long time. At last came a very wet summer, and everything went wrong in the country around. The hay had hardly been got in, when the hay-stacks were floated bodily down to the sea by an inundation; the vines were cut to pieces with the hail; the corn was all killed by a black blight; only in the Treasure Valley, as usual, all was safe. As it had rain when there was rain nowhere else, so it had sun when there was sun nowhere else. Everybody came to buy corn at the farm, and went away pouring maledictions on the Black Brothers. They asked what they liked, and got it, except from the poor, who could only beg, and several of whom were starved at their very door, without the slightest regard or notice.

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It was drawing towards winter, and very cold weather, when one day the two elder brothers had gone out, with their usual warning to little Gluck, who was left to mind the roast, that he was to let nobody in, and give nothing out. Gluck sat down quite close to the fire, for it was raining very hard, and the kitchen walls were by no means dry or comfortable-looking. He turned and turned, and the roast got nice and brown. "What a pity," thought Gluck, "my brothers never ask anybody to dinner. I'm sure, when they've got such a nice piece of mutton as this, and nobody else has got so much as a piece of dry bread, it would do their hearts good to have somebody to eat it with them."

Just as he spoke there came a double knock at the house door, yet heavy and dull, as though the knocker had been tied up—more like a puff than a knock.

"It must be the wind," said Gluck; "nobody else would venture to knock double knocks at our door."

No; it wasn't the wind: there it came again very hard, and what was particularly astounding, the knocker seemed to be in a hurry, and not to be in the least afraid of the consequences. Gluck went to the window, opened it, and put his head out to see who it was.

It was the most extraordinary looking little gentleman he had ever seen in his life. He had a very large nose, slightly brass-coloured; his cheeks were very round, and very red, and might have warranted a supposition that he had been blowing a refractory fire for the last eight and forty hours; his eyes twinkled merrily through long silky eyelashes, his moustaches curled twice round like a corkscrew on each side of his mouth, and his hair, of a curious mixed pepper-and-salt colour, descended far over his shoulders. He was about four-feet-six in height, and wore a conical pointed cap of nearly the same altitude, decorated with a black feather some three feet long. His doublet was prolonged behind into something resembling a violent exaggeration of what is now termed a "swallow-tail," but was much obscured by the swelling folds of an enormous black, glossy-looking cloak, which must have been very much too long in calm weather, as the wind, whistling round the old house, carried it clear out from the wearer's shoulders to about four times his own length.

Gluck was so perfectly paralysed by the singular appearance of his visitor that he remained fixed without uttering a word, until the old gentleman, having performed another, and a more energetic concerto on the knocker, turned round to look after his fly-away cloak. In so doing he caught sight of Gluck's little yellow head jammed in the window, with its mouth and eyes very wide open indeed.

"Hollo!" said the little gentleman, "that's not the way to answer the door. I'm wet, let me in."

To do the little gentleman justice, he *was* wet.  His feather hung down between his legs like a beaten puppy's tail, dripping like an umbrella; and from the ends of his moustaches the water was running into his waistcoat pockets, and out again like a mill stream.

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“I beg pardon, sir,” said Gluck, “I’m very sorry, but I really can’t.”

“Can’t what?” said the old gentleman.

“I can’t let you in, sir—I can’t indeed; my brothers would beat me to death, sir, if I thought of such a thing.  What do you want, sir?”

“Want?” said the old gentleman, petulantly, “I want fire, and shelter; and there’s your great fire there blazing, crackling, and dancing on the walls, with nobody to feel it Let me in, I say; I only want to warm myself.”

Gluck had had his head, by this time, so long out of the window that he began to feel it was really unpleasantly cold, and when he turned, and saw the beautiful fire rustling and roaring, and throwing long bright tongues up the chimney, as if it were licking its chops at the savory smell of the leg of mutton, his heart melted within him that it should be burning away for nothing.  “He does look *very* wet,” said little Gluck; “I’ll just let him in for a quarter of an hour.”  Round he went to the door, and opened it; and as the little gentleman walked in, there came a gust of wind through the house, that made the old chimneys totter.

“That’s a good boy,” said the little gentleman.  “Never mind your brothers.  I’ll talk to them.”

“Pray, sir, don’t do any such thing,” said Gluck.  “I can’t let you stay till they come; they’d be the death of me.”

“Dear me,” said the old gentleman, “I’m very sorry to hear that.  How long may I stay?”

“Only till the mutton’s done, sir,” replied Gluck, “and it’s very brown.”

Then the old gentleman walked into the kitchen, and sat himself down on the hob, with the top of his cap accommodated up the chimney, for it was a great deal too high for the roof.

“You’ll soon dry there, sir,” said Gluck, and sat down again to turn the mutton.  But the old gentleman did *not* dry there, but went on drip, drip, dripping among the cinders, and the fire fizzed, and sputtered, and began to look very black, and uncomfortable:  never was such a cloak; every fold in it ran like a gutter.

“I beg pardon, sir,” said Gluck at length, after watching the water spreading in long, quicksilver-like streams over the floor for a quarter of an hour; “mayn’t I take your cloak?”

“No, thank you,” said the old gentleman.

“Your cap, sir?”

“I am all right, thank you,” said the old gentleman rather gruffly.

“But—sir—I’m very sorry,” said Gluck, hesitatingly; “but—really, sir—you’re—putting the fire out.”

“It’ll take longer to do the mutton, then,” replied his visitor dryly.

Gluck was very much puzzled by the behaviour of his guest, it was such a strange mixture of coolness and humility.  He turned away at the string meditatively for another five minutes.

“That mutton looks very nice,” said the old gentleman at length.  “Can’t you give me a little bit?”

“Impossible, sir,” said Gluck.

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“I’m very hungry,” continued the old gentleman. “I’ve had nothing to eat yesterday, nor to-day. They surely couldn’t miss a bit from the knuckle!”

He spoke in so very melancholy a tone, that it quite melted Gluck’s heart. “They promised me one slice to-day, sir,” said he; “I can give you that, but not a bit more.”

“That’s a good boy,” said the old gentleman again.

Then Gluck warmed a plate and sharpened a knife. “I don’t care if I do get beaten for it,” thought he. Just as he had cut a large slice out of the mutton there came a tremendous rap at the door. The old gentleman jumped off the hob, as if it had suddenly become inconveniently warm. Gluck fitted the slice into the mutton again, with desperate efforts at exactitude, and ran to open the door.

“What did you keep us waiting in the rain for?” said Schwartz, as he walked in, throwing his umbrella in Gluck’s face. “Ay! what for, indeed, you little vagabond?” said Hans, administering an educational box on the ear, as he followed his brother into the kitchen.

“Bless my soul!” said Schwartz when he opened the door.

“Amen,” said the little gentleman, who had taken his cap off, and was standing in the middle of the kitchen, bowing with the utmost possible velocity.

“Who’s that?” said Schwartz, catching up a rolling-pin, and turning to Gluck with a fierce frown.

“I don’t know, indeed, brother,” said Gluck in great terror.

“How did he get in?” roared Schwartz.

“My dear brother,” said Gluck, deprecatingly, “he was so *very* wet!”

The rolling-pin was descending on Gluck’s head; but at the instant, the old gentleman interposed his conical cap, on which it crashed with a shock that shook the water out of it all over the room. What was very odd, the rolling-pin no sooner touched the cap than it flew out of Schwartz’s hand, spinning like a straw in a high wind, and fell into the corner at the further end of the room.

“Who are you, sir?” demanded Schwartz, turning upon him.

“What’s your business?” snarled Hans.

“I’m a poor old man, sir,” the little gentleman began very modestly, “and I saw your fire through the window, and begged shelter for a quarter of an hour.”

“Have the goodness to walk out again, then,” said Schwartz. “We’ve quite enough water in our kitchen, without making it a drying-house.”

“It is a cold day to turn an old man out in, sir; look at my gray hairs.” They hung down to his shoulders, as I told you before.

“Ay!” said Hans, “there are enough of them to keep you warm. Walk!”

“I’m very, very hungry, sir; couldn’t you spare me a bit of bread before I go?”

“Bread indeed!” said Schwartz; “do you suppose we’ve nothing to do with our bread but to give it to such red-nosed fellows as you?”

“Why don’t you sell your feather?” said Hans, sneeringly. “Out with you!”

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“A little bit,” said the old gentleman.

“Be off!” said Schwartz.

“Pray, gentlemen—”

“Off, and be hanged!” cried Hans, seizing him by the collar. But he had no sooner touched the old gentleman’s collar, than away he went after the rolling-pin, spinning round and round, till he fell into the corner on the top of it. Then Schwartz was very angry, and ran at the old gentleman to turn him out; but he also had hardly touched him, when away he went after Hans and the rolling-pin, and hit his head against the wall as he tumbled into the corner. And so there they lay, all three.

Then the old gentleman spun himself round with velocity in the opposite direction; continued to spin until his long cloak was all wound neatly about him; clapped his cap on his head, very much on one side (for it could not stand upright without going through the ceiling), gave an additional twist to his corkscrew moustaches, and replied with perfect coolness: “Gentlemen, I wish you a very good morning. At twelve o’clock to-night I’ll call again; after such a refusal of hospitality as I have just experienced, you will not be surprised if that visit is the last I ever pay you.”

“If ever I catch you here again,” muttered Schwartz, coming half frightened out of his corner—but, before he could finish his sentence, the old gentleman had shut the house door behind him with a great bang: and there drove past the window, at the same instant, a wreath of ragged cloud, that whirled and rolled away down the valley in all manner of shapes; turning over and over in the air, and melting away at last in a gush of rain.

“A very pretty business, indeed, Mr. Gluck!” said Schwartz. “Dish the mutton, sir. If ever I catch you at such a trick again—bless me, why, the mutton’s been cut!”

“You promised me one slice, brother, you know,” said Gluck.

“Oh! and you were cutting it hot, I suppose, and going to catch all the gravy. It’ll be long before I promise you such a thing again. Leave the room, sir; and have the kindness to wait in the coal cellar till I call you.”

Gluck left the room melancholy enough. The brothers ate as much mutton as they could, locked the rest in the cupboard and proceeded to get very drunk after dinner.

Such a night as it was! Howling wind, and rushing rain, without intermission. The brothers had just sense enough left to put up all the shutters, and double bar the door, before they went to bed. They usually slept in the same room. As the clock struck twelve, they were both awakened by a tremendous crash. Their door burst open with a violence that shook the house from top to bottom.

“What’s that?” cried Schwartz, starting up in his bed.

“Only I,” said the little gentleman.

The two brothers sat up on their bolster, and stared into the darkness.  The room was full of water, and by a misty moonbeam, which found its way through a hole in the shutter, they could see in the midst of it an enormous foam globe, spinning round, and bobbing up and down like a cork, on which, as on a most luxurious cushion, reclined the little old gentleman, cap and all.  There was plenty of room for it now, for the roof was off.

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“Sorry to incommode you,” said their visitor, ironically. “I’m afraid your beds are dampish; perhaps you had better go to your brother’s room: I’ve left the ceiling on, there.”

They required no second admonition, but rushed into Gluck’s room, wet through, and in an agony of terror.

“You’ll find my card on the kitchen table,” the old gentleman called after them. “Remember the *last* visit.”

“Pray Heaven it may!” said Schwartz, shuddering. And the foam globe disappeared.

Dawn came at last and the two brothers looked out of Gluck’s little window in the morning. The Treasure Valley was one mass of ruin and desolation. The inundation had swept away trees, crops, and cattle, and left in their stead a waste of red sand and gray mud. The two brothers crept shivering and horror-struck into the kitchen. The water had gutted the whole first floor; corn, money, almost every movable thing, had been swept away and there was left only a small white card on the kitchen table. On it, in large, breezy, long-legged letters, were engraved the words: *South-West Wind, Esquire*.

II.—OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE THREE BROTHERS AFTER THE VISIT OF SOUTHWEST WIND, ESQUIRE; AND HOW LITTLE GLUCK HAD AN INTERVIEW WITH THE KING OF THE GOLDEN RIVER.

Southwest Wind, Esquire, was as good as his word. After the momentous visit above related, he entered the Treasure Valley no more; and, what was worse, he had so much influence with his relations, the West Winds in general, and used it so effectually, that they all adopted a similar line of conduct. So no rain fell in the valley from one year’s end to another. Though everything remained green and flourishing in the plains below, the inheritance of the Three Brothers was a desert. What had once been the richest soil in the kingdom, became a shifting heap of red sand; and the brothers, unable longer to contend with the adverse skies, abandoned their valueless patrimony in despair, to seek some means of gaining a livelihood among the cities and people of the plains. All their money was gone, and they had nothing left but some curious, old-fashioned pieces of gold plate, the last remnants of their ill-gotten wealth.

“Suppose we turn goldsmiths?” said Schwartz to Hans, as they entered the large city. “It is a good knave’s trade; we can put a great deal of copper into the gold, without any one’s finding it out.”

The thought was agreed to be a very good one; they hired a furnace, and turned goldsmiths. But two slight circumstances affected their trade: the first, that people did not approve of the coppered gold; the second, that the two elder brothers, whenever

they had sold anything, used to leave little Gluck to mind the furnace, and go and drink out the money in the ale-house next door.  So they melted all their gold, without making money enough to buy more, and were at last reduced to one large drinking-mug, which an uncle of his had given to little Gluck, and

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which he was very fond of, and would not have parted with for the world; though he never drank anything out of it but milk and water. The mug was a very odd mug to look at. The handle was formed of two wreaths of flowing golden hair, so finely spun that it looked more like silk than metal, and these wreaths descended into, and mixed with, a beard and whiskers of the same exquisite workmanship, which surrounded and decorated a very fierce little face, of the reddest gold imaginable, right in the front of the mug, with a pair of eyes in it which seemed to command its whole circumference. It was impossible to drink out of the mug without being subjected to an intense gaze out of the side of these eyes; and Schwartz positively averred, that once, after emptying it, full of Rhenish, seventeen times, he had seen them wink! When it came to the mug's turn to be made into spoons, it half broke poor little Gluck's heart: but the brothers only laughed at him, tossed the mug into the melting-pot, and staggered out to the ale-house: leaving him, as usual, to pour the gold into bars, when it was all ready.

When they were gone, Gluck took a farewell look at his old friend in the melting-pot. The flowing hair was all gone; nothing remained but the red nose, and the sparkling eyes, which looked more malicious than ever. "And no wonder," thought Gluck, "after being treated in that way." He sauntered disconsolately to the window, and sat himself down to catch the fresh evening air, and escape the hot breath of the furnace. Now this window commanded a direct view of the range of mountains, which, as I told before, overhung the Treasure Valley, and more especially of the peak from which fell the Golden River. It was just at the close of the day, and when Gluck sat down at the window he saw the rocks of the mountain tops, all crimson and purple with the sunset; and there were bright tongues of fiery cloud burning and quivering about them; and the river, brighter than all, fell, in a waving column of pure gold, from precipice to precipice, with the double arch of a broad purple rainbow stretched across it, flushing and fading alternately in the wreaths of spray.

"Ah!" said Gluck aloud, after he had looked at it for a while, "if that river were really all gold, what a nice thing it would be."

"No it wouldn't, Gluck," said a clear, metallic voice close at his ear.

"Bless me! what's that?" exclaimed Gluck, jumping up. There was nobody there. He looked round the room, and under the table, and a great many times behind him, but there was certainly nobody there, and he sat down again at the window. This time he didn't speak, but he couldn't help thinking again that it would be very convenient if the river were really all gold.

"Not at all, my boy," said the same voice, louder than before.

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“Bless me!” said Gluck again; “what *is* that?” He looked again into all the corners and cupboards, and then began turning round, and round, as fast as he could in the middle of the room, thinking there was somebody behind him, when the same voice struck again on his ear. It was singing now very merrily, “Lala-lira-la;” no words, only a soft running, effervescent melody, something like that of a kettle on the boil. Gluck looked out of the window. No, it was certainly in the house. Upstairs, and downstairs. No, it was certainly in that very room, coming in quicker time, and clearer notes, every moment. “Lala-lira-la.” All at once it struck Gluck that it sounded louder near the furnace. He ran to the opening, and looked in: yes, he saw right; it seemed to be coming, not only out of the furnace, but out of the pot. He uncovered it, and ran back in a great fright, for the pot was certainly singing! He stood in the farthest corner of the room, with his hands up, and his mouth open, for a minute or two, when the singing stopped, and the voice became clear and pronunciative.

“Hollo!” said the voice.

Gluck made no answer.

“Hollo! Gluck, my boy,” said the pot again.

Gluck summoned all his energies, walked straight up to the crucible, drew it out of the furnace, and looked in. The gold was all melted, and its surface as smooth and polished as a river; but instead of reflecting little Gluck’s head, as he looked in, he saw meeting his glance from beneath the gold the red nose and sharp eyes of his old friend of the mug, a thousand times redder and sharper than ever he had seen them in his life.

“Come, Gluck, my boy,” said the voice out of the pot again, “I’m all right; pour me out.”

But Gluck was too much astonished to do anything of the kind.

“Pour me out, I say,” said the voice rather gruffly.

Still Gluck couldn’t move.

“*Will* you pour me out?” said the voice passionately. “I’m too hot.”

By a violent effort, Gluck recovered the use of his limbs, took hold of the crucible, and sloped it so as to pour out the gold. But instead of a liquid stream, there came out, first, a pair of pretty little yellow legs, then some coat tails, then a pair of arms stuck akimbo, and, finally, the well-known head of his friend the mug; all which articles, uniting as they rolled out, stood up energetically on the floor, in the shape of a little golden dwarf, about a foot and a half high.

“That’s right!” said the dwarf, stretching out first his legs, and then his arms, and then shaking his head up and down, and as far round as it would go, for five minutes without

stopping; apparently with the view of ascertaining if he were quite correctly put together, while Gluck stood contemplating him in speechless amazement.  He was dressed in a stashed doublet of spun gold, so fine in its texture, that the prismatic colours gleamed over it, as if

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on a surface of mother-of-pearl; and, over this brilliant doublet, his hair and beard fell full halfway to the ground, in waving curls, so exquisitely delicate that Gluck could hardly tell where they ended; they seemed to melt into air. The features of the face, however, were by no means finished with the same delicacy; they were rather coarse, slightly inclining to coppery in complexion, and indicative, in expression, of a very pertinacious and intractable disposition in their small proprietor. When the dwarf had finished his self-examination, he turned his small eyes full on Gluck, and stared at him deliberately for a minute or two. "No, it wouldn't, Gluck, my boy," said the little man.

This was certainly rather an abrupt and unconnected mode of commencing conversation. It might indeed be supposed to refer to the course of Gluck's thoughts, which had first produced the dwarf's observations out of the pot; but whatever it referred to, Gluck had no inclination to dispute the dictum.

"Wouldn't it, sir?" said Gluck, very mildly and submissively indeed.

"No," said the dwarf, conclusively. "No, it wouldn't." And with that, the dwarf pulled his cap hard over his brows, and took two turns, of three feet long, up and down the room, lifting his legs up very high, and setting them down very hard. This pause gave time for Gluck to collect his thoughts a little, and, seeing no great reason to view his diminutive visitor with dread, and feeling his curiosity overcome his amazement, he ventured on a question of peculiar delicacy.

"Pray, sir," said Gluck, rather hesitatingly, "were you my mug?"

On which the little man turned sharp round, walked straight up to Gluck, and drew himself up to his full height. "I," said the little man, "am the King of the Golden River." Whereupon he turned about again, and took two more turns, some six feet long, in order to allow time for the consternation which this announcement produced in his auditor to evaporate. After which, he again walked up to Gluck and stood still, as if expecting some comment on his communication.

Gluck determined to say something at all events. "I hope your Majesty is very well," said Gluck.

"Listen!" said the little man, deigning no reply to this polite inquiry. "I am the King of what you mortals call the Golden River. The shape you saw me in was owing to the malice of a stronger king, from whose enchantments you have this instant freed me. What I have seen of you, and your conduct to your wicked brothers, renders me willing to serve you; therefore, attend to what I tell you. Whoever shall climb to the top of that mountain from which you see the Golden River issue, and shall cast into the stream at its source three drops of holy water, for him, and for him only, the river shall turn to

gold.  But no one failing in his first, can succeed in a second attempt; and if anyone shall cast unholy water into the river, it will overwhelm him, and he will become a black stone."  So saying, the King of the Golden River turned away and deliberately walked into the centre of the hottest flame of the furnace.  His figure became red, white, transparent, dazzling—a blaze of intense light—rose, trembled, and disappeared.  The King of the Golden River had evaporated.

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“Oh!” cried poor Gluck, running to look up the chimney after him; “oh dear, dear, dear me!  My mug! my mug! my mug!”

III.—HOW MR. HANS SET OFF ON AN EXPEDITION TO THE GOLDEN RIVER, AND HOW HE PROSPERED THEREIN

The King of the Golden River had hardly made the extraordinary exit related in the last chapter, before Hans and Schwartz came roaring into the house, very savagely drunk. The discovery of the total loss of their last piece of plate had the effect of sobering them just enough to enable them to stand over Gluck, beating him very steadily for a quarter of an hour; at the expiration of which period they dropped into a couple of chairs, and requested to know what he had to say for himself.  Gluck told them his story, of which, of course, they did not believe a word.  They beat him again, till their arms were tired, and staggered to bed.  In the morning, however, the steadiness with which he adhered to his story obtained him some degree of credence; the immediate consequence of which was, that the two brothers, after wrangling a long time on the knotty question, which of them should try his fortune first, drew their swords and began fighting.  The noise of the fray alarmed the neighbours who, finding they could not pacify the combatants, sent for the constable.

Hans, on hearing this, contrived to escape, and hid himself; but Schwartz was taken before the magistrate, fined for breaking the peace, and, having drunk out his last penny the evening before, was thrown into prison till he should pay.

When Hans heard this, he was much delighted, and determined to set out immediately for the Golden River.  How to get the holy water was the question.  He went to the priest, but the priest could not give any holy water to so abandoned a character.  So Hans went to vespers in the evening for the first time in his life, and, under pretence of crossing himself, stole a cupful and returned home in triumph.

Next morning he got up before the sun rose, put the holy water into a strong flask, and two bottles of wine and some meat in a basket, slung them over his back, took his alpine staff in his hand, and set off for the mountains.

On his way out of the town he had to pass the prison, and as he looked in at the windows, whom should he see but Schwartz himself peeping out of the bars, and looking very disconsolate.

“Good morning, brother,” said Hans; “have you any message for the King of the Golden River?”

Schwartz gnashed his teeth with rage, and shook the bars with all his strength; but Hans only laughed at him, and advising him to make himself comfortable till he came

back again, shouldered his basket, shook the bottle of holy water in Schwartz’s face till it frothed again, and marched off in the highest spirits in the world.

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It was, indeed, a morning that might have made anyone happy, even with no Golden River to seek for. Level lines of dewy mist lay stretched along the valley, out of which rose the massy mountains—their lower cliffs in pale gray shadow, hardly distinguishable from the floating vapour, but gradually ascending till they caught the sunlight, which ran in sharp touches of ruddy colour along the angular crags, and pierced, in long level rays, through their fringes of spear-like pine. Far above, shot up red splintered masses of castellated rock, jagged and shivered into myriads of fantastic forms, with here and there a streak of sunlit snow, traced down their chasms like a line of forked lightning; and, far beyond, and far above all these, fainter than the morning cloud, but purer and changeless, slept, in the blue sky, the utmost peaks of the eternal snow.

The Golden River, which sprang from one of the lower and snowless elevations, was now nearly in shadow; all but the uppermost jets of spray, which rose like slow smoke above the undulating line of the cataract, and floated away in feeble wreaths upon the morning wind.

On this object, and on this alone, Hans's eyes and thoughts were fixed; forgetting the distance he had to traverse, he set off at an imprudent rate of walking, which greatly exhausted him before he had scaled the first range of the green and low hills. He was, moreover, surprised, on surmounting them, to find that a large glacier, of whose existence, notwithstanding his previous knowledge of the mountains, he had been absolutely ignorant, lay between him and the source of the Golden River. He entered on it with the boldness of a practised mountaineer; yet he thought he had never traversed so strange or so dangerous a glacier in his life. The ice was excessively slippery, and out of all its chasms came wild sounds of gushing water; not monotonous or low; but changeful and loud, rising occasionally into drifting passages of wild melody, then breaking off into short melancholy tones, or sudden shrieks, resembling those of human voices in distress or pain. The ice was broken into thousands of confused shapes, but none, Hans thought like the ordinary forms of splintered ice. There seemed a curious *expression* about all their outlines—a perpetual resemblance to living features, distorted and scornful. Myriads of deceitful shadows, and lurid lights, played and floated about and through the pale-blue pinnacles, dazzling and confusing the sight of the traveller; while his ears grew dull and his head giddy with the constant gush and roar of the concealed waters. These painful circumstances increased upon him as he advanced; the ice crashed and yawned into fresh chasms at his feet, tottering spires nodded around him, and fell thundering across his path; and, though he had repeatedly faced these dangers on the most terrific glaciers, and in the wildest weather, it was with a new and oppressive feeling of panic terror that he leaped the last chasm, and flung himself, exhausted and shuddering, on the firm turf of the mountain.

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He had been compelled to abandon his basket of food, which became a perilous incumbrance on the glacier, and had now no means of refreshing himself but by breaking off and eating some of the pieces of ice. This, however, relieved his thirst; an hour's repose recruited his hardy frame, and, with the indomitable spirit of avarice, he resumed his laborious journey.

His way now lay straight up a ridge of bare red rocks, without a blade of grass to ease the foot, or a projecting angle to afford an inch of shade from the south sun. It was past noon, and the rays beat intensely upon the steep path, while the whole atmosphere was motionless, and penetrated with heat. Intense thirst was soon added to the bodily fatigue with which Hans was now afflicted; glance after glance he cast on the flask of water which hung at his belt. "Three drops are enough," at last thought he; "I may, at least, cool my lips with it."

He opened the flask, and was raising it to his lips, when his eye fell on an object lying on the rock beside him; he thought it moved. It was a small dog, apparently in the last agony of death from thirst. Its tongue was out, its jaws dry, its limbs extended lifelessly, and a swarm of black ants were crawling about its lips and throat. Its eye moved to the bottle which Hans held in his hand. He raised it, drank, spurned the animal with his foot, and passed on. And he did not know how it was, but he thought that a strange shadow had suddenly come across the blue sky.

The path became steeper and more rugged every moment; and the high hill air, instead of refreshing him, seemed to throw his blood into a fever. The noise of the hill cataracts sounded like mockery in his ears; they were all distant, and his thirst increased every moment. Another hour passed, and he again looked down to the flask at his side; it was half empty; but there was much more than three drops in it. He stopped to open it, and again, as he did so, something moved in the path above him. It was a fair child, stretched nearly lifeless on the rock, its breast heaving with thirst, its eyes closed, and its lips parched and burning. Hans eyed it deliberately, drank, and passed on. And a dark-gray cloud came over the sun, and long, snake-like shadows crept up along the mountain sides. Hans struggled on. The sun was sinking, but its descent seemed to bring no coolness; the leaden weight of the dead air pressed upon his brow and heart, but the goal was near. He saw the cataract of the Golden River springing from the hillside, scarcely five hundred feet above him. He paused for a moment to breathe, and sprang on to complete his task.

At this instant a faint cry fell on his ear. He turned, and saw a gray-haired old man extended on the rocks. His eyes were sunk, his features deadly pale, and gathered into an expression of despair. "Water!" he stretched his arms to Hans, and cried feebly, "Water! I am dying."

"I have none," replied Hans; "thou hast had thy share of life." He strode over the prostrate body, and darted on. And a flash of blue lightning rose out of the east, shaped

like a sword; it shook thrice over the whole heaven, and left it dark with one heavy, impenetrable shade.  The sun was setting; it plunged toward the horizon like a red-hot ball.

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The roar of the Golden River rose on Hans's ear. He stood at the brink of the chasm through which it ran. Its waves were filled with the red glory of the sunset: they shook their crests like tongues of fire, and flashes of bloody light gleamed along their foam. Their sound came mightier and mightier on his senses; his brain grew giddy with the prolonged thunder. Shuddering he drew the flask from his girdle, and hurled it into the centre of the torrent. As he did so, an icy chill shot through his limbs: he staggered, shrieked, and fell. The waters closed over his cry. And the moaning of the river rose wildly into the night, as it gushed over *The Black Stone*.

IV.—HOW MR. SCHWARTZ SET OFF ON AN EXPEDITION TO THE GOLDEN RIVER, AND HOW HE PROSPERED THEREIN

Poor little Gluck waited very anxiously alone in the house for Hans's return. Finding he did not come back, he was terribly frightened, and went and told Schwartz in the prison all that had happened. Then Schwartz was very much pleased, and said that Hans must certainly have been turned into a black stone, and he should have all the gold to himself. But Gluck was very sorry, and cried all night. When he got up in the morning there was no bread in the house, nor any money; so Gluck went and hired himself to another goldsmith, and he worked so hard, and so neatly, and so long every day, that he soon got money enough together to pay his brother's fine, and he went and gave it all to Schwartz, and Schwartz got out of prison. Then Schwartz was quite pleased, and said he should have some of the gold of the river. But Gluck only begged he would go and see what had become of Hans.

Now when Schwartz had heard that Hans had stolen the holy water, he thought to himself that such a proceeding might not be considered altogether correct by the King of the Golden River, and determined to manage matters better. So he took some more of Gluck's money, and went to a bad priest who gave him some holy water very readily for it. Then Schwartz was sure it was all quite right. So Schwartz got up early in the morning before the sun rose, and took some bread and wine in a basket, and put his holy water in a flask, and set off for the mountains. Like his brother, he was much surprised at the sight of the glacier, and had great difficulty in crossing it, even after leaving his basket behind him. The day was cloudless, but not bright: there was a heavy purple haze hanging over the sky, and the hills looked lowering and gloomy. And as Schwartz climbed the steep rock path, the thirst came upon him, as it had upon his brother, until he lifted his flask to his lips to drink. Then he saw the fair child lying near him on the rocks, and it cried to him, and moaned for water.

"Water, indeed," said Schwartz; "I haven't half enough for myself," and passed on. And as he went he thought the sunbeams grew more dim, and he saw a low bank of black cloud rising out of the west; and, when he had climbed for another hour, the thirst overcame him again, and he would have drunk. Then he saw the old man lying before him on the path, and heard him cry out for water. "Water, indeed," said Schwartz; "I haven't half enough for myself," and on he went.

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Then again the light seemed to fade from before his eyes, and he looked up, and, behold, a mist, of the colour of blood, had come over the sun; and the bank of black cloud had risen very high, and its edges were tossing and tumbling like the waves of an angry sea. And they cast long shadows, which flickered over Schwartz's path.

Then Schwartz climbed for another hour, and again his thirst returned; and as he lifted his flask to his lips, he thought he saw his brother Hans lying exhausted on the path before him; and, as he gazed, the figure stretched its arms to him, and cried for water. "Ha, ha," laughed Schwartz, "are you there? Remember the prison bars, my boy. Water indeed! Do you suppose I carried it all the way up here for *you*?" And he strode over the figure; yet, as he passed, he thought he saw a strange expression of mockery about its lips. And, when he had gone a few yards farther, he looked back; but the figure was not there.

And a sudden horror came over Schwartz, he knew not why; but the thirst for gold prevailed over his fear, and he rushed on. And the bank of black cloud rose to the zenith, and out of it came bursts of spiry lightning, and waves of darkness seemed to heave and float between their flashes over the whole heavens. And the sky where the sun was setting was all level, and like a lake of blood; and a strong wind came out of that sky, tearing its crimson clouds into fragments, and scattering them far into the darkness. And when Schwartz stood by the brink of the Golden River, its waves were black, like thunder clouds, but their foam was like fire; and the roar of the waters below, and the thunder above, met, as he cast the flask into the stream. And, as he did so, the lightning glared into his eyes, and the earth gave way beneath him, and the waters closed over his cry. And the moaning of the river rose wildly into the night, as it gushed over the *Two Black Stones*.

V.—HOW LITTLE GLUCK SET OFF ON AN EXPEDITION TO THE GOLDEN RIVER, AND HOW HE PROSPERED THEREIN; WITH OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST

When Gluck found that Schwartz did not come back he was very sorry, and did not know what to do. He had no money, and was obliged to go and hire himself again to the goldsmith, who worked him very hard, and gave him very little money. So, after a month or two, Gluck grew tired, and made up his mind to go and try his fortune with the Golden River. "The little king looked very kind," thought he. "I don't think he will turn me into a black stone." So he went to the priest, and the priest gave him some holy water as soon as he asked for it. Then Gluck took some bread in his basket, and the bottle of water, and set off very early for the mountains.

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If the glacier had occasioned a great deal of fatigue to his brothers, it was twenty times worse for him, who was neither so strong nor so practised on the mountains. He had several very bad falls, lost his basket and bread, and was very much frightened at the strange noises under the ice. He lay a long time to rest on the grass, after he had got over, and began to climb the hill in just the hottest part of the day. When he had climbed for an hour, he got dreadfully thirsty, and was going to drink like his brothers, when he saw an old man coming down the path above him, looking very feeble, and leaning on a staff. "My son," said the old man, "I am faint with thirst, give me some of that water." Then Gluck looked at him, and, when he saw that he was pale and weary, he gave him the water. "Only pray don't drink it all," said Gluck. But the old man drank a great deal, and gave him back the bottle two-thirds empty. Then he bade him good speed, and Gluck went on again merrily. And the path became easier to his feet, and two or three blades of grass appeared upon it, and some grasshoppers began singing on the bank beside it; and Gluck thought he had never heard such merry singing.

Then he went on for another hour, and the thirst increased on him so that he thought he should be forced to drink. But, as he raised the flask, he saw a little child lying panting by the roadside, and it cried out piteously for water. Then Gluck struggled with himself, and determined to bear the thirst a little longer; and he put the bottle to the child's lips, and it drank it all but a few drops. Then it smiled on him, and got up, and ran down the hill; and Gluck looked after it till it became as small as a little star, and then turned and began climbing again. And then there were all kinds of sweet flowers growing on the rocks, bright green moss, with pale pink starry flowers, and soft belled gentians, more blue than the sky at its deepest, and pure white transparent lilies. And crimson and purple butterflies darted hither and thither, and the sky sent down such pure light, that Gluck had never felt so happy in his life.

Yet, when he had climbed for another hour, his thirst became intolerable again; and, when he looked at his bottle, he saw that there were only five or six drops left in it, and he could not venture to drink. And, as he was hanging the flask to his belt again, he saw a little dog lying on the rocks, gasping for breath—just as Hans had seen it on the day of his ascent. And Gluck stopped and looked at it and then at the Golden River, not five hundred yards above him; and he thought of the dwarf's words, "that no one could succeed, except in his first attempt"; and he tried to pass the dog, but it whined piteously, and Gluck stopped again. "Poor beastie!" said Gluck: "it'll be dead when I come down again, if I don't help it." Then he looked closer and closer at it, and its eye turned on him so mournfully that he could not stand it. "Confound the King and his gold too," said Gluck; and he opened the flask, and poured all the water into the dog's mouth.

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The dog sprang up and stood on its hind legs. Its tail disappeared, its ears became long, longer, silky, golden; its nose became very red, its eyes became very twinkling; in three seconds the dog was gone, and before Gluck stood his old acquaintance, the King of the Golden River.

“Thank you,” said the monarch; “but don’t be frightened, it’s all right”; for Gluck showed manifest symptoms of consternation at this unlooked-for reply to his last observation. “Why didn’t you come before,” continued the dwarf, “instead of sending me those rascally brothers of yours, for me to have the trouble of turning into stones? Very hard stones they make too.”

“Oh dear me!” said Gluck; “have you really been so cruel?”

“Cruel!” said the dwarf, “they poured unholy water into my stream; do you suppose I’m going to allow that?”

“Why,” said Gluck, “I am sure, sir—your Majesty, I mean—they got the water out of the church font.”

“Very probably,” replied the dwarf; “but,” and his countenance grew stern as he spoke, “the water which has been refused to the cry of the weary and dying is unholy, though it had been blessed by every saint in heaven; and the water which is found in the vessel of mercy is holy, though it had been defiled with corpses.”

So saying, the dwarf stooped and plucked a lily that grew at his feet. On its white leaves there hung three drops of clear dew. And the dwarf shook them into the flask which Gluck held in his hand. “Cast these into the river,” he said, “and descend on the other side of the mountains into the Treasure Valley. And so good speed.”

As he spoke, the figure of the dwarf became indistinct. The playing colours of his robe formed themselves into a prismatic mist of dewy light; he stood for an instant veiled with them as with the belt of a broad rainbow. The colours grew faint, the mist rose into the air; the monarch had evaporated.

And Gluck climbed to the brink of the Golden River, and its waves were as clear as crystal, and as brilliant as the sun. And, when he cast the three drops of dew into the stream, there opened where they fell a small circular whirlpool, into which the waters descended with a musical noise.

Gluck stood watching it for some time, very much disappointed, because not only the river was not turned into gold, but its waters seemed much diminished in quantity. Yet he obeyed his friend the dwarf, and descended the other side of the mountains toward the Treasure Valley; and, as he went, he thought he heard the noise of water working its way under the ground. And, when he came in sight of the Treasure Valley, behold, a

river, like the Golden River was springing from a new cleft of the rocks above it, and was flowing in innumerable streams among the dry heaps of red sand.

And as Gluck gazed, fresh grass sprang beside the new streams, and creeping plants grew, and climbed among this moistening soil.  Young flowers opened suddenly along the river sides, as stars leap out when twilight is deepening, and thickets of myrtle, and tendrils of vine, cast lengthening shadows over the valley as they grew.  And thus the Treasure Valley became a garden again, and the inheritance which had been lost by cruelty was regained by love.

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And Gluck went, and dwelt in the valley, and the poor were never driven from his door: so that his barns became full of corn, and his house of treasure. And, for him, the river had, according to the dwarf's promise, become a River of Gold.

And, to this day, the inhabitants of the valley point out the place where the three drops of holy dew were cast into the stream, and trace the course of the Golden River under the ground, until it emerges in the Treasure Valley. And at the top of the cataract of the Golden River are still to be seen two BLACK STONES, round which the waters howl mournfully every day at sunset, and these stones are still called by the people of the valley *The Black Brothers*.

## III

### THE SNOW-IMAGE: A CHILDISH MIRACLE

One afternoon of a cold winter's day, when the sun shone forth with chilly brightness, after a long storm, two children asked leave of their mother to run out and play in the new-fallen snow. The elder child was a girl, whom, because she was of a tender and modest disposition, and was thought to be very beautiful, her parents, and other people who were familiar with her, used to call Violet. But her brother was known by the style and title of Peony, on account of the ruddiness of his broad and round little phiz, which made everybody think of sunshine and great scarlet flowers. The father of these two children, a certain Mr. Lindsey, it is important to say, was an excellent but exceedingly matter-of-fact sort of man, a dealer in hardware, and was sturdily accustomed to take what is called the common-sense view of all matters that came under his consideration. With a heart about as tender as other people's, he had a head as hard and impenetrable, and therefore, perhaps, as empty, as one of the iron pots which it was a part of his business to sell. The mother's character, on the other hand, had a strain of poetry in it, a trait of unworldly beauty—a delicate and dewy flower, as it were, that had survived out of her imaginative youth, and still kept itself alive amid the dusty realities of matrimony and motherhood.

So, Violet and Peony, as I began with saying, besought their mother to let them run out and play in the new snow; for, though it had looked so dreary and dismal, drifting downward out of the gray sky, it had a very cheerful aspect, now that the sun was shining on it. The children dwelt in a city, and had no wider play-place than a little garden before the house, divided by a white fence from the street, and with a pear-tree and two or three plum-trees overshadowing it, and some rose-bushes just in front of the parlour-windows. The trees and shrubs, however, were now leafless, and their twigs were enveloped in the light snow, which thus made a kind of wintry foliage, with here and there a pendent icicle for the fruit.

“Yes, Violet—yes, my little Peony,” said their kind mother; “you may go out and play in the new snow.”

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Accordingly, the good lady bundled up her darlings in woollen jackets and wadded sacks, and put comforters round their necks, and a pair of striped gaiters on each little pair of legs, and worsted mittens on their hands, and gave them a kiss apiece, by way of a spell to keep away Jack Frost. Forth sallied the two children, with a hop-skip-and-jump, that carried them at once into the very heart of a huge snow-drift, whence Violet emerged like a snow-bunting, while little Peony floundered out with his round face in full bloom. Then what a merry time had they! To look at them, frolicking in the wintry garden, you would have thought that the dark and pitiless storm had been sent for no other purpose but to provide a new plaything for Violet and Peony; and that they themselves had been created, as the snow-birds were, to take delight only in the tempest, and in the white mantle which it spread over the earth.

At last, when they had frosted one another all over with handfuls of snow, Violet, after laughing heartily at little Peony's figure, was struck with a new idea.

"You look exactly like a snow-image, Peony," said she, "if your cheeks were not so red. And that puts me in mind! Let us make an image out of snow—an image of a little girl—and it shall be our sister, and shall run about and play with us all winter long. Won't it be nice?"

"O, yes!" cried Peony, as plainly as he could speak, for he was but a little boy. "That will be nice! And mamma shall see it!"

"Yes," answered Violet; "mamma shall see the new little girl. But she must not make her come into the warm parlour; for, you know, our little snow-sister will not love the warmth."

And forthwith the children began this great business of making a snow-image that should run about; while their mother, who was sitting at the window and overheard some of their talk, could not help smiling at the gravity with which they set about it. They really seemed to imagine that there would be no difficulty whatever in creating a live little girl out of the snow. And, to say the truth, if miracles are ever to be wrought, it will be by putting our hands to the work in precisely such a simple and undoubting frame of mind as that in which Violet and Peony now undertook to perform one, without so much as knowing that it was a miracle. So thought the mother; and thought, likewise, that the new snow, just fallen from heaven, would be excellent material to make new beings of, if it were not so very cold. She gazed at the children a moment longer, delighting to watch their little figures—the girl, tall for her age, graceful and agile, and so delicately coloured that she looked like a cheerful thought, more than a physical reality; while Peony expanded in breadth rather than height, and rolled along on his short and sturdy legs as substantial as an elephant, though not quite so big. Then the mother resumed her work. What it was I forget; but she was either trimming a silken bonnet for Violet, or darning a pair of stockings for little Peony's short legs. Again, however, and

again, and yet other agains, she could not help turning her head to the window to see how the children got on with their snow-image.

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Indeed, it was an exceedingly pleasant sight, those bright little souls at their task! Moreover, it was really wonderful to observe how knowingly and skilfully they managed the matter. Violet assumed the chief direction, and told Peony what to do, while, with her own delicate fingers, she shaped out all the nicer parts of the snow-figure. It seemed, in fact, not so much to be made by the children, as to grow up under their hands, while they were playing and prattling about it. Their mother was quite surprised at this; and the longer she looked, the more and more surprised she grew.

“What remarkable children mine are!” thought she, smiling with a mother’s pride; and, smiling at herself, too, for being so proud of them. “What other children could have made anything so like a little girl’s figure out of snow at the first trial? Well; but now I must finish Peony’s new frock, for his grandfather is coming to-morrow, and I want the little fellow to look handsome.”

So she took up the frock, and was soon as busily at work again with her needle as the two children with their snow-image. But still, as the needle travelled hither and thither through the seams of the dress, the mother made her toil light and happy by listening to the airy voices of Violet and Peony. They kept talking to one another all the time, their tongues being quite as active as their feet and hands. Except at intervals, she could not distinctly hear what was said, but had merely a sweet impression that they were in a most loving mood, and were enjoying themselves highly, and that the business of making the snow-image went prosperously on. Now and then, however, when Violet and Peony happened to raise their voices, the words were as audible as if they had been spoken in the very parlour, where the mother sat. O how delightfully those words echoed in her heart, even though they meant nothing so very wise or wonderful, after all!

But you must know a mother listens with her heart, much more than with her ears; and thus she is often delighted with the trills of celestial music, when other people can hear nothing of the kind.

“Peony, Peony!” cried Violet to her brother, who had gone to another part of the garden, “bring me some of that fresh snow, Peony, from the very farthest corner, where we have not been trampling. I want it to shape our little snow-sister’s bosom with. You know that part must be quite pure, just as it came out of the sky!”

“Here it is, Violet!” answered Peony, in his bluff tone—but a very sweet tone, too—as he came floundering through the half-trodden drifts. “Here is the snow for her little bosom. O Violet, how beau-ti-ful she begins to look!”

“Yes,” said Violet, thoughtfully and quietly; “our snow-sister does look very lovely. I did not quite know, Peony, that we could make such a sweet little girl as this.”

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The mother, as she listened, thought how fit and delightful an incident it would be, if fairies, or, still better, if angel-children were to come from paradise, and play invisibly with her own darlings, and help them to make their snow-image, giving it the features of celestial babyhood! Violet and Peony would not be aware of their immortal playmates—only they could see that the image grew very beautiful while they worked at it, and would think that they themselves had done it all.

“My little girl and boy deserve such playmates, if mortal children ever did!” said the mother to herself; and then she smiled again at her own motherly pride.

Nevertheless, the ideas seized upon her imagination; and ever and anon, she took a glimpse out of the window, half dreaming that she might see the golden-haired children of paradise sporting with her own golden-haired Violet and bright-cheeked Peony.

Now, for a few moments, there was a busy and earnest, but indistinct hum of the two children’s voices, as Violet and Peony wrought together with one happy consent. Violet still seemed to be the guiding spirit, while Peony acted rather as a labourer, and brought her the snow from far and near. And yet the little urchin evidently had a proper understanding of the matter, too!

“Peony, Peony!” cried Violet; for the brother was again at the other side of the garden. “Bring me those light wreaths of snow that have rested on the lower branches of the pear-tree. You can clamber on the snow-drift, Peony, and reach them easily. I must have them to make some ringlets for our snow-sister’s head!”

“Here they are, Violet!” answered the little boy. “Take care you do not break them. Well done! Well done! How pretty!”

“Does she not look sweet?” said Violet, with a very satisfied tone; “and now we must have some little shining bits of ice, to make the brightness of her eyes. She is not finished yet. Mamma will see how very beautiful she is; but papa will say, ’Tush! nonsense!—come in out of the cold!’”

“Let us call mamma to look out,” said Peony; and then he shouted lustily, “Mamma! mamma!! mamma!!! Look out, and see what a nice ’ittle girl we are making.”

The mother put down her work, for an instant, and looked out of the window. But it so happened that the sun—for this was one of the shortest days of the whole year—had sunken so nearly to the edge of the world, that his setting shine came obliquely into the lady’s eyes. So she was dazzled, you must understand, and could not very distinctly observe what was in the garden. Still, however, through all that bright, blinding dazzle of the sun and the new snow, she beheld a small white figure in the garden, that seemed to have a wonderful deal of human likeness about it. And she saw Violet and Peony—indeed, she looked more at them than at the image—she saw the two children

still at work; Peony bringing fresh snow, and Violet applying it to the figure as scientifically as a sculptor adds clay to his model.  Indistinctly as she discerned the snow-child, the mother thought to herself that never before was there a snow-figure so cunningly made, nor ever such a dear little girl and boy to make it.

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“They do everything better than other children,” said she, very complacently. “No wonder they make better snow-images!”

She sat down again to her work, and made as much haste with it as possible; because twilight would soon come, and Peony’s frock was not yet finished, and grandfather was expected, by railroad, pretty early in the morning. Faster and faster, therefore, went her flying fingers. The children, likewise, kept busily at work in the garden, and still the mother listened, whenever she could catch a word. She was amused to observe how their little imaginations had got mixed up with what they were doing, and were carried away by it. They seemed positively to think that the snow-child would run about and play with them.

“What a nice playmate she will be for us, all winter long!” said Violet. “I hope papa will not be afraid of her giving us a cold! Sha’n’t you love her dearly, Peony?”

“O yes!” cried Peony. “And I will hug her and she shall sit down close by me, and drink some of my warm milk!”

“O no, Peony!” answered Violet, with grave wisdom. “That will not do at all. Warm milk will not be wholesome for our little snow-sister. Little snow-people, like her, eat nothing but icicles. No, no, Peony; we must not give her anything warm to drink!”

There was a minute or two of silence; for Peony, whose short legs were never weary, had gone on a pilgrimage again to the other side of the garden. All of a sudden, Violet cried out, loudly and joyfully—

“Look here, Peony! Come quickly! A light has been shining on her cheek out of that rose-coloured cloud! and the colour does not go away! Is not that beautiful!”

“Yes; it is beau-ti-ful,” answered Peony, pronouncing the three syllables with deliberate accuracy. “O Violet, only look at her hair! It is all like gold!”

“O, certainly,” said Violet, with tranquillity, as if it were very much a matter of course. “That colour, you know, comes from the golden clouds, that we see up there in the sky. She is almost finished now. But her lips must be made very red—redder than her cheeks. Perhaps, Peony, it will make them red if we both kiss them!”

Accordingly, the mother heard two smart little smacks, as if both her children were kissing the snow-image on its frozen mouth. But, as this did not seem to make the lips quite red enough, Violet next proposed that the snow-child should be invited to kiss Peony’s scarlet cheek.

“Come, ’ittle snow-sister, kiss me!” cried Peony.

“There! she has kissed you,” added Violet, “and her lips are very red.  And she blushed a little, too!”

“O, what a cold kiss!” cried Peony.

Just then, there came a breeze of the pure west-wind, sweeping through the garden and rattling the parlour-windows.  It sounded so wintry cold, that the mother was about to tap on the window-pane with her thimbled finger, to summon the two children in, when they both cried out to her with one voice.  The tone was not a tone of surprise, although they were evidently a good deal excited; it appeared rather as if they were very much rejoiced at some event that had now happened, but which they had been looking for, and had reckoned upon all along.

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“Mamma! mamma!  We have finished our little snow-sister, and she is running about the garden with us!”

“What imaginative little beings my children are!” thought the mother, putting the last few stitches into Peony’s frock.  “And it is strange, too, that they make me almost as much a child as they themselves are!  I can hardly help believing, now, that the snow-image has really come to life!”

“Dear mamma!” cried Violet, “pray look out and see what a sweet playmate we have!”

The mother, being thus entreated, could no longer delay to look forth from the window. The sun was now gone out of the sky, leaving, however, a rich inheritance of his brightness among those purple and golden clouds which make the sunsets of winter so magnificent.  But there was not the slightest gleam or dazzle, either on the window or on the snow; so that the good lady could look all over the garden, and see everything and everybody in it.  And what do you think she saw there?  Violet and Peony, of course, her own two darling children.  Ah, but whom or what did she see besides?  Why, if you will believe me, there was a small figure of a girl, dressed all in white, with rose-tinged cheeks and ringlets of golden hue, playing about the garden with the two children!  A stranger though she was, the child seemed to be on as familiar terms with Violet and Peony, and they with her, as if all the three had been playmates during the whole of their little lives.  The mother thought to herself that it must certainly be the daughter of one of the neighbours, and that, seeing Violet, and Peony in the garden, the child had run across the street to play with them.  So this kind lady went to the door, intending to invite the little runaway into her comfortable parlour; for, now that the sunshine was withdrawn, the atmosphere, out of doors, was already growing very cold.

But, after opening the house-door, she stood an instant on the threshold, hesitating whether she ought to ask the child to come in, or whether she should even speak to her.  Indeed, she almost doubted whether it were a real child, after all, or only a light wreath of the new-fallen snow, blown hither and thither about the garden by the intensely cold west-wind.  There was certainly something very singular in the aspect of the little stranger.  Among all the children of the neighbourhood, the lady could remember no such face, with its pure white, and delicate rose-colour, and the golden ringlets tossing about the forehead and cheeks.  And as for her dress, which was entirely of white, and fluttering in the breeze, it was such as no reasonable woman would put upon a little girl, when sending her out to play, in the depth of winter.  It made this kind and careful mother shiver only to look at those small feet, with nothing in the world on them, except a very thin pair of white slippers.  Nevertheless, airily as she was clad, the child seemed to feel not the slightest inconvenience from the cold, but danced so lightly over the snow that the tips of her toes left hardly a print in its surface; while Violet could but just keep pace with her, and Peony’s short legs compelled him to lag behind.

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Once, in the course of their play, the strange child placed herself between Violet and Peony, and taking a hand of each, skipped merrily forward, and they along with her. Almost immediately, however, Peony pulled away his little fist, and began to rub it as if the fingers were tingling with cold; while Violet also released herself, though with less abruptness, gravely remarking that it was better not to take hold of hands. The white-robed damsel said not a word, but danced about, just as merrily as before. If Violet and Peony did not choose to play with her, she could make just as good a playmate of the brisk and cold west-wind, which kept blowing her all about the garden, and took such liberties with her, that they seemed to have been friends for a long time. All this while, the mother stood on the threshold, wondering how a little girl could look so much like a flying snow-drift, or how a snow-drift could look so very like a little girl.

She called Violet, and whispered to her.

“Violet, my darling, what is this child’s name?” asked she. “Does she live near us?”

“Why, dearest mamma,” answered Violet, laughing to think that her mother did not comprehend so very plain an affair, “this is our little snow-sister, whom we have just been making!”

“Yes, dear mamma,” cried Peony, running to his mother and looking up simply into her face, “This is our snow-image! Is it not a nice ’ittle child?”

At this instant a flock of snow-birds came flitting through the air. As was very natural, they avoided Violet and Peony. But—and this looked strange—they flew at once to the white-robed child, fluttered eagerly about her head, alighted on her shoulders, and seemed to claim her as an old acquaintance. She, on her part, was evidently as glad to see these little birds, old Winter’s grandchildren, as they were to see her, and welcomed them by holding out both her hands. Hereupon, they each and all tried to alight on her two palms and ten small fingers and thumbs, crowding one another off, with an immense fluttering of their tiny wings. One dear little bird nestled tenderly in her bosom; another put its bill to her lips. They were as joyous, all the while, and seemed as much in their element, as you may have seen them when sporting with a snow-storm.

Violet and Peony stood laughing at this pretty sight: for they enjoyed the merry time which their new playmate was having with their small-winged visitants, almost as much as if they themselves took part in it.

“Violet,” said her mother, greatly perplexed, “tell me the truth, without any jest. Who is this little girl?”

“My darling mamma,” answered Violet, looking seriously into her mother’s face, and apparently surprised that she should need any further explanation, “I have told you truly

who she is.  It is our little snow-image, which Peony and I have been making.  Peony will tell you so, as well as I."

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“Yes, mamma,” asseverated Peony, with much gravity in his crimson little phiz, “this is ’ittle snow-child. Is not she a nice one? But, mamma, her hand, is oh, so very cold!”

While mamma still hesitated what to think and what to do, the street-gate was thrown open, and the father of Violet and Peony appeared, wrapped in a pilot-cloth sack, with a fur cap drawn down over his ears, and the thickest of gloves upon his hands. Mr. Lindsey was a middle-aged man, with a weary and yet a happy look in his wind-flushed and frost-pinched face, as if he had been busy all the day long, and was glad to get back to his quiet home. His eyes brightened at the sight of his wife and children, although he could not help uttering a word or two of surprise, at finding the whole family in the open air, on so bleak a day, and after sunset too. He soon perceived the little white stranger, sporting to and fro in the garden, like a dancing snow-wreath, and the flock of snow-birds fluttering about her head.

“Pray, what little girl may that be?” inquired this very sensible man. “Surely her mother must be crazy, to let her go out in such bitter weather as it has been to-day, with only that flimsy white gown and those thin slippers!”

“My dear husband,” said his wife, “I know no more about the little thing than you do. Some neighbour’s child, I suppose. Our Violet and Peony,” she added, laughing at herself for repeating so absurd a story, “insist that she is nothing but a snow-image, which they have been busy about in the garden, almost all the afternoon.”

As she said this, the mother glanced her eyes toward the spot where the children’s snow-image had been made. What was her surprise, on perceiving that there was not the slightest trace of so much labour!—no image at all—no piled up heap of snow—-nothing whatever, save the prints of little footsteps around a vacant space!

“This is very strange!” said she.

“What is strange, dear mother?” asked Violet. “Dear father, do not you see how it is? This is our snow-image, which Peony and I have made, because we wanted another playmate. Did not we, Peony?”

“Yes, papa,” said crimson Peony. “This be our ’ittle snow-sister. Is she not beau-ti-ful? But she gave me such a cold kiss!”

“Pooh, nonsense, children!” cried their good, honest father, who, as we have already intimated, had an exceedingly common-sensible way of looking at matters. “Do not tell me of making live figures out of snow. Come, wife; this little stranger must not stay out in the bleak air a moment longer. We will bring her into the parlour; and you shall give her a supper of warm bread and milk, and make her as comfortable as you can. Meanwhile, I will inquire among the neighbours; or, if necessary, send the city-crier about the streets, to give notice of a lost child.”

So saying, this honest and very kind-hearted man was going toward the little white damsel, with the best intentions in the world.  But Violet and Peony, each seizing their father by the hand, earnestly besought him not to make her come in.

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“Dear father,” cried Violet, putting herself before him, “it is true what I have been telling you! This is our little snow-girl, and she cannot live any longer than while she breathes the cold west-wind. Do not make her come into the hot room!”

“Yes, father,” shouted Peony, stamping his little foot, so mightily was he in earnest, “this be nothing but our ’ittle snow-child! She will not love the hot fire!”

“Nonsense, children, nonsense, nonsense!” cried the father, half vexed, half laughing at what he considered their foolish obstinacy. “Run into the house, this moment! It is too late to play any longer, now. I must take care of this little girl immediately, or she will catch her death a-cold!”

“Husband! dear husband!” said his wife, in a low voice—for she had been looking narrowly at the snow-child, and was more perplexed than ever—there is something very singular in all this. “You will think me foolish—but—but—may it not be that some invisible angel has been attracted by the simplicity and good faith with which our children set about their undertaking? May he not have spent an hour of his immortality in playing with those dear little souls? and so the result is what we call a miracle. No, no! Do not laugh at me; I see what a foolish thought it is!”

“My dear wife,” replied the husband, laughing heartily, “you are as much a child as Violet and Peony.”

And in one sense so she was, for all through life she had kept her heart full of childlike simplicity and faith, which was as pure and clear as crystal; and, looking at all matters through this transparent medium, she sometimes saw truths so profound, that other people laughed at them as nonsense and absurdity.

But now kind Mr. Lindsey had entered the garden, breaking away from his two children, who still sent their shrill voices after him, beseeching him to let the snow-child stay and enjoy herself in the cold west-wind. As he approached, the snow-birds took to flight. The little white damsel, also, fled backward, shaking her head, as if to say, “Pray, do not touch me!” and roguishly, as it appeared, leading him through the deepest of the snow. Once, the good man stumbled, and floundered down upon his face, so that, gathering himself up again, with the snow sticking to his rough pilot-cloth sack, he looked as white and wintry as a snow-image of the largest size. Some of the neighbours, meanwhile, seeing him from their windows, wondered what could possess poor Mr. Lindsey to be running about his garden in pursuit of a snow-drift, which the west-wind was driving hither and thither! At length, after a vast deal of trouble, he chased the little stranger into a corner, where she could not possibly escape him. His wife had been looking on, and, it being nearly twilight, was wonderstruck to observe how the snow-child gleamed and sparkled, and how she seemed to shed a glow all round about her; and when driven into the corner, she positively glistened like a star! It was a frosty kind of

brightness, too like that of an icicle in the moonlight.  The wife thought it strange that good Mr. Lindsey should see nothing remarkable in the snow-child's appearance.

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“Come, you odd little thing!” cried the honest man, seizing her by the hand, “I have caught you at last, and will make you comfortable in spite of yourself. We will put a nice warm pair of worsted stockings on your frozen little feet, and you shall have a good thick shawl to wrap yourself in. Your poor white nose, I am afraid, is actually frost-bitten. But we will make it all right. Come along in.”

And so, with a most benevolent smile on his sagacious visage, all purple as it was with the cold, this very well-meaning gentleman took the snow-child by the hand and led her towards the house. She followed him, droopingly and reluctant; for all the glow and sparkle was gone out of her figure; and whereas just before she had resembled a bright frosty, star-gemmed evening, with a crimson gleam on the cold horizon, she now looked as dull and languid as a thaw. As kind Mr. Lindsey led her up the steps of the door, Violet and Peony looked into his face—their eyes full of tears, which froze before they could run down their cheeks—and again entreated him not to bring their snow-image into the house.

“Not bring her in!” exclaimed the kind-hearted man. “Why, you are crazy, my little Violet! —quite crazy, my small Peony! She is so cold, already, that her hand has almost frozen mine, in spite of my thick gloves. Would you have her freeze to death?”

His wife, as he came up the steps, had been taking another long, earnest, almost awe-stricken gaze at the little white stranger. She hardly knew whether it was a dream or not, but she could not help fancying that she saw the delicate print of Violet’s fingers on the child’s neck. It looked just as if, while Violet was shaping out the image, she had given it a gentle pat with her hand, and had neglected to smooth the impression quite away.

“After all, husband,” said the mother, recurring to her idea that the angels would be as much delighted to play with Violet and Peony as she herself was—“after all, she does look strangely like a snow-image! I do believe she is made of snow!”

A puff of the west-wind blew against the snow-child, and again she sparkled like a star.

“Snow!” repeated good Mr. Lindsey, drawing the reluctant guest over this hospitable threshold. “No wonder she looks like snow. She is half frozen, poor little thing! But a good fire will put everything to rights.”

Without further talk, and always with the same best intentions, this highly benevolent and common-sensible individual led the little white damsel—drooping, drooping, drooping, more and more—out of the frosty air, and into his comfortable parlour. A Heidenberg stove, filled to the brim with intensely burning anthracite, was sending a bright gleam through the isinglass of its iron door, and causing the vase of water on its top to fume and bubble with excitement. A warm, sultry smell was diffused throughout the room. A thermometer on the wall farthest from the stove stood at eighty degrees.

The parlour was hung with red curtains, and covered with a red carpet, and looked just as warm as it felt.  The difference betwixt the atmosphere here and the cold, wintry twilight out of doors, was like stepping at once from Nova Zembla to the hottest part of India, or from the North Pole into an oven.  O, this was a fine place for the little white stranger!

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The common-sensible man placed the snow-child on the hearth-rug, right in front of the hissing and fuming stove.

“Now she will be comfortable!” cried Mr. Lindsey, rubbing his hands and looking about him, with the pleasantest smile you ever saw. “Make yourself at home, my child.”

Sad, sad and drooping, looked the little white maiden, as she stood on the hearth-rug, with the hot blast of the stove striking through her like a pestilence. Once, she threw a glance wistfully toward the windows, and caught a glimpse, through its red curtains, of the snow-covered roofs, and the stars glimmering frostily, and all the delicious intensity of the cold night. The bleak wind rattled the window-panes, as if it were summoning her to come forth. But there stood the snow-child, drooping, before the hot stove!

But the common-sensible man saw nothing amiss.

“Come, wife,” said he, “let her have a pair of thick stockings and a woollen shawl or blanket directly; and tell Dora to give her some warm supper as soon as the milk boils. You, Violet and Peony, amuse your little friend. She is out of spirits, you see, at finding herself in a strange place. For my part, I will go around among the neighbours, and find out where she belongs.”

The mother, meanwhile, had gone in search of the shawl and stockings; for her own view of the matter, however subtle and delicate, had given way, as it always did, to the stubborn materialism of her husband. Without heeding the remonstrances of his two children, who still kept murmuring that their little snow-sister did not love the warmth, good Mr. Lindsey took his departure, shutting the parlour-door carefully behind him. Turning up the collar of his sack over his ears, he emerged from the house, and had barely reached the street-gate when he was recalled by the screams of Violet and Peony, and the rapping of a thimbled finger against the parlour window.

“Husband! husband!” cried his wife, showing her horror-stricken face through the window-panes. “There is no need of going for the child’s parents!”

“We told you so, father!” screamed Violet and Peony, as he re-entered the parlour. “You would bring her in; and now our poor—dear—beau-ti-ful little snow-sister is thawed!”

And their own sweet little faces were already dissolved in tears; so that their father, seeing what strange things occasionally happen in this every-day world, felt not a little anxious lest his children might be going to thaw too! In the utmost perplexity, he demanded an explanation of his wife. She could only reply, that, being summoned to the parlour by the cries of Violet and Peony, she found no trace of the little white maiden, unless it were the remains of a heap of snow, which, while she was gazing at it, melted quite away upon the hearth-rug.

“And there you see all that is left of it!” added she, pointing to a pool of water, in front of the stove.

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“Yes, father,” said Violet, looking reproachfully at him, through her tears, “there is all that is left of our dear little snow-sister!”

“Naughty father!” cried Peony, stamping his foot, and—I shudder to say—shaking his little fist at the common-sensible man. “We told you how it would be! What for did you bring her in?”

And the Heidenberg stove, through the isinglass of its door, seemed to glare at good Mr. Lindsey, like a red-eyed demon, triumphing in the mischief which it had done!

This, you will observe, was one of those rare cases, which yet will occasionally happen, where common-sense finds itself at fault. The remarkable story of the snow-image, though to that sagacious class of people to whom good Mr. Lindsey belongs it may seem but a childish affair, is, nevertheless, capable of being moralised in various methods, greatly for their edification. One of its lessons, for instance, might be that it behooves men, and especially men of benevolence, to consider well what they are about, and, before acting on their philanthropic purposes, to be quite sure that they comprehend the nature and all the relations of the business in hand. What has been established as an element of good to one being may prove absolute mischief to another; even as the warmth of the parlour was proper enough for children of flesh and blood, like Violet and Peony—though by no means very wholesome, even for them—-involved nothing short of annihilation to the unfortunate snow-image.

But, after all, there is no teaching anything to wise men of good Mr. Lindsey’s stamp. They know everything—O, to be sure!—everything that has been, and everything that is, and everything that, by any future possibility, can be. And should some phenomenon of nature or providence transcend their system, they will not recognise it, even if it come to pass under their very noses.

“Wife,” said Mr. Lindsey, after a fit of silence, “see what a quantity of snow the children have brought in on their feet! It has made quite a puddle here before the stove. Pray tell Dora to bring some towels and sop it up!”

## IV

**UNDINE**

## I.—HOW THE KNIGHT CAME TO THE FISHERMAN’S COTTAGE

Once—it may be some hundreds of years ago—there lived a good old Fisherman, who, on a fine summer’s evening, was sitting before the door mending his nets. He dwelt in a

land of exceeding beauty.  The green slope, upon which he had built his hut, stretched far out into a great lake; and it seemed either that the cape, enamoured of the glassy blue waters, had pressed forward into their bosom, or that the lake had lovingly folded in its arms the blooming promontory, with her waving grass and flowers, and the refreshing shade of her tall trees.  Each bade the other welcome, and increased its own beauty by so doing.  This lovely nook was scarcely ever visited by mankind, except

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by the Fisherman and his family. For behind the promontory lay a very wild forest, which, beside being gloomy and pathless, had too bad a name as the resort of wondrous spirits and goblins, to be crossed by anyone who could help it. Yet the pious old Fisherman went through it without being molested, whenever he walked to a large city beyond the forest, to dispose of the costly fish that he caught in the lake. For him, indeed, there was little danger, even in that forest; for his thoughts were almost all thoughts of devotion, and his custom was to carol forth to Heaven a loud and heartfelt hymn, on first setting foot within the treacherous shades.

As he sat this evening most peacefully over his nets, he was startled in an unwonted manner by a rustling sound in the forest, like that of a man and horse; and the noise came nearer and nearer. The dreams he had had in many a stormy night of the spirits of the forest started up before his mind, particularly the image of a gigantic long snow-white man, who kept nodding his head mysteriously. Nay, as he raised his eyes and looked into the forest, he could fancy he saw, through the thick screen of leaves, the nodding creature advance toward him. But he soon composed himself, recollecting that even in the heart of the woods nothing had ever befallen him; much less here, in the open air, could the bad spirits have power to touch him. He moreover repeated a text from the Bible aloud and earnestly, which quite restored his courage, and he almost laughed to see how his fancy had misled him. The white nodding man suddenly resolved himself into a little brook he knew of old, which gushed bubbling out of the wood, and emptied itself into the lake. And the rustling had been caused by a horseman in gorgeous attire, who now came forward toward the hut from beneath the trees.

He wore a scarlet mantle over his purple, gold-embroidered jerkin; a plume of red and purple feathers waved over his gold-coloured barret-cap; and from his golden belt hung a glittering jewelled sword. The white courser which carried him was of lighter make than the generality of chargers, and trod so airily, that the enamelled turf seemed scarcely to bend under him. The aged Fisherman could not quite shake off his uneasiness, although he told himself that so noble a guest could bring him no harm, and accordingly doffed his hat courteously, and interrupted his work when he approached.

The Knight reined in his horse, and asked whether they could both obtain one night's shelter.

"As to your horse, good sir," answered the Fisherman, "I have no better stable to offer him than the shady meadow, and no provender but the grass which grows upon it. But you shall yourself be heartily welcome to my poor house, and to the best of my supper and night lodging."

The stranger seemed quite content; he dismounted, and they helped each other to take off the horse's girth and saddle, after which the Knight let him graze on the flowery pasture, saying to his host, "Even if I had found you less kind and hospitable, my good old man, you must have borne with me till to-morrow; for I see we are shut in by a wide lake and Heaven forbid that I should cross the haunted forest again at nightfall!"

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“We will not say much about that,” replied the Fisherman; and he led his guest into the cottage.

There, close by the hearth, from whence a scanty fire shed its glimmering light over the clean little room, sat the Fisherman’s old wife. When their noble guest came in, she rose to give him a kind welcome, but immediately resumed her place of honour, without offering it to him; and the Fisherman said with a smile: “Do not take it amiss, young sir, if she does not give up to you the most comfortable place; it is the custom among us poor people that it should always belong to the oldest.”

“Why, husband!” said his wife, quietly, “what are you thinking of? Our guest is surely a Christian gentleman, and how could it come into his kind young heart to turn old people out of their places? Sit down, my young lord,” added she, turning to the Knight; “there stands a very comfortable chair for you; only remember it must not be too roughly handled, for one leg is not so steady as it has been.” The Knight drew the chair carefully forward, seated himself sociably, and soon felt quite at home in this little household, and as if he had just returned to it from a far journey.

The three friends began to converse openly and familiarly together. First the Knight asked a few questions about the forest, but the old man would not say much of that; least of all, said he, was it fitting to talk of such things at nightfall; but, on household concerns, and their own way of life, the old folks talked readily; and were pleased when the Knight told them of his travels, and that he had a castle near the source of the Danube, and that his name was Lord Huldbrand of Ringstetten. In the middle of their discourse, the stranger often observed a noise outside a small window, as if someone were dashing water against it. The old man knit his brows and looked grave whenever this occurred; at last, when a great splash of water came full against the panes, and some found its way into the room, he could bear it no longer, but started up, crying, “Undine! will you never leave off these childish tricks—when we have a stranger gentleman in the house too!” This produced silence outside, all but a sound of suppressed giggling, and the Fisherman said as he came back; “My honoured guest, you must put up with this, and perhaps with many another piece of mischief; but she means no harm. It is our adopted child Undine; there is no breaking her of her childish ways, though she is eighteen years old now. But as I told you she is as good a child as ever lived at bottom.”

“Ay, so you may say!” rejoined his wife, shaking her head. “When you come home from fishing, or from a journey, her playful nonsense may be pleasant enough. But, to be keeping her out of mischief all day long, as I must do, and never get a word of sense from her, nor a bit of help and comfort in my old age, is enough to weary the patience of a saint.”

“Well, well,” said the good man, “you feel toward Undine as I do toward the lake. Though its waves are apt enough to burst my banks and my nets, yet I love them for all that, and so do you love our pretty wench, with all her plaguey tricks.  Don’t you?”

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“Why, one cannot be really angry with her, to be sure,” said the dame, smiling.

Here the door flew open, and a beautiful fair creature tripped in, and said, playfully: “Well, father, you made game of me; where is your guest?” The next moment she perceived the Knight, and stood fixed in mute admiration; while Huldbrand gazed upon her lovely form, and tried to impress her image on his mind, thinking that he must avail himself of her amazement to do so, and that in a moment she would shrink away in a fit of bashfulness. But it proved otherwise. After looking at him a good while, she came up to him familiarly, knelt down beside him, and playing with a golden medal that hung from his rich chain, she said: “So, thou kind, thou beautiful guest! hast thou found us out in our poor hut at last? Why didst thou roam the world so many years without coming near us? Art come through the wild forest, my handsome friend?” The old woman allowed him no time to answer. She desired her to get up instantly, like a modest girl, and to set about her work. But Undine, without replying, fetched a footstool and put it close to Huldbrand’s chair, sat down there with her spinning, and said cheerfully—“I will sit and work here.” The old man behaved as parents are apt to do with spoiled children. He pretended not to see Undine’s waywardness, and was beginning to talk of something else; but she would not let him. She said, “I asked our visitor where he came from, and he has not answered me yet.”

“From the forest I came, you beautiful sprite,” answered Huldbrand; and she continued:

“Then you must tell me how you came there, and what wonderful adventures you had in it, for I know that nobody can escape without some.”

Huldbrand could not help shuddering on being reminded of his adventures, and involuntarily glanced at the window, half expecting to see one of the strange beings he had encountered in the forest grinning at him through it; but nothing was to be seen except the deep black night, which had now closed in. He recollected himself, and was just beginning his narrative, when the old man interposed: “Not just now, Sir Knight; this is no time for such tales.”

But Undine jumped up passionately, put her beautiful arms akimbo, and standing before the Fisherman, exclaimed: “What! may not he tell his story, father—may not he? But I will have it; he must. He shall indeed!” And she stamped angrily with her pretty feet, but it was all done in so comical and graceful a manner, that Huldbrand thought her still more bewitching in her wrath, than in her playful mood.

Not so the old man; his long-restrained anger burst out uncontrolled. He scolded Undine smartly for her disobedience, and unmannerly conduct to the stranger, his wife chiming in.

Undine then said:  “Very well, if you will be quarrelsome and not let me have my own way, you may sleep alone in your smoky old hut!” and she shot through the door like an arrow, and rushed into the dark night.

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## II.—HOW UNDINE FIRST CAME TO THE FISHERMAN

Huldbrand and the Fisherman sprang from their seats, and tried to catch the angry maiden; but before they could reach the house door, Undine had vanished far into the thick shades, and not a sound of her light footsteps was to be heard, by which to track her course. Huldbrand looked doubtfully at his host; he almost thought that the whole fair vision which had so suddenly plunged into the night, must be a continuation of the phantom play which had whirled around him in his passage through the forest. But the old man mumbled through his teeth: "It is not the first time she has served us so. And here are we, left in our anxiety with a sleepless night before us; for who can tell what harm may befall her, all alone out-of-doors till daybreak?"

"Then let us be after her, good father, for God's sake!" cried Huldbrand eagerly.

The old man replied, "Where would be the use? It were a sin to let you set off alone in pursuit of the foolish girl, and my old legs would never overtake such a Will-with-the-wisp—even if we could guess which way she is gone."

"At least let us call her, and beg her to come back," said Huldbrand; and he began calling after her in most moving tones: "Undine! O Undine, do return!"

The old man shook his head, and said that all the shouting in the world would do no good with such a wilful little thing. But yet he could not himself help calling out from time to time in the darkness: "Undine! ah, sweet Undine! I entreat thee, come back this once."

The Fisherman's words proved true. Nothing was to be seen or heard of Undine; and as her foster-father would by no means suffer Huldbrand to pursue her, they had nothing for it but to go in again. They found the fire on the hearth nearly burnt out, and the dame, who did not take to heart Undine's flight and danger so much as her husband, was gone to bed. The old man blew the coals, laid on dry wood, and by the light of the reviving flames he found a flagon of wine, which he put between himself and his guest. "You are uneasy about that silly wench, Sir Knight," said he, "and we had better kill part of the night chatting and drinking, than toss about in our beds, trying to sleep in vain. Had not we?"

Huldbrand agreed; the Fisherman made him sit in his wife's empty arm-chair, and they both drank and talked together, as a couple of worthy friends should do. Whenever, indeed, there was the least stir outside the window, or even sometimes without any, one of them would look up and say, "There she comes." Then they would keep silence for a few moments, and as nothing came, resume their conversation, with a shake of the head and a sigh.

But as neither could think of much beside Undine, the best means they could devise for beguiling the time was, that the Fisherman should relate, and the Knight listen to, the history of her first coming to the cottage.  He began as follows:

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“One day, some fifteen years ago, I was carrying my fish through that dreary wood to the town. My wife stayed at home, as usual; and at that time she had a good and pretty reason for it—the Lord had bestowed upon us (old as we already were) a lovely babe. It was a girl; and so anxious were we to do our best for the little treasure, that we began to talk of leaving our beautiful home, in order to give our darling a good education among other human beings. With us poor folks, wishing is one thing, and doing is quite another, Sir Knight; but what then? we can only try our best. Well then, as I plodded on, I turned over the scheme in my head. I was loath to leave our own dear nook, and it made me shudder to think, in the din and brawls of the town, ’So it is here we shall soon live, or in some place nearly as bad!’ Yet I never murmured against our good God, but rather thanked Him in secret for His last blessing; nor can I say that I met with anything extraordinary in the forest, either coming or going; indeed nothing to frighten me has ever crossed my path. The Lord was ever with me in the awful shades.”

Here he uncovered his bald head, and sat for a time in silent prayer; then putting his cap on again, he continued: “On this side of the wood it was—on this side, that the sad news met me. My wife came toward me with eyes streaming like two fountains; she was in deep mourning. ’Oh, good Heaven!’ I called out, ‘where is our dear child? Tell me?’

“‘Gone, dear husband,’ she replied; and we went into our cottage together, weeping silently. I looked for the little corpse, and then first heard how it had happened. My wife had been sitting on the shore with the child, and playing with it, all peace and happiness; when the babe all at once leaned over, as if she saw something most beautiful in the water; there she sat smiling, sweet angel! and stretching out her little hands; but the next moment she darted suddenly out of her arms, and down into the smooth waters. I made much search for the poor little corpse; but in vain; not a trace of her could I find.

“When evening was come, we childless parents were sitting together in the hut, silent; neither of us had a mind to speak, even if the tears had let us. We were looking idly into the fire. Just then something made a noise at the door. It opened, and a beautiful little maid, of three or four years’ old stood there gaily dressed, and smiling in our faces. We were struck dumb with surprise, and at first hardly knew if she were a little human being, or only an empty shadow. But I soon saw that her golden hair and gay clothes were dripping wet, and it struck me the little fairy must have been in the water and distressed for help. ‘Wife,’ said I, ’our dear child had no friend to save her; shall we not do for others what would have made our remaining days so happy, if anyone had done it for us?’ We undressed the child, put her to bed, and gave her a warm drink, while she never said a word, but kept smiling at us with her sky-blue eyes.

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“The next morning we found she had done herself no harm; and I asked her who were her parents, and what had brought her here; but she gave me a strange, confused answer. I am sure she must have been born far away, for these fifteen years have we kept her, without ever finding out where she came from; and besides, she is apt to let drop such marvellous things in her talk, that you might think she had lived in the moon. She will speak of golden castles, of crystal roofs, and I can’t tell what beside. The only thing she has told us clearly, is, that as she was sailing on the lake with her mother, she fell into the water, and when she recovered her senses found herself lying under these trees, in safety and comfort, upon our pretty shore.

“So now we had a serious, anxious charge thrown upon us. To keep and bring up the foundling, instead of our poor drowned child—that was soon resolved upon but who should tell us if she had yet been baptised or no? She knew how not how to answer the question. That she was one of God’s creatures, made for His glory and service, that much she knew; and anything that would glorify and please Him, she was willing to have done. So my wife and I said to each other: ’If she has never been baptised, there is no doubt it should be done; and if she was, better do too much than too little, in a matter of such consequence.’ We therefore began to seek a good name for the child. Dorothea seemed to us the best; for I had once heard that meant God’s gift; and she had indeed been sent us by Him as a special blessing, to comfort us in our misery. But she would not hear of that name. She said Undine was what her parents used to call her, and Undine she would still be. That, I thought, sounded like a heathen name, and occurred in no Calendar; and I took counsel with a priest in the town about it. He also objected to the name Undine; and at my earnest request, came home with me, through the dark forest, in order to baptise her. The little creature stood before us, looking so gay and charming in her holiday clothes, that the priest’s heart warmed toward her; and what with coaxing and wilfulness, she got the better of him, so that he clean forgot all the objections he had thought of to the name Undine. She was therefore so christened and behaved particularly well and decently during the sacred rite, wild and unruly as she had always been before. For, what my wife said just now was too true—we have indeed found her the wildest little fairy! If I were to tell you all—”

Here the Knight interrupted the Fisherman, to call his attention to a sound of roaring waters, which he had noticed already in the pauses of the old man’s speech, and which now rose in fury as it rushed past the windows. They both ran to the door. By the light of the newly risen moon, they saw the brook which gushed out of the forest breaking wildly over its banks, and whirling along stones and branches in its eddying course. A storm, as if awakened

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by the uproar, burst from the heavy clouds that were chasing each other across the moon; the lake howled under the wings of the wind; the trees on the shore groaned from top to bottom, and bowed themselves over the rushing waters. “Undine! for God’s sake, Undine!” cried the Knight, and the old man. No answer was to be heard; and, heedless now of any danger to themselves, they ran off in different directions, calling her in frantic anxiety.

## III.—HOW THEY FOUND UNDINE AGAIN

The longer Huldbrand wandered in vain pursuit of Undine, the more bewildered he became. The idea that she might be a mere spirit of the woods, sometimes returned upon him with double force; nay, amid the howling waves and storm, the groaning of trees, and the wild commotion of the once-peaceful spot, he might have fancied the whole promontory, its hut and its inhabitants, to be a delusion of magic, but that he still heard in the distance the Fisherman’s piteous cries of “Undine!” and the old housewife’s loud prayers and hymns, above the whistling of the blast.

At last he found himself on the margin of the overflowing stream, and saw it by the moonlight rushing violently along, close to the edge of the mysterious forest so as to make an island of the peninsula on which he stood. “Gracious Heaven!” thought he, “Undine may have ventured a step or two into that awful forest—perhaps in her pretty waywardness, just because I would not tell her my story—and the swollen stream has cut her off, and left her weeping alone among the spectres!” A cry of terror escaped him, and he clambered down the bank by means of some stones and fallen trees, hoping to wade or swim across the flood, and seek the fugitive beyond it. Fearful and unearthly visions did indeed float before him, like those he had met with in the morning, beneath these groaning, tossing branches. Especially he was haunted by the appearance of a tall white man, whom he remembered but too well, grinning and nodding at him from the opposite bank; however, the thought of these grim monsters did but urge him onward as he recollected Undine, now perhaps in deadly fear among them, and alone.

He had laid hold of a stout pine branch, and leaning on it, was standing in the eddy, though scarcely able to stem it, but he stepped boldly forward—when a sweet voice exclaimed close behind him: “Trust him not—trust not! The old fellow is tricksy—the stream!”

Well he knew those silver tones: the moon was just disappearing behind a cloud, and he stood amid the deepening shades, made dizzy as the water shot by him with the speed of an arrow. Yet he would not desist. “And if thou art not truly there, if thou flittest before me an empty shadow, I care not to live; I will melt into air like thee, my beloved Undine!” This he cried aloud, and strode further into the flood.

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“Look round then—look round, fair youth!” he heard just behind him, and looking round, he beheld by the returning moonbeams, on a fair island left by the flood, under some thickly interlaced branches, Undine all smiles and loveliness, nestling in the flowery grass. How much more joyfully than before did the young man use his pine staff to cross the waters! A few strides brought him through the flood that had parted them; and he found himself at her side, on the nook of soft grass, securely sheltered under the shade of the old trees. Undine half arose, and twined her arms round his neck in the green arbour, making him sit down by her on the turf. “Here you shall tell me all, my own friend,” said she in a low whisper; “the cross old folks cannot overhear us. And our pretty bower of leaves is well worth their wretched hut.”

“This is heaven!” cried Huldbrand, as he clasped in his arms the beautiful flatterer.

Meantime the old man had reached the banks of the stream, and he called out: “So, Sir Knight, when I had made you welcome, as one honest man should another, here are you making love to my adopted child—to say nothing of your leaving me to seek her, alone and terrified, all night.”

“I have but this moment found her, old man!” cried the Knight in reply.

“Well, I am glad of that,” said the Fisherman; “now then bring her back to me at once.”

But Undine would not hear of it. She had rather she said, go quite away into the wild woods with the handsome stranger, than return to the hut, where she had never had her own way, and which the Knight must sooner or later leave. Embracing Huldbrand, she sang with peculiar charm and grace:

“From misty cave the mountain wave
  Leapt out and sought the main!
The Ocean’s foam she made her home,
  And ne’er returned again.”

The old man wept bitterly as she sang, but this did not seem to move her. She continued to caress her lover, till at length he said: “Undine, the poor old man’s grief goes to my heart if not to yours. Let us go back to him.”

Astonished, she raised her large blue eyes toward him, and after a pause answered slowly and reluctantly: “To please you, I will: whatever you like pleases me too. But the old man yonder must first promise me that he will let you tell me all you saw in the forest, and the rest we shall see about.”

“Only come back—do come!” cried the Fisherman, and not another word could he say. At the same moment he stretched his arms over the stream toward her, and nodded his head by way of giving her the desired promise; and as his white hair fell over his face, it

gave him a strange look, and reminded Huldbrand involuntarily of the nodding white man in the woods.  Determined, however, that nothing should stop him, the young Knight took the fair damsel in his arms, and carried her through the short space of foaming flood, which divided the island from the mainland.  The old man fell upon Undine's neck, and rejoiced, and kissed her in the fulness of his heart; his aged wife also came up, and welcomed their recovered child most warmly.  All reproaches were forgotten; the more so, as Undine seemed to have left her sauciness behind, and overwhelmed her foster parents with kind words and caresses.

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When these transports of joy had subsided, and they began to look about them, the rosy dawn was just shedding its glow over the lake, the storm had ceased, and the birds were singing merrily on the wet branches. As Undine insisted upon hearing the story of the Knight's adventure, both the old folks cheerfully indulged her. Breakfast was set out under the trees between the cottage and the lake, and they sat down before it with glad hearts, Undine placing herself resolutely on the grass at the Knight's feet. Huldbrand began his narrative as follows.

## IV.—OF WHAT HAD BEFALLEN THE KNIGHT IN THE FOREST

"About eight days ago, I rode into the imperial city beyond this forest. A grand tournament and tilting was held there, and I spared neither lance nor steed. As I stood still a moment to rest myself, in a pause of the noble game, and had just given my helmet in charge to a squire, my eye fell upon a most beautiful woman, who stood, richly adorned, in one of the galleries, looking on. I inquired her name, and found that this charming lady was Bertalda, the adopted daughter of one of the principal lords in the neighbourhood. I observed that her eye was upon me too, and as is the way with us young knights, I had not been slack before, but I now fought more bravely still. That evening I was Bertalda's partner in the dance, and so I was again every evening during the jousting."

Here a sudden pain in his left hand, which hung beside him, checked the Knight in his tale, and he looked at his hand. Undine's pearly teeth had bitten one of his fingers sharply, and she looked very black at him. But the next moment that look changed into an expression of tender sadness, and she whispered low: "So you are faithless too!" Then she hid her face in her hands, and the Knight proceeded with his tale, although staggered and perplexed.

"That Bertalda is a high-spirited, extraordinary maid. On the second day she charmed me far less than the first, and on the third, less still. But I remained with her, because she was more gracious to me than to any other knight, and so it fell out that I asked her in jest for one of her gloves. 'You shall have it,' said she, 'if you will visit the haunted forest alone, and bring me an account of it.' It was not that I cared much for her glove, but the words had been spoken, and a knight that loves his fame does not wait to be twice urged to such a feat."

"I thought she had loved you," interrupted Undine.

"It looked like it," he replied.

“Well,” cried the maiden, laughing, “she must be a fool indeed!  To drive *him* away whom she loves! and into a haunted forest besides!  The forest and its mysteries might have waited long enough, for me.”

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“I set out yesterday morning,” continued the Knight, smiling kindly at Undine. “The stems of the trees looked so bright in the morning sunshine, as it played upon the green turf, and the leaves whispered together so pleasantly, that I could not but laugh at those who imagined any evil to lurk in such a beautiful place. I shall very soon have ridden through it and back again, thought I, pushing on cheerily, and before I was aware of it, I found myself in the depths of its leafy shades, and the plains behind me far out of sight. It then occurred to me that I was likely enough to lose my way in this wilderness of trees, and that this might be the only real danger to which the traveller was here exposed. So I halted, and took notice of the course of the sun; it was now high in the heavens.

“On looking up, I saw something black among the boughs of a tall oak. I took it for a bear, and seized my rifle; but it addressed me in a human voice, most hoarse and grating, saying: ’If I did not break off the twigs up here, what should we do to-night for fuel to roast you with, Sir Simpleton?’ And he gnashed his teeth, and rattled the boughs, so as to startle my horse, which ran away with me before I could make out what kind of a devil it was.”

“You should not mention *his* name,” said the Fisherman, crossing himself; his wife silently did the same, while Undine turned her beaming eyes upon her lover, and said—

“He is safe now; it is well they did not really roast him. Go on, pretty youth.”

He continued: “My terrified horse had almost dashed me against many a trunk and branch; he was running down with fright and heat, and yet there was no stopping him. At length he rushed madly toward the brink of a stony precipice; but here, as it seemed to me, a tall white man threw himself across the plunging animal’s path, and made him start back, and stop. I then recovered the control of him, and found that, instead of a white man, my preserver was no other than a bright silvery brook, which gushed down from the hill beside me, checking and crossing my horse in his course.”

“Thanks, dear brook!” cried Undine, clapping her hands. But the old man shook his head, and seemed lost in thought.

“Scarcely had I settled myself in the saddle, and got firm hold of my reins again,” proceeded Huldbrand, “when an extraordinary little man sprang up beside me, wizen and hideous beyond measure; he was of a yellow-brown hue, and his nose almost as big as the whole of his body. He grinned at me in the most fulsome way with his wide mouth, bowing and scraping every moment. As I could not abide these antics, I thanked him abruptly, pulled my still-trembling horse another way, and thought I would seek some other adventure, or perhaps go home; for during my wild gallop the sun had passed his meridian, and was now declining westward. But the little imp sprang round like lightning, and stood in front of my horse again.

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“‘Make way!’ cried I impatiently, ’the animal is unruly, and may run over you.’

“‘Oh,’ snarled the imp, with a laugh more disgusting than before, ’first give me a piece of coin for having caught your horse so nicely; but for me, you and your pretty beast would be lying in the pit down yonder:  whew!’

“‘Only have done with your grimaces,’ said I, ’and take your money along with you, though it is all a lie:  look there, it was that honest brook that saved me, not you—you pitiful wretch!’ So saying, I dropped a gold coin into his comical cap, which he held out toward me like a beggar.

“I trotted on, but he still followed, screaming, and, with inconceivable rapidity, whisked up to my side.  I put my horse into a gallop; he kept pace with me, though with much difficulty, and twisted his body into various frightful and ridiculous attitudes, crying at each step as he held up the money:  ’Bad coin! bad gold! bad gold! bad coin!’ And this he shrieked in such a ghastly tone, that you would have expected him to drop down dead after each cry.

“At last I stopped, much vexed, and asked, ’What do you want, with your shrieks?  Take another gold coin; take two if you will, only let me alone.’

“He began his odious smirking again, and snarled, ’It’s not gold, it’s not gold that I want, young gentleman; I have rather more of that than I can use:  you shall see.’

“All at once the surface of the ground became transparent; it looked like a smooth globe of green glass, and within it I saw a crowd of goblins at play with silver and gold.  Tumbling about, head over heels they pelted each other in sport, making a toy of the precious metals, and powdering their faces with gold dust.  My ugly companion stood half above, half below the surface; he made the others reach up to him quantities of gold, and showed it to me laughing, and then flung it into the fathomless depths beneath.  He displayed the piece of gold I had given him to the goblins below, who held their sides with laughing and hissed at me in scorn.  At length all their bony fingers pointed at me together; and louder and louder, closer and closer, wilder and wilder grew the turmoil, as it rose toward me, till not my horse only, but I myself was terrified; I put spurs into him, and cannot tell how long I may have scoured the forest this time.

“When at last I halted, the shades of evening had closed in.  Through the branches I saw a white footpath gleaming and hoped it must be a road out of the forest to the town.  I resolved to work my way thither; but lo! an indistinct, dead-white face, with ever-changing features, peeped at me through the leaves; I tried to avoid it, but wherever I went, there it was.  Provoked, I attempted to push my horse against it; then it splashed us both over with white foam, and we turned away, blinded for the moment.  So it drove us, step by step, further and further from the footpath, and indeed never letting us go on

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undisturbed but in one direction. While we kept to this, it was close upon our heels, but did not thwart us. Having looked round once or twice, I observed that the white foaming head was placed on a gigantic body, equally white. I sometimes doubted my first impression, and thought it merely a waterfall, but I never could satisfy myself that it was so. Wearily did my horse and I precede this active white pursuer, who often nodded at us, as if saying, 'That's right! that's right!' and it ended by our issuing from the wood here, where I rejoiced to see your lawn, the lake, and this cottage, and where the long white man vanished."

"Thank Heaven, he is gone," said the old man, and he then proceeded to consider how his guest could best return to his friends in the city. Upon this, Undine was heard to laugh in a whisper.

Huldbrand observed it, and said: "I thought you had wished me to stay; and now you seem pleased when we talk of my going?"

"Because," replied Undine, "you cannot get away. Only try to cross the swollen brook, in a boat, on horseback, or on foot. Or rather, do not try, for you would be dashed to pieces by the branches and stones that it hurls along. And as to the lake, I know how that is: father never ventures across it in his boat."

Huldbrand laughed, and got up to see whether she had spoken true; the old man went with him, and the maiden tripped along playfully by their side. They found she had told them no worse than the truth and the Knight resigned himself to staying in the island, as it might now be called till the floods had subsided. As they returned homeward, he whispered in his pretty companion's ear—"Well, my little Undine! are you angry at my staying?"

"Ah," said she sullenly, "never mind. If I had not bitten you, who knows what might have come out in your story of Bertalda?"

## V.—OF THE LIFE WHICH THE KNIGHT LED ON THE ISLAND

Has it ever befallen thee, gentle reader, after many ups and downs in this troublesome world, to alight upon a spot where thou foundest rest; where the love which is born with us for fireside comfort and domestic peace, revived in thee; where thou couldst fancy thy early home with the blossoms of childhood, its pure, heartfelt affection, and the holy influence breathed from thy fathers' graves, to be restored to thee—and that it must indeed be "good for thee to be here, and to build tabernacles?" The charm may have been broken, the dream dispelled; but that has nothing to do with our present picture;

nor wilt thou care to dwell on such bitter moments; but recall to mind that period of unspeakable peace, that foretaste of angelic rest which was granted thee, and thou wilt partly conceive what the Knight Huldbrand felt, while he lived on the promontory. Often, with secret satisfaction, did he mark the forest stream rolling by more wildly every day; its bed became wider

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and wider, and he felt the period of his seclusion from the world must be still prolonged. Having found an old crossbow in a corner of the cottage, and mended it, he spent part of his days roving about, waylaying the birds that flew by, and bringing whatever he killed to the kitchen, as rare game. When he came back laden with spoil, Undine would often scold him for taking the life of the dear little joyous creatures, soaring in the blue depths of Heaven; she would even weep bitterly over the dead birds. But if he came home empty-handed, she found fault with his awkwardness and laziness, which obliged them to be content with fish and crabs for dinner. Either way, he took delight in her pretty fits of anger; the more so as she rarely failed to make up for them by the fondest caresses afterwards. The old folks, having been in the young people's confidence from the first, unconsciously looked upon them as a betrothed or even married pair, shut out from the world with them in this retreat, and bestowed upon them for comforts in their old age. And this very seclusion helped to make the young Knight feel as if he were already Undine's bridegroom. It seemed to him that the whole world was contained within the surrounding waters, or at any rate, that he could never more cross that charmed boundary, and rejoin other human beings. And if at times the neighing of his steed reminded him of former feats of chivalry, and seemed to ask for more; if his coat of arms, embroidered on the saddle and trappings, caught his eye; or if his good sword fell from the nail on which he had hung it and slipped out of its scabbard, he would silence the misgivings that arose, by thinking, Undine is not a fisherman's daughter, but most likely sprung from some highly noble family in distant lands. The only thing that ever ruffled him, was to hear the old woman scolding Undine. The wayward girl only laughed at her; but to him it seemed as if his own honour were touched; and yet he could not blame the good wife, for Undine mostly deserved ten times worse than she got, therefore he still felt kindly toward the old dame, and these little rubs scarcely disturbed the even current of their lives.

At length, however, a grievance did arise. The Knight and the Fisherman were in the habit of sitting cheerfully over a flask of wine, both at noon, and also at eventide while the wind whistled around, as it generally did at night. But they had now exhausted the whole stock which the Fisherman had, long since, brought from the town with him and they both missed it sadly. Undine laughed at them all day for it, but they could not join in her mirth as heartily as usual. Toward evening she left the cottage, saying she could no longer bear such long dismal faces. As the twilight looked stormy, and the waters were beginning to moan and heave, the Knight and the old man ran out anxiously to fetch her back, remembering the agony of that night when Huldbrand first came to the cottage. But they were met by Undine, clapping her hands merrily. "What will you give me if I get you some wine? But, indeed, I want no reward for it," she added; "I shall be satisfied if you will but look brighter, and find more to say than you have done all these tedious mornings. Come along; the floods have washed a barrel ashore, and I will engage to sleep a whole week through if it is not a barrel of wine!"

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The men both followed her to a shady creek, and there found a barrel, which did look as if it contained the generous liquor which they longed for. They rolled it toward the hut as fast as they could, for a heavy storm seemed stalking across the sky, and there was light enough left to show them the waves of the lake tossing up their foaming heads, as if looking out for the rain which would soon pour down upon them. Undine lent a hand in the work, and presently, when the shower threatened to break instantly over their heads, she spoke to the big clouds in playful defiance: "You, you there! mind you do not give us a drenching; we are some way from home yet." The old man admonished her that this was sinful presumption, but she laughed slyly to herself, and no harm came of it. Beyond their hopes, they all three reached the comfortable fireside with their prize, unhurt; and it was not till they had opened the barrel, and found it to contain excellent wine, that the rain broke from the heavy clouds in torrents, and they heard the storm roaring among the trees, and over the lake's heaving billows.

A few bottles were soon filled from the great barrel, enough to last them several days; and they sat sipping and chatting over the bright fire, secure from the raging tempest. But the old man's heart presently smote him. "Dear me," said he, "here are we making merry over the blessing of Providence, while the owner of it has perhaps been carried away by the flood, and lost his life!"—"No, that he has not," said Undine, smiling; and she filled the Knight's glass again. He replied, "I give you my word, good father, that if I knew how to find and save him, no danger should deter me; I would not shrink from setting out in this darkness. This much I promise you, if ever I set foot in an inhabited country again, I will make inquiry after him or his heirs, and restore to them twice or three times the value of the wine." This pleased the old man, he gave an approving nod to the Knight, and drained his glass with a better conscience and a lighter heart. But Undine said to Huldbrand, "Do as you like with your money, you may make what compensation you please; but as to setting out and wandering after him, that was hastily said. I should cry my heart out if we chanced to lose you; and had not you rather stay with me and with the good wine?" "Why, yes!" said Huldbrand, laughing. "Well then," rejoined Undine, "it was a foolish thing you talked of doing; charity begins at home, you know." The old woman turned away, shaking her head and sighing; her husband forgot his usual indulgence for the pretty lassie, and reproved her sharply. "One would think," said he, "you had been reared by Turks and heathens; God forgive you and us, you perverse child."—"Ay but it *is* my way of thinking," pursued Undine, "whoever has reared me, so what is the use of your talking?"—"Peace!" cried the Fisherman; and she, who with all her wildness was sometimes cowed in a moment, clung trembling to Huldbrand, and whispered, "And are you angry with me, dear friend?" The Knight pressed her soft hand, and stroked down her ringlets. Not a word could he say; his distress at the old man's harshness toward Undine had sealed his lips; and so each couple remained sitting opposite the other, in moody silence and constraint.

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## VI.—OF A BRIDAL

A gentle tap at the door broke the silence, and made them all start: it sometimes happens that a mere trifle, coming quite unexpectedly, strikes the senses with terror. They looked at each other hesitating; the tap was repeated, accompanied by a deep groan, and the Knight grasped his sword. But the old man muttered, “If it is what I fear, it is not a sword that will help us!” Undine, however, stepped forward to the door, and said boldly and sharply, “If you are after any mischief, you spirits of earth, Kuehleborn shall teach you manners.”

The terror of the others increased at these strange words; they looked at the maiden with awe, and Huldbrand was just mustering courage to ask her a question, when a voice answered her from without: “I am no spirit of earth; call me, if you will, a spirit pent in mortal clay. If you fear God, and will be charitable, you dwellers in the cottage, open the door to me.” Undine opened it before he had done speaking, and held out a lamp into the stormy night, so as to show them the figure of an aged Priest, who started back as the radiant beauty of Undine flashed upon his sight. Well might he suspect magic and witchery, when so bright a vision shone out of a mean-looking cottage; he accordingly began a canticle, “All good spirits give praise to the Lord!”

“I am no ghost,” said Undine, smiling; “am I so frightful to behold? And you may see that a pious saying has no terrors for me. I worship God, too, and praise Him after my own fashion; He has not created us all alike. Come in, venerable father; you will find worthy folks here.”

The holy man walked in, bowing and casting his eyes around, and looking most mild and venerable. Every fold of his dark garment was dripping with water, and so were his long white beard and hoary locks. The Fisherman and the Knight led him to a bedroom, and gave him change of clothing, while the women dried his wet garments by the hearth fire. The aged stranger thanked them with all humility and gentleness, but would by no means accept of the Knight’s splendid mantle, which he offered him; he chose himself an old gray wrapper of the Fisherman’s instead. So they returned to the kitchen; the dame up gave her own arm-chair to the Priest, and had no peace till he sat himself down on it: “For,” said she, “you are old and weary, and a priest besides.” Undine pushed her little footstool toward the good man’s feet, and altogether behaved to him quite properly and gracefully. Huldbrand took notice of this, in a playful whisper; but she answered very gravely: “Because he is a servant of the Maker of us all; that is too serious for a jest.”

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Meantime the two men set meat and wine before their guest, and when he had recruited his strength a little, he began his story; saying that the day before he had left his monastery, which was a good way off beyond the lake, intending to visit the bishop at his palace, and report to him the distress which these almost supernatural floods had caused the monks and their poor tenantry. After going round a long way, to avoid these floods, he had been obliged toward evening to cross an arm of the overflowing lake, with the help of two honest sailors. "But," added he, "no sooner had our little vessel touched the waves, than we were wrapped in the tremendous storm, which is still raging over our heads now. It looked as if the waters had only awaited our coming to give a loose to their fury. The oars were soon dashed from the seamen's hands, and we saw their broken fragments carried further and further from us by the waves. We floated on the wave tops, helpless, driven by the furious tempest toward your shores, which we saw in the distance whenever the clouds parted for a moment. The boat was tossed about still more wildly and giddily: and whether it upset, or I fell out, I cannot tell. I floated on, till a wave landed me at the foot of a tree, in this your island."

"Ay, island indeed!" said the Fisherman. "It was a promontory but a short time ago. But, since the stream and our lake are gone raving mad together, everything about us is new and strange."

The Priest continued: "As I crept along the water-side in the dark, with a wild uproar around me, something caught my eye, and presently I descried a beaten pathway, which was soon lost in the shades; I spied the light in your cottage, and ventured to come hither; and I cannot sufficiently thank my heavenly Father, who has not only delivered me from the waters, but guided me to such kind souls. I feel this blessing the more, as it is very likely I may never see any faces but yours again."—"How so?" asked the fisherman. "Can you guess how long this fury of the elements may last?" replied the Priest. "And I am an old man. My stream of life may perhaps lose itself in the earth, before these floods subside. And besides, it may be the foaming waters will divide you from the forest more and more, till you are unable to get across in your fishing boat; and the people of the mainland, full of their own concerns, would quite forget you in your retreat."

Shuddering, and crossing herself, the Fisherman's wife exclaimed, "God forbid!" But the old man smiled at her, and said, "What creatures we are. That would make no difference, to you at least, my dear wife. How many years is it since you have set foot within the forest? And have you seen any face but Undine's and mine? Lately, indeed, we have had the good Knight and Priest besides. But they would stay with us; so that if we are forgotten in this island, you will be the gainer."

"So I see," said the dame; "yet somehow, it is cheerless to feel ourselves quite cut off from the rest of the world, however seldom we had seen it before."

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“Then *you* will stay with us!” murmured Undine in a sweet voice, and she pressed closer to Huldbrand’s side. But he was lost in deep thought. Since the Priest had last spoken, the land beyond the wild stream had seemed to his fancy more dark and distant than ever; while the flowery island he lived in—and his bride, the fairest flower in the picture—bloomed and smiled more and more freshly in his imagination. Here was the Priest at hand to unite them;—and, to complete his resolution, the old dame just then darted a reproving look at Undine, for clinging to her lover’s side in the holy man’s presence; an angry lecture seemed on the point of beginning. He turned toward the Priest, and these words burst from him: “You see before you a betrothed pair, reverend sir; if this damsel and the kind old people will consent, you shall unite us this very evening.”

The old folks were much surprised. Such a thought had often crossed their minds, but they had never till this moment heard it uttered; and it now fell upon their ears like an unexpected thing. Undine had suddenly become quite grave, and sat musing deeply, while the Priest inquired into various circumstances, and asked the old couple’s consent to the deed. After some deliberation, they gave it; the dame went away to prepare the young people’s bridal chamber, and to fetch from her stores two consecrated tapers for the wedding ceremony. Meanwhile the Knight was pulling two rings off his gold chain for himself and his bride to exchange. But this roused Undine from her reverie, and she said: “Stay! my parents did not send me into the world quite penniless; they looked forward long ago to this occasion and provided for it.” She quickly withdrew, and returned bringing two costly rings, one of which she gave to her betrothed and kept the other herself. This astonished the old Fisherman, and still more his wife, who came in soon after; for they neither of them had ever seen these jewels about the child. “My parents,” said Undine, “had these rings sewed into the gay dress which I wore, when first I came to you. They charged me to let no one know of them till my wedding-day came. Therefore I took them secretly out of the dress, and have kept them hidden till this evening.”

Here the Priest put a stop to the conversation, by lighting the holy tapers, placing them on the table, and calling the young pair to him. With few and solemn words he joined their hands; the aged couple gave their blessing, while the bride leaned upon her husband, pensive and trembling.

When it was over, the Priest said: “You are strange people after all! What did you mean by saying you were the only inhabitants of this island? During the whole ceremony there was a fine-looking tall man, in a white cloak, standing just outside the window opposite me. He must be near the door still, if you like to invite him in.”—“Heaven forbid!” said the dame shuddering; the old man shook his head without speaking; and Huldbrand rushed to the window. He could fancy he saw a streak of white, but it was soon lost in darkness. So he assured the Priest he must have been mistaken; and they all sat down comfortably round the fire.

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## VII.—HOW THE REST OF THE EVENING PASSED AWAY

Undine had been perfectly quiet and well-behaved both before and during the marriage ceremony; but now her wild spirits seemed the more uncontrollable from the restraint they had undergone, and rose to an extravagant height. She played all manner of childish tricks on her husband, her foster parents, and even the venerable Priest, and when the old woman began to check her, one or two words from Huldbrand, who gravely called Undine “his wife,” reduced her to silence. The Knight himself, however, was far from being pleased at Undine’s childishness; but no hint or sign would stop her. Whenever she perceived his disapproving looks—which she occasionally did—it subdued her for the moment; she would sit down by him, whisper something playfully in his ear, and so dispel the frown as it gathered on his brow. But the next instant some wild nonsense would dart into her head, and set her off worse than ever. At last the Priest said to her, in a kind but grave manner, “My dear young lady, no one that beholds you can be severe upon you, it is true; but remember, it is your duty to keep watch over your soul, that it may be ever in harmony with that of your wedded husband.” “Soul!” cried Undine, laughing; “that sounds very fine, and for most people may be very edifying and moral advice. But if one has no soul at all, pray how is one to keep watch over it? And that is my case.” The Priest was deeply hurt, and turned away his face in mingled sorrow and anger. But she came up to him beseechingly, and said, “Nay, hear me before you are angry, for it grieves me to see you displeased, and you would not distress any creature who has done you no harm. Only have patience with me, and I will tell you all, from the beginning.”

They saw she was preparing to give them a regular history; but she stopped short, appearing thrilled by some secret recollection, and burst into a flood of gentle tears. They were quite at a loss what to think of her, and gazed upon her, distressed from various causes. At length drying her eyes, she looked at the Priest earnestly and said, “There must be much to love in a soul, but much that is awful too. For God’s sake, holy father, tell me—were it not better to be still without one?” She waited breathlessly for an answer, restraining her tears. Her hearers had all risen from their seats, and now stepped back from her, shuddering. She seemed to have no eyes but for the saintly man; her countenance assumed an expression of anxiety and awe which yet more alarmed the others. “Heavy must be the burden of a soul,” added she, as no one answered her—“heavy indeed! for the mere approach of mine over-shadows me with anxious melancholy. And ah! how light-hearted, how joyous I used to be!” A fresh burst of weeping overcame her, and she covered her face with her veil.

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The Priest then approached her with much gravity, and adjured her by the holiest names to confess the truth, if any evil lurked in her, unknown to them. But she fell on her knees before him, repeated after him all his words of piety, gave praise to God, and declared she was in charity with all the world. The Priest turned to the young Knight. “Sir bridegroom,” said he, “I leave you alone with her whom I have made your wife. As far as I can discover, there is no evil, although much that is mysterious, in her. I exhort you to be sober, loving, and faithful.” So he went out; and the old people followed; crossing themselves.

Undine was still on her knees; she uncovered her face and looked timidly at Huldbrand, saying, “Ah, thou wilt surely cast me off now; and yet I have done nothing wrong, poor, poor child that I am!” This she said with so touching and gentle an expression, that her husband forgot all the gloom and mystery that had chilled his heart; he hastened toward, her and raised her in his arms. She smiled through her tears—it was like the glow of dawn shining upon a clear fountain. “Thou canst not forsake me!” whispered she, in accents of the firmest reliance; and she stroked his cheeks with her soft little hands. He tried to shake off the gloomy thoughts which still lurked in a corner of his mind, suggesting to him that he had married a fairy, or some shadowy being from the world of spirits: one question, however, he could not help asking: “My dear little Undine, just tell me one thing: what was that you said about spirits of earth, and Kuehleborn, when the Priest knocked at the door?”—“All nonsense!” said Undine, laughing, with her usual gayety. “First I frightened you with it, and then you frightened me. And that is the end of the story, and of our wedding-day!”

## VIII.—THE DAY AFTER THE MARRIAGE

A bright morning light wakened the young people; and Huldbrand lay musing silently. As often as he had dropped asleep, he had been scared by horrible dreams of spectres who suddenly took the form of fair women, or of fair women who were transformed into dragons. And when he started up from these grim visions, and saw the pale, cold moonlight streaming in at the window, he would turn an anxious look toward Undine; she lay slumbering in undisturbed beauty and peace. Then he would compose himself to sleep again—soon again to wake in terror. When he looked back upon all this in broad daylight, he was angry with himself for having let a suspicion, a shade of distrust of his beautiful wife, enter his mind. He frankly confessed to her this injustice; she answered him only by pressing his hand, and sighing from the bottom of her heart. But a look, such as her eyes had never before given, of the deepest and most confiding tenderness, left him no doubt that she forgave him. So he arose cheerfully, and joined the family in the sitting-room. The three others were gathered round

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the hearth looking uneasy, and neither of them having ventured to speak his thoughts yet. The Priest seemed to be secretly praying for deliverance from evil. But when the young husband appeared, beaming with happiness, the care-worn faces brightened up; nay, the Fisherman ventured upon a few courteous jokes with the Knight, which won a smile even from the good housewife. Meanwhile Undine had dressed herself, and now came in; they could not help rising to meet her, and stood still, astonished; the young creature was the same, yet so different. The Priest was the first to address her, with an air of paternal kindness, and when he raised his hands in benediction, the fair woman sank on her knees, trembling with pious awe. In a few meek and humble words, she begged him to forgive the folly of the day before, and besought him, with great emotion, to pray for the salvation of her soul. Then rising, she kissed her foster parents, and thanking them for all their kindness, she said: "Oh, now I feel from the bottom of my heart how much you have done for me, how deeply grateful I ought to be, dear, dear people!" She seemed as if she could not caress them enough; but soon, observing the dame glance toward the breakfast, she went toward the hearth, busied herself arranging and preparing the meal, and would not suffer the good woman to take the least trouble herself.

So she went on all day; at once a young matron, and a bashful, tender, delicate bride. The three who knew her best were every moment expecting this mood to change, and give place to one of her crazy fits; but they watched in vain. There was still the same angelic mildness and sweetness. The Priest could not keep his eyes away from her, and he said more than once to the bridegroom, "Sir, it was a great treasure which Heaven bestowed upon you yesterday, by my poor ministration; cherish her worthily, and she will be to you a blessing in time and eternity."

Toward evening, Undine clasped the Knight's arm with modest tenderness, and gently led him out before the door, where the rays of the setting sun were lighting up the fresh grass, and the tall, taper stems of trees. The young wife's face wore a melting expression of love and sadness, and her lips quivered with some anxious, momentous secret, which as yet betrayed itself only by scarce audible sighs. She silently led her companion onward; if he spoke, she replied by a look which gave him no direct answer, but revealed a whole heaven of love and timid submission. So they reached the banks of the stream which had overflowed, and the Knight started on finding the wild torrent changed into a gentle rippling brook, without a trace of its former violence left. "By to-morrow it will have dried up completely," said the bride, in a faltering voice, "and thou mayest begone whither thou wilt."—"Not without thee, my Undine," said the Knight, playfully; "consider, if I had a mind to forsake thee, the Church, the Emperor, and his ministers might step in, and bring thy truant

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home.”—“No, no, you are free; it shall be as you please!” murmured Undine, half tears, half smiles. “But I think thou wilt not cast me away; is not my heart bound up in thine? Carry me over to that little island opposite. There I will know my fate. I could indeed easily step through the little waves; but I love to rest in thine arms! and thou *mayest* cast me off; this may be the last time.” Huldbrand, full of anxious emotion, knew not how to answer. He took her up in his arms, and carried her over, now recollecting that from this very island he had borne her home to the Fisherman, on the night of his arrival. When there, he placed his fair burden on the turf, and was going to sit down beside her; but she said, “No, sit there, opposite me—I will read my doom in your eyes, before your lips have spoken it. Now listen, and I will tell you all.” And she began:—

“You must know, my own love, that in each element exists a race of beings, whose form scarcely differs from yours, but who very seldom appear to mortal sight. In the flames, the wondrous Salamanders glitter and disport themselves; in the depths of earth dwell the dry, spiteful race of Gnomes; the forests are peopled by Wood-nymphs, who are also spirits of air; and the seas, the rivers and brooks contain the numberless tribes of Water-sprites. Their echoing halls of crystal, where the light of heaven pours in, with its sun and stars, are glorious to dwell in; the gardens contain beautiful coral plants, with blue and red fruits; they wander over bright sea-sands, and gay-coloured shells, among the hidden treasures of the old world, too precious to be bestowed on these latter days, and long since covered by the silver mantle of the deep: many a noble monument still gleams there below, bedewed by the tears of Ocean, who garlands it with flowery sea-weeds and wreaths of shells. Those that dwell there below, are noble and lovely to behold, far more so than mankind. Many a fisherman has had a passing glimpse of some fair water-nymph, rising out of the sea with her song; he would then spread the report of her apparition, and these wonderful beings came to be called *Undines*. And you now see before you, my love, an Undine.”

The Knight tried to persuade himself that his fair wife was in one of her wild moods, and had invented this strange tale in sport. But though he said this to himself, he could not for a moment believe it; a mysterious feeling thrilled him; and, unable to utter a word, he kept his eyes rivetted on the beautiful speaker. She shook her head sadly, heaved a deep sigh, and went on:—

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“We might be happier than our human fellow-creatures (for we call you fellow-creatures, as our forms are alike), but for one great evil. We, and the other children of the elements, go down to the dust, body and spirit; not a trace of us remains and when the time comes for you to rise again to a glorified existence, we shall have perished with our native sands, flames, winds, and waves. For we have no souls; the elements move us, obey us while we live, close over us when we die; and we light spirits live as free from care as the nightingale, the gold-fish, and all such bright children of Nature. But no creatures rest content in their appointed place. My father, who is a mighty prince in the Mediterranean Sea, determined that his only child should be endowed with a soul, even at the cost of much suffering, which is ever the lot of souls. But a soul can be infused into one of our race, only by being united in the closest bands of love to one of yours. And now I have obtained a soul; to thee I owe it, O best beloved! and for that gift I shall ever bless thee, unless thou dost devote my whole futurity to misery. For what is to become of me should thou recoil from me, and cast me off? Yet I would not detain thee by deceit. And if I am to leave thee, say so now; go back to the land alone. I will plunge into this brook; it is my uncle, who leads a wonderful, sequestered life in this forest, away from all his friends. But he is powerful, and allied to many great rivers; and as he brought me here to the Fisherman, a gay and laughing child, so he is ready to take me back to my parents, a loving, suffering, forsaken woman.”

She would have gone on; but Huldbrand, full of compassion and love, caught her in his arms, and carried her back. There, with tears and kisses, he swore never to forsake his beloved wife; and said he felt more blessed than the Greek sculptor Pygmalion, whose beautiful statue dame Venus transformed into a living woman. Hanging on his arm in peaceful reliance, Undine returned; and she felt from her inmost heart, how little cause she had to regret the crystal palaces of her father.

## IX.—HOW THE KNIGHT AND HIS YOUNG BRIDE DEPARTED

When Huldbrand awoke from sleep the next morning, he missed his fair companion; and again he was tormented with a doubt, whether his marriage, and the lovely Undine, might not be all a fairy dream. But she soon reappeared, came up to him, and said, “I have been out early, to see if my uncle had kept his word. He has recalled all the straying waters into his quiet bed, and now takes his lonely and pensive course through the forest as he used to do. His friends in the lake and the air are gone to rest also; all things have returned to their usual calmness; and you may set out homeward on dry land, as soon as you please.” Huldbrand felt as if dreaming still, so little could he understand his wife’s wonderful relations. But he took no notice of this, and his sweet Undine’s gentle attentions soon charmed every uneasy thought away.

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A little while after, as they stood at the door together, looking over the fair scene with its boundary of clear waters, his heart yearned so toward this cradle of his love that he said: “But why should we go away so soon? we shall never spend happier days in yonder world, than we have passed in this peaceful nook. Let us at least see two or three more suns go down here.”—“As my Lord wishes,” answered Undine, with cheerful submission; “but, you see, the old people will be grieved at parting with me, whenever it is; and if we give them time to become acquainted with my soul, and with its new powers of loving and honouring them, I fear that when I go, their aged hearts will break under the load of sorrow. As yet, they take my gentle mood for a passing whim, such as they saw me liable to formerly, like a calm on the lake when the winds are lulled; and they will soon begin to love some favourite tree or flower in my place. They must not learn to know this newly obtained, affectionate heart, in the first overflowings of its tenderness, just at the moment when they are to lose me for this world; and how could I disguise it from them, if we remained together longer?”

Huldbrand agreed with her; he went to the old couple and finding them ready to consent, he resolved upon setting out that very hour. The Priest offered to accompany them; after a hasty farewell, the pretty bride was placed on the horse by her husband, and they crossed the stream’s dry bed quickly, and entered the forest. Undine shed silent but bitter tears, while the old folks wailed after her aloud. It seemed as if some foreboding were crossing their minds, of how great their loss would prove.

The three travellers reached the deepest shades of the forest, without breaking silence. It was a fair sight to behold, as they passed through the leafy bowers: the graceful woman sitting on her noble steed, guarded on one side by the venerable Priest in the white habit of his order; on the other, by the youthful Knight, with his gorgeous attire and glittering sword. Huldbrand had no eyes but for his precious wife; Undine, who had dried her duteous tears, no thought but for him; and they soon fell into a noiseless interchange of glances and signs, which at length was interrupted by the sound of a low murmur, proceeding from the Priest and a fourth fellow-traveller, who had joined them unobserved. He wore a white robe, very like the Priest’s dress, except that the hood almost covered his face, and the rest of it floated round him in such large folds that he was perpetually obliged to gather up, throw it over his arm, or otherwise arrange it; yet it did not seem to impede him at all in walking; when the young people saw him he was saying, “And so, my worthy father, I have dwelt in the forest for many a year, yet I am not what you commonly call a hermit. For, as I told you, I know nothing of penance, nor do I think it would do me much good. What makes me so fond of the woods is, that I have a very particular

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fancy for winding through the dark shades and forest walks, with my loose white clothes floating about me; now and then a pretty sunbeam will glance over me as I go."—"You seem to be a very curious person," replied the Priest "and I should like to know more about you."—"And pray who are you, to carry on the acquaintance?" said the stranger. "They call me Father Heilmann," answered the Priest, "and I belong to St. Mary's monastery, beyond the lake."—"Ay, ay!" rejoined the other. "My name is Kuehleborn, and if I stood upon ceremony, I might well call myself Lord of Kuehleborn, or Baron (Freiherr) Kuehleborn; for free I am, as the bird of the air, or a trifle more free. For instance, I must now have a word with the young woman there." And before they could look round, he was on the other side of the Priest, close to Undine, and stretching up his tall figure to whisper in her ear. But she turned hastily away, saying, "I have nothing more to do with you now."—"Heyday!" said the stranger, laughing, "what a prodigiously grand marriage yours must be, if you are to cast off your relations in this way! Have you forgotten Uncle Kuehleborn, who brought you all the way here on his back so kindly?"

"But I entreat you," said Undine, "never come to me again. I am afraid of you now; and will not my husband become afraid of me, if he finds I have so strange a family?"—"My little niece," said Kuehleborn, "please to remember that I am protecting you all this time; the foul Spirits of Earth might play you troublesome tricks if I did not. So you had better let me go on with you, and no more words. The old Priest there has a better memory than yours, for he would have it he knew my face very well, and that I must have been with him in the boat, when he fell into the water. And he may well say so, seeing that the wave which washed him over was none but myself, and I landed him safe on the shore, in time for your wedding."

Undine and the Knight looked at Father Heilmann, but he seemed to be plodding on in a waking dream, and not listening to what was said. Undine said to Kuehleborn, "There, I can see the end of the wood; we want your help no longer, and there is nothing to disturb us but you. So in love and kindness I entreat you, begone, and let us go in peace." This seemed to make Kuehleborn angry; he twisted his face hideously, and hissed at Undine, who cried aloud for help. Like lightning the Knight passed round her horse, and aimed a blow at Kuehleborn's head with his sword. But instead of the head, he struck into a waterfall, which gushed down a high cliff near them, and now showered them all with a splash that sounded like laughter, and wetted them to the bone. The Priest, seeming to wake up, said, "Well, I was expecting this, because that brook gushed down the rock so close to us. At first I could not shake off the idea that it was a man, and was speaking to me." The waterfall whispered distinctly in Huldbrand's ear, "Rash youth, dashing youth, I chide thee not, I shame thee not; still shield thy precious wife safe and sure, rash young soldier, dashing Knight!"

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A little further on they emerged into the open plains.  The city lay glittering before them, and the evening sun that gilded her towers, lent its grateful warmth to dry their soaked garments.

## X.—OF THEIR WAY OF LIFE IN THE TOWN

The sudden disappearance of the young Knight Huldbrand of Ringstetten had made a great stir in the city, and distressed the inhabitants, with whom his gallantry in the lists and the dance, and his gentle, courteous manners, had made him very popular.  His retainers would not leave the place without their master, but yet none had the courage to seek him in the haunted forest.  They therefore remained in their hostelry, idly hoping, as men are so apt to do, and keeping alive the remembrance of their lost lord by lamentations.  But soon after, when the tempest raged and the rivers overflowed, few doubted that the handsome stranger must have perished.  Bertalda, among others, mourned him for lost, and was ready to curse herself, for having urged him to the fatal ride through the forest.  Her ducal foster parents had arrived to take her away, but she prevailed upon them to wait a little, in hope that a true report of Huldbrand's death or safety might reach them.  She tried to persuade some of the young knights who contended for her favour, to venture into the forest and seek for the noble adventurer. But she would not offer her hand as the reward, because she still hoped to bestow it some day on the wanderer himself; and to obtain a glove, a scarf, or some such token from her, none of them cared to expose his life to bring back so dangerous a rival.

Now, when Huldbrand unexpectedly reappeared, it spread joy among his servants, and all the people generally, except Bertalda; for while the others were pleased at his bringing with him such a beautiful wife, and Father Heilmann to bear witness to their marriage, it could not but grieve *her*:  first, because the young Knight had really won her heart; and next, because she had betrayed her feelings by so openly lamenting his absence, far more than was now becoming.  However, she behaved like a prudent woman and suited her conduct to the circumstances, by living in the most cordial intimacy with Undine—who passed in the town for a princess, released by Huldbrand from the power of some wicked enchanter of the forest.  If she or her husband were questioned about it, they gave evasive answers; Father Heilmann's lips were sealed on all such idle topics, beside which, he had left them soon after they arrived, and returned to his cloister:  so the citizens were left to their own wondering conjectures, and even Bertalda came no nearer the truth than others.

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Meanwhile, Undine grew daily more fond of this winning damsel. “We must have known each other before,” she would often say, “or else some secret attraction draws us toward each other; for without some cause, some strange, mysterious cause, I am sure nobody would love another as I have loved you from the moment we met.” Bertalda, on her part, could not deny that she felt strongly inclined to like Undine, notwithstanding the grounds of complaint she thought she had against this happy rival. The affection being mutual, the one persuaded her parents, the other her wedded lord, to defer the day of departure repeatedly; they even went so far as to propose that Bertalda should accompany Undine to the castle of Ringstetten, near the source of the Danube.

They were talking of this one fine evening, as they sauntered by starlight round the market-place, which was surrounded by high trees; the young couple had invited Bertalda to join their evening stroll, and they now paced backward and forward in pleasant talk, with the dark blue sky over their heads, and a beautiful fountain before them in the centre, which, as it bubbled and sprang up into fanciful shapes, often caught their attention, and interrupted the conversation. All around them was serene and pleasant; through the foliage gleamed the light of many a lamp from the surrounding houses; and the ear was soothed by the hum of children at play, and of sauntering groups like themselves; they enjoyed at once the pleasure of solitude, and the social happiness of being near the cheerful haunts of men. Every little difficulty that had occurred to their favourite plan, seemed to vanish upon nearer examination, and the three friends could not imagine that Bertalda’s consent to the journey need be delayed a moment. But as she was on the point of naming a day for joining them and setting out, a very tall man came forward from the middle of the place, bowed to them respectfully, and began whispering in Undine’s ear. She though apparently displeased with the interruption and with the speaker, stepped aside with him, and they began a low discourse together, in what sounded like a foreign language. Huldbrand thought he knew this strange man’s face, and fixed his attention upon him so earnestly, that he neither heard nor answered the astonished Bertalda’s questions. All at once Undine clapped her hands joyfully, and turned her back, laughing, upon the stranger; he shook his head and walked off in an angry, hurried manner, and stepped into the fountain. This confirmed Huldbrand in his guess; while Bertalda inquired, “My dear Undine, what business had that man of the fountain with you?” Her friend smiled archly and replied, “On your birthday, the day after to-morrow, I will tell you, my sweet girl;” and she would say no more. She only pressed Bertalda to come and dine with them on that day, and bring her foster parents; after which they separated.

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“Kuehleborn?” said Huldbrand to his wife with a suppressed shudder, as they walked home through the dark streets. “Yes, it was he,” replied Undine “and he tried to put all sorts of nonsense into my head. However, without intending it he delighted me by one piece of news. If you wish to hear it, now, my kind lord, you have but to say so, and I will tell you every word. But if you like to give your Undine a *very* great delight, you will wait two days, and then have your share in the surprise.”

The Knight readily granted her what she had asked so meekly and gracefully; and as she dropped asleep she murmured, “How it will delight her! how little she expects such a message from the mysterious man—dear, dear Bertalda!”

## XI.—BERTALDA’S BIRTHDAY

The guests were now assembled at table; Bertalda sat at the top, adorned with flowers like the goddess of spring, and flashing with jewels, the gifts of many friends and relations. Undine and Huldbrand were on either side of her. When the sumptuous meal was ended, and the dessert served, the doors were opened—according to the good old German custom—to let the common people look in and have their share in the gaiety of the rich. The attendants offered wine and cake to the assembled crowd. Huldbrand and Bertalda were eagerly watching for the promised disclosure, and both kept their eyes fixed upon Undine. But she was still silent; her cheeks dimpled occasionally with a bright, conscious smile. Those that knew what she was about to do, could perceive that her interesting secret was ready to burst from her lips, but that she was playfully determined to keep it in, as children sometimes will save their daintiest morsels for the last. Her silent glee communicated itself to the other two, who watched impatiently for the happy news that was about to gladden their hearts. Some of the company now asked Undine for a song. She seemed to be prepared with one, and sent for her lute, to which she sang as follows:—

The sun gilds the wave,
  The flowers are sweet,
And the ocean doth lave
  The grass at our feet!

What lies on the earth
  So blooming and gay?
Doth a blossom peep forth
  And greet the new day?

Ah, ’tis a fair child!
  She sports with the flowers,
So gladsome and mild,
  Through the warm sunny hours

O sweet one, who brought thee?
  From far distant shore
Old Ocean he caught thee,
  And many a league bore.

Poor babe, all in vain
  Thou dost put forth thy hand
None clasp it again,
  ’Tis a bleak foreign land:

The flowers bloom brightly,
  And soft breathes the air,
But all pass thee lightly:
  Thy mother is far!

Thy life scarce begun,
  Thy smiles fresh from heaven,
Thy best treasure is gone,
  To another ’tis given.

A gallant charger treads the dell,
  His noble rider pities thee;
He takes thee home, he tends thee well,
  And cares for thee right gen’rously.

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Well thou becom’st thy station high,
  And bloom’st the fairest in the land;
And yet, alas! the purest joy
  Is left on thine own distant strand.

Undine put down her lute with a melancholy smile and the eyes of the Duke and Duchess filled with tears:  “So it was when I found you, my poor innocent orphan!” said the Duke with great emotion “as the fair singer said, your best treasure was gone and we have been unable to supply its place.”

“Now let us think of the poor parents,” said Undine and she struck the chords and sang:—

I

Mother roves from room to room
  Seeking rest, she knows not how,
The house is silent as the tomb,
  And who is there to bless her now?

II

Silent house!  Oh words of sorrow!
  Where is now her darling child?
She who should have cheered the morrow,
  And the evening hours beguiled?

III

The buds are swelling on the tree,
  The sun returns when night is o’er;
But, mother, ne’er comes joy to thee,
  Thy child shall bless thine eyes no more.

IV

And when the evening breezes blow,
  And father seeks his own fireside,
He smiles, forgetful of his woe,
  But ah! his tears that smile shall hide.

V

Father knows that in his home
  Deathlike stillness dwells for aye;

The voice of mirth no more shall come,
  And mother sighs the livelong day.

“O Undine, for God’s sake, where are my parents?” cried Bertalda, weeping.  “Surely you know, you have discovered it, most wonderful woman; else how could you have stirred my inmost heart as you have done?  They are perhaps even now in the room—-can it be?”—and her eyes glanced over the gay assembly, and fixed upon a reigning Princess who sat next to the Duke.  But Undine bent forward to the door, her eyes overflowing with the happiest tears.  “Where are they, the poor anxious parents?” said she; and the old Fisherman and his wife came out from the crowd of bystanders.  They turned an inquiring eye upon Undine, and then upon the handsome lady whom they were to call daughter.  “There she is,” faltered the delighted Undine, and the aged couple caught their long-lost child in their arms, thanking God, and weeping aloud.

Affrighted and enraged, Bertalda shrank from their embrace.  It was more than her proud spirit could bear, to be thus degraded; at a moment, too, when she was fully expecting an increase of splendour, and fancy was showering pearls and diadems upon her head.  She suspected that her rival had contrived this, on purpose to mortify her before Huldbrand and all the world.  She reviled both Undine and the old people; the hateful words, “Treacherous creature! and bribed wretches!” burst from her lips.  The old woman said in a half whisper, “Dear me, she has grown up a wicked woman; and yet my heart tells me she is my own child.”  The Fisherman has clasped his hands, and was praying silently that this girl might not prove to be theirs indeed.  Undine, pale as death, looked from Bertalda to the parents, from the parents to Bertalda, and could not recover the rude shock she had sustained, at being plunged from all her happy dreams into a state of fear and misery, such as she had never known before.

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“Have you a soul?  Have you indeed a soul, Bertalda?” she exclaimed once or twice, trying to recall her angry friend to reason, from what she took for a fit of madness, or a kind of nightmare.  But Bertalda only stormed the louder; the repulsed parents wailed piteously, and the company began to dispute angrily and to side with one or the other; when Undine stepped forward, and asked with so much earnest gentleness to be listened to in her husband’s house that all was hushed in a moment.  She took the place which Bertalda had left, at the head of the table, and as she stood there in modest dignity, the eyes of all turned toward her, and she said:  “You all that cast such angry looks at each other, and so cruelly spoil the joy of my poor feast, alas!  I little knew what your foolish angry passions were, and I think I never shall understand you.  What I had hoped would do so much good has led to all this; but that is not my fault, it is your own doing, believe me; I have little more to say, but one thing you must hear:  I have told no falsehood.  Proofs I have none to give, beyond my word, but I will swear to the truth of it.  I heard it from him who decoyed Bertalda from her parents into the water, and then laid her down in the meadow where the Duke was to pass.”

“She is a sorceress,” cried Bertalda, “a witch who has dealings with evil spirits! she has acknowledged it.”

“I have not,” said Undine, with a heaven of innocence and guilelessness in her eyes. “Nor am I a witch—only look at me!”

“Then she lies,” cried Bertalda, “and she dares not assert that I was born of these mean people.  My noble parents, I beseech you take me out of this room, and this town, where they are leagued together to insult me.”

But the venerable Duke stood still, and his lady said, “We must first sift this matter to the bottom.  Nothing shall make me leave the room till my doubts are satisfied.”

Then the old woman came up, made a deep obeisance to the Duchess, and said, “You give me courage to speak, my noble, worthy lady.  I must tell you, that if this ungodly young woman is my daughter, I shall know her by a violet mark between her shoulders, and another on the left instep.  If she would but come with me into another room—”

“I will not uncover myself before that country-woman,” said Bertalda, proudly turning away.

“But before me, you will,” rejoined the Duchess gravely.  “You shall go with me into that room, young woman, and the good dame will accompany us.”  They withdrew together, leaving the party in silent suspense.  In a few minutes they came back; Bertalda was deadly pale, and the Duchess said, “Truth is truth, and I am bound to declare that our Lady Hostess has told us perfectly right.  Bertalda is the Fisherman’s daughter; more than that, it concerns nobody to know.”  And the princely pair departed, taking with them their adopted child, and followed (upon a sign from the Duke) by the Fisherman and his

wife.  The rest of the assembly broke up, in silence or with secret murmurs, and Undine sank into Huldbrand’s arms, weeping bitterly.

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## XII.—HOW THEY LEFT THE IMPERIAL CITY

There was certainly much to displease the Lord of Ringstetten in the events of this day; yet he could not look back upon them, without feeling proud of the guileless truth and the generosity of heart shown by his lovely wife. “If indeed her soul was my gift,” thought he, “it is nevertheless much better than my own;” and he devoted himself to the task of soothing her grief, and determined he would take her away the next morning from a spot now so full of bitter recollections.

They were mistaken, however, in thinking that she had lost in the eyes of the world by this adventure. So prepared were the minds of the people to find something mysterious in her, that her strange discovery of Bertalda’s origin scarcely surprised them; while, on the other hand, everyone that heard of Bertalda’s history and of her passionate behaviour, was moved with indignation. Of this, the Knight and Undine were not aware; nor would it have given them any comfort, for she was still as jealous of Bertalda’s good name as of her own. Upon the whole, they had no greater wish than to leave the town without delay.

At daybreak next morning, Undine’s chariot was in readiness at the door, and the steeds of Huldbrand and of his squires stood around it, pawing the ground with impatience. As the Knight led his fair bride to the door, a fishing girl accosted them. “We want no fish,” said Huldbrand; “we are just going away.” The girl began to sob bitterly, and they then recognised her as Bertalda. They immediately turned back into the house with her; and she said that the Duke and Duchess had been so incensed at her violence the day before, as to withdraw their protection from her, though not without giving her a handsome allowance. The Fisherman too had received a liberal gift, and had departed that evening with his wife, to return to the promontory. “I would have gone with them,” she continued, “but the old Fisherman, whom they call my father—”

“And so he is, Bertalda,” interrupted Undine. “He is your father. For the man you saw at the fountain told me how it is. He was trying to persuade me that I had better not take you to Ringstetten, and he let drop the secret.”

“Well then,” said Bertalda, “my father—if so it must be—my father said, ’You shall not live with us till you are an altered creature. Take courage and come across the haunted forest to us; that will show that you sincerely wish to belong to your parents. But do not come in your finery; be like what you are, a fisherman’s daughter.’ And I will do as he bids me; for the whole world has forsaken me, and I have nothing left, but to live and die humbly in a poor hut, alone with my lowly parents. I do dread the forest very much. They say it is full of grim spectres, and I am so timid! But what can I do? I came here only to implore the Lady of Ringstetten’s pardon for my rude language yesterday. I have no doubt you meant what you did kindly, noble Dame; but you little knew what a trial your words would be to me, and I was so alarmed and bewildered, that many a hasty,

wicked word escaped my lips.  Ah forgive me, forgive me!  I am unhappy enough already.  Only consider what I was yesterday morning, even at the beginning of your feast, and what I am now."

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Her words were lost in a flood of bitter tears, and Undine, equally affected, fell weeping on her neck. It was long before her emotion would let her speak: at length she said, “You shall go to Ringstetten with us; all shall be as we had settled it before; only call me Undine again, and not ‘Lady’ and ‘noble Dame.’ You see, we began by being exchanged in our cradles; our lives have been linked from that hour, and we will try to bind them so closely that no human power shall sever us. Come with us to Ringstetten, and all will be well. We will live like sisters there, trust me for arranging that.” Bertalda looked timidly at Huldbrand. The sight of this beautiful, forsaken maiden affected him; he gave her his hand and encouraged her kindly to trust herself to him and his wife. “As to your parents,” said he, “we will let them know why you do not appear;” and he would have said much more concerning the good old folks, but he observed that Bertalda shuddered at the mention of them, and therefore dropped the subject. He gave her his arm, placed first her and then Undine in the carriage, and rode cheerfully after them; he urged the drivers on so effectually, that they very soon found themselves out of sight of the city, and beyond the reach of sad recollections—and the two ladies could fully enjoy the beautiful country through which the road wound along.

After a few days’ travelling, they arrived, one sunny evening, at the Castle of Ringstetten. Its young lord had much business with his steward and labourers to occupy him, so that Undine was left alone with Bertalda. They took a walk on the high ramparts of the castle, and admired the rich Swabian landscape, which lay far and wide around them. A tall man suddenly came up, with a courteous obeisance; and Bertalda could not help thinking him very like the ominous man of the fountain. The likeness struck her still more, when, upon an impatient and even menacing gesture of Undine’s, he went away with the same hasty step and shake of the head as before.

“Do not be afraid, dear Bertalda,” said Undine, “the ugly man shall not harm you this time.” After which she told her whole history, beginning from her birth, and how they had been exchanged in their earliest childhood. At first her friend looked at her with serious alarm; she thought Undine was possessed by some delirium. But she became convinced it was all true, as she listened to the well-connected narrative, which accounted so well for the strange events of the last months; besides which, there is something in genuine truth which finds an answer in every heart, and can hardly be mistaken. She was bewildered, when she found herself one of the actors in a living fairy tale, and as wild a tale as any she had read. She gazed upon Undine with reverence; but could not help feeling a chill thrown over her affection for her; and that evening at supper time, she wondered at the Knight’s fond love and familiarity toward a being, whom she now looked upon as rather a spirit than a human creature.

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## XIII.—HOW THEY LIVED IN THE CASTLE OF RINGSTETTEN

As he who relates this tale is moved to the heart by it, and hopes that it may affect his readers too, he entreats of them one favour; namely, that they will bear with him while he passes rapidly over a long space of time; and be content if he barely touches upon what happened therein. He knows well that some would relate in great detail, step by step, how Huldbrand's heart began to be estranged from Undine, and drawn toward Bertalda; while she cared not to disguise from him her ardent love; and how between them the poor injured wife came to be rather feared than pitied—and when he showed her kindness, a cold shiver would often creep over him and send him back to the child of earth, Bertalda;—all this the author knows, might be dwelt upon; nay, perhaps it ought to be so. But his heart shrinks from such a task, for he has met with such passages in real life, and cannot even abide their shadows in his memory. Perhaps, gentle reader, such feelings are known to thee also, for they are the common lot of mortal man. Well is thee if thou hast felt, not inflicted, these pangs; in these cases it is more blessed to receive than to give. As such recollections wake up from their cells, they will but cast a soft shade over the past; and it may be the thought of thy withered blossoms, once so fondly loved, brings a gentle tear down thy cheek. Enough of this: we will not go on to pierce our hearts with a thousand separate arrows, but content ourselves with saying, that so it happened in the present instance.

Poor Undine drooped day by day, and the others were neither of them happy; Bertalda especially was uneasy, and ready to suspect the injured wife, whenever she fancied herself slighted by Huldbrand; meantime she had gradually assumed the command in the house, and the deluded Huldbrand supported her openly. Undine looked on, in meek resignation. To increase the discomfort of their lives, there was no end to the mysterious sights and sounds that haunted Huldbrand and Bertalda in the vaulted galleries of the castle; such as had never been heard of before. The long white man, too well known to him as Uncle Kuehleborn, and to her as the spirit of the fountain, often showed his threatening countenance to both; but chiefly to Bertalda, who had more than once been made ill by the fright, and thought seriously of leaving the castle. But her love for Huldbrand detained her, and she quieted her conscience by thinking, that it had never come to a declaration of love between them; and, besides, she would not have known which way to turn. After receiving the Lord of Ringstetten's message, that Bertalda was with them, the old Fisherman had traced a few lines, scarcely legible, from infirmity and long disuse, saying, "I am now a poor old widower; for my dear good wife is dead. But, lonely as I am by my fireside, I had rather Bertalda stayed away than come here. Provided she does not harm my dear Undine! My curse be upon her if she does." Bertalda scattered these last words to the winds, but treasured up her father's command that she should not join him: as is the way with us selfish beings.

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One day, when Huldbrand had just ridden out, Undine sent for her servants and desired them to fetch a large stone and carefully to stop up the mouth of the magnificent fountain, which played in the centre of the court. The men objected, that they must then always go down the valley to a great distance for water. Undine smiled mournfully. “It grieves me to add to your burdens, my good friends,” said she, “I had rather go and fill my pitcher myself; but this fountain must be sealed up. Trust me, nothing else will do, and it is our only way of escaping a much worse evil.”

The servants rejoiced at any opportunity of pleasing their gentle mistress; not a word more was said, and they lifted the huge stone. They had raised it, and were about to let it down on the mouth of the spring, when Bertalda ran up, calling out to them to stop: the water of this fountain was the best for her complexion, and she never would consent to its being stopped. But Undine, instead of yielding as usual, kept firmly, though gently, to her resolution; she said that it behooved her, as mistress of the house, to order all such matters as appeared best to her, and none but her lord and husband should call her to account. “Look, oh look!” cried Bertalda, eagerly and angrily, “how the poor bright water curls and writhes, because you would deprive it of every gleam of sunshine, and of the cheerful faces of men, whose mirror it was created to be!” In truth, the spring did writhe and bubble up wonderfully, just as if someone were trying to force his way through; but Undine pressed them the more to dispatch the work. Nor was there much need to repeat her commands. The household people were too glad at once to obey their gentle lady, and to mortify the pride of Bertalda, in spite of whose threats and wrath, the stone was soon firmly fastened down on the mouth of the spring. Undine bent over it thoughtfully, and wrote on its surface with her delicate fingers. Something very hard and sharp must have been hidden in her hand; for when she walked away, and the others came up, they found all manner of strange characters on the stone, none of which were there before.

When the Knight came home that evening, Bertalda received him with tears and complaints of Undine. He looked sternly at his poor wife, who mournfully cast down her eyes, saying, however, with firmness, “My lord and husband would not chide the meanest of his vassals, without giving him a hearing, much less his wedded wife.”—-“Speak, then; what was your reason for this strange proceeding?” said the Knight with a frown. “I would rather tell it you quite alone!” sighed Undine. “You can say it just as well in Bertalda’s presence,” replied he. “Yes, if thou requirest it,” said Undine, “but require it not.” She looked so humble, and so submissive in her touching beauty, that the Knight’s heart was melted, as by a sunbeam from happier days. He took her affectionately by the hand, and led her to his own room, where she spoke to him as follows.

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“You know that wicked Uncle Kuehleborn, my dearest lord, and have often been provoked at meeting him about the castle. Bertalda, too, has been often terrified by him. No wonder; he is soulless, shallow, and unthinking as a mirror, in whom no feeling can pierce the surface. He has two or three times seen that you were displeased with me, that I in my childishness could not help weeping, and that Bertalda might chance to laugh at the same moment. And upon this he builds all manner of unjust suspicions, and interferes, unasked, in our concerns. What is the use of my reproaching him, or repulsing him with angry words? He believes nothing that I say. A poor cold life is his! How should he know, that the sorrows and the joys of love are so sweetly alike, so closely linked, that it is not in human power to part them. When a tear gushes out, a smile lies beneath; and a smile will draw the tears from their secret cells.”

She smiled through her tears in Huldbrand’s face, and a warm ray of his former love shot through his heart. She perceived this, pressed closer to him, and with a few tears of joy she went on.

“As I found it impossible to get rid of our tormentor by words, I had nothing for it, but to shut the door against him. And his only access to us was that fountain. He has quarrelled with the other fountain spirits in the surrounding valleys, and it is much lower down the Danube, below the junction of some friends with the great river, that his power begins again. Therefore I stopped the mouth of our fountain, and inscribed the stone with characters which cripple the might of my restless uncle; so that he can no longer cross your path, or mine, or Bertalda’s. Men can indeed lift the stone off as easily as ever; the inscription has no power over them. So you are free to comply with Bertalda’s wish; but indeed, she little knows what she asks. Against her the wild Kuehleborn has a most particular spite, and if some of his forebodings were to come true, (as they might, without her intending any harm) O, dearest, even thou wert not free from danger!”

Huldbrand deeply felt the generosity of his noble-minded wife, in so zealously shutting out her formidable protector, even when reviled by Bertalda for so doing. He clasped her fondly in his arms, and said with much emotion, “The stone shall remain; and everything shall be done as thou wishest, now and hereafter, my sweetest Undine.”

Scarce could she trust these words of love, after so dreary an estrangement; she returned his caresses with joyful but timid gratitude, and at length said, “My own dear love, as you are so exceedingly kind to me to-day, may I ask you to promise one thing? Herein you are like the summer: is he not most glorious when he decks his brows with thunders, and frowns upon us from his throne of clouds? So it is when your eyes flash lightning; it becomes you well, although in my weakness I may often shed a tear at it. Only—if you would promise to

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refrain from it when we are sailing, or even near any water. For there, you see, my relations have a right to control me. They might relentlessly tear me from you in their wrath, fancying that there is an insult offered to one of their race; and I should be doomed to spend the rest of my life in the crystal palaces below, without ever coming to you; or if they did send me up again—oh Heaven, that would be far worse! No, no, my best beloved; you will not let it come to that, if you love your poor Undine."

He solemnly promised to do as she asked him, and they returned to the saloon, quite restored to comfort and peace. They met Bertalda, followed by a few labourers whom she had sent for, and she said in a tone of bitterness that had grown common with her of late, "So, now your private consultation is over, and we may have the stone taken up. Make haste, you people, and do it for me." But Huldbrand, incensed at her arrogance, said shortly and decidedly, "The stone shall not be touched," and he then reproved Bertalda for her rudeness to his wife; upon which the labourers walked off, exulting secretly, while Bertalda hurried away to her chamber, pale and disturbed.

The hour of supper came, and they waited in vain for Bertalda. A message was sent to her; the servants found her room empty, and brought back only a sealed letter directed to the Knight. He opened it with trepidation and read, "I feel with shame that I am only a fisherman's daughter. Having forgotten it a moment, I will expiate my crime in the wretched hut of my parents. Live happy with your beautiful wife!"

Undine was sincerely grieved; she entreated Huldbrand to pursue their friend at once, and bring her back with him. Alas! there was little need of entreaty. His passion for Bertalda returned with fresh violence; he searched the castle all over, asking everyone if they could tell him in what direction the fair one had fled. He could discover nothing; and now he had mounted his horse in the court, and stood ready to set forth, and try the route by which he had brought Bertalda to the castle. A peasant boy just then came up, saying that he had met the lady riding toward the Black Valley. Like a shot the Knight darted through the gate, and took that direction, without heeding Undine's anxious cries from a window: "To the Black Valley? oh, not there! Huldbrand, not there! Or take me with you for God's sake!" Finding it vain to cry, she had her white palfrey saddled in all haste, and galloped after her husband, without allowing anyone to attend her.

## XIV.—HOW BERTALDA DROVE HOME WITH THE KNIGHT

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The Black Valley lay among the deepest recesses of the mountains. What it is called now none can tell. In those times it bore that name among the countrymen, on account of the deep gloom shed over it by many high trees, mostly pines. Even the brook which gushed down between the cliffs was tinged with black, and never sparkled like the merry streams from which nothing intercepts the blue of heaven. Now, in the dusk of twilight, it looked darker still as it gurgled between the rocks. The Knight spurred his horse along its banks, now fearing to lose ground in his pursuit, and now again, that he might overlook the fugitive in her hiding-place, if he hurried past too swiftly. He presently found himself far advanced in the valley, and hoped he must soon overtake her, if he were but in the right track. Then again, the thought that it might be a wrong one roused the keenest anxiety in his breast. Where was the tender Bertalda to lay her head, if he missed her in this bleak, stormy night, which was setting in, black and awful, upon the valley? And now he saw something white gleaming through the boughs, on the slope of the mountain; he took it for Bertalda's robe and made for it. But the horse started back, and reared so obstinately that Huldbrand, impatient of delay, and having already found him difficult to manage among the brambles of the thicket, dismounted, and fastened the foaming steed to a tree; he then felt his way through the bushes on foot. The boughs splashed his head and cheeks roughly with cold wet dew; far off, he heard the growl of thunder beyond the mountains, and the whole strange scene had such an effect upon him, that he became afraid of approaching the white figure, which he now saw lying on the ground at a short distance. And yet he could distinguish it to be a woman, dressed in long white garments like Bertalda's, asleep or in a swoon. He came close to her, made the boughs rustle, and his sword ring—but she stirred not. "Bertalda!" cried he; first gently, then louder and louder—in vain. When at length he shouted the beloved name with the whole strength of his lungs, a faint mocking echo returned it from the cavities of the rocks—"Bertalda!" but the sleeper awoke not. He bent over her; but the gloom of the valley and the shades of night prevented his discerning her features. At length, though kept back by some boding fears, he knelt down by her on the earth, and just then a flash of lightning lighted up the valley. He saw a hideous distorted face close to his own, and heard a hollow voice say, "Give me a kiss, thou sweet shepherd!" With a cry of horror Huldbrand started up, and the monster after him. "Go home!" it cried, "the bad spirits are abroad—go home! or I have you!" and its long white arm nearly grasped him. "Spiteful Kuehleborn," cried the Knight, taking courage, "what matters it, I know thee, foul spirit! There is a kiss for thee!" And he raised his sword furiously against the figure. But it dissolved, and a drenching shower made it sufficiently

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clear to the Knight what enemy he had encountered. “He would scare me away from Bertalda,” said he aloud to himself; “he thinks he can subdue me by his absurd tricks, and make me leave the poor terrified maiden in his power, that he may wreak his vengeance upon her. But *that* he never shall—wretched goblin! What power lies in a human breast when steeled by firm resolve, the contemptible juggler has yet to learn.” And he felt the truth of his own words, and seemed to have nerved himself afresh by them. He thought, too, that fortune now began to aid him, for before he had got back to his horse again, he distinctly heard the piteous voice of Bertalda as if near at hand, borne toward him on the winds as their howling mingled with the thunder. Eagerly did he push on in that direction, and he found the trembling damsel was just attempting to climb the mountain’s side, in order, at any risk, to get out of these awful shades.

He met her affectionately and however proudly she might before have determined to hold out, she could not but rejoice at being rescued by her much-loved Huldbrand from the fearful solitude, and warmly invited to return to his cheerful home in the castle. She accompanied him with scarcely a word of reluctance, but was so exhausted, that the Knight felt much relieved when they had reached the horse in safety; he hastened to loose him, and would have placed his tender charge upon him, and walked by her side to guide her carefully through the dangerous shades. But Kuehleborn’s mad pranks had driven the horse quite wild. Hardly could the Knight himself have sprung upon the terrified plunging creature’s back: to place the trembling Bertalda upon him was quite impossible; so they made up their minds to walk home. With his horse’s bridle over one arm, Huldbrand supported his half-fainting companion on the other. Bertalda mustered what strength she could, in order the sooner to get beyond this dreaded valley, but fatigue weighed her down like lead, and every limb shook under her; partly from the recollection of all she had already suffered from Kuehleborn’s spite, and partly from terror at the continued crashing of the tempest through the mountain forests.

At length she slid down from her protector’s arm, and sinking on the moss, she said: “Leave me to die here, noble Huldbrand; I reap the punishment of my folly, and must sink under this load of fatigue and anguish.”—“Never, my precious friend, never will I forsake you,” cried Huldbrand, vainly striving to curb his raging steed, who was now beginning to start and plunge worse than ever: the Knight contrived to keep him at some distance from the exhausted maiden, so as to save her the terror of seeing him near her. But no sooner had he withdrawn himself and the wild animal a few steps, than she began to call him back in the most piteous manner, thinking he was indeed going to desert her in this horrible wilderness. He was quite at a loss what to do: gladly would he have let the horse gallop away in the darkness and expend his wild fury, but that he feared he might rush down upon the very spot where Bertalda lay.

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In this extremity of distress, it gave him unspeakable comfort to descry a wagon slowly descending the stony road behind him. He called out for help: a man's voice replied telling him to have patience, but promising to come to his aid; soon two white horses became visible through the thicket, and next the white smock-frock of the wagoner, and a large sheet of white linen that covered his goods inside. "Ho, stop!" cried the man, and the obedient horses stood still. "I see well enough," said he, "what ails the beast. When first I came through these parts my horses were just as troublesome; because there is a wicked water-sprite living hard by, who takes delight in making them play tricks. But I know a charm for this; if you will give me leave to whisper it in your horse's ear, you will see him as quiet as mine yonder in a moment."—"Try your charm, if it will do any good!" said the impatient Knight. The driver pulled the unruly horse's head toward him, and whispered a couple of words in his ear. At once the animal stood still, tamed and pacified, and showed no remains of his former fury but by panting and snorting, as if he still chafed inwardly. This was no time for Huldbrand to inquire how it had been done. He agreed with the wagoner that Bertalda should be taken into the wagon, which by his account was loaded with bales of soft cotton, and conveyed to the Castle of Ringstetten, while the Knight followed on horseback. But his horse seemed too much spent by his former violence to be able to carry his master so far, and the man persuaded Huldbrand to get into the wagon with Bertalda. The horse was to be fastened behind. "We shall go down hill," said the man, "and that is light work for my horses." The Knight placed himself by Bertalda, his horse quietly followed them, and the driver walked by steadily and carefully.

In the deep stillness of night, while the storm growled more and more distant, and in the consciousness of safety and easy progress, Huldbrand and Bertalda insensibly got into confidential discourse. He tenderly reproached her for having so hastily fled; she excused herself with bashful emotions, and through all she said it appeared most clearly that her heart was all his own. Huldbrand was too much engrossed by the expression of her words to attend to their apparent meaning, and he only replied to the former. Upon this, the wagoner cried out in a voice that rent the air, "Now my horses, up with you; show us what you are made of, my fine fellows." The Knight put out his head and saw the horses treading or rather swimming through the foaming waters, while the wheels whirled loudly and rapidly like those of a water-mill, and the wagoner was standing upon the top of his wagon, overlooking the floods. "Why, what road is this? It will take us into the middle of the stream," cried Huldbrand. "No, sir," cried the driver laughing; "it is just the other way. The stream is coming into the middle of the road. Look round, and see how it is all flooded."

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In fact, the whole valley was now heaving with waves, that had swollen rapidly to a great height. “This must be Kuehleborn, the wicked sprite, trying to drown us!” cried the Knight. “Have you no charm to keep him off, friend?”—“I do know of one,” said the driver, “but I can’t and won’t make use of it, till you know who I am.”—“Is this a time for riddles?” shouted the Knight; “the flood is rising every moment, and what care I to know who you are?”—“It rather concerns you, however, to know,” said the driver, “for I am Kuehleborn.” And he grinned hideously into the wagon—which was now a wagon no longer, nor were the horses horses; but all dissolved into foaming waves; the wagoner himself shot up into a giant Waterspout, bore down the struggling horse into the flood, and, towering over the heads of the hapless pair, till he had swelled into a watery fountain, he would have swallowed them up the next moment.

But now the sweet voice of Undine was heard above the wild uproar; the moon shone out between the clouds, and at the same instant Undine came into sight, upon the high grounds above them. She addressed Kuehleborn in a commanding tone, the huge wave laid itself down, muttering and murmuring; the waters rippled gently away in the moon’s soft light, and Undine alighted like a white dove from her airy height, and led them to a soft green spot on the hillside, where she refreshed their jaded spirits with choice food. She then helped Bertalda to mount her own white palfrey, and at length they all three reached the Castle of Ringstetten in safety.

## XV.—THE TRIP TO VIENNA

For some time after this adventure they led a quiet and peaceful life in the castle. The Knight was deeply touched by his wife’s angelic goodness, so signally displayed by her pursuing and saving them in the Black Valley, where their lives were threatened by Kuehleborn. Undine herself was happy in the peace of an approving conscience; besides that, many a gleam of hope now brightened her path, as her husband’s love and confidence seemed to revive; Bertalda meanwhile was grateful, modest, and timid, without claiming any merit for being so. If either of her companions alluded to the sealing up of the fountain, or the adventures in the Black Valley, she would implore them to spare her on those subjects, because she could not think of the fountain without a blush, nor the valley without a shudder. She was therefore told nothing further; indeed, what would have been the use of enlightening her? Nothing could add to the peace and happiness which had taken up their abode in the Castle of Ringstetten; they enjoyed the present in full security, and the future lay before them, all blooming with fair fruits and flowers.

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The winter had gone by without any interruption to their social comfort; and spring, with her young green shoots and bright blue skies, began to smile upon men; their hearts felt light, like the young season, and from its returning birds of passage, they caught a fancy to travel. One day as they were walking together near the sources of the Danube, Huldbrand fell into talk about the glories of that noble river, how proudly he flowed on, through fruitful lands, to the spot where the majestic city of Vienna crowned his banks, and how every mile of his course was marked by fresh grandeur and beauty. "How delightful it would be to follow his course down to Vienna!" cried Bertalda; but instantly relapsing into her timid, chastened manner, she blushed and was silent. This touched Undine, and in her eagerness to give her friend pleasure, she said: "And why should we not take the trip?" Bertalda jumped for joy, and their fancy began to paint this pleasant recreation in the brightest colours. Huldbrand encouraged them cheerfully, but whispered once to Undine: "But, should not we get within Kuehleborn's power again, down there?"—"Let him come," said she, laughing; "I shall be with you, and in my presence he durst not attempt any mischief."

So the only possible objection seemed removed and they prepared for departure, and were soon sailing along, full of spirit and of gay hopes. But, O Man! it is not for thee to wonder when the course of events differs widely from the paintings of thy fancy. The treacherous foe, that lures us to our ruin, lulls his victim to rest with sweet music and golden dreams. Our guardian angel, on the contrary, will often rouse us by a sharp and awakening blow.

The first days they spent on the Danube were days of extraordinary enjoyment. The further they floated down the proud stream the nobler and fairer grew the prospect. But, just as they had reached a most lovely district, the first sight of which had promised them great delight, the unruly Kuehleborn began openly to give signs of his presence and power. At first they were only sportive tricks, because, whenever he ruffled the stream and raised the wind, Undine repressed him by a word or two, and made him again subside at once; but his attempts soon began again, and again, Undine was obliged to warn him off; so that the pleasure of the little party was grievously disturbed. To make things worse, the watermen would mutter many a dark surmise into each other's ears, and cast strange looks at the three gentlefolks, whose very servants began to feel suspicion, and to show distrust of their lord. Huldbrand said to himself more than once, "This comes of uniting with other than one's like: a son of earth may not marry a wondrous maid of ocean." To justify himself (as we all love to do) he would add, "But I did not know she was a maid of ocean. If I am to be pursued and fettered wherever I go by the mad freaks of her relations, mine is the misfortune, not the fault." Such reflections somewhat checked his self-reproaches; but they made him the more disposed to accuse, nay, even to hate Undine. Already he began to scowl upon her, and the poor wife understood but too well his meaning. Exhausted by this, and by her constant exertions against Kuehleborn, she sank back one evening in the boat, and was lulled by its gentle motion into a deep sleep.

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But no sooner were her eyes closed, than everyone in the boat thought he saw, just opposite his own eyes, a terrific human head rising above the water; not like the head of a swimmer, but planted upright on the surface of the river, and keeping pace with the boat. Each turned to his neighbour to show him the cause of his terror, and found him looking equally frightened, but pointing in a different direction, where the half-laughing, half-scowling goblin met his eyes. When at length they tried to explain the matter to each other, crying out, “Look there; no, there!” each of them suddenly perceived the other’s phantom, and the water round the boat appeared all alive with ghastly monsters. The cry which burst from every mouth awakened Undine. Before the light of her beaming eyes the horde of misshapen faces vanished. But Huldbrand was quite exasperated by these fiendish tricks and would have burst into loud imprecations, had not Undine whispered in the most beseeching manner, “For God’s sake, my own lord, be patient now; remember we are on the water.” The Knight kept down his anger, and soon sank into thought. Presently Undine whispered to him: “My love, had not we better give up the foolish journey, and go home to Ringstetten in comfort?” But Huldbrand muttered angrily, “Then I am to be kept a prisoner in my own castle? and even there I may not breathe freely unless the fountain is sealed up? Would to Heaven the absurd connection”—But Undine pressed her soft hand gently upon his lips. And he held his peace, and mused upon all she had previously told him.

In the meantime, Bertalda had yielded herself up to many and strange reflections. She knew something of Undine’s origin, but not all! and Kuehleborn in particular was only a fearful but vague image in her mind; she had not even once heard his name. And as she pondered these wonderful subjects, she half unconsciously took off a golden necklace which Huldbrand had bought for her of a travelling jeweller a few days before; she held it close to the surface of the river playing with it, and dreamily watching the golden gleam that it shed on the glassy water. Suddenly a large hand came up out of the Danube, snatched the necklace, and ducked under with it. Bertalda screamed aloud, and was answered by a laugh of scorn from the depths below. And now the Knight could contain himself no longer. Starting up, he gave loose to his fury, loading with imprecations those who chose to break into his family and private life, and challenging them—were they goblins or sirens—to meet his good sword. Bertalda continued to weep over the loss of her beloved jewel, and her tears were as oil to the flames of his wrath, while Undine kept her hand dipped into the water with a ceaseless low murmur, only once or twice interrupting her mysterious whispers to say to her husband in tones of entreaty, “Dearest love, speak not roughly to me here; say whatever you will, only spare me here; you know why!” and he still restrained his tongue

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(which stammered with passion) from saying a word directly against her. She soon drew her hand from under the water, bringing up a beautiful coral necklace whose glitter dazzled them all. “Take it,” said she, offering it kindly to Bertalda; “I have sent for this, instead of the one you lost; do not grieve any more, my poor child.” But Huldbrand darted forward, snatched the shining gift from Undine’s hand, hurled it again into the water, and roared furiously, “So you still have intercourse with them? In the name of sorcery, go back to them with all your baubles, and leave us men in peace, witch as you are!” With eyes aghast, yet streaming with tears, poor Undine gazed at him, still holding out the hand which had so lovingly presented to Bertalda the bright jewel. Then she wept more and more, like a sorely injured, innocent child. And at length she said faintly, “Farewell, my dearest; farewell! They shall not lay a finger on thee; only be true to me, that I may still guard thee from them. But I, alas! I must be gone; all this bright morning of life is over. Woe, woe is me! what hast thou done? woe, woe!” And she slipped out of the boat and passed away. Whether she went down into the river, or flowed away with it, none could tell; it was like both and yet like neither. She soon mingled with the waters of the Danube, and nothing was to be heard but the sobbing whispers of the stream as it washed against the boat, seeming to say distinctly, “Woe, woe! Oh be true to me! woe, woe!”

Huldbrand lay flat in the boat, drowned in tears, till a deep swoon came to the unhappy man’s relief, and steeped him in oblivion.

## XVI.—OF WHAT BEFELL HULDBRAND AFTERWARDS

Shall we say, Alas, or thank God, that our grief is so often transient? I speak of such grief as has its source in the wellsprings of life itself, and seems so identified with our lost friend, as almost to fill up the void he has left; and his hallowed image seems fixed within the sanctuary of our soul, until the signal of our release comes, and sets us free to join him! In truth, a good man will not suffer this sanctuary to be disturbed; yet even with him, it is not the first, the all-engrossing sorrow which abides. New objects will intermingle, and we are compelled to draw from our grief itself a fresh proof of the perishableness of earthly things: alas, then, that our grief is transient!

So it was with the Lord of Ringstetten; whether for his weal or woe, the sequel of this story will show us. At first, he could do nothing but weep abundantly, as his poor kind Undine had wept when he snatched from her the beautiful gift, which she thought would have comforted and pleased them so much. He would then stretch out his hand as she had done, and burst into tears afresh, like her. He secretly hoped that he might end by altogether dissolving in tears: and are there not many whose minds have been visited

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by the same painfully pleasing thought, at some season of great sorrow? Bertalda wept with him, and they lived quietly together at Ringstetten a long while, cherishing the memory of Undine, and seeming to have forgotten their own previous attachment. Moreover, the gentle Undine often appeared to Huldbrand in his dreams; she would caress him meekly and fondly, and depart again with tearful resignation, so that when he awoke, he doubted whose tears they were that bedewed his face—were they hers, or only his own?

But as time went on these visions became less frequent, and the Knight's grief milder; still he might perhaps have spent the rest of his days contentedly, devoting himself to the memory of Undine, and keeping it alive by talking of her, had not the old Fisherman unexpectedly made his appearance, and laid his serious commands upon Bertalda, his daughter, to return home with him. The news of Undine's disappearance had reached him, and he would no longer suffer Bertalda to remain in the castle alone with its lord. "I do not ask whether my daughter cares for me or not," said he; "her character is at stake, and where that is the case, nothing else is worth considering."

This summons from the old man, and the prospect of utter loneliness amid the halls and long galleries of the castle after Bertalda's departure, revived in Huldbrand's heart the feeling that had lain dormant, and as it were buried under his mourning for Undine, namely, his love for the fair Bertalda. The Fisherman had many objections to their marriage; Undine had been very dear to the old man and he thought it hardly certain yet that his lost darling was really dead. But, if her corpse were indeed lying stiff and cold in the bed of the Danube, or floating down its stream to the distant ocean, then Bertalda ought to reproach herself for her death, and it ill became her to take the place of her poor victim. However, the Fisherman was very fond of Huldbrand also; the entreaties of his daughter, who was now grown much more gentle and submissive, had their effect, and it seems that he did yield his consent at last; for he remained peaceably at the castle, and an express was sent for Father Heilmann, who in earlier, happier days had blessed Undine's and Huldbrand's union, that he might officiate at the Knight's second marriage.

No sooner had the holy man read the Lord of Ringstetten's letter than he set forth on his way thither, with far greater speed than the messenger had used to reach him. If his straining haste took away his breath, or he felt his aged limbs ache with fatigue, he would say to himself: "I may be in time to prevent a wicked deed; sink not till thou hast reached the goal, my withered frame!" And so he exerted himself afresh, and pushed on, without flagging or halting, till late one evening he entered the shady court of Ringstetten.

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The lovers were sitting hand in hand under a tree, with the thoughtful old man near them; as soon as they saw Father Heilmann, they rose eagerly and advanced to meet him. But he, scarcely noticing their civilities, begged the Knight to come with him into the castle. As he stared at this request, and hesitated to comply, the pious old Priest said, “Why, indeed, should I speak to you alone, my Lord of Ringstetten? What I have to say equally concerns the Fisherman and Bertalda; and as they must sooner or later know it, it had better be said now. How can you be certain, Lord Huldbrand, that your own wife is indeed dead? For myself, I can hardly think so. I will not venture to speak of things relating to her wondrous nature; in truth I have no clear knowledge about it. But a godly and faithful wife she proved herself, beyond all about. And these fourteen nights has she come to my bedside in dreams, wringing her poor hands in anguish, and sighing out, ’Oh stop him, dear father! I am yet alive! Oh save his life! Oh save his soul!’ I understood not the meaning of the vision till your messenger came; and I have now hastened hither, not to join but to part those hands, which may not be united in holy wedlock. Part from her, Huldbrand! Part from him, Bertalda! He belongs to another; see you not how his cheek turns pale at the thought of his departed wife? Those are not the looks of a bridegroom, and the spirit tells me this. If thou leavest him not now, there is joy for thee no more.” They all three felt at the bottom of their hearts that Father Heilmann’s words were true but they would not yield to them. Even the old Fisherman was so blinded as to think that what had been settled between them for so many days, could not now be relinquished. So they resisted the Priest’s warnings, and urged the fulfilment of their wishes with headlong, gloomy determination, till Father Heilmann departed with a melancholy shake of the head, without accepting even for one night their proffered hospitalities, or tasting any of the refreshments they set before him. But Huldbrand persuaded himself that the old Priest was a weak dotard; and early next morning he sent to a monk from the nearest cloister, who readily promised to come and marry them in a few days.

## XVII.—THE KNIGHT’S DREAM

The morning twilight was beginning to dawn, and the Knight lay half-awake on his couch. Whenever he dropped asleep he was scared by mysterious terrors, and started up as if sleep were peopled by phantoms. If he woke up in earnest, he felt himself fanned all around by what seemed like swans’ wings, and soothed by watery airs, which lulled him back again into the half-unconscious, twilight state. At length he did fall asleep and fancied himself lifted by swans on their soft wings, and carried far away over lands and seas, all to the sound of their sweetest melody. “Swans singing! swans singing!” thought he continually; “is not that the strain of Death?” Presently he found himself hovering above a vast sea. A swan warbled in his ear that it was the Mediterranean; and as he looked down into the deep it became like clear crystal, transparent to the bottom. This rejoiced him much, for he could see Undine sitting in a brilliant hall of crystal.

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She was shedding tears, indeed, and looked sadly changed since the happy times which they had spent together at Ringstetten; happiest at first, but happy also a short time since, just before the fatal sail on the Danube. The contrast struck Huldbrand deeply; but Undine did not seem to be aware of his presence. Kuehleborn soon came up to her, and began rating her for weeping. She composed herself, and looked at him with a firmness and dignity, before which he almost quailed. “Though I am condemned to live under these deep waters,” said she, “I have brought my soul with me; therefore my tears cannot be understood by thee. But to me they are blessings, like everything that belongs to a loving soul.” He shook his head incredulously, and said, after a pause: “Nevertheless, niece, you are still subject to the laws of our element; and you know you must execute sentence of death upon him as soon as he marries again, and breaks faith with you.”—“To this hour he is a widower,” said Undine, “and loves and mourns me truly.”—“Ah, but he will be bridegroom soon,” said Kuehleborn with a sneer; “wait a couple of days only; and the marriage blessing will have been given, and you must go up and put the criminal to death.”—“I cannot!” answered the smiling Undine. “I have had the fountain sealed up, against myself and my whole race.” “But suppose he leaves his castle,” said Kuehleborn, “or forgets himself so far as to let them set the fountain ‘free,’ for he thinks mighty little of those matters.”—“And that is why,” said Undine, still smiling through her tears, “that is why his spirit hovers at this moment over the Mediterranean, and listens to our conversation as in a dream. I have contrived it on purpose, that he may take warning.” On hearing this Kuehleborn looked up angrily at the Knight, scowled at him, stamped, and then shot upward through the waves like an arrow. His fury seemed to make him expand into a whale. Again the swans began to warble, to wave their wings, and to fly; the Knight felt himself borne high over alps and rivers, till he was deposited in the Castle of Ringstetten, and awoke in his bed.

He did awake in his bed, just as one of his squires entered the room, and told him that Father Heilmann was still lingering near the castle; for he had found him the evening before in the forest, living in a shed he had made for himself with branches and moss. On being asked what he was staying for since he had refused to bless the betrothed couple? He answered, “It is not the wedded only who stand in need of prayer, and though I came not for the bridal, there may yet be work for me of another kind. We must be prepared for everything. Sometimes marriage and mourning are not so far apart; and he who does not wilfully close his eyes may perceive it.” The Knight built all manner of strange conjectures upon these words, and upon his dream. But if once a man has formed a settled purpose, it is hard indeed to shake it. The end of this was, that their plans remained unchanged.

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## XVIII.—OF THE KNIGHT HULDBRAND'S SECOND BRIDAL

Were I to tell you how the wedding-day at Ringstetten passed, you might imagine yourself contemplating a glittering heap of gay objects, with a black crape thrown over them, through which the splendid pageant, instead of delighting the eye, would look like a mockery of all earthly joys. Not that the festive meeting was disturbed by any spectral apparitions: we have seen that the castle was safe from any intrusion of the malicious water-sprites. But the Knight, the Fisherman, and all the guests were haunted by a feeling that the chief person, the soul of the feast, was missing; and who was she but the gentle, beloved Undine? As often as they heard a door open, every eye turned involuntarily toward it, and when nothing ensued but the entrance of the steward with some more dishes, or of the cupbearer with a fresh supply of rich wine, the guests would look sad and blank, and the sparks of gayety kindled by the light jest or the cheerful discourse, were quenched in the damp of melancholy recollections. The bride was the most thoughtless, and consequently the most cheerful person present; but even she, at moments, felt it unnatural to be sitting at the head of the table, decked out in her wreath of green and her embroidery of gold, while Undine's corpse was lying cold and stiff in the bed of the Danube, or floating down its stream to the ocean. For, ever since her father had used these words, they had been ringing in her ears, and to-day especially they pursued her without ceasing.

The party broke up before night had closed in; not, as usual, dispersed by the eager impatience of the bridegroom to be alone with his bride; but dropping off listlessly, as a general gloom spread over the assembly; Bertalda was followed to her dressing-room by her women only, and the Knight by his pages. At this gloomy feast, there was no question of the gay and sportive train of bridesmaids and young men, who usually attend the wedded pair.

Bertalda tried to call up brighter thoughts; she bade her women display before her a splendid set of jewels, the gift of Huldbrand, together with her richest robes and veils, that she might select the gayest and handsomest dress for the morrow. Her maids seized the opportunity of wishing their young mistress all manner of joy, nor did they fail to extol the beauty of the bride to the skies. Bertalda, however, glanced at herself in the glass, and sighed: "Ah, but look at the freckles just here, on my throat!" They looked and found it was indeed so, but called them beauty spots that would only enhance the fairness of her delicate skin. Bertalda shook her head, and replied, "Still it is a blemish, and I once might have cured it!" said she with a deep sigh. "But the fountain in the court is stopped up—that fountain which used to supply me with precious, beautifying water. If I could but get one jugful to-day!"—"Is

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that all?" cried an obsequious attendant, and slipped out of the room. "Why, she will not be so mad," asked Bertalda in a tone of complacent surprise, "as to make them raise the stone this very night?" And now she heard men's footsteps crossing the court; and on looking down from her window, she saw the officious handmaid conducting them straight to the fountain; they carried levers and other tools upon their shoulders. "Well, it is my will to be sure," said Bertalda, smiling, "provided they are not too long about it." And, elated by the thought that a hint from her could now effect what had once been denied to her entreaties, she watched the progress of the work in the moonlit court below.

The men began straining themselves to lift the huge stone; occasionally a sigh was heard, as someone recollected that they were now reversing their dear lady's commands. But the task proved lighter than they had expected. Some power from beneath seemed to second their efforts, and help the stone upward. "Why!" said the astonished workmen to each other, "it feels as if the spring below had turned into a waterspout." More and more did the stone heave, till, without any impulse from the men it rolled heavily along the pavement with a hollow sound. But, from the mouth of the spring arose, slowly and solemnly, what looked like a column of water; at first they thought so, but presently saw that it was no waterspout, but the figure of a pale woman, veiled in white. She was weeping abundantly, wringing her hands and clasping them over her head, while she proceeded with slow and measured step toward the castle. The crowd of servants fell back from the spot; while, pale and aghast, the bride and her women looked on from the window.

When the figure had arrived just under that window, she raised her tearful face for a moment, and Bertalda thought she recognised Undine's pale features through the veil. The shadowy form moved on slowly and reluctantly, like one sent to execution. Bertalda screamed out that the Knight must be called; no one durst stir a foot, and the bride herself kept silence, frightened at the sound of her own voice.

While these remained at the window, as if rooted to the spot, the mysterious visitor had entered the castle, and passed up the well-known stairs, and through the familiar rooms, still weeping silently. Alas! how differently had she trodden those floors in days gone by!

The Knight had now dismissed his train; half-undressed, and in a dejected mood, he was standing near a large mirror, by the light of a dim taper. He heard the door tapped by a soft, soft touch. It was thus Undine had been wont to knock, when she meant to steal upon him playfully. "It is all fancy!" thought he. "The bridal bed awaits me."—"Yes, but it is a cold one," said a weeping voice from without; and the mirror then showed him the door opening slowly, and the white form coming in, and closing the door gently behind her. "They have opened the

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mouth of the spring," murmured she; "and now I am come, and now must thou die." His beating heart told him this was indeed true; but he pressed his hands over his eyes, and said: "Do not bewilder me with terror in my last moments. If thy veil conceals the features of a spectre, hide them from me still, and let me die in peace."—"Alas!" rejoined the forlorn one, "wilt thou not look upon me once again? I am fair, as when thou didst woo me on the promontory."—"Oh, could that be true!" sighed Huldbrand, "and if I might die in thy embrace!"—"Be it so, my dearest," said she. And she raised her veil, and the heavenly radiance of her sweet countenance beamed upon him.

Trembling, at once with love and awe, the Knight approached her; she received him with a tender embrace; but instead of relaxing her hold, she pressed him more closely to her heart, and wept as if her soul would pour itself out. Drowned in her tears and his own, Huldbrand felt his heart sink within him, and at last he fell lifeless from the fond arms of Undine upon his pillow.

"I have wept him to death!" said she to the pages, whom she passed in the ante-chamber; and she glided slowly through the crowd, and went back to the fountain.

## XIX.—HOW THE KNIGHT HULDBRAND WAS INTERRED

Father Heilmann had returned to the castle, as soon as he heard of the Lord of Ringstetten's death, and he appeared there just after the monk, who had married the hapless pair, had fled full of alarm and horror. "It is well," answered Heilmann, when told this: "now is the time for my office; I want no assistant." He addressed spiritual exhortations to the widowed bride, but little impression could be made on so worldly and thoughtless a mind. The old Fisherman, although grieved to the heart, resigned himself more readily to the awful dispensation; and when Bertalda kept calling Undine a witch and a murderer, the old man calmly answered: "The stroke could not be turned away. For my part, I see only the hand of God therein; and none grieved more deeply over Huldbrand's sentence, than she who was doomed to inflict it, the poor forsaken Undine!" And he helped to arrange the funeral ceremonies in a manner suitable to the high rank of the dead. He was to be buried in a neighbouring hamlet, whose churchyard contained the graves of all his ancestors, and which he had himself enriched with many noble gifts. His helmet and coat of arms lay upon the coffin, about to be lowered into earth with his mortal remains; for Lord Huldbrand of Ringstetten was the last of his race.

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The mourners began their dismal procession, and the sound of their solemn dirge rose into the calm blue depths of heaven. Heilmann walked first, bearing on high a crucifix, and the bereaved Bertalda followed leaning on her aged father. Suddenly, amid the crowd of mourners who composed the widow's train, appeared a snow-white figure, deeply veiled, with hands uplifted in an attitude of intense grief. Those that stood near her felt a shudder creep over them; they shrank back, and thus increased the alarm of those whom the stranger next approached, so that confusion gradually spread itself through the whole train. Here and there was to be found a soldier bold enough to address the figure, and attempt to drive her away; but she always eluded their grasp, and the next moment reappeared among the rest, moving along with slow and solemn step. At length, when the attendants had all fallen back, she found herself close behind Bertalda, and now slackened her pace to the very slowest measure, so that the widow was not aware of her presence. No one disturbed her again, while she meekly and reverently glided on behind her.

So they advanced till they reached the churchyard, when the whole procession formed a circle round the open grave. Bertalda then discovered the unbidden guest, and half-angry, half-frightened, she forbade her to come near the Knight's resting-place. But the veiled form gently shook her head, and extended her hands in humble entreaty; this gesture reminded Bertalda of poor Undine, when she gave her the coral necklace on the Danube, and she could not but weep. Father Heilmann enjoined silence; for they had begun to heap earth over the grave, and were about to offer up solemn prayers around it. Bertalda knelt down in silence, and all her followers did the same. When they rose, lo, the white form had vanished! and on the spot where she had knelt, a bright silvery brook now gushed out of the turf, and flowed round the Knight's tomb, till it had almost wholly encircled it; then it ran further on, and emptied itself into a shady pool which bounded one side of the churchyard. From that time forth, the villagers are said to have shown travellers this clear spring, and they still believe it to be the poor forsaken Undine, who continues thus to twine her arms round her beloved lord.

## V

### THE STORY OF RUTH

It came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab—he and his wife and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other was Ruth. And they dwelled there about ten years.

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And Mahlon and Chilion died also, both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab; for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, “Go, return each to her mother’s house. The Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in this house of her husband.” Then she kissed them.

And they lifted up their voice and wept; and they said unto her, “Surely, we will return with thee unto thy people.”

And Naomi said, “Turn again, my daughters; why will ye go with me? Turn again, my daughters, go your way.”

And they lifted up their voice and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

And she said, “Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people and unto her gods! Return thou after thy sister-in-law.”

And Ruth said, “Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee. For whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.”

When Naomi saw that Ruth was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her. So they two went until they came to Bethlehem.

And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, “Is this Naomi?”

And she said unto them, “Call me not Naomi [pleasant], call me Mara [bitter]; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing that the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?”

So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab; and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley-harvest.

And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech, and his name was Boaz.

And Ruth said unto Naomi:  "Let me now go to the field and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace."

And Naomi said unto her, "Go, my daughter."

And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said unto the reapers, "The Lord be with you!"

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And they answered him, “The Lord bless thee!”

Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, “Whose damsel is this?”

And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, “It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab. And she said, ’I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’ So she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.”

Then said Boaz unto Ruth, “Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens; let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them. Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? And when thou art a thirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.”

Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, “Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?”

And Boaz answered and said unto her, “It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law, since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.”

Then she said, “Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.”

And Boaz said unto her at meal-time, “Come thou hither, and eat of the bread and dip thy morsel in the vinegar.”

And she sat beside the reapers, and he reached her parched corn; and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.

And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not; and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.”

So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up and went into the city; and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned, and she brought forth and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.

And her mother-in-law said unto her, “Where hast thou gleaned to-day, and where wroughtest thou?  Blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee!”

And she showed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, “The man’s name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz.”

And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, “Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead.  The man is near of kin unto us; one of our next kinsmen.”

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And Ruth the Moabitess said, “He said unto me also, ’Thou shalt keep fast by my young men until they have ended all my harvest.’”

And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field.”

So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley-harvest and of wheat-harvest, and dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, “My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor. Wash thyself, therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor; but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie; and thou shalt go in and uncover his feet and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.”

And Ruth said unto her, “All that thou sayest unto me I will do.” And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her.

And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn. And she came softly and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.

And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself; and behold! a woman lay at his feet. And he said, “Who art thou?”

And she answered, “I am Ruth, thine handmaid. Spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.”

And he said, “Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter; for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than in the beginning; inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest; for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman; howbeit, there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be, in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman’s part; but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth. Lie down until the morning.”

And she lay at his feet until the morning. And she rose up before one could know another.

And he said, “Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.”  Also he said, “Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee and hold it.”

And when she held it he measured six measures of barley and laid it on her.

And she went into the city, and when she came to her mother-in-law she said, “Who art thou, my daughter?”

And she told her all that the man had done to her; and she said, “These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, ’Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law.’”

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Then Naomi said, “Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall; for the man will not be in rest until he have finished the thing this day.”

Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there. And, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by, unto whom he said, “Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here.”

And he turned aside, and sat down.

And Boaz took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, “Sit ye down here.”

And they sat down.

And he said unto the kinsman, “Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land which was our brother Elimelech’s; and I thought to advertise thee, saying, ’Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is none to redeem it beside thee, and I am after thee.’”

And he said, “I will redeem it.”

Then said Boaz, “What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.”

And the kinsman said, “I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance. Redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it.”

Now this was the manner in former time in Israel, concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things: a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour; and this was a testimony in Israel. Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz:

“Buy it for thee.” So he drew off his shoe.

And Boaz said unto the elders and unto all the people, “Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s, and all that was Chilion’s and Mahlon’s at the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day.”

And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said: “We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel; and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in

Bethlehem; and let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman."

So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife.

And Ruth bare a son. And the women said unto Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age; for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him."

And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women, her neighbours, gave it a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi"! and they called his name Obed.

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## VI

### THE GREAT STONE FACE

One afternoon, when the sun was going down, a mother and her little boy sat at the door of their cottage, talking about the Great Stone Face. They had but to lift their eyes, and there it was plainly to be seen, though miles away, with the sunshine brightening all its features.

And what was the Great Stone Face?

Embosomed amongst a family of lofty mountains, there was a valley so spacious that It contained many thousand inhabitants. Some of these good people dwelt in log-huts, with the black forest all around them, on the steep and difficult hillsides. Others had their homes in comfortable farmhouses, and cultivated the rich soil on the gentle slopes or level surfaces of the valley. Others, again, were congregated into populous villages, where some wild, highland rivulet, tumbling down from its birthplace in the upper mountain region, had been caught and tamed by human cunning, and compelled to turn the machinery of cotton-factories. The inhabitants of this valley, in short, were numerous, and of many modes of life. But all of them, grown people and children, had a kind of familiarity with the Great Stone Face, although some possessed the gift of distinguishing this grand natural phenomenon more perfectly than many of their neighbours. The Great Stone Face, then, was a work of Nature in her mood of majestic playfulness, formed on the perpendicular side of a mountain by some immense rocks, which had been thrown together in such a position as, when viewed at a proper distance, precisely to resemble the features of the human countenance. It seemed as if an enormous giant, or a Titan, had sculptured his own likeness on the precipice. There was the broad arch of the forehead, a hundred feet in height; the nose, with its long bridge; and the vast lips, which, if they could have spoken, would have rolled their thunder accents from one end of the valley to the other. True it is, that if the spectator approached too near, he lost the outline of the gigantic visage, and could discern only a heap of ponderous and gigantic rocks, piled in chaotic ruin one upon another. Retracing his steps, however, the wondrous features would again be seen; and the farther he withdrew from them, the more like a human face, with all its original divinity intact did they appear; until, as it grew dim in the distance, with the clouds and glorified vapour of the mountains clustering about it, the Great Stone Face seemed positively to be alive.

It was a happy lot for children to grow up to manhood or womanhood with the Great Stone Face before their eyes, for all the features were noble, and the expression was at once grand and sweet, as if it were the glow of a vast, warm heart, that embraced all mankind in its affections, and had room for more. It was an education only to look at it. According to the belief of many people, the valley owed much of its fertility to this benign

aspect that was continually beaming over it, illuminating the clouds, and infusing its tenderness into the sunshine.

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As we began with saying, a mother and her little boy sat at their cottage-door, gazing at the Great Stone Face, and talking about it. The child's name was Ernest.

"Mother," said he, while the Titanic visage smiled on him, "I wish that it could speak, for it looks so very kindly that its voice must needs be pleasant. If I were to see a man with such a face, I should love him dearly."

"If an old prophecy should come to pass," answered his mother, "we may see a man, some time or other, with exactly such a face as that."

"What prophecy do you mean, dear mother?" eagerly inquired Ernest. "Pray tell me all about it!"

So his mother told him a story that her own mother had told to her, when she herself was younger than little Ernest; a story, not of things that were past, but of what was yet to come; a story, nevertheless, so very old, that even the Indians, who formerly inhabited this valley, had heard it from their forefathers, to whom, as they affirmed, it had been murmured by the mountain streams, and whispered by the wind among the tree-tops. The purport was, that, at some future day, a child should be born hereabouts, who was destined to become the greatest and noblest personage of his time, and whose countenance, in manhood, should bear an exact resemblance to the Great Stone Face. Not a few old-fashioned people, and young ones likewise, in the ardour of their hopes, still cherished an enduring faith in this old prophecy. But others who had seen more of the world had watched and waited till they were weary, and had beheld no man with such a face, nor any man that proved to be much greater or nobler than his neighbours, concluded it to be nothing but an idle tale. At all events, the great man of the prophecy had not yet appeared.

"O mother, dear mother!" cried Ernest, clapping his hands above his head, "I do hope that I shall live to see him!"

His mother was an affectionate and thoughtful woman, and felt that it was wisest not to discourage the generous hopes of her little boy. So she only said to him, "Perhaps you may."

And Ernest never forgot the story that his mother told him. It was always in his mind, whenever he looked upon the Great Stone Face. He spent his childhood in the log-cottage where he was born, and was dutiful to his mother, and helpful to her in many things, assisting her much with his little hands, and more with his loving heart. In this manner, from a happy yet often pensive child, he grew up to be a mild, quiet, unobtrusive boy, and sun-browned with labour in the fields, but with more intelligence brightening his aspect than is seen in many lads who have been taught at famous schools. Yet Ernest had had no teacher, save only that the Great Stone Face became one to him. When the toil of the day was over, he would gaze at it for hours, until he

began to imagine that those vast features recognised him, and gave him a smile of kindness and encouragement, responsive to his own look of veneration. We must not take upon us to affirm that this was a mistake, although the Face may have looked no more kindly at Ernest than at all the world beside. But the secret was, that the boy's tender and confiding simplicity discerned what other people could not see; and thus the love, which was meant for all, became his peculiar portion.

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About this time, there went a rumour throughout the valley, that the great man, foretold from ages long ago, who was to bear a resemblance to the Great Stone Face, had appeared at last. It seems that, many years before, a young man had migrated from the valley and settled at a distant seaport, where, after getting together a little money, he had set up as a shopkeeper. His name—but I could never learn whether it was his real one, or a nickname that had grown out of his habits and success in life—was Gathergold. Being shrewd and active, and endowed by Providence with that inscrutable faculty which develops itself in what the world calls luck, he became an exceedingly rich merchant, and owner of a whole fleet of bulky-bottomed ships. All the countries of the globe appeared to join hands for the mere purpose of adding heap after heap to the mountainous accumulation of this one man's wealth. The cold regions of the north, almost within the gloom and shadow of the Arctic Circle, sent him their tribute in the shape of furs; hot Africa sifted for him the golden sands of her rivers, and gathered up the ivory tusks of her great elephants out of the forests; the East came bringing him the rich shawls, and spices, and teas, and the effulgence of diamonds, and the gleaming purity of large pearls. The ocean, not to be behindhand with the earth, yielded up her mighty whales, that Mr. Gathergold might sell their oil, and make a profit on it. Be the original commodity what it might, it was gold within his grasp. It might be said of him, as of Midas in the fable, that whatever he touched with his finger immediately glistened, and grew yellow, and was changed at once into sterling metal, or, which suited him still better, into piles of coin. And, when Mr. Gathergold had become so very rich that it would have taken him a hundred years only to count his wealth, he bethought himself of his native valley, and resolved to go back thither, and end his days where he was born. With this purpose in view, he sent a skilful architect to build him such a palace as should be fit for a man of his vast wealth to live in.

As I have said above, it had already been rumoured in the valley that Mr. Gathergold had turned out to be the prophetic personage so long and vainly looked for, and that his visage was the perfect and undeniable similitude of the Great Stone Face. People were the more ready to believe that this must needs be the fact, when they beheld the splendid edifice that rose, as if by enchantment, on the site of his father's old weather-beaten farmhouse. The exterior was of marble, so dazzlingly white that it seemed as though the whole structure might melt away in the sunshine, like those humbler ones which Mr. Gathergold, in his young play-days, before his fingers were gifted with the touch of transmutation, had been accustomed to build of snow. It had a richly ornamented portico, supported by tall pillars, beneath which was a lofty door, studded with silver knobs, and made of a kind

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of variegated wood that had been brought from beyond the sea. The windows, from the floor to the ceiling of each stately apartment, were composed, respectively, of but one enormous pane of glass, so transparently pure that it was said to be a finer medium than even the vacant atmosphere. Hardly anybody had been permitted to see the interior of this palace; but it was reported, and with good semblance of truth, to be far more gorgeous than the outside, insomuch that whatever was iron or brass in other houses was silver or gold in this; and Mr. Gathergold's bedchamber, especially, made such a glittering appearance that no ordinary man would have been able to close his eyes there. But, on the other hand, Mr. Gathergold was now so inured to wealth, that perhaps he could not have closed his eyes unless where the gleam of it was certain to find its way beneath his eyelids.

In due time, the mansion was finished; next came the upholsterers, with magnificent furniture; then, a whole troop of black and white servants, the harbingers of Mr. Gathergold, who, in his own majestic person, was expected to arrive at sunset. Our friend Ernest, meanwhile, had been deeply stirred by the idea that the great man, the noble man, the man of prophecy, after so many ages of delay, was at length to be made manifest to his native valley. He knew, boy as he was, that there were a thousand ways in which Mr. Gathergold, with his vast wealth, might transform himself into an angel of beneficence, and assume a control over human affairs as wide and benignant as the smile of the Great Stone Face. Full of faith and hope, Ernest doubted not that what the people said was true, and that now he was to behold the living likeness of those wondrous features on the mountain-side. While the boy was still gazing up the valley, and fancying, as he always did, that the Great Stone Face returned his gaze and looked kindly at him, the rumbling of wheels was heard, approaching swiftly along the winding road.

"Here he comes!" cried a group of people who were assembled to witness the arrival. "Here comes the great Mr. Gathergold!"

A carriage, drawn by four horses, dashed round the turn of the road. Within it, thrust partly out of the window, appeared the physiognomy of a little old man, with a skin as yellow as if his own Midas-hand had transmuted it. He had a low forehead, small, sharp eyes, puckered about with innumerable wrinkles, and very thin lips, which he made still thinner by pressing them forcibly together.

"The very image of the Great Stone Face!" shouted the people. "Sure enough, the old prophecy is true; and here we have the great man come, at last!"

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And, what greatly perplexed Ernest, they seemed actually to believe that here was the likeness which they spoke of. By the roadside there chanced to be an old beggar-woman and two little beggar-children, stragglers from some far-off region, who, as the carriage rolled onward, held out their hands and lifted up their doleful voices, most piteously beseeching charity. A yellow claw—the very same that had clawed together so much wealth—poked itself out of the coach-window, and dropt some copper coins upon the ground; so that, though the great man's name seems to have been Gathergold, he might just as suitably have been nicknamed Scattercopper. Still, nevertheless, with an earnest shout, and evidently with as much good faith as ever, the people bellowed:

"He is the very image of the Great Stone Face!"

But Ernest turned sadly from the wrinkled shrewdness of that sordid visage, and gazed up the valley, where, amid a gathering mist, gilded by the last sunbeams, he could still distinguish those glorious features which had impressed themselves into his soul. Their aspect cheered him. What did the benign lips seem to say?

"He will come! Fear not, Ernest; the man will come!"

The years went on, and Ernest ceased to be a boy. He had grown to be a young man now. He attracted little notice from the other inhabitants of the valley; for they saw nothing remarkable in his way of life, save that, when the labour of the day was over, he still loved to go apart and gaze and meditate upon the Great Stone Face. According to their idea of the matter, it was a folly, indeed, but pardonable, inasmuch as Ernest was industrious, kind, and neighbourly, and neglected no duty for the sake of indulging this idle habit. They knew not that the Great Stone Face had become a teacher to him, and that the sentiment which was expressed in it would enlarge the young man's heart, and fill it with wider and deeper sympathies than other hearts. They knew not that thence would come a better wisdom than could be learned from books, and a better life than could be moulded on the defaced example of other human lives. Neither did Ernest know that the thoughts and affections which came to him so naturally, in the fields and at the fireside, and wherever he communed with himself, were of a higher tone than those which all men shared with him. A simple soul—simple as when his mother first taught him the old prophecy—he beheld the marvellous features beaming adown the valley, and still wondered that their human counterpart was so long in making his appearance.

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By this time poor Mr. Gathergold was dead and buried; and the oddest part of the matter was, that his wealth which was the body and spirit of his existence, had disappeared before his death, leaving nothing of him but a living skeleton, covered over with a wrinkled, yellow skin. Since the melting away of his gold, it had been very generally conceded that there was no such striking resemblance, after all, betwixt the ignoble features of the ruined merchant and that majestic face upon the mountain-side. So the people ceased to honour him during his lifetime, and quietly consigned him to forgetfulness after his decease. Once in a while, it is true, his memory was brought up in connection with the magnificent palace which he had built, and which had long ago been turned into a hotel for the accommodation of strangers, multitudes of whom came, every summer, to visit that famous natural curiosity, the Great Stone Face. Thus, Mr. Gathergold being discredited and thrown into the shade, the man of prophecy was yet to come.

It so happened that a native-born son of the valley, many years before, had enlisted as a soldier, and, after a great deal of hard fighting, had now become an illustrious commander. Whatever he may be called in history, he was known in camps and on the battle-field under the nickname of Old Blood-and-Thunder. This war-worn veteran, being now infirm with age and wounds, and weary of the turmoil of a military life, and of the roll of the drum and the clangour of the trumpet, that had so long been ringing in his ears, had lately signified a purpose of returning to his native valley hoping to find repose where he remembered to have left it. The inhabitants, his old neighbours and their grown-up children, were resolved to welcome the renowned warrior with a salute of cannon and a public dinner; and all the more enthusiastically, it being affirmed that now, at last, the likeness of the Great Stone Face had actually appeared. An aide-de-camp of Old Blood-and-Thunder, travelling through the valley, was said to have been struck with the resemblance. Moreover the schoolmates and early acquaintances of the general were ready to testify, on oath, that, to the best of their recollection, the aforesaid general had been exceedingly like the majestic image, even when a boy, only that the idea had never occurred to them at that period. Great, therefore, was the excitement throughout the valley; and many people, who had never once thought of glancing at the Great Stone Face for years before, now spent their time in gazing at it, for the sake of knowing exactly how General Blood-and-Thunder looked.

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On the day of the great festival, Ernest, with all the other people of the valley, left their work, and proceeded to the spot where the sylvan banquet was prepared. As he approached, the loud voice of the Rev. Dr. Battleblast was heard, beseeching a blessing on the good things set before them, and on the distinguished friend of peace in whose honour they were assembled. The tables were arranged in a cleared space of the woods, shut in by the surrounding trees, except where a vista opened eastward, and afforded a distant view of the Great Stone Face. Over the general's chair, which was a relic from the home of Washington, there was an arch of verdant boughs, with the laurel profusely intermixed, and surmounted by his country's banner, beneath which he had won his victories. Our friend Ernest raised himself on his tiptoes, in hopes to get a glimpse of the celebrated guest; but there was a mighty crowd about the tables anxious to hear the toasts and speeches, and to catch any word that might fall from the general in reply; and a volunteer company, doing duty as a guard, pricked ruthlessly with their bayonets at any particularly quiet person among the throng. So Ernest, being of an unobtrusive character was thrust quite into the background, where he could see no more of Old Blood-and-Thunder's physiognomy than if it had been still blazing on the battle-field. To console himself, he turned towards the Great Stone Face, which, like a faithful and long-remembered friend, looked back and smiled upon him through the vista of the forest. Meantime, however, he could overhear the remarks of various individuals, who were comparing the features of the hero with the face on the distant mountain-side.

"'Tis the same face, to a hair!" cried one man, cutting a caper for joy.

"Wonderfully like, that's a fact!" responded another.

"Like! why, I call it Old Blood-and-Thunder himself, in a monstrous looking-glass!" cried a third. "And why not? He's the greatest man of this or any other age, beyond a doubt."

And then all three of the speakers gave a great shout, which communicated electricity to the crowd, and called forth a roar from a thousand voices, that went reverberating for miles among the mountains, until you might have supposed that the Great Stone Face had poured its thunder-breath into the cry. All these comments, and this vast enthusiasm, served the more to interest our friend; nor did he think of questioning that now, at length, the mountain-visage had found its human counterpart. It is true, Ernest had imagined that this long-looked-for personage would appear in the character of a man of peace, uttering wisdom and doing good, and making people happy. But, taking an habitual breadth of view, with all his simplicity, he contended that Providence should choose its own method of blessing mankind, and could conceive that this great end might be effected even by a warrior and a bloody sword, should inscrutable wisdom see fit to order matters so.

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“The general! the general!” was now the cry.  “Hush! silence!  Old Blood-and-Thunder’s going to make a speech.”

Even so; for, the cloth being removed, the general’s health had been drunk amid shouts of applause, and he now stood upon his feet to thank the company.  Ernest saw him. There he was, over the shoulders of the crowd, from the two glittering epaulets and embroidered collar upward, beneath the arch of green boughs with intertwined laurel, and the banner drooping as if to shade his brow!  And there, too, visible in the same glance, through the vista of the forest, appeared the Great Stone Face!  And was there, indeed, such a resemblance as the crowd had testified?  Alas, Ernest could not recognise it!  He beheld a war-worn and weather-beaten countenance, full of energy, and expressive of an iron will; but the gentle wisdom, the deep, broad, tender sympathies, were altogether wanting in Old Blood-and-Thunder’s visage; and even if the Great Stone Face had assumed his look of stern command, the milder traits would still have tempered it.

“This is not the man of prophecy,” sighed Ernest, to himself, as he made his way out of the throng.  “And must the world wait longer yet?”

The mists had congregated about the distant mountain-side, and there were seen the grand and awful features of the Great Stone Face, awful but benignant, as if a mighty angel were sitting among the hills, and enrobing himself in a cloud-vesture of gold and purple.  As he looked, Ernest could hardly believe but that a smile beamed over the whole visage, with a radiance still brightening, although without motion of the lips.  It was probably the effect of the western sunshine, melting through the thinly diffused vapours that had swept between him and the object that he gazed at.  But—as it always did—the aspect of his marvellous friend made Ernest as hopeful as if he had never hoped in vain.

“Fear not, Ernest,” said his heart, even as if the Great Face were whispering him—“fear not, Ernest; he will come.”

More years sped swiftly and tranquilly away.  Ernest still dwelt in his native valley, and was now a man of middle age.  By imperceptible degrees, he had become known among the people.  Now, as heretofore, he laboured for his bread, and was the same simple-hearted man that he had always been.  But he had thought and felt so much he had given so many of the best hours of his life to unworldly hopes for some great good to mankind, that it seemed as though he had been talking with the angels, and had imbibed a portion of their wisdom unawares.  It was visible in the calm and well-considered beneficence of his daily life, the quiet stream of which had made a wide green margin all along its course.  Not a day passed by, that the world was not the better because this man, humble as he was, had lived.  He never stepped aside from his own path, yet would always reach a blessing to his neighbour.  Almost involuntarily, too, he had become a preacher.

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The pure and high simplicity of his thought, which, as one of its manifestations, took shape in the good deeds that dropped silently from his hand, flowed also forth in speech. He uttered truths that wrought upon and moulded the lives of those who heard him. His auditors, it may be, never suspected that Ernest, their own neighbour and familiar friend, was more than an ordinary man; least of all did Ernest himself suspect it; but, inevitably as the murmur of a rivulet, came thoughts out of his mouth that no other human lips had spoken.

When the people's minds had had a little time to cool, they were ready enough to acknowledge their mistake in imagining a similarity between General Blood-and-Thunder's truculent physiognomy and the benign visage on the mountain-side. But now, again, there were reports and many paragraphs in the newspapers, affirming that the likeness of the Great Stone Face had appeared upon the broad shoulders of a certain eminent statesman. He, like Mr. Gathergold and Old Blood-and-Thunder, was a native of the valley, but had left it in his early days, and taken up the trades of law and politics. Instead of the rich man's wealth and the warrior's sword, he had but a tongue, and it was mightier than both together. So wonderfully eloquent was he, that whatever he might choose to say, his auditors had no choice but to believe him; wrong looked like right, and right like wrong; for when it pleased him, he could make a kind of illuminated fog with his mere breath, and obscure the natural daylight with it. His tongue, indeed, was a magic instrument: sometimes it rumbled like the thunder; sometimes it warbled like the sweetest music. It was the blast of war—the song of peace; and it seemed to have a heart in it, when there was no such matter. In good truth, he was a wondrous man; and when his tongue had acquired him all other imaginable success—when it had been heard in halls of state, and in the courts of princes and potentates—after it had made him known all over the world, even as a voice crying from shore to shore—it finally persuaded his countrymen to select him for the Presidency. Before this time—-indeed, as soon as he began to grow celebrated—his admirers had found out the resemblance between him and the Great Stone Face; and so much were they struck by it, that throughout the country this distinguished gentleman was known by the name of Old Stony Phiz. The phrase was considered as giving a highly favourable aspect to his political prospects; for, as is likewise the case with the Popedom, nobody ever becomes President without taking a name other than his own.

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While his friends were doing their best to make him President, Old Stony Phiz, as he was called, set out on a visit to the valley where he was born. Of course, he had no other object than to shake hands with his fellow-citizens, and neither thought nor cared about any effect which his progress through the country might have upon the election. Magnificent preparations were made to receive the illustrious statesman; a cavalcade of horsemen set forth to meet him at the boundary line of the State, and all the people left their business and gathered along the wayside to see him pass. Among these was Ernest. Though more than once disappointed, as we have seen, he had such a hopeful and confiding nature, that he was always ready to believe in whatever seemed beautiful and good. He kept his heart continually open, and thus was sure to catch the blessing from on high, when it should come. So now again, as buoyantly as ever, he went forth to behold the likeness of the Great Stone Face.

The cavalcade came prancing along the road, with a great clattering of hoofs and a mighty cloud of dust, which rose up so dense and high that the visage of the mountain-side was completely hidden from Ernest's eyes. All the great men of the neighbourhood were there on horseback: militia officers, in uniform; the member of Congress; the sheriff of the county; the editors of newspapers; and many a farmer, too, had mounted his patient steed, with his Sunday coat upon his back. It really was a very brilliant spectacle, especially as there were numerous banners flaunting over the cavalcade, on some of which were gorgeous portraits of the illustrious statesman and the Great Stone Face, smiling familiarly at one another, like two brothers. If the pictures were to be trusted, the mutual resemblance, it must be confessed, was marvellous. We must not forget to mention that there was a band of music, which made the echoes of the mountains ring and reverberate with the loud triumph of its strains; so that airy and soul-thrilling melodies broke out among all the heights and hollows, as if every nook of his native valley had found a voice to welcome the distinguished guest. But the grandest effect was when the far-off mountain precipice flung back the music; for then the Great Stone Face itself seemed to be swelling the triumphant chorus, in acknowledgment that, at length, the man of prophecy was come.

All this while the people were throwing up their hats and shouting, with enthusiasm so contagious that the heart of Ernest kindled up, and he likewise threw up his hat, and shouted, as loudly as the loudest, "Huzza for the great man! Huzza for Old Stony Phiz?" But as yet he had not seen him.

"Here he is, now!" cried those who stood near Ernest. "There! There! Look at Old Stony Phiz and then at the Old Man of the Mountain, and see if they are not as like as two twin-brothers!"

In the midst of all this gallant array, came an open barouche, drawn by four white horses; and in the barouche, with his massive head uncovered, sat the illustrious statesman, Old Stony Phiz himself.

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“Confess it,” said one of Ernest’s neighbours to him, “the Great Stone Face has met its match at last!”

Now, it must be owned that, at his first glimpse of the countenance which was bowing and smiling from the barouche, Ernest did fancy that there was a resemblance between it and the old familiar face upon the mountain-side. The brow, with its massive depth and loftiness, and all the other features, indeed, were boldly and strongly hewn, as if in emulation of a more than heroic, of a Titanic model. But the sublimity and stateliness, the grand expression of a divine sympathy, that illuminated the mountain visage, and etherealised its ponderous granite substance into spirit, might here be sought in vain. Something had been originally left out, or had departed. And therefore the marvellously gifted statesman had always a weary gloom in the deep caverns of his eyes, as of a child that has outgrown its playthings, or a man of mighty faculties and little aims, whose life, with all its high performances, was vague and empty, because no high purpose had endowed it with reality.

Still, Ernest’s neighbour was thrusting his elbow into his side, and pressing him for an answer.

“Confess! confess! Is not he the very picture of your Old Man of the Mountain?”

“No!” said Ernest, bluntly, “I see little or no likeness.”

“Then so much the worse for the Great Stone Face!” answered his neighbour; and again he set up a shout for Old Stony Phiz.

But Ernest turned away, melancholy, and almost despondent: for this was the saddest of his disappointments, to behold a man who might have fulfilled the prophecy, and had not willed to do so. Meantime, the cavalcade, the banners, the music, and the barouches swept past him, with the vociferous crowd in the rear, leaving the dust to settle down, and the Great Stone Face to be revealed again, with the grandeur that it had worn for untold centuries.

“Lo, here I am, Ernest!” the benign lips seemed to say. “I have waited longer than thou, and am not yet weary. Fear not; the man will come.”

The years hurried onward, treading in their haste on one another’s heels. And now they began to bring white hairs, and scatter them over the head of Ernest; they made reverend wrinkles across his forehead, and furrows in his cheeks. He was an aged man. But not in vain had he grown old; more than the white hairs on his head were the sage thoughts in his mind; his wrinkles and furrows were inscriptions that Time had graved, and in which he had written legends of wisdom that had been tested by the tenor of a life. And Ernest had ceased to be obscure. Unsought for, undesired, had come the fame which so many seek, and made him known in the great world, beyond

the limits of the valley in which he had dwelt so quietly.  College professors, and even the active men of cities, came from far to see and converse with Ernest; for the report had gone abroad that this simple husbandman

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had ideas unlike those of other men, not gained from books, but of a higher tone—a tranquil and familiar majesty, as if he had been talking with the angels as his daily friends. Whether it were sage, statesman, or philanthropist, Ernest received these visitors with the gentle sincerity that had characterised him from boyhood, and spoke freely with them of whatever came uppermost, or lay deepest in his heart or their own. While they talked together, his face would kindle, unawares, and shine upon them, as with a mild evening light. Pensive with the fulness of such discourse, his guests took leave and went their way; and passing up the valley, paused to look at the Great Stone Face, imagining that they had seen its likeness in a human countenance, but could not remember where.

While Ernest had been growing up and growing old, a bountiful Providence had granted a new poet to this earth. He, likewise, was a native of the valley, but had spent the greater part of his life at a distance from that romantic region, pouring out his sweet music amid the bustle and din of cities. Often, however, did the mountains which had been familiar to him in his childhood, lift their snowy peaks into the clear atmosphere of his poetry. Neither was the Great Stone Face forgotten, for the poet had celebrated it in an ode, which was grand enough to have been uttered by its own majestic lips. This man of genius, we may say, had come down from heaven with wonderful endowments. If he sang of a mountain, the eyes of all mankind beheld a mightier grandeur reposing on its breast, or soaring to its summit, than had before been seen there. If his theme were a lovely lake, a celestial smile had now been thrown over it, to gleam forever on its surface. If it were the vast old sea, even the deep immensity of its dread bosom seemed to swell the higher, as if moved by the emotions of the song. Thus the world assumed another and a better aspect from the hour that the poet blessed it with his happy eyes. The Creator had bestowed him, as the last best touch to his own handiwork. Creation was not finished till the poet came to interpret, and so complete it.

The effect was no less high and beautiful, when his human brethren were the subject of his verse. The man or woman, sordid with the common dust of life, who crossed his daily path, and the little child who played in it, were glorified if he beheld them in his mood of poetic faith. He showed the golden links of the great chain that intertwined them with an angelic kindred; he brought out the hidden traits of a celestial birth that made them worthy of such kin. Some, indeed, there were, who thought to show the soundness of their judgment by affirming that all the beauty and dignity of the natural world existed only in the poet’s fancy. Let such men speak for themselves, who undoubtedly appear to have been spawned forth by Nature with a contemptuous bitterness; she having plastered them up out of her refuse stuff, after all the swine were made. As respects all things else, the poet’s ideal was the truest truth.

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The songs of this poet found their way to Ernest. He read them after his customary toil, seated on the bench before his cottage-door, where for such a length of time he had filled his repose with thought, by gazing at the Great Stone Face. And now as he read stanzas that caused the soul to thrill within him, he lifted his eyes to the vast countenance beaming on him so benignantly.

“O majestic friend,” he murmured, addressing the Great Stone Face, “is not this man worthy to resemble thee?”

The Face seemed to smile, but answered not a word.

Now it happened that the poet, though he dwelt so far away, had not only heard of Ernest, but had meditated much upon his character, until he deemed nothing so desirable as to meet this man, whose untaught wisdom walked hand in hand with the noble simplicity of his life. One summer morning, therefore, he took passage by the railroad, and, in the decline of the afternoon, alighted from the cars at no great distance from Ernest’s cottage. The great hotel, which had formerly been the palace of Mr. Gathergold, was close at hand, but the poet, with his carpet-bag on his arm, inquired at once where Ernest dwelt, and was resolved to be accepted as his guest.

Approaching the door, he there found the good old man holding a volume in his hand, which alternately he read, and then, with a finger between the leaves, looked lovingly at the Great Stone Face.

“Good evening,” said the poet. “Can you give a traveller a night’s lodging?”

“Willingly,” answered Ernest; and then he added, smiling, “Methinks I never saw the Great Stone Face look so hospitably at a stranger.”

The poet sat down on the bench beside him, and he and Ernest talked together. Often had the poet held intercourse with the wittiest and the wisest, but never before with a man like Ernest, whose thoughts and feelings gushed up with such a natural freedom, and who made great truths so familiar by his simple utterance of them. Angels, as had been so often said, seemed to have wrought with him at his labour in the fields; angels seemed to have sat with him by the fireside; and, dwelling with angels as friend with friends, he had imbibed the sublimity of their ideas, and imbued it with the sweet and lowly charm of household words. So thought the poet. And Ernest, on the other hand, was moved and agitated by the living images which the poet flung out of his mind, and which peopled all the air about the cottage-door with shapes of beauty, both gay and pensive. The sympathies of these two men instructed them with a profounder sense than either could have attained alone. Their minds accorded into one strain, and made delightful music which neither of them could have claimed as all his own, nor distinguished his own share from the other’s. They led one another, as it were, into a

high pavilion of their thoughts, so remote, and hitherto so dim, that they had never entered it before, and so beautiful that they desired to be there always.

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As Ernest listened to the poet, he imagined that the Great Stone Face was bending forward to listen too. He gazed earnestly into the poet's glowing eyes.

"Who are you, my strangely gifted guest?" he said.

The poet laid his finger on the volume that Ernest had been reading.

"You have read these poems," said he. "You know me, then—for I wrote them."

Again, and still more earnestly than before, Ernest examined the poet's features; then turned towards the Great Stone Face; then back, with an uncertain aspect, to his guest. But his countenance fell; he shook his head, and sighed.

"Wherefore are you sad?" inquired the poet.

"Because," replied Ernest, "all through life I have awaited the fulfilment of a prophecy; and, when I read these poems, I hoped that it might be fulfilled in you."

"You hoped," answered the poet, faintly smiling, "to find in me the likeness of the Great Stone Face. And you are disappointed, as formerly with Mr. Gathergold, and Old Blood-and-Thunder, and Old Stony Phiz. Yes, Ernest, it is my doom. You must add my name to the illustrious three, and record another failure of your hopes. For—in shame and sadness do I speak it, Ernest—I am not worthy to be typified by yonder benign and majestic image."

"And why?" asked Ernest. He pointed to the volume. "Are not those thoughts divine?"

"They have a strain of the Divinity," replied the poet. "You can hear in them the far-off echo of a heavenly song. But my life, dear Ernest, has not corresponded with my thought. I have had grand dreams, but they have been only dreams, because I have lived—and that, too, by my own choice—among poor and mean realities. Sometimes even—shall I dare to say it?—I lack faith in the grandeur, the beauty, and the goodness, which my own works are said to have made more evident in nature and in human life. Why, then, pure seeker of the good and true, shouldst thou hope to find me, in yonder image of the divine?"

The poet spoke sadly, and his eyes were dim with tears. So, likewise, were those of Ernest.

At the hour of sunset, as had long been his frequent custom, Ernest was to discourse to an assemblage of the neighbouring inhabitants in the open air. He and the poet, arm in arm, still talking together as they went along, proceeded to the spot. It was a small nook among the hills, with a gray precipice behind, the stern front of which was relieved by the pleasant foliage of many creeping plants, that made a tapestry for the naked rocks, by hanging their festoons from all its rugged angles. At a small elevation above

the ground, set in a rich framework of verdure, there appeared a niche, spacious enough to admit a human figure, with freedom for such gestures as spontaneously accompany earnest thought and genuine emotion. Into this natural pulpit Ernest ascended, and threw a look of familiar kindness around upon his audience. They stood, or sat, or reclined upon the grass, as seemed good to each, with the departing sunshine falling obliquely over them, and mingling its subdued cheerfulness with the solemnity of a grove of ancient trees, beneath and amid the boughs of which the golden rays were constrained to pass. In another direction was seen the Great Stone Face, with the same cheer, combined with the same solemnity, in its benignant aspect.

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Ernest began to speak, giving to the people of what was in his heart and mind. His words had power, because they accorded with his thoughts; and his thoughts had reality and depth, because they harmonised with the life which he had always lived. It was not mere breath that this preacher uttered; they were the words of life, because a life of good deeds and holy love was melted into them. Pearls, pure and rich, had been dissolved into this precious draught. The poet, as he listened, felt that the being and character of Ernest were a nobler strain of poetry than he had ever written. His eyes glistening with tears, he gazed reverentially at the venerable man, and said within himself that never was there an aspect so worthy of a prophet and a sage as that mild, sweet, thoughtful countenance, with the glory of white hair diffused about it. At a distance, but distinctly to be seen, high up in the golden light of the setting sun, appeared the Great Stone Face, with hoary mists around it, like the white hairs around the brow of Ernest. Its look of grand beneficence seemed to embrace the world.

At that moment, in sympathy with a thought which he was about to utter, the face of Ernest assumed a grandeur of expression, so imbued with benevolence, that the poet, by an irresistible impulse, threw his arms aloft, and shouted:

“Behold! Behold! Ernest is himself the likeness of the Great Stone Face.”

Then all the people looked, and saw that what the deep-sighted poet said was true. The prophecy was fulfilled. But Ernest, having finished what he had to say, took the poet’s arm, and walked slowly homeward, still hoping that some wiser and better man than himself would by and by appear, bearing a resemblance to the *Great Stone Face*.

## VII

### THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED AND CAME SAFE HOME AGAIN

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin’s spouse said to her dear,
“Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

“To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair

Unto the Bell at Edmonton
  All in a chaise and pair.

“My sister and my sister’s child,
  Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
  On horseback after we.”

He soon replied, “I do admire
  Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear.
  Therefore it shall be done.

“I am a linen-draper bold,
  As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender
  Will lend his horse to go.”

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, “That’s well said;
  And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
  Which is both bright and clear.”

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John Gilpin kissed his loving wife;
  O’er joyed was he to find,
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
  She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
  But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all
  Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,
  Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
  To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
  Were never folks so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
  As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse’s side
  Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
  But soon came down again;

For saddle-tree scarce reached had he,
  His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
  Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
  Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
  Would trouble him much more.

’Twas long before the customers
  Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
  “The wine is left behind!”

“Good lack!” quoth he—“yet bring it me
  My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
  When I do exercise.”

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
  Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
  And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
  Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
  To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
  Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brushed and neat,
  He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
  Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o’er the stones,
  With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
  Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
  Which galled him in his seat.

So, “Fair and softly,” John he cried,
  But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
  In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs be must
  Who cannot sit upright,
He grasped the mane with both his hands
  And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
  Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
  Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
  Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
  Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
  Like streamer long and gay,

Till loop and button failing both,
  At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
  The bottles he has slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
  As hath been said or sung.

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The dogs did bark, the children screamed
  Up flew the windows all;
And every soul cried out, “Well done!”
  As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
  His fame soon spread around;
“He carries weight!” “He rides a race!”
  “’Tis for a thousand pound!”

And still, as fast as he drew near,
  ’Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike-men
  Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
  His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
  Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
  Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse’s flanks to smoke
  As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight
  With leathern girdle braced;
For all might see the bottle necks
  Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
  These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
  Of Edmonton so gay;

And there he threw the Wash about
  On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
  Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
  From the balcony she spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
  To see how he did ride.

“Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here’s the house!”
They all at once did cry;
“The dinner waits, and we are tired;”
Said Gilpin—“So am I!”

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there;
For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend’s the calender’s
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:

“What news? what news? your tidings tell;
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bareheaded you are come,
Or why you come at all?”

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke;
And thus unto the calender
In merry guise he spoke:

“I came because your horse would come,
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road.”

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Returned him not a single word,
But to the house went in;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig,
A wig that flowed behind,

A hat not much the worse for wear,
  Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
  Thus showed his ready wit,
“My head is twice as big as yours,
  They therefore needs must fit.

“But let me scrape the dirt away
  That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
  Be in a hungry case.”

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Said John, “It is my wedding-day,
  And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
  And I should dine at Ware.”

So turning to his horse, he said,
  “I am in haste to dine;
’Twas for your pleasure you came here,
  You shall go back for mine.”

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast!
  For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
  Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
  Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
  As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went Gilpin’s hat and wig:
He lost them sooner than at first;
  For why?—they were too big.

Now Mrs. Gilpin, when she saw
  Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
  She pulled out half-a-crown;

And thus unto the youth, she said,
  That drove them to the Bell,
“This shall be yours, when you bring back
  My husband safe and well.”

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
  John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
  By catching at his rein;

But not performing what he meant,
  And gladly would have done,
The frightened steed he frighted more,
  And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
  The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
  Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
  They raised the hue and cry:—

"Stop thief! stop thief! a highwayman!"
  Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way
  Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
  Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking, as before,
  That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
  For he got first to town;
Nor stopped till where he had got up
  He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the king!
  And Gilpin long live he;
And, when he next doth ride abroad,
  May I be there to see!

—WILLIAM COWPER

# VIII

### THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY

I suppose that very few casual readers of the *New York Herald* of August 13, 1863, observed, in an obscure corner, among the "Deaths," the announcement,—

> "NOLAN.  Died, on board U.S.  Corvette *Levant*, Lat. 2 deg. 11' S., Long. 131 deg.  W., on the 11th of May, PHILIP NOLAN."

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I happened to observe it, because I was stranded at the old Mission House in Mackinaw, waiting for a Lake Superior steamer which did not choose to come, and I was devouring to the very stubble all the current literature I could get hold of, even down to the deaths and marriages in the *Herald*. My memory for names and people is good, and the reader will see, as he goes on, that I had reason enough to remember Philip Nolan. There are hundreds of readers who would have paused at that announcement, if the officer of the *Levant* who reported it had chosen to make it thus: "Died May 11th, THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY." For it was as "The Man without a Country" that poor Philip Nolan had generally been known by the officers who had him in charge during some fifty years, as, indeed, by all the men who sailed under them. I dare say there is many a man who has taken wine with him once a fortnight, in a three years' cruise, who never knew that his name was "Nolan," or whether the poor wretch had any name at all.

There can now be no possible harm in telling this poor creature's story. Reason enough there has been till now ever since Madison's administration went out in 1817, for very strict secrecy, the secrecy of honour itself, among the gentlemen of the navy who have had Nolan in successive charge. And certainly it speaks well for the *esprit de corps* of the profession, and the personal honour of its members, that to the press this man's story has been wholly unknown—and, I think, to the country at large also. I have reason to think, from some investigations I made in the Naval Archives when I was attached to the Bureau of Construction, that every official report relating to him was burned when Ross burned the public buildings at Washington. One of the Tuckers, or possibly one of the Watsons, had Nolan in charge at the end of the war; and when, on returning from his cruise, he reported at Washington to one of the Crowninshields—who was in the Navy Department when he came home—he found that the Department ignored the whole business. Whether they really knew nothing about it, or whether it was a "*Non mi ricordo*," determined on as a piece of policy I do not know. But this I do know, that since 1817, and possibly before, no naval officer has mentioned Nolan in his report of a cruise.

But, as I say, there is no need for secrecy any longer. And now the poor creature is dead, it seems to me worth while to tell a little of his story, by way of showing young Americans of to-day what it is to be A MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY.

PHILIP NOLAN was as fine a young officer as there was in the "Legion of the West," as the Western division of our army was then called. When Aaron Burr made his first dashing expedition down to New Orleans in 1805, at Fort Massac, or somewhere above on the river, he met, as the Devil would have it, this gay, dashing, bright young fellow; at some dinner-party, I think. Burr marked him, talked

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to him, walked with him, took him a day or two's voyage in his flat-boat, and, in short, fascinated him. For the next year, barrack-life was very tame to poor Nolan. He occasionally availed himself of the permission the great man had given him to write to him. Long, high-worded, stilted letters the poor boy wrote and rewrote and copied. But never a line did he have in reply from the gay deceiver. The other boys in the garrison sneered at him, because he lost the fun which they found in shooting or rowing while he was working away on these grand letters to his grand friend. They could not understand why Nolan kept by himself while they were playing high-low-jack. Poker was not yet invented. But before long the young fellow had his revenge. For this time His Excellency, Honourable Aaron Burr, appeared again under a very different aspect. There were rumours that he had an army behind him and everybody supposed that he had an empire before him. At that time the youngsters all envied him. Burr had not been talking twenty minutes with the commander before he asked him to send for Lieutenant Nolan. Then after a little talk he asked Nolan if he could show him something of the great river and the plans for the new post. He asked Nolan to take him out in his skiff to show him a canebrake or a cottonwood tree, as he said, really to seduce him; and by the time the sail was over, Nolan was enlisted body and soul. From that time, though he did not yet know it, he lived as A MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY.

What Burr meant to do I know no more than you, dear reader. It is none of our business just now. Only, when the grand catastrophe came, and Jefferson and the House of Virginia of that day undertook to break on the wheel all the possible Clarences of the then House of York, by the great treason trial at Richmond, some of the lesser fry in that distant Mississippi Valley, which was farther from us than Puget's Sound is to-day, introduced the like novelty on their provincial stage; and, to while away the monotony of the summer at Fort Adams, got up, for *spectacles*, a string of courts-martial on the officers there. One and another of the colonels and majors were tried, and, to fill out the list, little Nolan, against whom, Heaven knows, there was evidence enough—that he was sick of the service, had been willing to be false to it, and would have obeyed any order to march any whither with anyone who would follow him had the order been signed, "By command of His Exc. A. Burr." The courts dragged on. The big flies escaped, rightly for all I know. Nolan was proved guilty enough, as I say; yet you and I would never have heard of him, reader, but that, when the president of the court asked him at the close whether he wished to say anything to show that he had always been faithful to the United States, he cried out, in a fit of frenzy—

"Damn the United States! I wish I may never hear of the United States again!"

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I suppose he did not know how the words shocked old Colonel Morgan, who was holding the court. Half the officers who sat in it had served through the Revolution, and their lives, not to say their necks, had been risked for the very idea which he so cavalierly cursed in his madness. He, on his part, had grown up in the West of those days, in the midst of "Spanish plot," "Orleans plot," and all the rest. He had been educated on a plantation where the finest company was a Spanish officer or a French merchant from Orleans. His education, such as it was, had been perfected in commercial expeditions to Vera Cruz, and I think he told me his father once hired an Englishman to be a private tutor for a winter on the plantation. He had spent half his youth with an older brother, hunting horses in Texas; and, in a word, to him "United States" was scarcely a reality. Yet he had been fed by "United States" for all the years since he had been in the army. He had sworn on his faith as a Christian to be true to "United States." It was "United States" which gave him the uniform he wore, and the sword by his side. Nay, my poor Nolan, it was only because "United States" had picked you out first as one of her own confidential men of honour that "A. Burr" cared for you a straw more than for the flat-boat men who sailed his ark for him. I do not excuse Nolan; I only explain to the reader why he damned his country, and wished he might never hear her name again.

He never did hear her name but once again. From that moment, Sept. 23, 1807, till the day he died, May 11, 1863, he never heard her name again. For that half-century and more he was a man without a country.

Old Morgan, as I said, was terribly shocked. If Nolan had compared George Washington to Benedict Arnold, or had cried, "God save King George," Morgan would not have felt worse. He called the court into his private room, and returned in fifteen minutes, with a face like a sheet, to say:

"Prisoner, hear the sentence of the Court! The Court decides, subject to the approval of the President, that you never hear the name of the United States again."

Nolan laughed. But nobody else laughed. Old Morgan was too solemn, and the whole room was hushed dead as night for a minute. Even Nolan lost his swagger in a moment. Then Morgan added:

"Mr. Marshal, take the prisoner to Orleans in an armed boat, and deliver him to the naval commander there."

The marshal gave his orders and the prisoner was taken out of court.

"Mr. Marshal," continued old Morgan, "see that no one mentions the United States to the prisoner. Mr. Marshal, make my respects to Lieutenant Mitchell at Orleans, and request him to order that no one shall mention the United States to the prisoner while he is on

board ship.  You will receive your written orders from the officer on duty here this evening.  The Court is adjourned without day."

I have always supposed that Colonel Morgan himself took the proceedings of the court to Washington city, and explained them to Mr. Jefferson.  Certain it is that the President approved them—certain, that is, if I may believe the men who say they have seen his signature.  Before the *Nautilus* got round from New Orleans to the Northern Atlantic coast with the prisoner on board, the sentence had been approved, and he was a man without a country.

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The plan then adopted was substantially the same which was necessarily followed ever after. Perhaps it was suggested by the necessity of sending him by water from Fort Adams and Orleans. The Secretary of the Navy—it must have been the first Crowninshield, though he is a man I do not remember—was requested to put Nolan on board a government vessel bound on a long cruise, and to direct that he should be only so far confined there as to make it certain that he never saw or heard of the country. We had few long cruises then, and the navy was very much out of favour; and as almost all of this story is traditional, as I have explained, I do not know certainly what his first cruise was. But the commander to whom he was intrusted—perhaps it was Tingey or Shaw, though I think it was one of the younger men—we are all old enough now—regulated the etiquette and the precautions of the affair, and according to his scheme they were carried out, I suppose, till Nolan died.

When I was second officer of the *Intrepid*, some thirty years after, I saw the original paper of instructions. I have been sorry ever since that I did not copy the whole of it. It ran, however, much in this way—

WASHINGTON (with a date, which
must have been late in 1807).

Sir,

You will receive from Lieutenant Neale the person of Philip Nolan, late a lieutenant in the United States army.

This person on his trial by court-martial expressed, with an oath, the wish that he might never hear of the United States again.

> The Court sentenced him to have his wish fulfilled.
>
> For the present, the execution of the order is intrusted by the President to this Department.
>
> You will take the prisoner on board your ship, and keep him there with such precautions as shall prevent his escape.

You will provide him with such quarters, rations, and clothing as would be proper for an officer of his late rank, if he were a passenger on your vessel on the business of his Government.The gentlemen on board will make any arrangements agreeable to themselves regarding his society. He is to be exposed to no indignity of any kind, nor is he ever unnecessarily to be reminded that he is a prisoner.But under no circumstances is he ever to hear of his country or to see any information regarding it; and you will especially caution all the officers under your command to take care, that, in the various

indulgences which may be granted, this rule, in which his punishment is involved, shall not be broken.It is the intention of the Government that he shall never again see the country which he has disowned.  Before the end of your cruise you will receive orders which will give effect to this intention.

Respectfully yours,
W. SOUTHARD, for the
Secretary of the Navy.

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If I had only preserved the whole of this paper, there would be no break in the beginning of my sketch of this story. For Captain Shaw, if it were he, handed it to his successor in the charge, and he to his, and I suppose the commander of the *Levant* has it to-day as his authority for keeping this man in this mild custody.

The rule adopted on board the ships on which I have met “the man without a country” was, I think, transmitted from the beginning. No mess liked to have him permanently, because his presence cut off all talk of home or the prospect of return, of politics or letters, of peace or of war—cut off more than half the talk men liked to have at sea. But it was always thought too hard that he should never meet the rest of us, except to touch hats, and we finally sank into one system. He was not permitted to talk with the men, unless an officer was by. With officers he had unrestrained intercourse, as far as they and he chose. But he grew shy, though he had favourites: I was one. Then the captain always asked him to dinner on Monday. Every mess in succession took up the invitation in its turn. According to the size of the ship, you had him at your mess more or less often at dinner. His breakfast he ate in his own state-room—he always had a state-room—which was where a sentinel or somebody on the watch could see the door. And whatever else he ate or drank, he ate or drank alone. Sometimes, when the marines or sailors had any special jollification, they were permitted to invite “Plain-Buttons,” as they called him. Then Nolan was sent with some officer, and the men were forbidden to speak of home while he was there. I believe the theory was that the sight of his punishment did them good. They called him “Plain-Buttons,” because, while he always chose to wear a regulation army-uniform, he was not permitted to wear the army-button, for the reason that it bore either the initials or the insignia of the country he had disowned.

I remember, soon after I joined the navy, I was on shore with some of the older officers from our ship and from the *Brandywine*, which we had met at Alexandria. We had leave to make a party and go up to Cairo and the Pyramids. As we jogged along (you went on donkeys then), some of the gentlemen (we boys called them “Dons,” but the phrase was long since changed) fell to talking about Nolan, and someone told the system which was adopted from the first about his books and other reading. As he was almost never permitted to go on shore, even though the vessel lay in port for months, his time at the best hung heavy; and everybody was permitted to lend him books, if they were not published in America and made no allusion to it. These were common enough in the old days, when people in the other hemisphere talked of the United States as little as we do of Paraguay. He had almost all the foreign papers that came into the ship, sooner or later; only somebody must go over them first, and cut out any advertisement

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or stray paragraph that alluded to America. This was a little cruel sometimes, when the back of what was cut out might be as innocent as Hesiod. Right in the midst of one of Napoleon's battles, or one of Canning's speeches, poor Nolan would find a great hole, because on the back of the page of that paper there had been an advertisement of a packet for New York, or a scrap from the President's message. I say this was the first time I ever heard of this plan, which afterwards I had enough and more than enough to do with. I remember it, because poor Phillips, who was of the party, as soon as the allusion to reading was made, told a story of something which happened at the Cape of Good Hope on Nolan's first voyage; and it is the only thing I ever knew of that voyage. They had touched at the Cape, and had done the civil thing with the English Admiral and the fleet, and then, leaving for a long cruise up the Indian Ocean, Phillips had borrowed a lot of English books from an officer, which, in those days, as indeed in these, was quite a windfall. Among them, as the Devil would order, was the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," which they had all of them heard of, but which most of them had never seen. I think it could not have been published long. Well, nobody thought there could be any risk of anything national in that, though Phillips swore old Shaw had cut out the "Tempest" from Shakespeare before he let Nolan have it, because he said "the Bermudas ought to be ours, and, by Jove, should be one day." So Nolan was permitted to join the circle one afternoon when a lot of them sat on deck smoking and reading aloud. People do not do such things so often now; but when I was young we got rid of a great deal of time so. Well, so it happened that in his turn Nolan took the book and read to the others; and he read very well, as I know. Nobody in the circle knew a line of the poem, only it was all magic and Border chivalry, and was ten thousand years ago. Poor Nolan read steadily through the fifth canto, stopped a minute and drank something, and then began, without a thought of what was coming:

"Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,"—

It seems impossible to us that anybody ever heard this for the first time; but all these fellows did then, and poor Nolan himself went on, still unconsciously or mechanically—

"This is my own, my native land!"

Then they all saw that something was to pay; but he expected to get through, I suppose, turned a little pale, but plunged on,

"Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned
From wandering on a foreign strand?—
If such there breathe, go, mark him well—"

By this time the men were all beside themselves, wishing there was any way to make him turn over two pages; but he had not quite presence of mind for that; he gagged a little, coloured crimson, and staggered on—

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“For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name.
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim,
Despite these titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self—”

and here the poor fellow choked, could not go on, but started up, swung the book into the sea, vanished into his state-room, “And by Jove,” said Phillips, “we did not see him for two months again. And I had to make up some beggarly story to that English surgeon why I did not return his Walter Scott to him.”

That story shows about the time when Nolan’s braggadocio must have broken down. At first, they said, he took a very high tone, considered his imprisonment a mere farce, affected to enjoy the voyage, and all that; but Phillips said that after he came out of his state-room he never was the same man again. He never read aloud again unless it was the Bible or Shakespeare, or something else he was sure of. But it was not that merely. He never entered in with the other young men exactly as a companion again. He was always shy afterwards, when I knew him—very seldom spoke, unless he was spoken to, except to a very few friends. He lighted up occasionally—I remember late in his life hearing him fairly eloquent on something which had been suggested to him by one of Flechier’s sermons—but generally he had the nervous, tired look of a heart-wounded man.

When Captain Shaw was coming home—if, as I say, it was Shaw—rather to the surprise of everybody they made one of the Windward Islands, and lay off and on for nearly a week. The boys said the officers were sick of salt-junk, and meant to have turtle-soup before they came home. But after several days the *Warren* came to the same rendezvous; they exchanged signals; she sent to Phillips and these homeward-bound men letters and papers, and told them she was outward-bound, perhaps to the Mediterranean, and took poor Nolan and his traps on the boat back to try his second cruise. He looked very blank when he was told to get ready to join her. He had known enough of the signs of the sky to know that till that moment he was going “home.” But this was a distinct evidence of something he had not thought of, perhaps—that there was no going home for him, even to a prison. And this was the first of some twenty such transfers, which brought him sooner or later into half our best vessels, but which kept him all his life at least some hundred miles from the country he had hoped he might never hear of again.

It may have been on that second cruise—it was once when he was up the Mediterranean,—that Mrs. Graff, the celebrated Southern beauty of those days, danced with him. They had been lying a long time in the Bay of Naples, and the officers were very intimate in the English fleet, and there had been great festivities, and our men thought they must give a great ball on board the ship. How they ever did it on board the *Warren* I am sure I do not

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know. Perhaps it was not the *Warren*, or perhaps ladies did not take up so much room as they do now. They wanted to use Nolan's state-room for something, and they hated to do it without asking him to the ball; so the captain said they might ask him, if they would be responsible that he did not talk with the wrong people, "who would give him intelligence." So the dance went on, the finest party that had ever been known, I dare say; for I never heard of a man-of-war ball that was not. For ladies they had the family of the American consul, one or two travellers who had adventured so far, and a nice bevy of English girls and matrons, perhaps Lady Hamilton herself.

Well, different officers relieved each other in standing and talking with Nolan in a friendly way, so as to be sure that nobody else spoke to him. The dancing went on with spirit, and after a while even the fellows who took this honorary guard of Nolan ceased to fear any *contretemps*. Only when some English lady—Lady Hamilton, as I said, perhaps—-called for a set of "American dances," an odd thing happened. Everybody then danced contra-dances. The black band, nothing loath, conferred as to what "American dances" were, and started off with "Virginia Reel," which they followed with "Money Musk," which, in its turn in those days, should have been followed by "The Old Thirteen." But just as Dick, the leader, tapped for his fiddles to begin, and bent forward, about to say, in true negro state, "'The Old Thirteen,' gentlemen and ladies!" as he had said "'Virginny Reel,' if you please!" and "'Money-Musk,' if you please!" the captain's boy tapped him on the shoulder, whispered to him, and he did not announce the name of the dance; he merely bowed, began on the air, and they all fell to—the officers teaching the English girls the figure, but not telling them why it had no name.

But that is not the story I started to tell. As the dancing went on, Nolan and our fellows all got at ease, as I said: so much so, that it seemed quite natural for him to bow to that splendid Mrs. Graff and say:

"I hope you have not forgotten me, Miss Rutledge. Shall I have the honour of dancing?"

He did it so quickly, that Fellows, who was with him, could not hinder him. She laughed and said:

"I am not Miss Rutledge any longer, Mr. Nolan; but I will dance all the same," just nodded to Fellows, as if to say he must leave Mr. Nolan to her, and led him off to the place where the dance was forming.

Nolan thought he had got his chance. He had known her at Philadelphia, and at other places had met her, and this was a godsend. You could not talk in contra-dances as you do in cotillions, or even in the pauses of waltzing; but there were chances for tongues and sounds, as well as for eyes and blushes. He began with her travels, and Europe, and Vesuvius, and the French; and then, when they had worked down, and had

that long talking time at the bottom of the set, he said boldly—a little pale, she said, as she told me the story years after—

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“And what do you hear from home, Mrs. Graff?”

And that splendid creature looked through him.  Jove! how she must have looked through him!

“Home!!  Mr. Nolan!!!  I thought you were the man who never wanted to hear of home again!”—and she walked directly up the deck to her husband, and left poor Nolan alone, as he always was.—He did not dance again.  I cannot give any history of him in order; nobody can now; and, indeed, I am not trying to.

These are the traditions, which I sort out, as I believe them, from the myths which have been told about this man for forty years.  The lies that have been told about him are legion.  The fellows used to say he was the “Iron Mask;” and poor George Pons went to his grave in the belief that this was the author of “Junius,” who was being punished for his celebrated libel on Thomas Jefferson.  Pons was not very strong in the historical line.

A happier story than either of these I have told is of the war.  That came along soon after.  I have heard this affair told in three or four ways—and, indeed, it may have happened more than once.  But which ship it was on I cannot tell.  However, in one at least, of the great frigate-duels with the English, in which the navy was really baptised, it happened that a round-shot from the enemy entered one of our ports square, and took right down the officer of the gun himself, and almost every man of the gun’s crew.  Now you may say what you choose about courage, but that is not a nice thing to see.  But, as the men who were not killed picked themselves up, and as they and the surgeon’s people were carrying off the bodies, there appeared Nolan, in his shirt-sleeves, with the rammer in his hand, and, just as if he had been the officer, told them off with authority—-who should go to the cock-pit with the wounded men, who should stay with him—-perfectly cheery, and with that way which makes men feel sure all is right and is going to be right.  And he finished loading the gun with his own hands, aimed it, and bade the men fire.  And there he stayed, captain of that gun, keeping those fellows in spirits, till the enemy struck—sitting on the carriage while the gun was cooling, though he was exposed all the time—showing them easier ways to handle heavy shot—making the raw hands laugh at their own blunders—and when the gun cooled again, getting it loaded and fired twice as often as any other gun on the ship.  The captain walked forward by way of encouraging the men, and Nolan touched his hat and said:

“I am showing them how we do this in the artillery, sir.”

And this is the part of the story where all the legends agree; the commodore said:

“I see you do, and I thank you, sir; and I shall never forget this day, sir, and you never shall, sir.”

And after the whole thing was over, and he had the Englishman’s sword, in the midst of the state and ceremony of the quarter-deck, he said:

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“Where is Mr. Nolan?  Ask Mr. Nolan to come here.”

And when Nolan came, he said:

“Mr. Nolan, we are all very grateful to you to-day; you are one of us to-day; you will be named in the despatches.”

And then the old man took off his own sword of ceremony, and gave it to Nolan, and made him put it on.  The man told me this who saw it.  Nolan cried like a baby, and well he might.  He had not worn a sword since that infernal day at Fort Adams.  But always afterwards on occasions of ceremony, he wore that quaint old French sword of the commodore’s.

The captain did mention him in the despatches.  It was always said he asked that he might be pardoned.  He wrote a special letter to the Secretary of War.  But nothing ever came of it.  As I said, that was about the time when they began to ignore the whole transaction at Washington, and when Nolan’s imprisonment began to carry itself on because there was nobody to stop it without any new orders from home.

I have heard it said that he was with Porter when he took possession of the Nukahiwa Islands.  Not this Porter, you know, but old Porter, his father, Essex Porter—that is, the old Essex Porter, not this Essex.  As an artillery officer, who had seen service in the West, Nolan knew more about fortifications, embrasures, ravelins, stockades, and all that, than any of them did; and he worked with a right goodwill in fixing that battery all right.  I have always thought it was a pity Porter did not leave him in command there with Gamble.  That would have settled all the question about his punishment.  We should have kept the islands, and at this moment we should have one station in the Pacific Ocean.  Our French friends, too, when they wanted this little watering-place, would have found it was preoccupied.  But Madison and the Virginians, of course, flung all that away.

All that was near fifty years ago.  If Nolan was thirty then, he must have been near eighty when he died.  He looked sixty when he was forty.  But he never seemed to me to change a hair afterwards.  As I imagine his life, from what I have seen and heard of it, he must have been in every sea, and yet almost never on land.  He must have known, in a formal way, more officers in our service than any man living knows.  He told me once, with a grave smile, that no man in the world lived so methodical a life as he.  “You know the boys say I am the Iron Mask, and you know how busy he was.”  He said it did not do for anyone to try to read all the time, more than to do anything else all the time; and that he used to read just five hours a day.  “Then,” he said, “I keep up my note-books, writing in them at such and such hours from what I have been reading; and I include in these my scrap-books.”  These were very curious indeed.  He had six or eight, of different subjects.  There was one of History, one of Natural Science, one which he called “Odds and Ends.”  But they were not merely books of extracts from

newspapers.  They had bits of plants and ribbons, shells tied on, and carved scraps of bone and wood, which he had taught the men to cut for him, and they were beautifully illustrated.  He drew admirably.  He had some of the funniest drawings there, and some of the most pathetic, that I have ever seen in my life.  I wonder who will have Nolan's scrap-books.

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Well, he said his reading and his notes were his profession, and that they took five hours and two hours respectively of each day. "Then," said he, "every man should have a diversion as well as a profession. My Natural History is my diversion." That took two hours a day more. The men used to bring him birds and fish, but on a long cruise he had to satisfy himself with centipedes and cockroaches and such small game. He was the only naturalist I ever met who knew anything about the habits of the house-fly and the mosquito. All those people can tell you whether they are *Lepidoptera* or *Steptopotera*; but as for telling how you can get rid of them, or how they get away from you when you strike them—why Linnaeus knew as little of that as John Foy the idiot did. These nine hours made Nolan's regular daily "occupation." The rest of the time he talked or walked. Till he grew very old, he went aloft a great deal. He always kept up his exercise; and I never heard that he was ill. If any other man was ill, he was the kindest nurse in the world; and he knew more than half the surgeons do. Then if anybody was sick or died, or if the captain wanted him to, on any other occasion, he was always ready to read prayers. I have said that he read beautifully.

My own acquaintance with Philip Nolan began six or eight years after the English war, on my first voyage after I was appointed a midshipman. It was in the first days after our Slave-Trade treaty, while the Reigning House, which was still the House of Virginia, had still a sort of sentimentalism about the suppression of the horrors of the Middle Passage, and something was sometimes done that way. We were in the South Atlantic on that business. From the time I joined, I believe I thought Nolan was a sort of lay chaplain—a chaplain with a blue coat. I never asked about him. Everything in the ship was strange to me. I knew it was green to ask questions, and I suppose I thought there was a "Plain-Buttons" on every ship. We had him to dine in our mess once a week, and the caution was given that on that day nothing was to be said about home. But if they had told us not to say anything about the planet Mars or the Book of Deuteronomy, I should not have asked why; there were a great many things which seemed to me to have as little reason. I first came to understand anything about "the man without a country" one day when we overhauled a dirty little schooner which had slaves on board. An officer was sent to take charge of her, and, after a few minutes, he sent back his boat to ask that someone might be sent him who could speak Portuguese. We were all looking over the rail when the message came, and we all wished we could interpret, when the captain asked who spoke Portuguese. But none of the officers did; and just as the captain was sending forward to ask if any of the people could, Nolan stepped out and said he should be glad to interpret, if the captain wished, as he understood the language. The captain thanked him, fitted out another boat with him, and in this boat it was my luck to go.

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When we got there, it was such a scene as you seldom see, and never want to. Nastiness beyond account, and chaos run loose in the midst of the nastiness. There were not a great many of the negroes; but by way of making what there were understand that they were free, Vaughan had had their handcuffs, and ankle-cuffs knocked off, and, for convenience's sake, was putting them upon the rascals of the schooner's crew. The negroes were, most of them, out of the hold, and swarming all round the dirty deck, with a central throng surrounding Vaughan and addressing him in every dialect, and *patois* of a dialect, from the Zulu click up to the Parisian of Beledeljereed.

As we came on deck, Vaughan looked down from a hogshead, on which he had mounted in desperation, and said—

"For God's love, is there anybody who can make these wretches understand something? The men gave them rum, and that did not quiet them. I knocked that big fellow down twice, and that did not soothe him. And then I talked Choctaw to all of them together; and I'll be hanged if they understood that as well as they understood the English."

Nolan said he could speak Portuguese, and one or two fine-looking Kroomen were dragged out, who, as it had been found already, had worked for the Portuguese on the coast at Fernando Po.

"Tell them they are free," said Vaughan; "and tell them that these rascals are to be hanged as soon as we can get rope enough."

Nolan "put that into Spanish," that is, he explained it in such Portuguese as the Kroomen could understand, and they in turn to such of the negroes as could understand them. Then there was such a yell of delight, clinching of fists, leaping and dancing, kissing of Nolan's feet, and a general rush made to the hogshead by way of spontaneous worship of Vaughan, as the *deus ex machina* of the occasion.

"Tell them," said Vaughan, well pleased, "that I will take them all to Cape Palmas."

This did not answer so well. Cape Palmas was practically as far from the homes of most of them as New Orleans or Rio Janeiro was; that is they would be eternally separated from home there. And their interpreters, as we could understand, instantly said, "*Ah, non Palmas*" and began to propose infinite other expedients in most voluble language. Vaughan was rather disappointed at this result of his liberality, and asked Nolan eagerly what they said. The drops stood on poor Nolan's white forehead, as he hushed the men down, and said:

"He says, 'Not Palmas.' He says, 'Take us home, take us to our own country, take us to our own house, take us to our own pickaninnies and our own women.' He says he has

an old father and mother who will die if they do not see him.  And this one says he left his people all sick, and paddled down to Fernando to beg the white doctor to come and help them, and that these devils caught him in the bay just in sight of home, and that he has never seen anybody from home since then.  And this one says," choked out Nolan, "that he has not heard a word from his home in six months, while he has been locked up in an infernal barracoon."

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Vaughan always said he grew gray himself while Nolan struggled through this interpretation. I, who did not understand anything of the passion involved in it, saw that the very elements were melting with fervent heat, and that something was to pay somewhere. Even the negroes themselves stopped howling, as they saw Nolan's agony, and Vaughan's almost equal agony of sympathy. As quick as he could get words, he said:

"Tell them yes, yes, yes; tell them they shall go to the Mountains of the Moon, if they will. If I sail the schooner through the Great White Desert, they shall go home!"

And after some fashion Nolan said so. And then they all fell to kissing him again, and wanted to rub his nose with theirs.

But he could not stand it long; and getting Vaughan to say he might go back, he beckoned me down into our boat. As we lay back in the stern-sheets and the men gave way, he said to me: "Youngster, let that show you what it is to be without a family, without a home, and without a country. And if you are ever tempted to say a word or to do a thing that shall put a bar between you and your family, your home, and your country, pray God in His mercy to take you that instant home to His own heaven. Stick by your family, boy; forget you have a self, while you do everything for them. Think of your home, boy; write and send, and talk about it. Let it be nearer and nearer to your thought, the farther you have to travel from it; and rush back to it when you are free, as that poor black slave is doing now. And for your country, boy," and the words rattled in his throat, "and for that flag," and he pointed to the ship, "never dream a dream but of serving her as she bids you, though the service carry you through a thousand hells. No matter what happens to you, no matter who flatters you or who abuses you, never look at another flag, never let a night pass but you pray God to bless that flag. Remember, boy, that behind all these men you have to do with, behind officers, and government, and people even, there is the Country Herself, your Country, and that you belong to Her as you belong to your own mother. Stand by Her, boy, as you would stand by your mother, if those devils there had got hold of her to-day!"

I was frightened to death by his, calm, hard passion; but I blundered out that I would, by all that was holy, and that I had never thought of doing anything else. He hardly seemed to hear me; but he did, almost in a whisper, say: "O, if anybody had said so to me when I was of your age!"

I think it was this half-confidence of his, which I never abused, for I never told this story till now, which afterward made us great friends. He was very kind to me. Often he sat up, or even got up, at night, to walk the deck with me, when it was my watch. He explained to me a great deal of my mathematics, and I owe to him my taste for mathematics. He lent me books, and helped me about my reading.

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He never alluded so directly to his story again; but from one and another officer I have learned, in thirty years, what I am telling. When we parted from him in St. Thomas harbour, at the end of our cruise, I was more sorry than I can tell. I was very glad to meet him again in 1830; and later in life, when I thought I had some influence in Washington, I moved heaven and earth to have him discharged. But it was like getting a ghost out of prison. They pretended there was no such man, and never was such a man. They will say so at the Department now! Perhaps they do not know. It will not be the first thing in the service of which the Department appears to know nothing!

There is a story that Nolan met Burr once on one of our vessels, when a party of Americans came on board in the Mediterranean. But this I believe to be a lie; or, rather, it is a myth, *ben trovato*, involving a tremendous blowing-up with which he sunk Burr,—-asking him how he liked to be "without a country." But it is clear from Burr's life, that nothing of the sort could have happened; and I mention this only as an illustration of the stories which get a-going where there is the least mystery at bottom.

Philip Nolan, poor fellow, repented of his folly, and then, like a man, submitted to the fate he had asked for. He never intentionally added to the difficulty or delicacy of the charge of those who had him in hold. Accidents would happen; but never from his fault. Lieutenant Truxton told me that, when Texas was annexed, there was a careful discussion among the officers, whether they should get hold of Nolan's handsome set of maps and cut Texas out of it—from the map of the world and the map of Mexico. The United States had been cut out when the atlas was bought for him. But it was voted, rightly enough, that to do this would be virtually to reveal to him what had happened, or, as Harry Cole said, to make him think Old Burr had succeeded. So it was from no fault of Nolan's that a great botch happened at my own table, when, for a short time, I was in command of the *George Washington* corvette, on the South American station. We were lying in the La Plata, and some of the officers, who had been on shore and had just joined again, were entertaining us with accounts of their misadventures in riding the half-wild horses of Buenos Ayres. Nolan was at table, and was in an unusually bright and talkative mood. Some story of a tumble reminded him of an adventure of his own when he was catching wild horses in Texas with his adventurous cousin, at a time when he must have been quite a boy. He told the story with a good deal of spirit—so much so, that the silence which often follows a good story hung over the table for an instant, to be broken by Nolan himself. For he asked perfectly unconsciously:

"Pray, what has become of Texas? After the Mexicans got their independence, I thought that province of Texas would come forward very fast. It is really one of the finest regions on earth; it is the Italy of this continent. But I have not seen or heard a word of Texas for nearly twenty years."

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There were two Texan officers at the table. The reason he had never heard of Texas was that Texas and her affairs had been painfully cut out of his newspapers since Austin began his settlements; so that, while he read of Honduras and Tamaulipas, and, till quite lately, of California—this virgin province, in which his brother had travelled so far, and I believe, had died, had ceased to be to him. Waters and Williams, the two Texas men, looked grimly at each other and tried not to laugh. Edward Morris had his attention attracted by the third link in the chain of the captain's chandelier. Watrous was seized with a convulsion of sneezing. Nolan himself saw that something was to pay, he did not know what. And I, as master of the feast, had to say:

"Texas is out of the map, Mr. Nolan. Have you seen Captain Back's curious account of Sir Thomas Roe's Welcome?"

After that cruise I never saw Nolan again. I wrote to him at least twice a year, for in that voyage we became even confidentially intimate; but he never wrote to me. The other men tell me that in those fifteen years he *aged* very fast, as well he might indeed, but that he was still the same gentle, uncomplaining, silent sufferer that he ever was, bearing as best he could his self-appointed punishment—rather less social, perhaps, with new men whom he did not know, but more anxious, apparently, than ever to serve and befriend and teach the boys, some of whom fairly seemed to worship him. And now it seems the dear old fellow is dead. He has found a home at last, and a country.

Since writing this, and while considering whether or not I would print it, as a warning to the young Nolans and Vallandighams and Tatnalls of to-day of what it is to throw away a country, I have received from Danforth, who is on board the *Levant*, a letter which gives an account of Nolan's last hours. It removes all my doubts about telling this story.

The reader will understand Danforth's letter, or the beginning of it, if he will remember that after ten years of Nolan's exile everyone who had him in charge was in a very delicate position. The government had failed to renew the order of 1807 regarding him. What was a man to do? Should he let him go? What, then, if he were called to account by the Department for violating the order of 1807? Should he keep him? What, then, if Nolan should be liberated some day, and should bring an action of false imprisonment or kidnapping against every man who had had him in charge? I urged and pressed this upon Southard, and I have reason to think that other officers did the same thing. But the Secretary always said, as they so often do at Washington, that there were no special orders to give, and that we must act on our own judgment. That means, "If you succeed, you will be sustained; if you fail, you will be disavowed." Well, as Danforth says, all that is over now, though I do not know but I expose myself to a criminal prosecution on the evidence of the very revelation I am making.

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Here is the letter:

LEVANT, 2 deg. 2’ S. at 131 deg. W.

DEAR FRED:

I try to find heart and life to tell you that it is all over with dear old Nolan. I have been with him on this voyage more than I ever was, and I can understand wholly now the way in which you used to speak of the dear old fellow. I could see that he was not strong, but I had no idea the end was so near. The doctor has been watching him very carefully, and yesterday morning came to me and told me that Nolan was not so well, and had not left his state-room—a thing I never remember before. He had let the doctor come and see him as he lay there—the first time the doctor had been in the state-room—and he said he should like to see me. Oh, dear! do you remember the mysteries we boys used to invent about his room in the old *Intrepid* days? Well, I went in, and there, to be sure, the poor fellow lay in his berth, smiling pleasantly as he gave me his hand, but looking very frail. I could not help a glance round, which showed me what a little shrine he had made of the box he was lying in. The Stars and Stripes were triced up above and around a picture of Washington, and he had painted a majestic eagle, with lightnings blazing from his beak and his foot just clasping the whole globe, which his wings overshadowed. The dear old boy saw my glance, and said, with a sad smile, “Here, you see, I have a country!” And then he pointed to the foot of his bed, where I had not seen before a great map of the United States, as he had drawn it from memory, and which he had there to look upon as he lay. Quaint, queer old names were on it, in large letters: “Indiana Territory,” “Mississippi Territory,” and “Louisiana Territory.” I suppose our fathers learned such things: but the old fellow had patched in Texas, too; he had carried his western boundary all the way to the Pacific, but on that shore he had defined nothing.“O Captain,” he said, “I know I am dying. I cannot get home. Surely you will tell me something now?—Stop! stop! Do not speak till I say what I am sure you know, that there is not in this ship, that there is not in America—God bless her!—a more loyal man than I. There cannot be a man who loves the old flag as I do, or prays for it as I do, or hopes for it as I do. There are thirty-four stars in it now, Danforth. I thank God for that, though I do not know what their names are. There has never been one taken away: I thank God for that. I know by that that there has never been any successful Burr, O Danforth, Danforth,” he sighed out, “how like a wretched night’s dream a boy’s idea of personal fame or of separate sovereignty seems; when one looks back on it after such a life as mine! But tell me—tell me something—tell me everything, Danforth, before I die!”Ingham, I swear to you that I felt like a monster that I had not told him everything before. Danger or no danger, delicacy or

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no delicacy, who was I, that I should have been acting the tyrant all this time over this dear, sainted old man, who had years ago expiated, in his whole manhood's life, the madness of a boy's treason? "Mr. Nolan," said I, "I will tell you everything you ask about. Only, where shall I begin?"Oh, the blessed smile that crept over his white face! and he pressed my hand and said, "God bless you! Tell me their names," he said, and he pointed to the stars on the flag. "The last I know is Ohio. My father lived in Kentucky. But I have guessed Michigan and Indiana and Mississippi—that was where Fort Adams is—they make twenty. But where are your other fourteen? You have not cut up any of the old ones, I hope?"Well, that was not a bad text, and I told him the names in as good order as I could, and he bade me take down his beautiful map and draw them in as I best could with my pencil. He was wild with delight about Texas, told me how his cousin died there; he had marked a gold cross near where he supposed his grave was; and he had guessed at Texas. Then he was delighted as he saw California and Oregon,—that, he said, he had suspected partly, because he had never been permitted to land on that shore, though the ships were there so much. "And the men," said he, laughing, "brought off a good deal beside furs." Then he went back—heavens, how far!—to ask about the *Chesapeake*, and what was done to Barron for surrendering her to the *Leopard*, and whether Burr ever tried again—and he ground his teeth with the only passion he showed. But in a moment that was over, and he said, "God forgive me, for I am sure I forgive him." Then he asked about the old war—told me the true story of his serving the gun the day we took the *Java*—asked about dear old David Porter, as he called him. Then he settled down more quietly, and very happily, to hear me tell in an hour the history of fifty years.How I wished it had been somebody who knew something! But I did as well as I could. I told him of the English war. I told him about Fulton and the steamboat beginning. I told him about old Scott, and Jackson; told him all I could think of about the Mississippi, and New Orleans, and Texas, and his own old Kentucky. And do you think, he asked who was in command of the "Legion of the West." I told him it was a very gallant officer named Grant, and that, by our last news, he was about to establish his headquarters at Vicksburg. Then, "Where was Vicksburg?" I worked that out on the map; it was about a hundred miles, more or less, above his old Fort Adams and I thought Fort Adams must be a ruin now. "It must be at old Vick's plantation, at Walnut Hills," said he: "well, that is a change!"I tell you, Ingham, it was a hard thing to condense the history of half a century into that talk with a sick man. And I do not now know what I told him—of emigration,

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and the means of it—of steamboats, and railroads, and telegraphs—of inventions, and books, and literature—of the colleges, and West Point, and the Naval School—but with the queerest interruptions that ever you heard. You see it was Robinson Crusoe asking all the accumulated questions of fifty-six years!I remember he asked, all of a sudden, who was President now; and when I told him, he asked if Old Abe was General Benjamin Lincoln's son. He said he met old General Lincoln, when he was quite a boy himself, at some Indian treaty. I said no, that Old Abe was a Kentuckian like himself, but I could not tell him of what family; he had worked up from the ranks. "Good for him!" cried Nolan; "I am glad of that. As I have brooded and wondered, I have thought our danger was in keeping up those regular successions in the first families." Then I got talking about my visit to Washington. I told him of meeting the Oregon Congressman, Harding; I told him about the Smithsonian, and the Exploring Expedition; I told him about the Capitol and the statues for the pediment, and Crawford's Liberty, and Greenough's Washington: Ingham, I told him everything I could think of that would show the grandeur of his country and its prosperity; but I could not make up my mouth to tell him a word about this infernal rebellion!And he drank it in and enjoyed it as I cannot tell you. He grew more and more silent, yet I never thought he was tired or faint. I gave him a glass of water, but he just wet his lips, and told me not to go away. Then he asked me to bring the Presbyterian "Book of Public Prayer" which lay there, and said, with a smile, that it would open at the right place—and so it did. There was his double red mark down the page; and I knelt down and read, and he repeated with me, "For ourselves and our country, O gracious God, we thank Thee, that, notwithstanding our manifold transgressions of Thy holy laws, Thou hast continued to us Thy marvellous kindness," and so to the end of that thanksgiving. Then he turned to the end of the same book, and I read the words more familiar to me: "Most heartily we beseech Thee with Thy favour to behold and bless Thy servant, the President of the United States, and all others in authority"—and the rest of the Episcopal collect. "Danforth," said he "I have repeated these prayers night and morning, it is now fifty-five years." And then he said he would go to sleep. He bent me down over him and kissed me; and he said, "Look in my Bible, Captain, when I am gone." And I went away.

> But I had no thought it was the end. I thought he was tired and would sleep. I knew he was happy, and I wanted him to be alone.

But in an hour, when the doctor went in gently, he found Nolan had breathed his life away with a smile. He had something pressed close to his lips. It was his father's badge of the Order of the Cincinnati.

> We looked in his Bible, and there was a slip of paper at the place where he had marked the text—

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> "They desire a country, even a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city."
>
> On this slip of paper he had written:

"Bury me in the sea; it has been my home, and I love it. But will not someone set up a stone for my memory at Fort Adams or at Orleans, that my disgrace may not be more than I ought to bear? Say on it:

"*In Memory of*

"PHILIP NOLAN,
"*Lieutenant in the Army of the United States.*

"He loved his country as no other man has
loved her; but no man deserved less at
her hands."

## IX

THE NUeRNBERG STOVE

August lived in a little town called Hall. Hall is a favourite name for several towns in Austria and in Germany; but this one especial little Hall, in the Upper Innthal, is one of the most charming Old-World places that I know, and August for his part did not know any other. It has the green meadows and the great mountains all about it, and the gray-green glacier-fed water rushes by it. It has paved streets and enchanting little shops that have all latticed panes and iron gratings to them; it has a very grand old Gothic church, that has the noblest blendings of light and shadow, and marble tombs of dead knights, and a look of infinite strength and repose as a church should have. Then there is the Muntze Tower, black and white, rising out of greenery and looking down on a long wooden bridge and the broad rapid river; and there is an old schloss which has been made into a guard-house, with battlements and frescoes and heraldic devices in gold and colours, and a man-at-arms carved in stone standing life-size in his niche and bearing his date 1530. A little farther on, but close at hand, is a cloister with beautiful marble columns and tombs, and a colossal wood-carved Calvary, and beside that a small and very rich chapel: indeed, so full is the little town of the undisturbed past, that to walk in it is like opening a missal of the Middle Ages, all emblazoned and illuminated with saints and warriors, and it is so clean, and so still, and so noble, by reason of its monuments and its historic colour, that I marvel much no one has ever cared to sing its praises. The old pious heroic life of an age at once more restful and more brave than

ours still leaves its spirit there, and then there is the girdle of the mountains all around, and that alone means strength, peace, majesty.

In this little town a few years ago August Strehla lived with his people in the stone-paved irregular square where the grand church stands.

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He was a small boy of nine years at that time—a chubby-faced little man with rosy cheeks, big hazel eyes, and clusters of curls the brown of ripe nuts. His mother was dead, his father was poor, and there were many mouths at home to feed. In this country the winters are long and very cold, the whole land lies wrapped in snow for many months, and this night that he was trotting home, with a jug of beer in his numb red hands, was terribly cold and dreary. The good burghers of Hall had shut their double shutters, and the few lamps there were flickered dully behind their quaint, old-fashioned iron casings. The mountains indeed were beautiful, all snow-white under the stars that are so big in frost. Hardly anyone was astir; a few good souls wending home from vespers, a tired post-boy who blew a shrill blast from his tasseled horn as he pulled up his sledge before a hostelry, and little August hugging his jug of beer to his ragged sheepskin coat, were all who were abroad, for the snow fell heavily and the good folks of Hall go early to their beds. He could not run, or he would have spilled the beer; he was half frozen and a little frightened, but he kept up his courage by saying over and over again to himself, “I shall soon be at home with dear Hirschvogel.”

He went on through the streets, past the stone man-at-arms of the guard-house, and so into the place where the great church was, and where near it stood his father Karl Strehla’s house, with a sculptured Bethlehem over the doorway, and the Pilgrimage of the Three Kings painted on its wall. He had been sent on a long errand outside the gates in the afternoon, over the frozen fields and broad white snow, and had been belated, and had thought he had heard the wolves behind him at every step, and had reached the town in a great state of terror, thankful with all his little panting heart to see the oil-lamp burning under the first house-shrine. But he had not forgotten to call for the beer, and he carried it carefully now, though his hands were so numb that he was afraid they would let the jug down every moment.

The snow outlined with white every gable and cornice of the beautiful old wooden houses; the moonlight shone on the gilded signs, the lambs, the grapes, the eagles, and all the quaint devices that hung before the doors; covered lamps burned before the Nativities and Crucifixions painted on the walls or let into the wood-work; here and there, where a shutter had not been closed, a ruddy fire-light lit up a homely interior, with the noisy band of children clustering round the house-mother and a big brown loaf, or some gossips spinning and listening to the cobbler’s or the barber’s story of a neighbour, while the oil-wicks glimmered, and the hearth-logs blazed, and the chestnuts sputtered in their iron roasting-pot. Little August saw all these things as he saw everything with his two big bright eyes that had such curious lights and shadows in them; but he went heedfully on his way for the sake of the beer which a single slip of the foot would make him spill. At his knock and call the solid oak door, four centuries old if one, flew open, and the boy darted in with his beer, and shouted, with all the force of mirthful lungs, “Oh, dear Hirschvogel, but for the thought of you I should have died!”

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It was a large barren room into which he rushed with so much pleasure, and the bricks were bare and uneven. It had a walnut-wood press, handsome and very old, a broad deal table, and several wooden stools for all its furniture; but at the top of the chamber, sending out warmth and colour together as the lamp sheds its rays upon it, was a tower of porcelain, burnished with all the hues of a king's peacock and a queen's jewels, and surmounted with armed figures, and shields, and flowers of heraldry, and a great golden crown upon the highest summit of all.

It was a stove of 1532, and on it were the letters H.R.H., for it was in every portion the handwork of the great potter of Nuernberg, Augustin Hirschvogel, who put his mark thus, as all the world knows.

The stove no doubt had stood in palaces and been made for princes, had warmed the crimson stockings of cardinals and the gold-broidered shoes of archduchesses, had glowed in presence-chambers and lent its carbon to help kindle sharp brains in anxious councils of state; no one knew what it had been or done or been fashioned for; but it was a right royal thing. Yet perhaps it had never been more useful than it was now in this poor desolate room, sending down heat and comfort into the troop of children tumbled together on a wolfskin at its feet, who received frozen August among them with loud shouts of joy.

"O, dear Hirschvogel, I am so cold, so cold!" said August, kissing its gilded lion's claws. "Is father not in, Dorothea?"

"No, dear. He is late."

Dorothea was a girl of seventeen, dark-haired and serious, and with a sweet, sad face, for she had had many cares laid on her shoulders, even whilst still a mere baby. She was the eldest of the Strehla family; and there were ten of them in all. Next to her there came Jan and Karl and Otho, big lads, gaining a little for their own living; and then came August, who went up in the summer to the high Alps with the farmers' cattle, but in winter could do nothing to fill his own little platter and pot; and then all the little ones, who could only open their mouths to be fed like young birds—Albrecht and Hilda, and Waldo and Christof, and last of all little three-year-old Ermengilda, with eyes like forget-me-nots, whose birth had cost them the life of their mother.

They were of that mixed race, half Austrian, half Italian, so common in the Tyrol; some of the children were white and golden as lilies, others were brown and brilliant as fresh-fallen chestnuts. The father was a good man, but weak and weary with so many to find for and so little to do it with. He worked at the salt-furnaces, and by that gained a few florins; people said he would have worked better and kept his family more easily if he had not loved his pipe and a draught of ale too well; but this had only been said of him after his wife's death, when trouble and perplexity had begun to dull a brain never too vigorous, and to enfeeble further a character already

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too yielding. As it was, the wolf often bayed at the door of the Strehla household, without a wolf from the mountains coming down. Dorothea was one of those maidens who almost work miracles, so far can their industry and care and intelligence make a home sweet and wholesome and a single loaf seem to swell into twenty. The children were always clean and happy, and the table was seldom without its big pot of soup once a day. Still, very poor they were, and Dorothea's heart ached with shame, for she knew that their father's debts were many for flour and meat and clothing. Or fuel to feed the big stove they had always enough without cost, for their mother's father was alive, and sold wood and fir cones and coke, and never grudged them to his grandchildren, though he grumbled at Strehla's improvidence and hapless, dreamy ways.

"Father says we are never to wait for him: we will have supper, now you have come home, dear," said Dorothea, who, however she might fret her soul in secret as she knitted their hose and mended their shirts, never let her anxieties cast a gloom on the children; only to August she did speak a little sometimes, because he was so thoughtful and so tender of her always, and knew as well as she did that there were troubles about money—though these troubles were vague to them both, and the debtors were patient and kindly, being neighbours all in the old twisting streets between the guard-house and the river.

Supper was a huge bowl of soup, with big slices of brown bread swimming in it and some onions bobbing up and down: the bowl was soon emptied by ten wooden spoons, and then the three eldest boys slipped off to bed, being tired with their rough bodily labour in the snow all day, and Dorothea drew her spinning-wheel by the stove and set it whirring, and the little ones got August down upon the old worn wolfskin and clamoured to him for a picture or a story. For August was the artist of the family.

He had a piece of planed deal that his father had given him, and some sticks of charcoal, and he would draw a hundred things he had seen in the day, sweeping each out with his elbow when the children had seen enough of it and sketching another in its stead—faces and dogs' heads, and men in sledges, and old women in their furs, and pine-trees, and cocks and hens, and all sorts of animals, and now and then—very reverently—a Madonna and Child. It was all very rough, for there was no one to teach him anything But it was all life-like, and kept the whole troop of children shrieking with laughter, or watching breathless, with wide open, wondering, awed eyes.

They were all so happy: what did they care for the snow outside? Their little bodies were warm, and their hearts merry; even Dorothea, troubled about the bread for the morrow, laughed as she spun; and August, with all his soul in his work, and little rosy Ermengilda's cheek on his shoulder, glowing after his frozen afternoon, cried out loud, smiling, as he looked up at the stove that was shedding its head down on them all:

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“Oh, dear Hirschvogel! you are almost as great and good as the sun!  No; you are greater and better, I think, because he goes away nobody knows where all these long, dark, cold hours, and does not care how people die for want of him; but you—you are always ready:  just a little bit of wood to feed you, and you will make a summer for us all the winter through!”

The grand old stove seemed to smile through all its iridescent surface at the praises of the child.  No doubt the stove, though it had known three centuries and more, had known but very little gratitude.

It was one of those magnificent stoves in enamelled faience which so excited the jealousy of the other potters of Nuernberg that in a body they demanded of the magistracy that Augustin Hirschvogel should be forbidden to make any more of them—-the magistracy, happily, proving of a broader mind, and having no sympathy with the wish of the artisans to cripple their greater fellow.

It was of great height and breadth, with all the majolica lustre which Hirschvogel learned to give to his enamels when he was making love to the young Venetian girl whom he afterwards married.  There was the statue of a king at each corner, modelled with as much force and splendour as his friend Albrecht Duerer could have given unto them on copperplate or canvas.  The body of the stove itself was divided into panels, which had the Ages of Man painted on them in polychrome; the borders of the panels had roses and holly and laurel and other foliage, and German mottoes in black letter of odd Old-World moralising, such as the old Teutons, and the Dutch after them, love to have on their chimney-places and their drinking cups, their dishes and flagons.  The whole was burnished with gilding in many parts, and was radiant everywhere with that brilliant colouring of which the Hirschvogel family, painters on glass and great in chemistry as they were, were all masters.

The stove was a very grand thing, as I say:  possibly Hirschvogel had made it for some mighty lord of the Tyrol at that time when he was an imperial guest at Innspruck and fashioned so many things for the Schloss Amras and beautiful Philippine Welser, the Burgher’s daughter, who gained an Archduke’s heart by her beauty and the right to wear his honors by her wit.  Nothing was known of the stove at this latter day in Hall.  The grandfather Strehla, who had been a master-mason, had dug it up out of some ruins where he was building, and, finding it without a flaw, had taken it home, and only thought it worth finding because it was such a good one to burn.  That was now sixty years past, and ever since then the stove had stood in the big desolate empty room, warming three generations of the Strehla family, and having seen nothing prettier perhaps in all its many years than the children tumbled now in a cluster like gathered flowers at its feet.  For the Strehla children, born to nothing else, were all born to beauty; white or brown, they were equally lovely to look upon, and when they went into the church to mass, with their curling locks and their clasped hands, they stood under the grim statues like cherubs flown down off some fresco.

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“Tell us a story, August,” they cried, in chorus, when they had seen charcoal pictures till they were tired; and August did as he did every night, pretty nearly, looked up at the stove and told them what he imagined of the many adventures and joys and sorrows of the human being who figured on the panels from his cradle to his grave.

To the children the stove was a household god. In summer they laid a mat of fresh moss all round it, and dressed it up with green boughs and the numberless beautiful wild flowers of the Tyrol country. In winter all their joys centred in it, and scampering home from school over the ice and snow they were happy, knowing that they would soon be cracking nuts or roasting chestnuts in the broad ardent glow of its noble tower, which rose eight feet high above them with all its spires and pinnacles and crowns.

Once a travelling peddler had told them that the letters on it meant Augustin Hirschvogel, and that Hirschvogel had been a great German potter and painter, like his father before him, in the art-sanctified city of Nuernberg, and had made many such stoves, that were all miracles of beauty and of workmanship, putting all his heart and his soul and his faith into his labours, as the men of those earlier ages did, and thinking but little of gold or praise.

An old trader, too, who sold curiosities not far from the church, had told August a little more about the brave family of Hirschvogel, whose houses can be seen in Nuernberg to this day; of old Veit, the first of them, who painted the Gothic windows of St. Sebald with the marriage of the Margravine; of his sons and of his grandsons, potters, painters, engravers all, and chief of them great Augustin, the Luca della Robbia of the North. And August’s imagination, always quick, had made a living personage out of these few records, and saw Hirschvogel as though he were in the flesh walking up and down the Maximilian-Strass in his visit to Innspruck, and maturing beautiful things in his brain as he stood on the bridge and gazed on the emerald-green flood of the Inn.

So the stove had got to be called Hirschvogel in the family, as if it were a living creature, and little August was very proud because he had been named after that famous old dead German who had had the genius to make so glorious a thing. All the children loved the stove, but with August the love of it was a passion; and in his secret heart he used to say to himself, “When I am a man, I will make just such things too, and then I will set Hirschvogel in a beautiful room in a house that I will build myself in Innspruck just outside the gates, where the chestnuts are, by the river: that is what I will do when I am a man.”

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For August, a salt-baker's son and a little cow-keeper when he was anything, was a dreamer of dreams, and when he was upon the high Alps with his cattle, with the stillness and the sky around him, was quite certain that he would live for greater things than driving the herds up when the springtide came among the blue sea of gentians, or toiling down in the town with wood and with timber as his father and grandfather did every day of their lives. He was a strong and healthy little fellow, fed on the free mountain air, and he was very happy, and loved his family devotedly, and was as active as a squirrel and as playful as a hare; but he kept his thoughts to himself, and some of them went a very long way for a little boy who was only one among many, and to whom nobody had ever paid any attention except to teach him his letters and tell him to fear God. August in winter was only a little, hungry schoolboy, trotting to be catechised by the priest, or to bring the loaves from the bake-house, or to carry his father's boots to the cobbler; and in summer he was only one of hundreds of cow-boys, who drove the poor, half-blind, blinking, stumbling cattle, ringing their throat-bells, out into the sweet intoxication of the sudden sunlight, and lived up with them in the heights among the Alpine roses, with only the clouds and the snow-summits near. But he was always thinking, thinking, thinking, for all that; and under his little sheepskin winter coat and his rough hempen summer shirt his heart had as much courage in it as Hofer's ever had—-great Hofer, who is a household word in all the Innthal, and whom August always reverently remembered when he went to the city of Innspruck and ran out by the foaming water-mill and under the wooded height of Berg Isel.

August lay now in the warmth of the stove and told the children stories, his own little brown face growing red with excitement as his imagination glowed to fever heat. That human being on the panels, who was drawn there as a baby in a cradle, as a boy playing among flowers, as a lover sighing under a casement, as a soldier in the midst of strife, as a father with children round him, as a weary, old, blind man on crutches, and, lastly, as a ransomed soul raised up by angels, had always had the most intense interest for August, and he had made, not one history for him, but a thousand; he seldom told them the same tale twice. He had never seen a story-book in his life; his primer and his mass-book were all the volumes he had. But nature had given him Fancy, and she is a good fairy that makes up for the want of very many things! only, alas! her wings are so very soon broken, poor thing, and then she is of no use at all.

"It is time for you all to go to bed, children," said Dorothea, looking up from her spinning. "Father is very late to-night; you must not sit up for him."

"Oh, five minutes more, dear Dorothea!" they pleaded; and little rosy and golden Ermengilda climbed up into her lap. "Hirschvogel is so warm, the beds are never so warm as he. Cannot you tell us another tale, August?"

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“No,” cried August, whose face had lost its light, now that his story had come to an end, and who sat serious, with his hands clasped on his knees, gazing on to the luminous arabesques of the stove.

“It is only a week to Christmas,” he said, suddenly.

“Grandmother’s big cakes!” chuckled little Christof, who was five years old, and thought Christmas meant a big cake and nothing else.

“What will Santa Claus find for ’Gilda if she be good?” murmured Dorothea over the child’s sunny head; for, however hard poverty might pinch, it could never pinch so tightly that Dorothea would not find some wooden toy and some rosy apples to put in her little sister’s socks.

“Father Max has promised me a big goose, because I saved the calf’s life in June,” said August; it was the twentieth time he had told them so that month, he was so proud of it.

“And Aunt Maila will be sure to send us wine and honey and a barrel of flour; she always does,” said Albrecht. Their aunt Maila had a chalet and a little farm over on the green slopes toward Dorf Ampas.

“I shall go up into the woods and get Hirschvogel’s crown,” said August; they always crowned Hirschvogel for Christmas with pine boughs and ivy and mountain-berries. The heat soon withered the crown; but it was part of the religion of the day to them, as much so as it was to cross themselves in church and raise their voices in the “O Salutaris Hostia.”

And they fell chatting of all they would do on the Christmas night, and one little voice piped loud against another’s, and they were as happy as though their stockings would be full of golden purses and jewelled toys, and the big goose in the soup-pot seemed to them such a meal as kings would envy.

In the midst of their chatter and laughter a blast of frozen air and a spray of driven snow struck like ice through the room, and reached them even in the warmth of the old wolfskins and the great stove. It was the door which had opened and let in the cold; it was their father who had come home.

The younger children ran joyous to meet him. Dorothea pushed the one wooden arm-chair of the room to the stove, and August flew to set the jug of beer on a little round table, and fill a long clay pipe; for their father was good to them all, and seldom raised his voice in anger, and they had been trained by the mother they had loved to dutifulness and obedience and a watchful affection.

To-night Karl Strehla responded very wearily to the young ones’ welcome, and came to the wooden chair with a tired step and sat down heavily, not noticing either pipe or beer.

“Are you not well, dear father?” his daughter asked him.

“I am well enough,” he answered, dully and sat there with his head bent, letting the lighted pipe grow cold.

He was a fair, tall man, gray before his time, and bowed with labour.

“Take the children to bed,” he said, suddenly, at last, and Dorothea obeyed.  August stayed behind, curled before the stove; at nine years old, and when one earns money in the summer from the farmers, one is not altogether a child any more, at least in one’s own estimation.

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August did not heed his father's silence:  he was used to it.  Karl Strehla was a man of few words, and, being of weakly health, was usually too tired at the end of the day to do more than drink his beer and sleep.  August lay on the wolfskin dreamy and comfortable, looking up through his drooping eyelids at the golden coronets on the crest of the great stove, and wondering for the millionth time whom it had been made for, and what grand places and scenes it had known.

Dorothea came down from putting the little ones in their beds; the cuckoo-clock in the corner struck eight; she looked to her father and the untouched pipe, then sat down to her spinning, saying nothing.  She thought he had been drinking in some tavern; it had been often so with him of late.

There was a long silence; the cuckoo called the quarter twice; August dropped asleep, his curls falling over his face; Dorothea's wheel hummed like a cat.

Suddenly Karl Strehla struck his hand on the table, sending the pipe to the ground.

"I have sold Hirschvogel," he said; and his voice was husky and ashamed in his throat. The spinning-wheel stopped.  August sprang erect out of his sleep.

"Sold Hirschvogel!" If their father had dashed the holy crucifix on the floor at their feet and spat on it, they could not have shuddered under the horror of a greater blasphemy.

"I have sold Hirschvogel!" said Karl Strehla, in the same husky, dogged voice.  "I have sold it to a travelling trader in such things for two hundred florins.  What would you?—I owe double that.  He saw it this morning when you were all out.  He will pack it and take it to Munich to-morrow."

Dorothea gave a low shrill cry:

"Oh, father?—the children—in midwinter!"

She turned white as the snow without; her words died away in her throat.

August stood, half blind with sleep, staring with dazed eyes as his cattle stared at the sun when they came out from their winter's prison.

"It is not true.  It is not true!" he muttered.  "You are jesting, father?"

Strehla broke into a dreary laugh.

"It is true.  Would you like to know what is true too? that the bread you eat, and the meat you put in this pot, and the roof you have over your heads, are none of them paid for, have been none of them paid for, for months and months; if it had not been for your grandfather I should have been in prison all summer and autumn, and he is out of

patience and will do no more now.  There is no work to be had; the masters go to younger men:  they say I work ill; it may be so.  Who can keep his head above water with ten hungry children dragging him down?  When your mother lived it was different. Boy, you stare at me as if I were a mad dog.  You have made a god of yon china thing. Well—it goes, goes to-morrow.  Two hundred florins, that is something.  It will keep me out of prison for a little and with the spring things may turn—”

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August stood like a creature paralysed. His eyes were wide open, fastened on his father's with terror and incredulous horror; his face had grown as white as his sister's; his chest heaved with tearless sobs.

"It is not true! It is not true!" he echoed stupidly. It seemed to him that the very skies must fall, and the earth perish, if they could take away Hirschvogel. They might as soon talk of tearing down God's sun out of the heavens.

"You will find it true," said his father, doggedly, and angered because he was in his own soul bitterly ashamed to have bartered away the heirloom and treasure of his race, and the comfort and healthgiver of his young children. "You will find it true. The dealer has paid me half the money to-night, and will pay me the other half to-morrow when he packs it up and takes it away to Munich. No doubt it is worth a great deal more—at least I suppose so, as he gives that—but beggars cannot be choosers. The little black stove in the kitchen will warm you all just as well. Who would keep a gilded, painted thing in a poor house like this, when one can make two hundred florins by it? Dorothea, you never sobbed more when your mother died. What is it, when all is said?—a bit of hardware, much too grand-looking for such a room as this. If all the Strehlas had not been born fools it would have been sold a century ago, when it was dug up out of the ground. 'It is a stove for a museum,' the trader said when he saw it. 'To a museum let it go.'"

August gave a shrill shriek like a hare's when it is caught for its death, and threw himself on his knees at his father's feet.

"Oh, father, father!" he cried, convulsively, his hands closing on Strehla's knees, and his uplifted face blanched and distorted with terror. "Oh, father, dear father, you cannot mean what you say? Send *it* away—our life, our sun, our joy, our comfort? we shall all die in the dark and the cold. Sell *me* rather. Sell me to any trade or any pain you like; I will not mind. But Hirschvogel! it is like selling the very cross off the altar! You must be in jest. You could not do such a thing—you could not—you who have always been gentle and good, and who have sat in the warmth here year after year with our mother. It is not a piece of hardware, as you say; it is a living thing, for a great man's thoughts and fancies have put life into it, and it loves us, though we are only poor little children, and we love it with all our hearts and souls, and up in heaven I am sure the dead Hirschvogel knows! Oh, listen; I will go and try and get work to-morrow; I will ask them to let me cut ice or make the paths through the snow. There must be something I could do, and I will beg the people we owe money to, to wait; they are all neighbours, they will be patient. But sell Hirschvogel! oh, never! never! never! Give the florins back to the vile man. Tell him it would be like selling the shroud out of mother's coffin, or the golden curls off Ermengilda's head! Oh, father, dear father! do hear me, for pity's sake!"

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Strehla was moved by the boy's anguish. He loved his children, though he was often weary of them, and their pain was pain to him. But beside emotion, and stronger than emotion, was the anger that August roused in him: he hated and despised himself for the barter of the heirloom of his race, and every word of the child stung him with a stinging sense of shame.

And he spoke in his wrath rather than in his sorrow.

"You are a little fool," he said, harshly, as they had never heard him speak. "You rave like a play-actor. Get up and go to bed. The stove is sold. There is no more to be said. Children like you have nothing to do with such matters. The stove is sold, and goes to Munich to-morrow. What is it to you? Be thankful I can get bread for you. Get on your legs, I say, and go to bed."

Strehla took up the jug of ale as he paused, and drained it slowly as a man who had no cares.

August sprang to his feet and threw his hair back off his face; the blood rushed into his cheeks, making them scarlet: his great soft eyes flamed alight with furious passion.

"You *dare* not!" he cried, aloud, "you dare not sell it, I say! It is not yours alone; it is ours —"

Strehla flung the emptied jug on the bricks with a force that shivered it to atoms, and, rising to his feet, struck his son a blow that felled him to the floor. It was the first time in all his life that he had ever raised his hand against any one of his children.

Then he took the oil-lamp that stood at his elbow and stumbled off to his own chamber with a cloud before his eyes.

"What has happened?" said August, a little while later, as he opened his eyes and saw Dorothea weeping above him on the wolfskin before the stove. He had been struck backward, and his head had fallen on the hard bricks where the wolfskin did not reach. He sat up a moment, with his face bent upon his hands.

"I remember now," he said, very low, under his breath.

Dorothea showered kisses on him, while her tears fell like rain.

"But, oh, dear, how could you speak so to father?" she murmured. "It was very wrong."

"No, I was right," said August, and his little mouth, that hitherto had only curled in laughter, curved downward with a fixed and bitter seriousness. "How dare he? How dare he?" he muttered, with his head sunk in his hands. "It is not his alone. It belongs to us all. It is as much yours and mine as it is his."

Dorothea could only sob in answer. She was too frightened to speak. The authority of their parents in the house had never in her remembrance been questioned.

“Are you hurt by the fall dear August?” she murmured, at length, for he looked to her so pale and strange.

“Yes—no. I do not know. What does it matter?”

He sat up upon the wolfskin with passionate pain upon his face; all his soul was in rebellion, and he was only a child and was powerless.

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“It is a sin; it is a theft; it is an infamy,” he said slowly, his eyes fastened on the gilded feet of Hirschvogel.

“Oh, August, do not say such things of father!” sobbed his sister. “Whatever he does, *we* ought to think it right.”

August laughed aloud.

“Is it right that he should spend his money in drink?—that he should let orders lie unexecuted?—that he should do his work so ill that no one cares to employ him?—that he should live on grandfather’s charity, and then dare sell a thing that is ours every whit as much as it is his? To sell Hirschvogel! Oh, dear God! I would sooner sell my soul!”

“August!” cried Dorothea, with piteous entreaty. He terrified her, she could not recognise her little, gay, gentle brother in those fierce and blasphemous words.

August laughed aloud again; then all at once his laughter broke down into bitterest weeping. He threw himself forward on the stove, covering it with kisses, and sobbing as though his heart would burst from his bosom.

What could he do? Nothing, nothing, nothing!

“August, dear August,” whispered Dorothea piteously, and trembling all over—for she was a very gentle girl, and fierce feeling terrified her—“August, do not lie there. Come to bed: it is quite late. In the morning you will be calmer. It is horrible indeed, and we shall die of cold, at least the little ones; but if it be father’s will—”

“Let me alone,” said August, through his teeth, striving to still the storm of sobs that shook him from head to foot. “Let me alone. In the morning!—how can you speak of the morning?”

“Come to bed, dear,” sighed his sister. “Oh, August, do not lie and look like that! you frighten me. Do come to bed.”

“I shall stay here.”

“Here! all night!”

“They might take it in the night. Besides, to leave it *now*.”

“But it is cold! the fire is out.”

“It will never be warm any more, nor shall we.”

All his childhood had gone out of him, all his gleeful, careless, sunny temper had gone with it; he spoke sullenly and wearily, choking down the great sobs in his chest. To him it was as if the end of the world had come.

His sister lingered by him while striving to persuade him to go to his place in the little crowded bedchamber with Albrecht and Waldo and Christof. But it was in vain. “I shall stay here,” was all he answered her. And he stayed—all the night long.

The lamps went out; the rats came and ran across the floor; as the hours crept on through midnight and past, the cold intensified and the air of the room grew like ice. August did not move; he lay with his face downward on the golden and rainbow hued pedestal of the household treasure, which henceforth was to be cold for evermore, an exiled thing in a foreign city in a far-off land.

Whilst yet it was dark his three elder brothers came down the stairs and let themselves out, each bearing his lantern and going to his work in stone-yard and timber-yard and at the salt-works. They did not notice him; they did not know what had happened.

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A little later his sister came down with a light in her hand to make ready the house ere morning should break.

She stole up to him and laid her hand on his shoulder timidly.

“Dear August, you must be frozen.  August, do look up! do speak!”

August raised his eyes with a wild, feverish, sullen look in them that she had never seen there.  His face was ashen white:  his lips were like fire.  He had not slept all night; but his passionate sobs had given way to delirious waking dreams and numb senseless trances, which had alternated one on another all through the freezing, lonely, horrible hours.

“It will never be warm again,” he muttered, “never again!”

Dorothea clasped him with trembling hands.

“August! do you not know me!” she cried, in an agony.  “I am Dorothea.  Wake up, dear—wake up!  It is morning, only so dark!”

August shuddered all over.

“The morning!” he echoed.

He slowly rose up on to his feet.

“I will go to grandfather,” he said, very low.  “He is always good:  perhaps he could save it.”

Loud blows with the heavy iron knocker of the house-door drowned his words.  A strange voice called aloud through the keyhole:

“Let me in!  Quick!—there is no time to lose!  More snow like this, and the roads will be all blocked.  Let me in.  Do you hear?  I am come to take the great stove.”

August sprang erect, his fists doubled, his eyes blazing.

“You shall never touch it!” he screamed; “you shall never touch it!”

“Who shall prevent us?” laughed a big man, who was a Bavarian, amused at the fierce little figure fronting him.

“I!” said August “You shall never have it! you shall kill me first!”

“Strehla,” said the big man, as August’s father entered the room, “you have got a little mad dog here:  muzzle him.”

One way and another they did muzzle him.  He fought like a little demon, and hit out right and left, and one of his blows gave the Bavarian a black eye.  But he was soon mastered by four grown men, and his father flung him with no light hand out from the door of the back entrance, and the buyers of the stately and beautiful stove set to work to pack it heedfully and carry it away.

When Dorothea stole out to look for August, he was nowhere in sight.  She went back to little 'Gilda, who was ailing, and sobbed over the child, whilst the others stood looking on, dimly understanding that with Hirschvogel was going all the warmth of their bodies, all the light of their hearth.

Even their father now was very sorry and ashamed; but two hundred florins seemed a big sum to him, and, after all, he thought the children could warm themselves quite as well at the black iron stove in the kitchen.  Besides, whether he regretted it now or not, the work of the Nuernberg potter was sold irrevocably, and he had to stand still and see the men from Munich wrap it in manifold wrappings and bear it out into the snowy air to where an ox-cart stood in waiting for it.

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In another moment Hirschvogel was gone—gone forever and aye.

August stood still for a time, leaning, sick and faint from the violence that had been used to him, against the back wall of the house. The wall looked on a court where a well was, and the backs of other houses, and beyond them the spire of the Muntze Tower and the peaks of the mountains.

Into the court an old neighbour hobbled for water, and, seeing the boy, said to him:

“Child, is it true your father is selling the big painted stove?”

August nodded his head, then burst into a passion of tears.

“Well, for sure he is a fool,” said the neighbour. “Heaven forgive me for calling him so before his own child! but the stove was worth a mint of money. I do remember in my young days, in old Anton’s time (that was your great-grandfather, my lad), a stranger from Vienna saw it, and said that it was worth its weight in gold.”

August’s sobs went on their broken, impetuous course.

“I loved it! I loved it!” he moaned. “I do not care what its value was. I loved it! *I loved it*!”

“You little simpleton!” said the old man, kindly. “But you are wiser than your father, when all’s said. If sell it he must, he should have taken it to good Herr Steiner over at Spruez, who would have given him honest value. But no doubt they took him over his beer, ay, ay! but if I were you I would do better than cry. I would go after it.”

August raised his head, the tears raining down his cheeks.

“Go after it when you are bigger,” said the neighbour, with a good-natured wish to cheer him up a little. “The world is a small thing after all: I was a travelling clockmaker once upon a time, and I know that your stove will be safe enough whoever gets it; anything that can be sold for a round sum is always wrapped up in cotton wool by everybody. Ay, ay, don’t cry so much; you will see your stove again some day.”

Then the old man hobbled away to draw his brazen pail full of water at the well.

August remained leaning against the wall; his head was buzzing and his heart fluttering with the new idea which had presented itself to his mind. “Go after it,” had said the old man. He thought, “Why not go with it?” He loved it better than anyone, even better than Dorothea; and he shrank from the thought of meeting his father again, his father who had sold Hirschvogel.

He was by this time in that state of exaltation in which the impossible looks quite natural and commonplace. His tears were still wet on his pale cheeks, but they had ceased to fall. He ran out of the court-yard by a little gate, and across to the huge Gothic porch of the church. From there he could watch unseen his father's house-door, at which were always hanging some blue-and-gray pitchers, such as are common and so picturesque in Austria, for a part of the house was let to a man who dealt in pottery.

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He hid himself in the grand portico, which he had so often passed through to go to mass or compline within, and presently his heart gave a great leap, for he saw the straw-enwrapped stove brought out and laid with infinite care on the bullock-dray. Two of the Bavarian men mounted beside it, and the sleigh-wagon slowly crept over the snow of the place—snow crisp and hard as stone. The noble old minster looked its grandest and most solemn, with its dark-gray stone and its vast archways, and its porch that was itself as big as many a church, and its strange gargoyles and lamp-irons black against the snow on its roof and on the pavement; but for once August had no eyes for it; he only watched for his old friend. Then he, a little unnoticeable figure enough, like a score of other boys in Hall, crept, unseen by any of his brothers or sisters, out of the porch and over the shelving uneven square, and followed in the wake of the dray.

Its course lay toward the station of the railway, which is close to the salt-works, whose smoke at times sullies this part of clean little Hall, though it does not do very much damage. From Hall the iron road runs northward through glorious country to Salzburg, Vienna, Prague, Buda, and southward over the Brenner into Italy. Was Hirschvogel going north or south? This at least he would soon know.

August had often hung about the little station, watching the trains come and go and dive into the heart of the hills and vanish. No one said anything to him for idling about; people are kind-hearted and easy of temper in this pleasant land, and children and dogs are both happy there. He heard the Bavarians arguing and vociferating a great deal, and learned that they meant to go too and wanted to go with the great stove itself. But this they could not do, for neither could the stove go by a passenger train nor they themselves go in a goods-train. So at length they insured their precious burden for a large sum, and consented to send it by a luggage train which was to pass through Hall in half an hour. The swift trains seldom deign to notice the existence of Hall at all.

August heard, and a desperate resolve made itself up in his little mind. Where Hirschvogel went would he go. He gave one terrible thought to Dorothea—poor, gentle Dorothea!—sitting in the cold at home, then set to work to execute his project. How he managed it he never knew very clearly himself, but certain it is that when the goods-train from the north, that had come all the way from Linz on the Danube, moved out of Hall, August was hidden behind the stove in the great covered truck, and wedged, unseen and undreamt of by any human creature, amidst the cases of wood-carving, of clocks and clock-work, of Vienna toys, of Turkish carpets, of Russian skins, of Hungarian wines, which shared the same abode as did his swathed and bound Hirschvogel. No doubt he was very naughty, but it never occurred to him that he was so: his whole mind and soul were absorbed in the one entrancing idea, to follow his beloved friend and fire-king.

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It was very dark in the closed truck, which had only a little window above the door; and it was crowded, and had a strong smell in it from the Russian hides and the hams that were in it. But August was not frightened; he was close to Hirschvogel, and presently he meant to be closer still; for he meant to do nothing less than get inside Hirschvogel itself. Being a shrewd little boy, and having had by great luck two silver groschen in his breeches-pocket, which he had earned the day before by chopping wood, he had bought some bread and sausage at the station of a woman there who knew him, and who thought he was going out to his uncle Joachim's chalet above Jenbach. This he had with him, and this he ate in the darkness and the lumbering, pounding, thundering noise which made him giddy, as never had he been in a train of any kind before. Still he ate, having had no breakfast, and being a child, and half a German, and not knowing at all how or when he ever would eat again.

When he had eaten, not as much as he wanted, but as much as he thought was prudent (for who could say when he would be able to buy anything more?), he set to work like a little mouse to make a hole in the withes of straw and hay which enveloped the stove. If it had been put in a packing-case he would have been defeated at the onset. As it was, he gnawed, and nibbled, and pulled, and pushed, just as a mouse would have done, making his hole where he guessed that the opening of the stove was —the opening through which he had so often thrust the big oak logs to feed it. No one disturbed him; the heavy train went lumbering on and on, and he saw nothing at all of the beautiful mountains, and shining waters, and great forests through which he was being carried. He was hard at work getting through the straw and hay and twisted ropes; and get through them at last he did, and found the door of the stove, which he knew so well, and which was quite large enough for a child of his age to slip through, and it was this which he had counted upon doing. Slip through he did, as he had often done at home for fun, and curled himself up there to see if he could anyhow remain during many hours. He found that he could; air came in through the brass fretwork of the stove; and with admirable caution in such a little fellow he leaned out, drew the hay and straw together, rearranged the ropes, so that no one could ever have dreamed a little mouse had been at them. Then he curled himself up again, this time more like a dormouse than anything else; and, being safe inside his dear Hirschvogel and intensely cold, he went fast asleep as if he were in his own bed at home with Albrecht, and Christof on either side of him. The train lumbered on, stopped often and long, as the habit of goods-trains is, sweeping the snow away with its cow-switcher, and rumbling through the deep heart of the mountains, with its lamps aglow like the eyes of a dog in a night of frost.

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The train rolled on in its heavy, slow fashion, and the child slept soundly, for a long while. When he did awake, it was quite dark outside in the land; he could not see, and of course he was in absolute darkness; and for a while he was solely frightened, and trembled terribly, and sobbed in a quiet heart-broken fashion, thinking of them all at home. Poor Dorothea! how anxious she would be! How she would run over the town and walk up to grandfather's at Dorf Ampas, and perhaps even send over to Jenbach, thinking he had taken refuge with Uncle Joachim! His conscience smote him for the sorrow he must be even then causing to his gentle sister; but it never occurred to him to try and go back. If he once were to lose sight of Hirschvogel how could he ever hope to find it again? how could he ever know whither it had gone—north, south, east or west? The old neighbour had said that the world was small; but August knew at least that it must have a great many places in it; that he had seen himself on the maps on his school-house walls. Almost any other little boy would, I think, have been frightened out of his wits at the position in which he found himself; but August was brave, and he had a firm belief that God and Hirschvogel would take care of him. The master-potter of Nuernberg was always present to his mind, a kindly, benign, and gracious spirit, dwelling manifestly in that porcelain tower whereof he had been the maker.

A droll fancy, you say? But every child with a soul in him has quite as quaint fancies as this one was of August's.

So he got over his terror and his sobbing both, though he was so utterly in the dark. He did not feel cramped at all, because the stove was so large, and air he had in plenty, as it came through the fretwork running round the top. He was hungry again, and again nibbled with prudence at his loaf and his sausage. He could not at all tell the hour. Every time the train stopped and he heard the banging, stamping, shouting, and jangling of chains that went on, his heart seemed to jump up into his mouth. If they should find him out! Sometimes porters came and took away this case and the other, a sack here, a bale there, now a big bag, now a dead chamois. Every time the men trampled near him, and swore at each other, and banged this and that to and fro, he was so frightened that his very breath seemed to stop. When they came to lift the stove out, would they find him? and if they did find him, would they kill him? That was what he kept thinking of all the way, all through the dark hours, which seemed without end. The goods-trains are usually very slow, and are many days doing what a quick train does in a few hours. This one was quicker than most, because it was bearing goods to the King of Bavaria; still, it took all the short winter's day and the long winter's night and half another day to go over ground that the mail-trains cover in a forenoon. It passed great armoured Kuffstein standing across the beautiful

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and solemn gorge, denying the right of way to all the foes of Austria. It passed twelve hours later, after lying by in out-of-the-way stations, pretty Rosenheim, that marks the border of Bavaria. And here the Nuernberg stove, with August inside it, was lifted out heedfully and set under a covered way. When it was lifted out, the boy had hard work to keep in his screams; he was tossed to and fro as the men lifted the huge thing, and the earthenware walls of his beloved fire-king were not cushions of down. However, though they swore and grumbled at the weight of it, they never suspected that a living child was inside it, and they carried it out on to the platform and set it down under the roof of the goods-shed. There it passed the rest of the night and all the next morning, and August was all the while within it.

The winds of early winter sweep bitterly over Rosenheim, and all the vast Bavarian plain was one white sheet of snow. If there had not been whole armies of men at work always clearing the iron rails of the snow, no trains could ever have run at all. Happily for August, the thick wrappings in which the stove was enveloped and the stoutness of its own make screened him from the cold, of which, else, he must have died—frozen. He had still some of his loaf, and a little—a very little—of his sausage. What he did begin to suffer from was thirst; and this frightened him almost more than anything else, for Dorothea had read aloud to them one night a story of the tortures some wrecked men had endured because they could not find any water but the salt sea. It was many hours since he had last taken a drink from the wooden spout of their old pump, which brought them the sparkling, ice-cold water of the hills.

But, fortunately for him, the stove having been marked and registered as “fragile and valuable,” was not treated quite like a mere bale of goods, and the Rosenheim stationmaster, who knew its consignees, resolved to send it on by a passenger-train that would leave there at daybreak. And when this train went out, in it, among piles of luggage belonging to other travellers, to Vienna, Prague, Buda-Pest, Salzburg, was August, still undiscovered, still doubled up like a mole in the winter under the grass. Those words, “fragile and valuable,” had made the men lift Hirschvogel gently and with care. He had begun to get used to his prison, and a little used to the incessant pounding and jumbling and rattling and shaking with which modern travel is always accompanied, though modern invention does deem itself so mightily clever. All in the dark he was, and he was terribly thirsty; but he kept feeling the earthenware sides of the Nuernberg giant and saying, softly, “Take care of me; oh, take care of me, dear Hirschvogel!”

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He did not say, “Take me back;” for, now that he was fairly out in the world, he wished to see a little of it. He began to think that they must have been all over the world in all this time that the rolling and roaring and hissing and jangling had been about his ears; shut up in the dark, he began to remember all the tales that had been told in Yule round the fire at his grandfather’s good house at Dorf, of gnomes and elves and subterranean terrors, and the Erl King riding on the black horse of night, and—and—and he began to sob and to tremble again, and this time did scream outright. But the steam was screaming itself so loudly that no one, had there been anyone nigh, would have heard him; and in another minute or so the train stopped with a jar and a jerk, and he in his cage could hear men crying aloud, “Muenchen! Muenchen!”

Then he knew enough of geography to know that he was in the heart of Bavaria. He had had an uncle killed in the Bayerischenwald by the Bavarian forest guards, when in the excitement of hunting a black bear he had overpassed the limits of the Tyrol frontier.

That fate of his kinsman, a gallant young chamois-hunter who had taught him to handle a trigger and load a muzzle, made the very name of Bavaria a terror to August.

“It is Bavaria! It is Bavaria!” he sobbed to the stove; but the stove said nothing to him; it had no fire in it. A stove can no more speak without fire than a man can see without light. Give it fire, and it will sing to you, tell tales to you, offer you in return all the sympathy you ask.

“It is Bavaria!” sobbed August; for it is always a name of dread augury to the Tyroleans, by reason of those bitter struggles and midnight shots and untimely deaths which come from those meetings of jaeger and hunter in the Bayerischenwald. But the train stopped; Munich was reached, and August, hot and cold by turns, and shaking like a little aspen-leaf, felt himself once more carried out on the shoulders of men, rolled along on a truck, and finally set down, where he knew not, only he knew he was thirsty—so thirsty! If only he could have reached his hand out and scooped up a little snow!

He thought he had been moved on this truck many miles, but in truth the stove had been only taken from the railway-station to a shop in the Marienplatz. Fortunately, the stove was always set upright on its four gilded feet, an injunction to that effect having been affixed to its written label, and on its gilded feet it stood now in the small dark curiosity-shop of one Hans Rhilfer.

“I shall not unpack it till Anton comes,” he heard a man’s voice say; and then he heard a key grate in a lock, and by the unbroken stillness that ensued he concluded he was alone, and ventured to peep through the straw and hay. What he saw was a small square room filled with pots and pans, pictures, carvings, old blue jugs, old steel armour, shields, daggers, Chinese idols, Vienna china, Turkish

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rugs, and all the art lumber and fabricated rubbish of a *bric-a-brac* dealer's. It seemed a wonderful place to him; but, oh! was there one drop of water in it all? That was his single thought; for his tongue was parching, and his throat felt on fire, and his chest began to be dry and choked as with dust. There was not a drop of water, but there was a lattice window grated, and beyond the window was a wide stone ledge covered with snow. August cast one look at the locked door, darted out of his hiding place, ran and opened the window, crammed the snow into his mouth again and again, and then flew back into the stove, drew the hay and straw over the place he entered by, tied the cords, and shut the brass door down on himself. He had brought some big icicles in with him, and by them his thirst was finally, if only temporarily, quenched. Then he sat still in the bottom of the stove, listening intently, wide awake, and once more recovering his natural boldness.

The thought of Dorothea kept nipping his heart and his conscience with a hard squeeze now and then; but he thought to himself, "If I can take her back Hirschvogel then how pleased she will be, and how little 'Gilda will clap her hands!" He was not at all selfish in his love for Hirschvogel: he wanted it for them all at home quite as much as for himself. There was at the bottom of his mind a kind of ache of shame that his father—his own father—should have stripped their hearth and sold their honour thus.

A robin had been perched upon a stone griffin sculptured on a house-eave near. August had felt for the crumbs of his loaf in his pocket, and had thrown them to the little bird sitting so easily on the frozen snow.

In the darkness where he was he now heard a little song, made faint by the stove-wall and the window-glass that was between him and it, but still distinct and exquisitely sweet. It was the robin, singing after feeding on the crumbs. August, as he heard, burst into tears. He thought of Dorothea, who every morning threw out some grain or some bread on the snow before the church. "What use is it going *there*," she said, "if we forget the sweetest creatures God has made?" Poor Dorothea! Poor, good, tender, much-burdened little soul! He thought of her till his tears ran like rain.

Yet it never once occurred to him to dream of going home. Hirschvogel was here.

Presently the key turned in the lock of the door; he heard heavy footsteps and the voice of the man who had said to his father, "You have a little mad dog; muzzle him!" The voice said, "Ay, ay, you have called me a fool many times. Now you shall see what I have gotten for two hundred dirty florins. *Potztausend*! never did *you* do such a stroke of work."

Then the other voice grumbled and swore, and the steps of the two men approached more closely, and the heart of the child went pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat, as a mouse's does

when it is on the top of a cheese and hears a housemaid's broom sweeping near. They began to strip the stove of its wrappings: that he could tell by the noise they made with the hay and the straw. Soon they had stripped it wholly; that too, he knew by the oaths and exclamations of wonder and surprise and rapture which broke from the man who had not seen it before.

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“A right royal thing!  A wonderful and never-to-be-rivalled thing!  Grander than the great stove of Hohen-Salzburg!  Sublime! magnificent! matchless!”

So the epithets ran on in thick guttural voices, diffusing a smell of lager-beer so strong as they spoke that it reached August crouching in his stronghold.  If they should open the door of the stove!  That was his frantic fear.  If they should open it, it would be all over with him.  They would drag him out; most likely they would kill him, he thought, as his mother’s young brother had been killed in the Wald.

The perspiration rolled off his forehead in his agony; but he had control enough over himself to keep quiet, and after standing by the Nuernberg master’s work for nigh an hour, praising, marvelling, expatiating in the lengthy German tongue, the men moved to a little distance and began talking of sums of money and divided profits, of which discourse he could make out no meaning.  All he could make out was that the name of the king—the king—the king came over very often in their arguments.  He fancied at times they quarrelled, for they swore lustily and their voices rose hoarse and high; but after a while they seemed to pacify each other and agree to something, and were in great glee, and so in these merry spirits came and slapped the luminous sides of stately Hirschvogel, and shouted to it:

“Old Mumchance, you have brought us rare good luck!  To think you were smoking in a silly fool of a salt-baker’s kitchen all these years!”

Then inside the stove August jumped up, with flaming cheeks and clinching hands, and was almost on the point of shouting out to them that they were the thieves and should say no evil of his father, when he remembered, just in time, that to breathe a word or make a sound was to bring ruin on himself and sever him forever from Hirschvogel.  So he kept quite still, and the men barred the shutters of the little lattice and went out by the door, double-locking it after them.  He had made out from their talk that they were going to show Hirschvogel to some great person:  therefore he kept quite still and dared not move.

Muffled sounds came to him through the shutters from the streets below—the rolling of wheels, the clanging of church-bells, and bursts of that military music which is so seldom silent in the streets of Munich.  An hour perhaps passed by; sounds of steps on the stairs kept him in perpetual apprehension.  In the intensity of his anxiety, he forgot that he was hungry and many miles away from cheerful, Old World little Hall, lying by the clear gray river-water, with the ramparts of the mountains all round.

Presently the door opened again sharply.  He could hear the two dealers’ voices murmuring unctuous words, in which “honour,” “gratitude,” and many fine long noble titles played the chief parts.  The voice of another person, more clear and refined than theirs, answered them curtly, and then, close by the Nuernberg stove and the boy’s ear, ejaculated a single “*Wunderschoen*!” August almost lost his terror for himself in his thrill

of pride at his beloved Hirschvogel being thus admired in the great city.  He thought the master-potter must be glad too.

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“*Wunderschoen*!” ejaculated the stranger a second time, and then examined the stove in all its parts, read all its mottoes, gazed long on all its devices.

“It must have been made for the Emperor Maximilian,” he said at last; and the poor little boy, meanwhile, within, was “hugged up into nothing,” as you children say, dreading that every moment he would open the stove. And open it truly he did, and examined the brass-work of the door; but inside it was so dark that crouching August passed unnoticed, screwed up into a ball like a hedgehog as he was. The gentleman shut to the door at length, without having seen anything strange inside it; and then he talked long and low with the tradesmen, and, as his accent was different from that which August was used to, the child could distinguish little that he said, except the name of the king and the word “gulden” again and again. After a while he went away, one of the dealers accompanying him, one of them lingering behind to bar up the shutters. Then this one also withdrew again, double-locking the door.

The poor little hedgehog uncurled itself and dared to breathe aloud.

What time was it?

Late in the day, he thought, for to accompany the stranger they had lighted a lamp; he had heard the scratch of the match, and through the brass fretwork had seen the lines of light.

He would have to pass the night here, that was certain. He and Hirschvogel were locked in, but at least they were together. If only he could have had something to eat! He thought with a pang of how at this hour at home they ate the sweet soup, sometimes with apples in it from Aunt Maila’s farm orchard, and sang together, and listened to Dorothea’s reading of little tales, and basked in the glow and delight that had beamed on them from the great Nuernberg fire-king.

“Oh, poor, poor little ’Gilda! What is she doing without the dear Hirschvogel?” he thought. Poor little ’Gilda! she had only now the black iron stove of the ugly little kitchen. Oh, how cruel of father!

August could not bear to hear the dealers blame or laugh at his father, but he did feel that it had been so, so cruel to sell Hirschvogel. The mere memory of all those long winter evenings, when they had all closed round it, and roasted chestnuts or crab-apples in it, and listened to the howling of the wind and the deep sound of the church-bells, and tried very much to make each other believe that the wolves still came down from the mountains into the streets of Hall, and were that very minute growling at the house door—all this memory coming on him with the sound of the city bells, and the knowledge that night drew near upon him so completely, being added to his hunger and his fear, so overcame him that he burst out crying for the fiftieth time since he had been inside the stove, and felt that he would starve to death, and wondered dreamily if

Hirschvogel would care.  Yes, he was sure Hirschvogel would care.  Had he not decked it all summer long with alpine roses and edelweiss and heaths and made it sweet with thyme and honeysuckle and great garden-lilies?  Had he ever forgotten when Santa Claus came to make it its crown of holly and ivy and wreathe it all around?

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“Oh, shelter me; save me; take care of me!” he prayed to the old fire-king, and forgot poor little man, that he had come on this wild-goose chase northward to save and take care of Hirschvogel!

After a time he dropped asleep, as children can do when they weep, and little robust hill-born boys most surely do, be they where they may. It was not very cold in this lumber-room; it was tightly shut up, and very full of things, and at the back of it were the hot pipes of an adjacent house, where a great deal of fuel was burnt. Moreover, August’s clothes were warm ones, and his blood was young. So he was not cold, though Munich is terribly cold in the nights of December; and he slept on and on—which was a comfort to him, for he forgot his woes, and his perils, and his hunger for a time.

Midnight was once more chiming from all the brazen tongues of the city when he awoke, and, all being still around him, ventured to put his head out of the brass door of the stove to see why such a strange bright light was round him.

It was a very strange and brilliant light indeed; and yet, what is perhaps still stranger, it did not frighten or amaze him, nor did what he saw alarm him either, and yet I think it would have done you or me. For what he saw was nothing less than all the *bric-a-brac* in motion.

A big jug, an Apostel-Krug, of Kruessen, was solemnly dancing a minuet with a plump Faenza jar; a tall Dutch clock was going through a gavotte with a spindle-legged ancient chair; a very droll porcelain figure of Zitzenhausen was bowing to a very stiff soldier in *terre cuite* of Ulm; an old violin of Cremona was playing itself, and a queer little shrill plaintive music that thought itself merry came from a painted spinet covered with faded roses; some gilt Spanish leather had got up on the wall and laughed; a Dresden mirror was tripping about, crowned with flowers, and a Japanese bonze was riding along on a griffin; a slim Venetian rapier had come to blows with a stout Ferrara sabre, all about a little pale-faced chit of a damsel in white Nymphenburg china; and a portly Franconian pitcher in *gres gris* was calling aloud, “Oh, these Italians! always at feud!” But nobody listened to him at all. A great number of little Dresden cups and saucers were all skipping and waltzing; the teapots, with their broad round faces, were spinning their own lids like teetotums; the high-backed gilded chairs were having a game of cards together; and a little Saxe poodle, with a blue ribbon at its throat, was running from one to another, whilst a yellow cat of Cornelis Zachtleven’s rode about on a Delft horse in blue pottery of 1489. Meanwhile the brilliant light shed on the scene came from three silver candelabra, though they had no candles set up in them; and, what is the greatest miracle of all, August looked on at these mad freaks and felt no sensation of wonder! He only, as he heard the violin and the spinet playing, felt an irresistible desire to dance too.

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No doubt his face said what he wished; for a lovely little lady, all in pink and gold and white, with powdered hair, and high-heeled shoes, and all made of the very finest and fairest Meissen china, tripped up to him, and smiled, and gave him her hand, and led him out to a minuet. And he danced it perfectly—poor little August in his thick, clumsy shoes, and his thick, clumsy sheepskin jacket, and his rough homespun linen, and his broad Tyrolean hat! He must have danced it perfectly, this dance of kings and queens in days when crowns were duly honoured, for the lovely lady always smiled benignly and never scolded him at all, and danced so divinely herself to the stately measures the spinet was playing that August could not take his eyes off her till, the minuet ended, she sat down on her own white-and-gold bracket.

“I am the Princess of Saxe-Royal,” she said to him, with a benignant smile; “and you have got through that minuet very fairly.”

Then he ventured to say to her:

“Madame my princess, could you tell me kindly why some of the figures and furniture dance and speak, and some lie up in a corner like lumber? It does make me curious. Is it rude to ask?”

For it greatly puzzled him why, when some of the *bric-a-brac* was all full of life and motion, some was quite still and had not a single thrill in it.

“My dear child,” said the powdered lady, “is it possible that you do not know the reason? Why, those silent, dull things are *imitation*.”

This she said with so much decision that she evidently considered it a condensed but complete answer.

“Imitation?” repeated August, timidly, not understanding.

“Of course! Lies, falsehoods, fabrications!” said the princess in pink shoes, very vivaciously. “They only *pretend* to be what we are! They never wake up: how can they? No imitation ever had any soul in it yet.”

“Oh!” said August, humbly, not even sure that he understood entirely yet. He looked at Hirschvogel: surely it had a royal soul within it: would it not wake up and speak? Oh dear! how he longed to hear the voice of his fire-king! And he began to forget that he stood by a lady who sat upon a pedestal of gold-and-white china, with the year 1746 cut on it, and the Meissen mark.

“What will you be when you are a man?” said the little lady, sharply, for her black eyes were quick though her red lips were smiling. “Will you work for the *Konigliche Porcellan-Manufactur*, like my great dead Kandler?”

“I have never thought,” said August, stammering; “at least—that is—I do wish—I do hope to be a painter, as was Master Augustin Hirschvogel at Nuernberg.”

“Bravo!” said all the real *bric-a-brac* in one breath, and the two Italian rapiers left off fighting to cry, “*Benone*!” For there is not a bit of true *bric-a-brac* in all Europe that does not know the names of the mighty masters.

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August felt quite pleased to have won so much applause, and grew as red as the lady's shoes with bashful contentment.

"I knew all the Hirschvogel, from old Veit downwards," said a fat *gres de Flandre* beer-jug: "I myself was made at Nuernberg." And he bowed to the great stove very politely, taking off his own silver hat—I mean lid—with a courtly sweep that he could scarcely have learned from burgomasters. The stove, however, was silent, and a sickening suspicion (for what is such heart-break as a suspicion of what we love?) came through the mind of August: *Was Hirschvogel only imitation*?

"No, no, no, no!" he said to himself, stoutly: though Hirschvogel never stirred, never spoke, yet would he keep all faith in it! After all their happy years together, after all the nights of warmth and joy he owed it, should he doubt his own friend and hero, whose gilt lion's feet he had kissed in his babyhood? "No, no, no, no!" he said, again, with so much emphasis that the Lady of Meissen looked sharply again at him.

"No," she said, with pretty disdain; "no, believe me, they may 'pretend' forever. They can never look like us! They imitate even our marks, but never can they look like the real thing, never can they *chassent de race*."

"How should they?" said a bronze statuette of Vischer's "They daub themselves green with verdigris, or sit out in the rain to get rusted; but green and rust are not *patina*; only the ages can give that!"

"And *my* imitations are all in primary colours, staring colours, hot as the colours of a hostelry's sign-board!" said the Lady of Meissen, with a shiver.

"Well, there is a *gres de Flandre* over there, who pretends to be a Hans Kraut, as I am," said the jug with the silver hat, pointing with his handle to a jug that lay prone on its side in a corner. "He has copied me as exactly as it is given to moderns to copy us. Almost he might be mistaken for me. But yet what a difference there is! How crude are his blues! how evidently done over the glaze are his black letters! He has tried to give himself my very twist; but what a lamentable exaggeration of that playful deviation in my lines which in his becomes actual deformity!"

"And look at that," said the gilt Cordovan leather, with a contemptuous glance at a broad piece of gilded leather spread out on a table. "They will sell him cheek by jowl with me, and give him my name; but look! *I* am overlaid with pure gold beaten thin as a film and laid on me in absolute honesty by worthy Diego de las Gorgias, worker in leather of lovely Cordova in the blessed reign of Ferdinand the Most Christian. *His* gilding is one part gold to eleven other parts of brass and rubbish, and it has been laid on him with a brush—*a brush*—pah! of course he will be as black as a crock in a few years' time, whilst I am as bright as when I first was made, and, unless I am burnt as my Cordova burnt its heretics, I shall shine on forever."

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“They carve pear-wood because it is so soft, and dye it brown, and call it *me*” said an old oak cabinet, with a chuckle.

“That is not so painful; it does not vulgarise you so much as the cups they paint to-day and christen after *me*,” said a Carl Theodor cup subdued in hue, yet gorgeous as a jewel.

“Nothing can be so annoying as to see common gimcracks aping *me*,” interposed the princess in the pink shoes.

“They even steal my motto, though it is Scripture,” said a *Trauerkrug* of Regensburg in black-and-white.

“And my own dots they put on plain English china creatures!” sighed the little white maid of Nymphenburg.

“And they sell hundreds and thousands of common china plates, calling them after me, and baking my saints and my legends in a muffle of to-day; it is blasphemy!” said a stout plate of Gubbio, which in its year of birth had seen the face of Maestro Giorgio.

“That is what is so terrible in these *bric-a-brac* places,” said the princess of Meissen. “It brings one in contact with such low, imitative creatures; one really is safe nowhere nowadays unless under glass at the Louvre or South Kensington.”

“And they get even there,” sighed the *gres de Flandre*. “A terrible thing happened to a dear friend of mine, a *terre cuite* of Blasius (you know the *terres cuites* of Blasius date from 1560). Well, he was put under glass in a museum that shall be nameless, and he found himself set next to his own imitation born and baked yesterday at Frankfort, and what think you the miserable creature said to him, with a grin? ‘Old Pipeclay,’ that is what he called my friend, ’the fellow that bought *me* got just as much commission on me as the fellow that bought *you*, and that was all that *he* thought about. You know it is only the public money that goes!’ And the horrid creature grinned again till he actually cracked himself. There is a Providence above all things, even museums.”

“Providence might have interfered before, and saved the public money,” said the little Meissen lady with the pink shoes.

“After all, does it matter?” said a Dutch jar of Haarlem, “All the shamming in the world will not *make* them us!”

“One does not like to be vulgarised,” said the Lady of Meissen, angrily.

“My maker, the Krabbetje,[1] did not trouble his head about that,” said the Haarlem jar, proudly. “The Krabbetje made me for the kitchen, the bright, clean, snow-white Dutch kitchen, well-nigh three centuries ago, and now I am thought worthy the palace; yet I

wish I were at home; yes, I wish I could see the good Dutch vrouw, and the shining canals, and the great green meadows dotted with the kine."

[Footnote 1:  Jan Asselyn, called Krabbetje, the Little Crab, born 1610, master-potter of Delft and Haarlem.]

"Ah! if we could all go back to our makers!" sighed the Gubbio plate, thinking of Giorgio Andreoli and the glad and gracious days of the Renaissance:  and somehow the words touched the frolicsome souls of the dancing jars, the spinning teapots, the chairs that were playing cards; and the violin stopped its merry music with a sob, and the spinet sighed—thinking of dead hands.

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Even the little Saxe poodle howled for a master forever lost; and only the swords went on quarrelling, and made such a clattering noise that the Japanese bonze rode at them on his monster and knocked them both right over, and they lay straight and still, looking foolish, and the little Nymphenburg maid, though she was crying, smiled and almost laughed.

Then from where the great stove stood there came a solemn voice.

All eyes turned upon Hirschvogel, and the heart of its little human comrade gave a great jump of joy.

“My friends,” said that clear voice from the turret of Nuernberg faience, “I have listened to all you have said. There is too much talking among the Mortalities whom one of themselves has called the Windbags. Let not us be like them. I hear among men so much vain speech, so much precious breath and precious time wasted in empty boasts, foolish anger, useless reiteration, blatant argument, ignoble mouthings, that I have learned to deem speech a curse, laid on man to weaken and envenom all his undertakings. For over two hundred years I have never spoken myself: you, I hear, are not so reticent. I only speak now because one of you said a beautiful thing that touched me. If we all might but go back to our makers! Ah, yes! if we might! We were made in days when even men were true creatures, and so we, the work of their hands, were true too. We, the begotten of ancient days, derive all the value in us from the fact that our makers wrought at us with zeal, with piety, with integrity, with faith—not to win fortunes or to glut a market, but to do nobly an honest thing and create for the honour of the Arts and God. I see amidst you a little human thing who loves me, and in his own ignorant childish way loves Art. Now, I want him forever to remember this night and these words; to remember that we are what we are, and precious in the eyes of the world, because centuries ago those who were of single mind and of pure hand so created us, scorning sham and haste and counterfeit. Well do I recollect my master, Augustin Hirschvogel. He led a wise and blameless life, and wrought in loyalty and love, and made his time beautiful thereby, like one of his own rich, many-coloured church casements, that told holy tales as the sun streamed through them. Ah, yes, my friends, to go back to our masters!—that would be the best that could befall us. But they are gone, and even the perishable labours of their lives outlive them. For many, many years I, once honoured of emperors, dwelt in a humble house and warmed in successive winters three generations of little, cold, hungry children. When I warmed them they forgot that they were hungry; they laughed and told tales, and slept at last about my feet. Then I knew that humble as had become my lot it was one that my master would have wished for me, and I was content. Sometimes a tired woman would creep up to me, and smile because she was near me, and point out my golden crown or my ruddy fruit to a baby in

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her arms. That was better than to stand in a great hall of a great city, cold and empty, even though wise men came to gaze and throngs of fools gaped, passing with flattering words. Where I go now I know not; but since I go from that humble house where they loved me, I shall be sad and alone. They pass so soon—those fleeting mortal lives! Only we endure—we the things that the human brain creates. We can but bless them a little as they glide by: if we have done that, we have done what our masters wished. So in us our masters, being dead, yet may speak and live."

Then the voice sank away in silence, and a strange golden light that had shone on the great stove faded away; so also the light died down in the silver candelabra. A soft, pathetic melody stole gently through the room. It came from the old, old spinet that was covered with the faded roses.

Then that sad, sighing music of a bygone day died too; the clocks of the city struck six of the morning; day was rising over the Bayerischenwald. August awoke with a great start, and found himself lying on the bare bricks of the floor of the chamber; and all the *bric-a-brac* was lying quite still all around. The pretty Lady of Meissen was motionless on her porcelain bracket, and the little Saxe poodle was quiet at her side.

He rose slowly to his feet. He was very cold, but he was not sensible of it or of the hunger that was gnawing his little empty entrails. He was absorbed in the wondrous sight, in the wondrous sounds, that he had seen and heard.

All was dark around him. Was it still midnight or had morning come? Morning, surely; for against the barred shutters he heard the tiny song of the robin.

Tramp, tramp, too, came a heavy step up the stair. He had but a moment in which to scramble back into the interior of the great stove, when the door opened and the two dealers entered, bringing burning candles with them to see their way.

August was scarcely conscious of danger more than he was of cold or hunger. A marvellous sense of courage, of security, of happiness, was about him, like strong and gentle arms enfolding him and lifting him upward—upward—upward! Hirschvogel would defend him.

The dealers undid the shutters, scaring the red-breast away; and then tramped about in their heavy boots and chatted in contented voices, and began to wrap up the stove once more in all its straw and hay and cordage.

It never once occurred to them to glance inside. Why should they look inside a stove that they had bought and were about to sell again for all its glorious beauty of exterior.

The child still did not feel afraid.  A great exaltation had come to him:  he was like one lifted up by his angels.

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Presently the two traders called up their porters, and the stove, heedfully swathed and wrapped and tended as though it were some sick prince going on a journey, was borne on the shoulders of six stout Bavarians down the stairs and out of the door into the Marienplatz. Even behind all those wrappings August felt the icy bite of the intense cold of the outer air at dawn of a winter's day in Munich. The men moved the stove with exceeding gentleness and care, so that he had often been far more roughly shaken in his big brothers' arms than he was in his journey now; and though both hunger and thirst made themselves felt, being foes that will take no denial, he was still in that state of nervous exaltation which deadens all physical suffering and is at once a cordial and an opiate. He had heard Hirschvogel speak; that was enough.

The stout carriers tramped through the city, six of them, with the Nuernberg fire-castle on their brawny shoulders, and went right across Munich to the railway-station, and August in the dark recognised all the ugly, jangling, pounding, roaring, hissing railway-noises, and thought, despite his courage and excitement, "Will it be a *very* long journey?" For his stomach had at times an odd sinking sensation, and his head often felt sadly light and swimming. If it was a very, very long journey he felt half afraid that he would be dead or something bad before the end, and Hirschvogel would be so lonely: that was what he thought most about; not much about himself, and not much about Dorothea and the house at home. He was "high strung to high emprise," and could not look behind him.

Whether for a long or a short journey, whether for weal or woe, the stove with August still within it was once more hoisted up into a great van; but this time it was not all alone, and the two dealers as well as the six porters were all with it.

He in his darkness knew that; for he heard their voices. The train glided away over the Bavarian plain southward; and he heard the men say something of Berg and the Wurm-See, but their German was strange to him, and he could not make out what these names meant.

The train rolled on, with all its fume and fuss, and roar of steam, and stench of oil and burning coal. It had to go quietly and slowly on account of the snow which was falling, and which had fallen all night.

"He might have waited till he came to the city," grumbled one man to another. "What weather to stay on at Berg!"

But who he was that stayed on at Berg, August could not make out at all.

Though the men grumbled about the state of the roads and the season, they were hilarious and well content, for they laughed often, and, when they swore, did so good-humouredly, and promised their porters fine presents at New Year; and August, like a

shrewd little boy as he was, who even in the secluded Innthal had learned that money is the chief mover of men’s mirth, thought to himself, with a terrible pang:

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“They have sold Hirschvogel for some great sum!  They have sold him already!”

Then his heart grew faint and sick within him, for he knew very well that he must soon die, shut up without food and water thus; and what new owner of the great fireplace would ever permit him to dwell in it?

“Never mind; I *will* die,” thought he; “and Hirschvogel will know it.”

Perhaps you think him a very foolish little fellow; but I do not.

It is always good to be loyal and ready to endure to the end.

It is but an hour and a quarter that the train usually takes to pass from Munich to the Wurm-See or Lake of Starnberg but this morning the journey was much slower, because the way was encumbered by snow.  When it did reach Possenhofen and stop, and the Nuernberg stove was lifted out once more, August could see through the fretwork of the brass door, as the stove stood upright facing the lake, that this Wurm-See was a calm and noble piece of water, of great width, with low wooded banks and distant mountains, a peaceful, serene place, full of rest.

It was now near ten o’clock.  The sun had come forth; there was a clear gray sky hereabouts; the snow was not falling, though it lay white and smooth everywhere, down to the edge of the water, which before long would itself be ice.

Before he had time to get more than a glimpse of the green gliding surface, the stove was again lifted up and placed on a large boat that was in waiting—one of those very long and huge boats which the women in these parts use as laundries, and the men as timber-rafts.  The stove, with much labour and much expenditure of time and care, was hoisted into this, and August would have grown sick and giddy with the heaving and falling if his big brothers had not long used him to such tossing about, so that he was as much at ease head, as feet, downward.  The stove, once in it safely with its guardians, the big boat moved across the lake to Leoni.  How a little hamlet on a Bavarian lake got that Tuscan-sounding name I cannot tell; but Leoni it is.  The big boat was a long time crossing; the lake here is about three miles broad, and these heavy barges are unwieldy and heavy to move, even though they are towed and tugged at from the shore.

“If we should be too late!” the two dealers muttered to each other, in agitation and alarm.  “He said eleven o’clock.”

“Who was he?” thought August; “the buyer, of course, of Hirschvogel.”  The slow passage across the Wurm-See was accomplished at length:  the lake was placid; there was a sweet calm in the air and on the water; there was a great deal of snow in the sky, though the sun was shining and gave a solemn hush to the atmosphere.  Boats and one little steamer were going up and down; in the clear frosty light the distant mountains of

Zillerthal and the Algau Alps were visible; market-people, cloaked and furred, went by on the water or on the banks; the deep woods of the shores were black and gray and brown.  Poor August could see nothing of a scene that would have delighted him; as the stove was now set, he could only see the old worm-eaten wood of the huge barge.

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Presently they touched the pier at Leoni.

“Now, men, for a stout mile and half! You shall drink your reward at Christmas time,” said one of the dealers to his porters, who, stout, strong men as they were, showed a disposition to grumble at their task. Encouraged by large promises, they shouldered sullenly the Nuernberg stove, grumbling again at its preposterous weight, but little dreaming that they carried within it a small, panting, trembling boy; for August began to tremble now that he was about to see the future owner of Hirschvogel.

“If he looks a good, kind man,” he thought, “I will beg him to let me stay with it.”

The porters began their toilsome journey, and moved off from the village pier. He could see nothing, for the brass door was over his head, and all that gleamed through it was the clear gray sky. He had been tilted on to his back, and if he had not been a little mountaineer, used to hanging head-downward over crevasses, and, moreover, seasoned to rough treatment by the hunters and guides of the hills and the salt-workers in the town, he would have been made ill and sick by the bruising and shaking and many changes of position to which he had been subjected.

The way the men took was a mile and a half in length, but the road was heavy with snow, and the burden they bore was heavier still. The dealers cheered them on, swore at them and praised them in one breath; besought them and reiterated their splendid promises, for a clock was striking eleven, and they had been ordered to reach their destination at that hour, and, though the air was so cold, the heat-drops rolled off their foreheads as they walked, they were so frightened at being late. But the porters would not budge a foot quicker than they chose, and as they were not poor four-footed carriers their employers dared not thrash them, though most willingly would they have done so.

The road seemed terribly long to the anxious tradesmen, to the plodding porters, to the poor little man inside the stove, as he kept sinking and rising, sinking and rising, with each of their steps.

Where they were going he had no idea, only after a very long time he lost the sense of the fresh icy wind blowing on his face through the brass-work above, and felt by their movements beneath him that they were mounting steps or stairs. Then he heard a great many different voices, but he could not understand what was being said. He felt that his bearers paused some time, then moved on and on again. Their feet went so softly he thought they must be moving on carpet, and as he felt a warm air come to him he concluded that he was in some heated chambers, for he was a clever little fellow, and could put two and two together, though he was so hungry and so thirsty and his empty stomach felt so strangely. They must have gone, he thought, through some very great number of rooms, for they walked so long on and on, on and on. At last the stove was set down again, and, happily for him, set so that his feet were downward.

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What he fancied was that he was in some museum, like that which he had seen in the city of Innspruck.

The voices he heard were very hushed, and the steps seemed to go away, far away, leaving him alone with Hirschvogel. He dared not look out, but he peeped through the brass-work, and all he could see was a big carved lion's head in ivory, with a gold crown atop. It belonged to a velvet fauteuil, but he could not see the chair, only the ivory lion.

There was a delicious fragrance in the air—a fragrance as flowers. "Only how can it be flowers?" thought August. "It is November!"

From afar off, as it seemed, there came a dreamy, exquisite music, as sweet as the spinet's had been, but so much fuller, so much richer, seeming as though a chorus of angels were singing all together. August ceased to think of the museum; he thought of heaven. "Are we gone to the Master?" he thought, remembering the words of Hirschvogel.

All was so still around him; there was no sound anywhere except the sound of the far-off choral music.

He did not know it, but he was in the royal castle of Berg, and the music he heard was the music of Wagner, who was playing in a distant room some of the motives of "Parsival."

Presently he heard a fresh step near him, and he heard a low voice say, close behind him, "So!" An exclamation no doubt, he thought, of admiration and wonder at the beauty of Hirschvogel.

Then the same voice said, after a long pause, during which no doubt, as August thought, this newcomer was examining all the details of the wondrous fire-tower, "It was well bought; it is exceedingly beautiful! It is most undoubtedly the work of Augustin Hirschvogel."

Then the hand of the speaker turned the round handle of the brass door, and the fainting soul of the poor little prisoner within grew sick with fear.

The handle turned, the door was slowly drawn open, someone bent down and looked in, and the same voice that he had heard in praise of its beauty called aloud, in surprise, "What is this in it? A live child!"

Then August, terrified beyond all self control, and dominated by one master-passion, sprang out of the body of the stove and fell at the feet of the speaker.

"Oh, let me stay! Pray, meinherr, let me stay!" he sobbed. "I have come all the way with Hirschvogel!"

Some gentlemen's hands seized him, not gently by any means, and their lips angrily muttered in his ear, "Little knave, peace! be quiet! hold your tongue!  It is the king!"

They were about to drag him out of the august atmosphere as if he had been some venomous, dangerous beast come there to slay, but the voice he had heard speak of the stove said, in kind accents, "Poor little child! he is very young.  Let him go:  let him speak to me."

The word of a king is law to his courtiers:  so, sorely against their wish, the angry and astonished chamberlains let August slide out of their grasp, and he stood there in his little rough sheepskin coat and his thick, mud-covered boots, with his curling hair all in a tangle, in the midst of the most beautiful chamber he had ever dreamed of, and in the presence of a young man with a beautiful dark face, and eyes full of dreams and fire; and the young man said to him:

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“My child, how came you here, hidden in this stove?  Be not afraid:  tell me the truth.  I am the king.”

August in an instinct of homage cast his great battered black hat with the tarnished gold tassels down on the floor of the room, and folded his little brown hands in supplication. He was too intensely in earnest to be in any way abashed; he was too lifted out of himself by his love for Hirschvogel to be conscious of any awe before any earthly majesty.  He was only so glad—so glad it was the king.  Kings were always kind; so the Tyrolese think, who love their lords.

“Oh, dear king!” he said, with trembling entreaty in his faint little voice, “Hirschvogel was ours, and we have loved it all our lives; and father sold it.  And when I saw that it did really go from us, then I said to myself I would go with it; and I have come all the way inside it.  And last night it spoke and said beautiful things.  And I do pray you to let me live with it, and I will go out every morning and cut wood for it and you, if only you will let me stay beside it.  No one ever has fed it with fuel but me since I grew big enough, and it loves me; it does indeed; it said so last night; and it said that it had been happier with us than if it were in any palace—”

And then his breath failed him, and, as he lifted his little eager, pale face to the young king’s, great tears were falling down his cheeks.

Now, the king liked all poetic and uncommon things, and there was that in the child’s face which pleased and touched him.  He motioned to his gentlemen to leave the little boy alone.

“What is your name?” he asked him.

“I am August Strehla.  My father is Hans Strehla.  We live in Hall, in the Innthal; and Hirschvogel has been ours so long—so long!”

His lips quivered with a broken sob.

“And have you truly travelled inside this stove all the way from Tyrol?”

“Yes,” said August; “no one thought to look inside till you did.”

The king laughed; then another view of the matter occurred to him.

“Who bought the stove of your father?” he inquired.

“Traders of Munich,” said August, who did not know that he ought not to have spoken to the king as to a simple citizen, and whose little brain was whirling and spinning dizzily round its one central idea.

“What sum did they pay your father, do you know?” asked the sovereign.

“Two hundred florins,” said August, with a great sigh of shame. “It was so much money, and he is so poor, and there are so many of us.”

The king turned to his gentlemen-in-waiting. “Did these dealers of Munich come with the stove?”

He was answered in the affirmative. He desired them to be sought for and brought before him. As one of his chamberlains hastened on the errand, the monarch looked at August with compassion.

“You are very pale, little fellow: when did you eat last?”

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“I had some bread and sausage with me; yesterday afternoon I finished it.”

“You would like to eat now?”

“If I might have a little water I would be glad; my throat is very dry.”

The king had water and wine brought for him, and cake also; but August, though he drank eagerly, could not swallow anything. His mind was in too great a tumult.

“May I stay with Hirschvogel?—may I stay?” he said with feverish agitation.

“Wait a little,” said the king, and asked, abruptly, “What do you wish to be when you are a man?”

“A painter. I wish to be what Hirschvogel was—I mean the master that made *my* Hirschvogel.”

“I understand,” said the king.

Then the two dealers were brought into their sovereign’s presence. They were so terribly alarmed, not being either so innocent or so ignorant as August was that they were trembling as though they were being led to the slaughter, and they were so utterly astonished too at a child having come all the way from Tyrol in the stove, as a gentleman of the court had just told them this child had done, that they could not tell what to say or where to look, and presented a very foolish aspect indeed.

“Did you buy this Nuernberg stove of this little boy’s father for two hundred florins?” the king asked them; and his voice was no longer soft and kind as it had been when addressing the child, but very stern.

“Yes, your majesty,” murmured the trembling traders.

“And how much did the gentleman who purchased it for me give to you?”

“Two thousand ducats, your majesty,” muttered the dealers, frightened out of their wits, and telling the truth in their fright.

The gentleman was not present: he was a trusted counselor in art matters of the king’s, and often made purchases for him.

The king smiled a little, and said nothing. The gentleman had made out the price to him as eleven thousand ducats.

“You will give at once to this boy’s father the two thousand gold ducats that you received, less the two hundred Austrian florins that you paid him,” said the king to his

humiliated and abject subjects.  “You are great rogues.  Be thankful you are not more greatly punished.”

He dismissed them by a sign to his courtiers, and to one of these gave the mission of making the dealers of the Marienplatz disgorge their ill-gotten gains.

August heard, and felt dazzled yet miserable.  Two thousand gold Bavarian ducats for his father!  Why, his father would never need to go any more to the salt-baking!  And yet, whether for ducats or for florins, Hirschvogel was sold just the same, and would the king let him stay with it?—would he?

“Oh, do! oh, please do!” he murmured, joining his little brown weather-stained hands, and kneeling down before the young monarch, who himself stood absorbed in painful thought, for the deception so basely practised for the greedy sake of gain on him by a trusted counsellor was bitter to him.

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He looked down on the child, and as he did so smiled once more.

“Rise up, my little man,” he said, in a kind voice; “kneel only to your God. Will I let you stay with your Hirschvogel? Yes, I will, you shall stay at my court, and you shall be taught to be a painter—in oils or on porcelain as you will—and you must grow up worthily, and win all the laurels at our Schools of Art, and if when you are twenty-one years old you have done well and bravely, then I will give you your Nuernberg stove, or, if I am no more living, then those who reign after me shall do so. And now go away with this gentleman, and be not afraid, and you shall light a fire every morning in Hirschvogel, but you will not need to go out and cut the wood.”

Then he smiled and stretched out his hand; the courtiers tried to make August understand that he ought to bow and touch it with his lips, but August could not understand that anyhow; he was too happy. He threw his two arms about the king’s knees, and kissed his feet passionately; then he lost all sense of where he was, and fainted away from hunger, and tire, and emotion, and wondrous joy.

As the darkness of his swoon closed in on him, he heard in his fancy the voice from Hirschvogel saying:

“Let us be worthy our maker!”

He is only a scholar yet, but he is a happy scholar, and promises to be a great man. Sometimes he goes back for a few days to Hall, where the gold ducats have made his father prosperous. In the old house-room there is a large white porcelain stove of Munich, the king’s gift to Dorothea and ’Gilda.

And August never goes home without going into the great church and saying his thanks to God, who blessed his strange winter’s journey in the Nuernberg stove. As for his dream in the dealers’ room that night, he will never admit that he did dream it; he still declares that he saw it all and heard the voice of Hirschvogel. And who shall say that he did not? for what is the gift of the poet and the artist except to see the sights which others cannot see and to hear the sounds that others cannot hear?

## X

### RAB AND HIS FRIENDS

Four-and-thirty years ago, Bob Ainslie and I were coming up Infirmary Street from the Edinburgh High School, our heads together, and our arms intertwisted, as only lovers and boys know how, or why.

When we got to the top of the street, and turned north, we espied a crowd at the Tron Church. “A dog-fight!” shouted Bob, and was off; and so was I, both of us all but praying

that it might not be over before we got up!  And is not this boy-nature? and human nature too? and don't we all wish a house on fire not to be out before we see it?  Dogs like fighting; old Isaac says they "delight" in it, and for the best of all reasons; and boys are not cruel because they like to see the fight.  They see three of the great cardinal virtues of dog

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or man—courage, endurance, and skill—in intense action. This is very different from a love of making dogs fight, and enjoying, and aggravating, and making gain by their pluck. A boy—be he ever so fond himself of fighting, if he be a good boy, hates and despises all this, but he would run off with Bob and me fast enough: it is a natural, and not wicked interest, that all boys and men have in witnessing intense energy in action.

Does any curious and finely-ignorant woman wish to know how Bob's eye at a glance announced a dog-fight to his brain? He did not, he could not see the dogs fighting; it was a flash of an inference, a rapid induction. The crowd round a couple of dogs fighting, is a crowd masculine mainly, with an occasional active, compassionate woman, fluttering wildly round the outside, and using her tongue and her hands freely upon the men, as so many "brutes;" it is a crowd annular, compact, and mobile; a crowd centripetal, having its eyes and its heads all bent downwards and inwards, to one common focus.

Well, Bob and I are up, and find it is not over: a small thoroughbred, white bull-terrier, is busy throttling a large shepherd's dog, unaccustomed to war, but not to be trifled with. They are hard at it; the scientific little fellow doing his work in great style, his pastoral enemy fighting wildly, but with the sharpest of teeth and a great courage. Science and breeding, however, soon had their own; the Game Chicken, as the premature Bob called him, working his way up, took his final grip of poor Yarrow's throat—and he lay gasping and done for. His master, a brown, handsome, big young shepherd from Tweedsmuir, would have liked to have knocked down any man, would "drink up Esil, or eat a crocodile," for that part, if he had a chance: it was no use kicking the little dog; that would only make him hold the closer. Many were the means shouted out in mouthfuls, of the best possible ways of ending it. "Water!" but there was none near, and many cried for it who might have got it from the well at Blackfriars Wynd. "Bite the tail!" and a large, vague, benevolent, middle-aged man, more desirous than wise, with some struggle got the bushy end of *Yarrow's* tail into his ample mouth, and bit it with all his might. This was more than enough for the much-enduring, much-perspiring shepherd, who, with a gleam of joy over his broad visage, delivered a terrific facer upon our large, vague, benevolent, middle-aged friend—who went down like a shot.

Still the Chicken holds; death not far off. "Snuff! a pinch of snuff!" observed a calm, highly-dressed young buck, with an eye-glass in his eye. "Snuff, indeed!" growled the angry crowd, affronted and glaring. "Snuff! a pinch of snuff!" again observes the buck but with more urgency; whereon were produced several open boxes, and from a mull which may have been at Culloden, he took a pinch, knelt down, and presented it to the nose of the Chicken. The laws of physiology and of snuff take their course; the Chicken sneezes, and Yarrow is free!

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The young pastoral giant stalks off with Yarrow in his arms—comforting him.

But the Bull Terrier's blood is up, and his soul unsatisfied; he grips the first dog he meets, and discovering she is not a dog, in Homeric phrase, he makes a brief sort of *amende*, and is off. The boys, with Bob and me at their head, are after him: down Niddry Street he goes, bent on mischief; up the Cowgate like an arrow—Bob and I, and our small men, panting behind.

There, under the single arch of the South Bridge, is a huge mastiff, sauntering down the middle of the causeway, as if with his hands in his pockets: he is old, gray, brindled, as big as a little Highland bull, and has the Shakespearian dewlaps shaking as he goes.

The Chicken makes straight at him, and fastens on his throat. To our astonishment, the great creature does nothing but stand still, hold himself up, and roar—yes, roar; a long, serious, remonstrative roar. How is this? Bob and I are up to them. *He is muzzled*! The bailies had proclaimed a general muzzling, and his master, studying strength and economy mainly, had encompassed his huge jaws in a home-made apparatus, constructed out of the leather of some ancient *breechin*. His mouth was open as far as it could; his lips curled up in rage—a sort of terrible grin; his teeth gleaming, ready, from out the darkness, the strap across his mouth tense as a bowstring; his whole frame stiff with indignation and surprise; his roar asking us all round, "Did you ever see the like of this?" He looked a statue of anger and astonishment, done in Aberdeen granite.

We soon had a crowd: the Chicken held on. "A knife!" cried Bob; and a cobbler gave him his knife: you know the kind of knife, worn away obliquely to a point, and always keen. I put its edge to the tense leather; it ran before it; and then!—one sudden jerk of that enormous head, a sort of dirty mist about his mouth, no noise—and the bright and fierce little fellow is dropped, limp, and dead. A solemn pause: this was more than any of us had bargained for. I turned the little fellow over, and saw he was quite dead; the mastiff had taken him by the small of the back like a rat, and broken it.

He looked down at his victim appeased, ashamed, and amazed; snuffed him all over, stared at him, and taking a sudden thought, turned round and trotted off. Bob took the dead dog up, and said, "John, we'll bury him after tea." "Yes," said I, and was off after the mastiff. He made up the Cowgate at a rapid swing; he had forgotten some engagement. He turned up the Candlemaker Row, and stopped at the Harrow Inn.

There was a carrier's cart ready to start, and a keen thin, impatient, black-a-vised little man, his hand at his gray horse's head, looking about angrily for something. "Rab, ye thief!" said he, aiming a kick at my great friend, who drew cringing up, and avoiding the heavy shoe with more agility than dignity, and watching his master's eye, slunk dismayed under the cart—his ears down, and as much as he had of tail down too.

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What a man this must be—thought I—to whom my tremendous hero turns tail. The carrier saw the muzzle hanging, cut and useless, from his neck, and I eagerly told him the story, which Bob and I always thought, and still think, Homer, or King David, or Sir Walter alone were worthy to rehearse. The severe little man was mitigated, and condescended to say, “Rab, my man, puir Rabbie,”—whereupon the stump of a tail rose up, the ears were cocked, the eyes filled, and were comforted; the two friends were reconciled. “Hupp!” and a stroke of the whip were given to Jess; and off went the three.

Bob and I buried the Game Chicken that night (we had not much of a tea) in the back-green of his house in Melville Street, No. 17, with considerable gravity and silence; and being at the time in the Iliad, and, like all boys, Trojans, we called him Hector of course.

* * * * *

Six years have passed—a long time for a boy and a dog: Bob Ainslie is off to the wars; I am a medical student and clerk at Minto House Hospital.

Rab I saw almost every week, on the Wednesday and we had much pleasant intimacy. I found the way to his heart by frequent scratching of his huge head, and an occasional bone. When I did not notice him he would plant himself straight before me, and stand wagging that butt of a tail, and looking up, with his head a little to one side. His master I occasionally saw; he used to call me “Maister John,” but was laconic as any Spartan.

One fine October afternoon, I was leaving the hospital when I saw the large gate open, and in walked Rab, with that great and easy saunter of his. He looked as if taking general possession of the place; like the Duke of Wellington entering a subdued city, satiated with victory and peace. After him came Jess, now white from age, with her cart; and in it a woman, carefully wrapped up—the carrier leading the horse anxiously, and looking back. When he saw me, James (for his name was James Noble) made a curt and grotesque “boo,” and said, “Maister John, this is the mistress; she’s got a trouble in her breest—some kind o’ an income we’re thinkin’.”

By this time I saw the woman’s face; she was sitting on a sack filled with straw, her husband’s plaid round her, and his big-coat with its large white metal buttons over her feet.

I never saw a more unforgettable face—pale, serious, *lonely*, delicate, sweet, without being at all what we call fine. She looked sixty, and had on a mutch, white as snow, with its black ribbon; her silvery, smooth hair setting off her dark-gray eyes—eyes such as one sees only twice or thrice in a lifetime, full of suffering, full also of the overcoming of it: her eyebrows black and delicate, and her mouth firm, patient, and contented, which few mouths ever are.

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As I have said, I never saw a more beautiful countenance or one more subdued to settled quiet. "Ailie," said James, "this is Maister John, the young doctor; Rab's freend, ye ken. We often speak aboot you, doctor." She smiled, and made a movement, but said nothing; and prepared to come down, putting her plaid aside and rising. Had Solomon, in all his glory, been handing down the Queen of Sheba at his palace gate he could not have done it more daintily, more tenderly, more like a gentleman, than did James the Howgate carrier, when he lifted down Ailie his wife. The contrast of his small, swarthy, weather-beaten, keen, worldly face to hers—pale, subdued, and beautiful—-was something wonderful. Rab looked on concerned and puzzled, but ready for anything that might turn up—were it to strangle the nurse, the porter, or even me. Ailie and he seemed great friends.

"As I was sayin' she's got a kind o' trouble in her breest, doctor; wull ye tak' a look at it?" We walked into the consulting-room, all four; Rab grim and comic, willing to be happy and confidential if cause could be shown, willing also to be the reverse, on the same terms. Ailie sat down, undid her open gown and her lawn handkerchief round her neck, and without a word, showed me her right breast. I looked at and examined it carefully —she and James watching me, and Rab eyeing all three. What could I say? there it was, that had once been so soft, so shapely, so white, so gracious and bountiful, so "full of all blessed conditions,"—hard as a stone, a centre of horrid pain, making that pale face with its gray, lucid, reasonable eyes, and its sweet resolved mouth, express the full measure of suffering overcome. Why was that gentle, modest, sweet woman, clean and lovable, condemned by God to bear such a burden?

I got her away to bed. "May Rab and me bide?" said James. "*You* may; and Rab, if he will behave himself." "I'se warrant he's do that, doctor;" and in slank the faithful beast. I wish you could have seen him. There are no such dogs now. He belonged to a lost tribe. As I have said, he was brindled and gray like Rubislaw granite; his hair short, hard, and close, like a lion's; his body thick set like a little bull—a sort of compressed Hercules of a dog. He must have been ninety pounds' weight, at the least; he had a large blunt head; his muzzle black as night, his mouth blacker than any night, a tooth or two—being all he had—gleaming out of his jaws of darkness. His head was scarred with the records of old wounds, a sort of series of fields of battle all over it; one eye out, one ear cropped as close as was Archbishop Leighton's father's; the remaining eye had the power of two; and above it, and in constant communication with it, was a tattered rag of an ear, which was forever unfurling itself, like an old flag; and then that bud of a tail, about one inch long, if it could in any sense be said to be long, being as broad as long—the mobility, the instantaneousness of that bud were very funny and surprising, and its expressive twinklings and winkings, the intercommunications between the eye, the ear, and it, were of the oddest and swiftest.

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Rab had the dignity and simplicity of great size; and having fought his way along the road to absolute supremacy, he was as mighty in his own line as Julius Caesar or the Duke of Wellington, and had the gravity of all great fighters.

You must have often observed the likeness of certain men to certain animals, and of certain dogs to men. Now, I never looked at Rab without thinking of the great Baptist preacher, Andrew Fuller. The same large, heavy, menacing, combative, sombre, honest countenance, the same deep inevitable eye, the same look—as of thunder asleep, but ready—neither a dog nor a man to be trifled with.

Next day, my master, the surgeon, examined Ailie. There was no doubt it must kill her, and soon. It could be removed—it might never return—it would give her speedy relief—she should have it done. She curtsied, looked at James, and said, “When?” “To-morrow,” said the kind surgeon—a man of few words. She and James and Rab and I retired. I noticed that he and she spoke little, but seemed to anticipate everything in each other. The following day, at noon, the students came in, hurrying up the great stair. At the first landing-place, on a small well-known blackboard, was a bit of paper fastened by wafers, and many remains of old wafers beside it. On the paper were the words—“An operation to-day. J.B. *Clerk*.”

Up ran the youths, eager to secure good places: in they crowded, full of interest and talk. “What’s the case?” “Which side is it?”

Don’t think them heartless; they are neither better nor worse than you or I; they get over their professional horrors, and into their proper work—and in them pity—as an *emotion*, ending in itself or at best in tears and a long-drawn breath, lessens, while pity as a *motive*, is quickened, and gains power and purpose. It is well for poor human nature that it is so.

The operating theatre is crowded; much talk and fun, and all the cordiality and stir of youth. The surgeon with his staff of assistants is there. In comes Ailie: one look at her quiets and abates the eager students. That beautiful old woman is too much for them; they sit down, and are dumb, and gaze at her. These rough boys feel the power of her presence. She walks in quickly, but without haste; dressed in her mutch, her neckerchief, her white dimity short-gown, her black bombazine petticoat, showing her white worsted stockings and her carpet-shoes. Behind her was James with Rab. James sat down in the distance, and took that huge and noble head between his knees. Rab looked perplexed and dangerous; forever cocking his ear and dropping it as fast.

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Ailie stepped up on a seat, and laid herself on the table as her friend the surgeon told her; arranged herself, gave a rapid look at James, shut her eyes, rested herself on me, and took my hand. The operation was at once begun; it was necessarily slow; and chloroform—one of God's best gifts to his suffering children—was then unknown. The surgeon did his work. The pale face showed its pain, but was still and silent. Rab's soul was working within him; he saw that something strange was going on—blood flowing from his mistress, and she suffering; his ragged ear was up, and importunate; he growled and gave now and then a sharp impatient yelp; he would have liked to have done something to that man. But James had him firm, and gave him a *glower* from time to time, and an intimation of a possible kick;—all the better for James, it kept his eye and his mind off Ailie.

It is over: she is dressed, steps gently and decently down from the table, looks for James; then, turning to the surgeon and the students, she curtsies—and in a low, clear voice, begs their pardon if she has behaved ill. The students—all of us—wept like children; the surgeon happed her up carefully—and, resting on James and me, Ailie went to her room, Rab following. We put her to bed. James took off his heavy shoes, crammed with tackets, heel-capt and toe-capt, and put them carefully under the table, saying, "Maister John, I'm for nane o'yer strynge nurse bodies for Ailie. I'll be her nurse, and I'll gang aboot on my stockin' soles as canny as pussy." And so he did; and handy and clever, and swift and tender as any woman, was that horny-handed, snell, peremptory little man. Everything she got he gave her: he seldom slept; and often I saw his small shrewd eyes out of the darkness, fixed on her. As before, they spoke little.

Rab behaved well, never moving, showing us how meek and gentle he could be, and occasionally, in his sleep, letting us know that he was demolishing some adversary. He took a walk with me every day, generally to the Candlemaker Row; but he was sombre and mild; declined doing battle, though some fit cases offered, and indeed submitted to sundry indignities; and was always very ready to turn, and came faster back, and trotted up the stair with much lightness, and went straight to that door.

Jess, the mare, had been sent, with her weather-worn cart, to Howgate, and had doubtless her own dim and placid meditations and confusions, on the absence of her master and Rab, and her unnatural freedom from the road and her cart.

For some days Ailie did well. The wound healed "by the first intention;" for as James said, "Oor Ailie's skin's ower clean to beil." The students came in quiet and anxious, and surrounded her bed. She said she liked to see their young, honest faces. The surgeon dressed her, and spoke to her in his own short kind way, pitying her through his eyes, Rab and James outside the circle—Rab being now reconciled, and even cordial, and having made up his mind that as yet nobody required worrying, but, as you may suppose, *semper paratus*.

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So far well:  but, four days after the operation, my patient had a sudden and long shivering, a “groosin’,” as she called it.  I saw her soon after; her eyes were too bright, her cheek coloured; she was restless, and ashamed of being so; the balance was lost; mischief had begun.  On looking at the wound, a blush of red told the secret:  her pulse was rapid, her breathing anxious and quick, she wasn’t herself, as she said, and was vexed at her restlessness.  We tried what we could; James did everything, was everywhere; never in the way, never out of it; Rab subsided under the table into a dark place, and was motionless, all but his eye, which followed every one.  Ailie got worse; began to wander in her mind, gently; was more demonstrative in her ways to James, rapid in her questions, and sharp at times.  He was vexed, and said, “She was never that way afore; no, never.”  For a time she knew her head was wrong, and was always asking our pardon—the dear, gentle old woman:  then delirium set in strong, without pause.  Her brain gave way, and then came that terrible spectacle—

> “The intellectual power, through words and things,
> Went sounding on its dim and perilous way.”

she sang bits of old songs and Psalms, stopping suddenly, mingling the Psalms of David and the diviner words of his Son and Lord, with homely odds and ends and scraps of ballads.

Nothing more touching, or in a sense more strangely beautiful, did I ever witness.  Her tremulous, rapid, affectionate, eager, Scotch voice—the swift, aimless, bewildered mind, the baffled utterance, the bright and perilous eye; some wild words, some household cares, something for James, the names of the dead, Rab called rapidly and in a “fremyt” voice, and he starting up surprised, and slinking off as if he were to blame somehow, or had been dreaming he heard; many eager questions and beseechings which James and I could make nothing of, and on which she seemed to set her all, and then sink back ununderstood.  It was very sad, but better than many things that are not called sad.  James hovered about, put out and miserable, but active and exact as ever; read to her when there was a lull, short bits from the Psalms, prose and metre, chanting the latter in his own rude and serious way, showing great knowledge of the fit words, bearing up like a man, and doating over her as his “ain Ailie.”  “Ailie, ma woman!” “Ma ain bonnie wee dawtie!”

The end was drawing on:  the golden bowl was breaking; the silver cord was fast being loosed—that *animula blandula, vagula, hospes, comesque*, was about to flee.  The body and the soul—companions for sixty years—were being sundered, and taking leave.  She was walking alone, through the valley of that shadow, into which one day we must all enter—and yet she was not alone, for we know whose rod and staff were comforting her.

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One night she had fallen quiet, and as we hoped, asleep; her eyes were shut. We put down the gas and sat watching her. Suddenly she sat up in bed, and taking a bed-gown which was lying on it rolled up, she held it eagerly to her breast—to the right side. We could see her eyes bright with a surprising tenderness and joy, bending over this bundle of clothes. She held it as a woman holds her sucking child; opening out her night-gown impatiently, and holding it close, and brooding over it, and murmuring foolish little words, as over one whom his mother comforteth, and who sucks and is satisfied. It was pitiful and strange to see her wasted dying look, keen and yet vague—her immense love.

"Preserve me!" groaned James, giving way. And then she rocked back and forward, as if to make it sleep, hushing it, and wasting on it her infinite fondness. "Wae's me, doctor; I declare she's thinkin' it's that bairn." "What bairn?" "The only bairn we ever had; our wee Mysie, and she's in the Kingdom, forty years and mair." It was plainly true: the pain in the breast, telling its urgent story to a bewildered, ruined brain, was misread and mistaken; it suggested to her the uneasiness of a breast full of milk and then the child; and so again once more they were together and she had her ain wee Mysie in her bosom.

This was the close. She sank rapidly: the delirium left her; but as, she whispered, she was "clean silly;" it was the lightening before the final darkness. After having for some time lain still—her eyes shut, she said "James!" He came close to her, and lifting up her calm, clear, beautiful eyes, she gave him a long look, turned to me kindly but shortly, looked for Rab but could not see him, then turned to her husband again, as if she would never leave off looking, shut her eyes, and composed herself. She lay for some time breathing quick, and passed away so gently, that when we thought she was gone, James, in his old-fashioned way, held the mirror to her face. After a long pause, one small spot of dimness was breathed out; it vanished away, and never returned, leaving the blank clear darkness of the mirror without a stain. "What is our life? it is even a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

Rab all this time had been full awake and motionless; he came forward beside us: Ailie's hand, which James had held, was hanging down, it was soaked with his tears; Rab licked it all over carefully, looked at her, and returned to his place under the table.

James and I sat, I don't know how long, but for some time—saying nothing: he started up abruptly, and with some noise went to the table, and putting his right fore and middle fingers each into a shoe, pulled them out, and put them on, breaking one of the leather latchets, and muttering in anger, "I never did the like o' that afore!"

I believe he never did; nor after either. "Rab!" he said roughly, and pointing with his thumb to the bottom of the bed. Rab leapt up and settled himself; his head and eye to the dead face. "Maister John, ye'll wait for me," said the carrier; and disappeared in the darkness, thundering downstairs in his heavy shoes. I ran to a front window; there he was, already round the house, and out at the gate, fleeing like a shadow.

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I was afraid about him, and yet not afraid; so I sat down beside Rab, and being wearied, fell asleep. I awoke from a sudden noise outside. It was November, and there had been a heavy fall of snow. Rab was *in statu quo*; he heard the noise too, and plainly knew it, but never moved. I looked out; and there, at the gate, in the dim morning—for the sun was not up—was Jess and the cart—a cloud of steam rising from the old mare. I did not see James; he was already at the door, and came up the stairs and met me. It was less than three hours since he left, and he must have posted out—who knows how?—to Howgate, full nine miles off; yoked Jess, and driven her astonished into town. He had an armful of blankets and was streaming with perspiration. He nodded to me, spread out on the floor two pairs of clean old blankets having at their corners, "A.G., 1794," in large letters in red worsted. These were the initials of Alison Graeme, and James may have looked in at her from without—himself unseen but not unthought of—-when he was "wat, wat, and weary," and after having walked many a mile over the hills, may have seen her sitting, while "a' the lave were sleepin';" and by the firelight working her name on the blankets for her ain James's bed.

He motioned Rab down, and taking his wife in his arms, laid her in the blankets, and happed her carefully and firmly up, leaving the face uncovered; and then lifting her, he nodded again sharply to me, and with a resolved but utterly miserable face, strode along the passage, and downstairs, followed by Rab. I followed with a light; but he didn't need it. I went out, holding stupidly the candle in my hand in the calm frosty air; we were soon at the gate. I could have helped him, but I saw he was not to be meddled with, and he was strong, and did not need it. He laid her down as tenderly, as safely, as he had lifted her out ten days before—as tenderly as when he had her first in his arms when she was only "A.G."—sorted her, leaving that beautiful sealed face open to the heavens; and then taking Jess by the head, he moved away. He did not notice me, neither did Rab, who presided behind the cart.

I stood till they passed through the long shadow of the College, and turned up Nicholson Street. I heard the solitary cart sound through the streets, and die away and come again; and I returned, thinking of that company going up Libberton Brae, then along Roslin Muir, the morning light touching the Pentlands and making them like on-looking ghosts; then down the hill through Auchindinny woods, past "haunted Woodhouselee"; and as daybreak came sweeping up the bleak Lammermuirs, and fell on his own door, the company would stop, and James would take the key, and lift Ailie up again, laying her on her own bed, and, having put Jess up, would return with Rab and shut the door.

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James buried his wife, with his neighbours mourning, Rab inspecting the solemnity from a distance. It was snow, and that black ragged hole would look strange in the midst of the swelling spotless cushion of white. James looked after everything; then rather suddenly fell ill, and took to bed; was insensible when the doctor came, and soon died. A sort of low fever was prevailing in the village, and his want of sleep, his exhaustion, and his misery, made him apt to take it. The grave was not difficult to reopen. A fresh fall of snow had again made all things white and smooth; Rab once more looked on, and slunk home to the stable.

And what of Rab? I asked for him next week of the new carrier who got the goodwill of James's business, and was now master of Jess and her cart. "How's Rab?" He put me off, and said rather rudely, "What's *your* business wi' the dowg?" I was not to be so put off. "Where's Rab?" He, getting confused and red, and intermeddling with his hair, said, "'Deed, sir, Rab's deid." "Dead! what did he die of?" "Weel, sir," said he, getting redder, "he didna exactly dee; he was killed. I had to brain him wi' a rack-pin; there was nae doin' wi' him. He lay in the treviss wi' the mear, and wadna come oot. I tempit him wi' kail and meat, but he wad tak naething, and keepit me frae feedin' the beast, and he was aye gur gurrin', and grup gruppin' me by the legs. I was laith to make awa wi' the auld dowg, his like wasna atween this and Thornhill—but, 'deed, sir, I could do naething else." I believed him. Fit end for Rab, quick and complete. His teeth and his friends gone, why should he keep the peace, and be civil?

## XI

PETER RUGG, THE MISSING MAN[2]

Sir—Agreeably to my promise, I now relate to you all the particulars of the lost man and child which I have been able to collect. It is entirely owing to the humane interest you seemed to take in the report, that I have pursued the inquiry to the following result.

You may remember that business called me to Boston in the summer of 1820. I sailed in the packet to Providence, and when I arrived there I learned that every seat in the stage was engaged. I was thus obliged either to wait a few hours or accept a seat with the driver, who civilly offered me that accommodation. Accordingly I took my seat by his side, and soon found him intelligent and communicative.

When we had travelled about ten miles, the horses suddenly threw their ears on their necks, as flat as a hare's. Said the driver, "Have you a surtout with you?" "No," said I; "why do you ask?" "You will want one soon," said he; "do you observe the ears of all the horses?" "Yes, and was just about to ask the reason." "They see the storm-breeder, and we shall see him soon." At this moment there was not a cloud visible in the firmament. Soon after a small speck appeared in the road. "There," said my companion,

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“comes the storm-breeder; he always leaves a Scotch mist behind him. By many a wet jacket do I remember him. I suppose the poor fellow suffers much himself, much more than is known to the world.” Presently a man with a child beside him, with a large black horse, and a weather-beaten chair, once built for a chaise body, passed in great haste, apparently at the rate of twelve miles an hour. He seemed to grasp the reins of his horse with firmness, and appeared to anticipate his speed. He seemed dejected, and looked anxiously at the passengers, particularly at the stage-driver and myself. In a moment after he passed us, the horses’ ears were up and bent themselves forward so that they nearly met. “Who is that man?” said I; “he seems in great trouble.” “Nobody knows who is he, but his person and the child are familiar to me. I have met them more than a hundred times, and have been so often asked the way to Boston by that man, even when he was travelling directly from that town, that of late I have refused any communication with him, and that is the reason he gave me such a fixed look.” “But does he never stop anywhere?” “I have never known him to stop anywhere longer than to inquire the way to Boston; and, let him be where he may, he will tell you he cannot stay a moment, for he must reach Boston that night.”

We were now ascending a high hill in Walpole, and as we had a fair view of the heavens, I was rather disposed to jeer the driver for thinking of his surtout, as not a cloud as big as a marble could be discerned. “Do you look,” said he, “in the direction whence the man came, that is the place to look; the storm never meets him, it follows him.” We presently approached another hill, and when at the height, the driver pointed out in an eastern direction a little black speck as big as a hat. “There,” said he, “is the seed storm; we may possibly reach Polley’s before it reaches us, but the wanderer and his child will go to Providence through rain, thunder, and lightning.” And now the horses, as though taught by instinct, hastened with increased speed. The little black cloud came on rolling over the turnpike, and doubled and trebled itself in all directions. The appearance of this cloud attracted the notice of all the passengers; for after it had spread itself to a great bulk, it suddenly became more limited in circumference, grew more compact, dark, and consolidated. And now the successive flashes of chain lightning caused the whole cloud to appear like a sort of irregular network, and displayed a thousand fantastic images. The driver bespoke my attention to a remarkable configuration in the cloud; he said every flash of lightning near its centre discovered to him distinctly the form of a man sitting in an open carriage drawn by a black horse. But in truth I saw no such thing. The man’s fancy was doubtless at fault. It is a very common thing for the imagination to paint for the senses, both in the visible and invisible world.

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In the meantime the distant thunder gave notice of a shower at hand, and just as we reached Polley's tavern the rain poured down in torrents. It was soon over, the cloud passing in the direction of the turnpike toward Providence. In a few moments after, a respectable-looking man in a chaise stopped at the door. The man and child in the chair having excited some little sympathy among the passengers, the gentleman was asked if he had observed them. He said he had met them; that the man seemed bewildered, and inquired the way to Boston; that he was driving at great speed, as though he expected to outstrip the tempest; that the moment he had passed him a thunderclap broke distinctly over the man's head and seemed to envelop both man and child, horse and carriage. "I stopped," said the gentleman, "supposing the lightning had struck him, but the horse only seemed to loom up and increase his speed, and, as well as I could judge, he travelled just as fast as the thunder cloud." While this man was speaking, a peddler with a cart of tin merchandise came up, all dripping; and, on being questioned, he said he had met that man and carriage, within a fortnight, in four different States; that at each time he had inquired the way to Boston; and that a thunder shower like the present had each time deluged him, his wagon and his wares, setting his tin pots, *etc*., afloat, so that he had determined to get marine insurance done for the future. But that which excited his surprise most was the strange conduct of his horse, for that, long before he could distinguish the man in the chair, his own horse stood still in the road and flung back his ears. "In short," said the peddler, "I wish never to see that man and horse again; they do not look to me as if they belonged to this world."

This is all that I could learn at that time; and the occurrence soon after would have become with me like one of those things which had never happened, had I not, as I stood recently on the doorstep of Bennett's Hotel in Hartford, heard a man say, "There goes Peter Rugg and his child! he looks wet and weary, and farther from Boston than ever." I was satisfied it was the same man that I had seen more than three years before; for whoever has once seen Peter Rugg can never after be deceived as to his identity. "Peter Rugg!" said I, "and who is Peter Rugg?" "That," said the stranger, "is more than anyone can tell exactly. He is a famous traveller, held in light esteem by all inn-holders, for he never stops to eat, drink, or sleep. I wonder why the Government does not employ him to carry the mail." "Ay," said a bystander, "that is a thought bright only on one side. How long would it take, in that case, to send a letter to Boston? For Peter has already, to my knowledge, been more than twenty years travelling to that place." "But," said I, "does the man never stop anywhere, does he never converse with anyone? I saw the same man more than three years since, near Providence,

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and I heard a strange story about him. Pray, sir, give me some account of this man." "Sir," said the stranger, "those who know the most respecting that man say the least. I have heard it asserted that heaven sometimes sets a mark on a man, either for judgment or trial. Under which Peter Rugg now labours I cannot say; therefore I am rather inclined to pity than to judge." "You speak like a humane man," said I, "and if you have known him so long, I pray you will give me some account of him. Has his appearance much altered in that time?" "Why, yes; he looks as though he never ate, drank, or slept; and his child looks older than himself; and he looks like time broke off from eternity and anxious to gain a resting-place." "And how does his horse look?" said I. "As for his horse, he looks fatter and gayer, and shows more animation and courage, than he did twenty years ago. The last time Rugg spoke to me he inquired how far it was to Boston. I told him just one hundred miles. 'Why,' said he, 'how can you deceive me so? It is cruel to deceive a traveller. I have lost my way. Pray direct me the nearest way to Boston.' I repeated it was one hundred miles. 'How can you say so?' said he. 'I was told last evening it was but fifty, and I have travelled all night.' 'But,' said I, 'you are now travelling from Boston. You must turn back.' 'Alas!' said he, 'it is all turn back! Boston shifts with the wind, and plays all around the compass. One man tells me it is to the east, another to the west; and the guide-posts, too, they all point the wrong way.' 'But will you not stop and rest?' said I; 'you seem wet and weary.' 'Yes,' said he, 'it has been foul weather since I left home.' 'Stop, then, and refresh yourself.' 'I must not stop, I must reach home to-night, if possible, though I think you must be mistaken in the distance to Boston.' He then gave the reins to his horse, which he restrained with difficulty, and disappeared in a moment. A few days afterwards I met the man a little this side of Claremont, winding around the hills in Unity, at the rate, I believe, of twenty miles an hour."

"Is Peter Rugg his real name, or has he accidentally gained that name?" "I know not, but presume he will not deny his name; you can ask him, for see, he has turned his horse and is passing this way." In a moment a dark-coloured, high-spirited horse approached, and would have passed without stopping, but I had resolved to speak to Peter Rugg, or whoever the man might be. Accordingly. I stepped into the street, and as the horse approached I made a feint of stopping him. The man immediately reined in his horse. "Sir," said I, "may I be so bold as to inquire if you are not Mr. Rugg? for I think I have seen you before." "My name is Peter Rugg," said he; "I have unfortunately lost my way; I am wet and weary, and will take it kindly of you to direct me to Boston." "You live in Boston, do you, and in what street?" "In Middle Street." "When did

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you leave Boston?" "I cannot tell precisely; it seems a considerable time." "But how did you and your child become so wet? it has not rained here to-day." "It has just rained a heavy shower up the river. But I shall not reach Boston to-night if I tarry. Would you advise me to take the old road, or the turnpike?" "Why, the old road is one hundred and seventeen miles, and the turnpike is ninety-seven." "How can you say so? you impose on me; it is wrong to trifle with a traveller; you know it is but forty miles from Newburyport to Boston." "But this is not Newburyport; this is Hartford." "Do not deceive me, sir. Is not this town Newburyport, and the river that I have been following the Merrimac?" "No, sir; this is Hartford, and the river the Connecticut." He wrung his hands and looked incredulous. "Have the rivers, too, changed their courses as the cities have changed places? But see, the clouds are gathering in the south, and we shall have a rainy night. Ah, that fatal oath!" He would tarry no longer. His impatient horse leaped off, his hind flanks rising like wings—he seemed to devour all before him and to scorn all behind.

I had now, as I thought, discovered a clue to the history of Peter Rugg, and I determined, the next time my business called me to Boston, to make a further inquiry. Soon after I was enabled to collect the following particulars from Mrs. Croft, an aged lady in Middle Street, who has resided in Boston during the last twenty years. Her narration is this: The last summer a person, just at twilight, stopped at the door of the late Mrs. Rugg. Mrs. Croft, on coming to the door, perceived a stranger, with a child by his side, in an old, weather-beaten carriage, with a black horse. The stranger asked for Mrs. Rugg, and was informed that Mrs. Rugg had died, at a good old age, more than twenty years before that time. The stranger replied, "How can you deceive me so? do ask Mrs. Rugg to step to the door." "Sir, I assure you Mrs. Rugg has not lived here these nineteen years; no one lives here but myself, and my name is Betsey Croft." The stranger paused, and looked up and down the street and said, "Though the painting is rather faded, this looks like my house." "Yes," said the child, "that is the stone before the door that I used to sit on to eat my bread and milk." "But," said the stranger, "it seems to be on the wrong side of the street. Indeed, everything here seems to be misplaced. The streets are all changed, the people are all changed, the town seems changed, and, what is strangest of all, Catharine Rugg has deserted her husband and child." "Pray," said the stranger, "has John Foy come home from sea? He went a long voyage; he is my kinsman. If I could see him, he could give me some account of Mrs. Rugg." "Sir," said Mrs. Croft, "I never heard of John Foy. Where did he live?" "Just above here, in Orange-Tree Lane." "There is no such place in this neighbourhood." "What do you tell me! Are the streets gone? Orange-Tree

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Lane is at the head of Hanover Street, near Pemberton's Hill." "There is no such lane now." "Madam! you cannot be serious. But you doubtless know my brother, William Rugg. He lives in Royal Exchange Lane, near King Street." "I know of no such lane; and I I am sure there is no such street as King Street in this town." "No such street as King Street? Why, woman! you mock me. You may as well tell me there is no King George. However, madam, you see I am wet and weary. I must find a resting place. I will go to Hart's tavern, near the market." "Which market, sir? for you seem perplexed; we have several markets." "You know there is but one market, near the town dock." "Oh, the old market. But no such man as Hart has kept there these twenty years."

Here the stranger seemed disconcerted, and muttered to himself quite audibly: "Strange mistake! How much this looks like the town of Boston! It certainly has a great resemblance to it; but I perceive my mistake now. Some other Mrs. Rugg, some other Middle Street." Then said he, "Madam, can you direct me to Boston?" "Why, this is Boston, the city of Boston. I know of no other Boston." "City of Boston it may be, but it is not the Boston where I live. I recollect now, I came over a bridge instead of a ferry. Pray what bridge is that I just came over?" "It is Charles River Bridge." "I perceive my mistake; there is a ferry between Boston and Charlestown, there is no bridge. Ah, I perceive my mistake. If I was in Boston, my horse would carry me directly to my own door. But my horse shows by his impatience that he is in a strange place. Absurd, that I should have mistaken this place for the old town of Boston! It is a much finer city than the town of Boston. It has been built long since Boston. I fancy Boston must lie at a distance from this city, as the good woman seems ignorant of it." At these words his horse began to chafe, and strike the pavement with his fore feet; the stranger seemed a little bewildered, and said "No home to-night," and, giving the reins to his horse, passed up the street, and I saw no more of him.

It was evident that the generation to which Peter Rugg belonged had passed away.

This was all the account of Peter Rugg I could obtain from Mrs. Croft; but she directed me to an elderly man, Mr. James Felt, who lived near her, and who had kept a record of the principal occurrences for the last fifty years. At my request she sent for him; and, after I had related to him the object of my inquiry, Mr. Felt told me he had known Rugg in his youth; that his disappearance had caused some surprise; but as it sometimes happens that men run away, sometimes to be rid of others, and sometimes to be rid of themselves; and as Rugg took his child with him, and his own horse and chair; and as it did not appear that any creditors made a stir, the occurrence soon mingled itself in the stream of oblivion; and Rugg and his child, horse and chair, were soon forgotten. "It is

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true," said Mr. Felt, "sundry stories grew out of Rugg's affair, whether true or false I cannot tell; but stranger things have happened in my day, without even a newspaper notice." "Sir," said I, "Peter Rugg is now living. I have lately seen Peter Rugg and his child, horse and chair; therefore I pray you to relate to me all you know or ever heard of him." "Why, my friend," said James Felt, "that Peter Rugg is now a living man I will not deny; but that you have seen Peter Rugg and his child is impossible, if you mean a small child, for Jenny Rugg, if living, must be at least—let me see—Boston Massacre, 1770—Jenny Rugg was about ten years old. Why, sir, Jenny Rugg if living must be more than sixty years of age. That Peter Rugg is living is highly probable, as he was only ten years older than myself; and I was only eighty last March, and I am as likely to live twenty years longer as any man." Here I perceived that Mr. Felt was in his dotage, and I despaired of gaining any intelligence from him on which I could depend.

I took my leave of Mrs. Croft, and proceeded to my lodgings at the Marlborough Hotel.

If Peter Rugg, thought I, has been travelling since the Boston Massacre, there is no reason why he should not travel to the end of time. If the present generation know little of him, the next will know less, and Peter and his child will have no hold on this world.

In the course of the evening I related my adventure in Middle Street. "Ha!" said one of the company, smiling, "do you really think you have seen Peter Rugg? I have heard my grandfather speak of him as though he seriously believed his own story." "Sir," said I, "pray let us compare your grandfather's story of Mr. Rugg with my own." "Peter Rugg, sir, if my grandfather was worthy of credit, once lived in Middle Street, in this city. He was a man in comfortable circumstances, had a wife and one daughter, and was generally esteemed for his sober life and manners. But unhappily his temper at times was altogether ungovernable, and then his language was terrible. In these fits of passion, if a door stood in his way he would never do less than kick a panel through. He would sometimes throw his heels over his head, and come down on his feet, uttering oaths in a circle. And thus, in a rage, he was the first who performed a somerset, and did what others have since learned to do for merriment and money. Once Rugg was seen to bite a tenpenny nail in halves. In those days everybody, both men and boys, wore wigs; and Peter, at these moments of violent passion, would become so profane that his wig would rise up from his head. Some said it was on account of his terrible language; others accounted for it in a more philosophical way, and said it was caused by the expansion of his scalp, as violent passion, we know, will swell the veins and expand the head. While these fits were on him, Rugg had no respect for heaven or earth. Except this infirmity, all agreed that Rugg was a good soft of a man; for when his fits were over, nobody was so ready to commend a placid temper as Peter.

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“It was late in autumn, one morning, that Rugg, in his own chair, with a fine large bay horse, took his daughter and proceeded to Concord. On his return a violent storm overtook him. At dark he stopped in Menotomy (now West Cambridge), at the door of a Mr. Cutter, a friend of his, who urged him to tarry overnight. On Rugg’s declining to stop, Mr. Cutter urged him vehemently. ‘Why, Mr. Rugg,’ said Cutter, ’the storm is overwhelming you; the night is exceeding dark; your little daughter will perish; you are in an open chair, and the tempest is increasing.’ ‘*Let the storm increase*,’ said Rugg, with a fearful oath, ’*I will see home to-night, in spite of the last tempest! or may I never see home*.’ At these words he gave his whip to his high-spirited horse, and disappeared in a moment. But Peter Rugg did not reach home that night, nor the next; nor, when he became a missing man, could he ever be traced beyond Mr. Cutter’s in Menotomy. For a long time after, on every dark and stormy night, the wife of Peter Rugg would fancy she heard the crack of a whip, and the fleet tread of a horse, and the rattling of a carriage, passing her door. The neighbours, too, heard the same noises, and some said they knew it was Rugg’s horse; the tread on the pavement was perfectly familiar to them. This occurred so repeatedly that at length the neighbours watched with lanterns, and saw the real Peter Rugg, with his own horse and chair, and child sitting beside him, pass directly before his own door, his head turning toward his house, and himself making every effort to stop his horse, but in vain. The next day the friends of Mrs. Rugg exerted themselves to find her husband and child. They inquired at every public house and stable in town; but it did not appear that Rugg made any stay in Boston. No one, after Rugg had passed his own door, could give any account of him; though it was asserted by some that the clatter of Rugg’s horse and carriage over the pavements shook the houses on both sides of the street. And this is credible, if, indeed, Rugg’s horse and carriage did pass on that night. For at this day, in many of the streets, a loaded truck or team in passing will shake the houses like an earthquake. However, Rugg’s neighbours never afterward watched again; some of them treated it all as a delusion, and thought no more of it. Others, of a different opinion, shook their heads and said nothing. Thus Rugg and his child, horse and chair, were soon forgotten; and probably many in the neighbourhood never heard a word on the subject.

“There was indeed a rumour that Rugg afterward was seen in Connecticut, between Suffield and Hartford, passing through the country like a streak of chalk. This gave occasion to Rugg’s friends to make further inquiry. But the more they inquired, the more they were baffled. If they heard of Rugg one day in Connecticut, the next day they heard of him winding around the hills in New Hampshire; and soon after, a man in a chair, with a small child, exactly answering the description of Peter Rugg, would be seen in Rhode Island, inquiring the way to Boston.

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“But that which chiefly gave a colour of mystery to the story of Peter Rugg was the affair at Charlestown bridge. The toll-gatherer asserted that sometimes, on the darkest and most stormy nights, when no object could be discerned about the time Rugg was missing, a horse and wheelcarriage, with a noise equal to a troop, would at midnight, in utter contempt of the rates of toll, pass over the bridge. This occurred so frequently that the toll-gatherer resolved to attempt a discovery. Soon after, at the usual time, apparently the same horse and carriage approached the bridge from Charlestown square. The toll-gatherer, prepared, took his stand as near the middle of the bridge as he dared, with a large three-legged stool in his hand. As the appearance passed, he threw the stool at the horse, but heard nothing except the noise of the stool skipping across the bridge. The toll-gatherer on the next day asserted that the stool went directly through the body of the horse, and he persisted in that belief ever after. Whether Rugg, or whoever the person was, ever passed the bridge again, the toll-gatherer would never tell; and when questioned, seemed anxious to waive the subject. And thus Peter Rugg and his child, horse and carriage, remain a mystery to this day.”

This, sir, is all that I could learn of Peter Rugg in Boston....

[Footnote 2: From Jonathan Dunwell of New York, to Mr. Herman Krauff.]