

Margery — Volume 01 eBook

Margery — Volume 01 by Georg Ebers

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INTRODUCTION:

"Pietro Giustiniani, merchant, of Venice." This was the signature affixed to his receipt by the little antiquary in the city of St. Mark, from whom I purchased a few stitched sheets of manuscript. What a name and title!

As I remarked on the splendor of his ancestry he slapped his pocket, and exclaimed, half in pride and half in lamentation:

"Yes, they had plenty of money; but what has become of it?"

"And have you no record of their deeds?" I asked the little man, who himself wore a moustache with stiff military points to it.

"Their deeds!" he echoed scornfully. "I wish they had been less zealous in their pursuit of fame and had managed their money matters better!— Poor child!"

And he pointed to little Marietta who was playing among the old books, and with whom I had already struck up a friendship. She this day displayed some strange appendage in the lobes of her ears, which on closer examination I found to be a twist of thread.

The child's pretty dark head was lying confidentially against my arm and as, with my fingers, I felt this singular ornament, I heard, from behind the little desk at the end of the counter, her mother's shrill voice in complaining accents: "Aye, Sir, it is a shame in a family which has given three saints to the Church—Saint Nicholas, Saint Anna, and Saint Eufemia, all three Giustinianis as you know—in a family whose sons have more than once worn a cardinal's hat—that a mother, Sir, should be compelled to let her own child—But you are fond of the little one, Sir, as every one is hereabout. Heh, Marietta! What would you say if the gentleman were to give you a pair of ear-rings, now; real gold ear-rings I mean? Thread for ear-rings, Sir, in the ears of a Giustiniani! It is absurd, preposterous, monstrous; and a right-thinking gentleman like you, Sir, will never deny that."

How could I neglect such a hint; and when I had gratified the antiquary's wife, I could reflect with some pride that I might esteem myself a benefactor to a family which boasted of its descent from the Emperor Justinian, which had been called the 'Fabia gens' of Venice, and, in its day had given to the Republic great generals, far-seeing statesmen, and admirable scholars.

When, at length, I had to quit the city and took leave of the curiosity-dealer, he pressed my hand with heartfelt regret; and though the Signora Giustiniani, as she pocketed a tolerably thick bundle of paper money, looked at me with that kindly pity which a good woman is always ready to bestow on the inexperienced, especially when they are young, that, no doubt, was because the manuscript I had acquired bore such a

dilapidated appearance. The margins of the thick old Nuremberg paper were eaten into by mice and insects, in many places black patches like tinder dropped away from the yellow pages; indeed, many passages of the once

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clear writing had so utterly faded that I scarcely hoped to see them made legible again by the chemist's art. However, the contents of the document were so interesting and remarkable, so unique in relation to the time when it was written, that they irresistibly riveted my attention, and in studying them I turned half the night into day. There were nine separate parts. All, except the very last one, were in the same hand, and they seemed to have formed a single book before they were torn asunder. The cover and title-page were lost, but at the head of the first page these words were written in large letters: "The Book of my Life." Then followed a long passage in crude verse, very much to this effect.

"What we behold with waking Eye
Can, to our judgment, never lie,
And what through Sense and Sight we gain.
Becometh part of Soul and Brain.
Look round the World in which you dwell
Nor, Snail-like, live within your Shell;
And if you see His World aright
The Lord shall grant you double Sight.
For, though your Mind and Soul be small,
If you but open them to all
The great wide World, they will expand
Those glorious Things to understand.
When Heart and Brain are great with Love
Man is most like the Lord above.
Look up to Him with patient Eye
Not on your own Infirmary.
In pious Trust yourself forget
For others only toil and fret,
Since all we do for fellow Men
With right good Will, shall be our Gain.
What if the Folk should call you Fool
Care not, but act by Virtue's Rule,
Contempt and Curses let them fling,
God's Blessing shields you from their Sting.
Grey is my Head but young my Heart;
In Nuremberg, ere I depart,
Children and Grandchildren, for you
I write this Book, and it is true."

Margery Schopper.



Below the verses the text of the narrative began with these words: "In the yere of our Lord M/CCCC/lx/VI dyd I begynne to wtre in thys lytel Boke thys storie of my lyf, as I haue lyued it."

It was in her sixty-second year that the writer had first begun to note down her reminiscences. This becomes clear as we go on, but it may be gathered from the first lines on the second page which begins thus:

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"I, Margery Schopper, was borne in the yere of our Lord M/CCCC/IV on a Twesday after 'Palmarum' Sondag, at foure houris after mydnyght. Myn uncle Kristan Pfinzing was god sib to me in my chrystening. My fader, God assoyle his soul, was Franz Schopper, iclyped the Singer. He dyed on a Monday after 'Laetare'—[The fourth Sunday in Lent.]—Sondag M/CCCC/IV. And he hadde to wyf Kristine Peheym whyche was my moder. Also she bare to hym my brethren Herdegen and Kunz Schopper. My moder dyed in the vigil of Seint Kateryn M/CCCC/V. Thus was I reft of my moder whyle yet a babe; also the Lord broughte sorwe upon me in that of hys grace He callyd my fader out of thys worlde before that ever I sawe the lyght of dai."

These few lines, which I read in the little antiquary's shop, betrayed me to my ruin; for, in my delight at finding the daily journal of a German housewife of the beginning of the fifteenth century my heart overflowed; forgetting all prudence I laughed aloud, exclaiming "splendid," "wonderful," "what a treasure!" But it would have been beyond all human power to stand speechless, for, as I read on, I found things which far exceeded my fondest expectations. The writer of these pages had not been content, like the other chroniclers of her time and of her native town—such as Ulman Stromer, Andres Tucher and their fellows—to register notable facts without any connection, the family affairs, items of expenditure and mercantile measures of her day; she had plainly and candidly recorded everything that had happened to her from her childhood to the close of her life. This Margery had inherited some of her father's artistic gifts; he is mentioned in Ulman Stromer's famous chronicle, where he is spoken of as "the Singer." It was to her mother, however, that she owed her bold spirit, for she was a Behaim, cousin to the famous traveller Behaim of Schwarzbach, whose mother is known to have been one of the Schopper family, daughter to Herdegen Schopper.

In the course of a week I had not merely read the manuscript, but had copied a great deal of what seemed to me best worth preservation, including the verses. I subsequently had good reason to be glad that I had taken so much pains, though travelling about at the time; for a cruel disaster befel the trunk in which the manuscript was packed, with other books and a few treasures, and which I had sent home by sea. The ship conveying them was stranded at the mouth of the Elbe and my precious manuscript perished miserably in the wreck.

The nine stitched sheets, of which the last was written by the hand of Margery Schopper's younger brother, had found their way to Venice—as was recorded on the last page—in the possession of Margery's great-grandson, who represented the great mercantile house of Im Hoff on the Fondaco, and who ultimately died in the City of St. Mark. When that famous firm was broken up the papers were separated from their cover and had finally fallen into the hands

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of the curiosity dealer of whom I bought them. And after surviving travels on land, risk of fire, the ravages of worms and the ruthlessness of man for four centuries, they finally fell a prey to the destructive fury of the waves; but my memory served me well as to the contents, and at my bidding was at once ready to aid me in restoring the narrative I had read. The copied portions were a valuable aid, and imagination was able to fill the gaps; and though it failed, no doubt, to reproduce Margery Schopper's memoirs phrase for phrase and word for word, I have on the whole succeeded in transcribing with considerable exactitude all that she herself had thought worthy to be rescued from oblivion. Moreover I have avoided the repetition of the mode of talk in the fifteenth century, when German was barely commencing to be used as a written language, since scholars, writers, and men of letters always chose the Latin tongue for any great or elegant intellectual work. The narrator's expressions would only be intelligible to a select few, and, I should have done my Margery injustice, had I left the ideas and descriptions, whose meaning I thoroughly understood, in the clumsy form she had given them. The language of her day is a mirror whose uneven surface might easily reflect the fairest picture in blurred or distorted out lines to modern eyes. Much, indeed which most attracted me in her descriptions will have lost its peculiar charm in mine; as to whether I have always supplemented her correctly, that must remain an open question.

I have endeavored to throw myself into the mind and spirit of my Margery and repeat her tale with occasional amplification, in a familiar style, yet with such a choice of words as seems suitable to the date of her narrative. Thus I have perpetuated all that she strove to record for her descendants out of her warm heart and eager brain; though often in mere outline and broken sentences, still, in the language of her time and of her native province.

MARGERY

CHAPTER I.

I, Margery Schopper, was born in the year of our Lord 1404, on the Tuesday after Palm Sunday. My uncle Christan Pfinzing of the Burg, a widower whose wife had been a Schopper, held me at the font. My father, God have his soul, was Franz Schopper, known as Franz the Singer. He died in the night of the Monday after Laetare Sunday in 1404, and his wife my mother, God rest her, whose name was Christine, was born a Behaim; she had brought him my two brothers Herdegen and Kunz, and she died on the eve of Saint Catharine's day 1404; so that I lost my mother while I was but a babe, and God dealt hardly with me also in taking my father to Himself in His mercy, before I ever saw the light.

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Instead of a loving father, such as other children have, I had only a grave in the churchyard, and the good report of him given by such as had known him; and by their account he must have been a right merry and lovable soul, and a good man of business both in his own affairs and in those pertaining to the city. He was called “the Singer” because, even when he was a member of the town-council, he could sing sweetly and worthily to the lute. This art he learned in Lombardy, where he had been living at Padua to study the law there; and they say that among those outlandish folk his music brought him a rich reward in the love of the Italian ladies and damsels. He was a well-favored man, of goodly stature and pleasing to look upon, as my brother Herdegen his oldest son bears witness, since it is commonly said that he is the living image of his blessed father; and I, who am now an old woman, may freely confess that I have seldom seen a man whose blue eyes shone more brightly beneath his brow, or whose golden hair curled thicker over his neck and shoulders than my brother’s in the high day of his happy youth.

He was born at Eastertide, and the Almighty blessed him with a happy temper such as he bestows only on a Sunday-child. He, too, was skilled in the art of singing, and as my other brother, my playmate Kunz, had also a liking for music and song, there was ever a piping and playing in our orphaned and motherless house, as if it were a nest of mirthful grasshoppers, and more childlike gladness and happy merriment reigned there than in many another house that rejoices in the presence of father and mother. And I have ever been truly thankful to the Almighty that it was so; for as I have often seen, the life of children who lack a mother’s love is like a day when the sun is hidden by storm-clouds. But the merciful God, who laid his hand on our mother’s heart, filled that of another woman with a treasure of love towards me and my brothers.

Our cousin Maud, a childless widow, took upon herself to care for us. As a maid, and before she had married her departed husband, she had been in love with my father, and then had looked up to my mother as a saint from Heaven, so she could have no greater joy than to tell us tales about our parents; and when she did so her eyes would be full of tears, and as every word came straight from her heart it found its way straight to ours; and as we three sat round, listening to her, besides her own two eyes there were soon six more wet enough to need a handkerchief.

Her gait was heavy and awkward, and her face seemed as though it had been hewn out of coarse wood, so that it was a proper face to frighten children; even when she was young they said that her appearance was too like a man and devoid of charms, and for that reason my father never heeded her love for him; but her eyes were like open windows, and out of them looked everything that was good and kind and loving and true, like angels within. For the sake of those eyes you forgot all else; all that was rough in her, and her wide nose with the deep dent just in the middle, and such hair on her lip as many a young stripling might envy her.

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And Sebald Kresz knew very well what he was about when he took to wife Maud Im Hoff when he was between sixty and seventy years of age; and she had nothing to look forward to in life as she stood at the altar with him, but to play the part of nurse to a sickly perverse old man. But to Maud it seemed as fair a lot to take care of a fellow-creature as it is to many another to be nursed and cherished; and it was the reward of her faithful care that she could keep the old man from the clutch of Death for full ten years longer. After his decease she was left a well-to-do widow; but instead of taking thought for herself she at once entered on a life of fresh care, for she undertook the duty of filling the place of mother to us three orphans.

As I grew up she would often instruct me in her kind voice, which was as deep as the bass pipe of an organ, that she had set three aims before her in bringing us up, namely: to make us good and Godfearing; to teach us to agree among ourselves so that each should be ready to give everything up to the others; and to make our young days as happy as possible. How far she succeeded in the first I leave to others to judge; but a more united family than we ever were I should like any man to show me, and because it was evident from a hundred small tokens how closely we clung together folks used to speak of us as “the three links,” especially as the arms borne by the Schoppers display three rings linked to form a chain.

As for myself, I was the youngest and smallest of the three links, and yet I was the middle one; for if ever it fell that Herdegen and Kunz had done one thing or another which led them to disagree and avoid or defy each other, they always came together again by seeking me and through my means. But though I thus sometimes acted as peacemaker it is no credit to me, since I did not bring them together out of any virtue or praiseworthy intent, but simply because I could not bear to stand alone, or with only one ring linked to me.

Alas! how far behind me lies the bright, happy youth of which I now write! I have reached the top of life's hill, nay, I have long since overstepped the ridge; and, as I look back and think of all I have seen and known, it is not to the end that I may get wisdom for myself whereby to do better as I live longer. My old bones are stiff and set; it would be vain now to try to bend them. No, I write this little book for my own pleasure, and to be of use and comfort to my children and grandchildren. May they avoid the rocks on which I have bruised my feet, and where I have walked firmly on may they take example by an old woman's brave spirit, though I have learned in a thousand ways that no man gains profit by any experience other than his own.

So I will begin at the beginning.

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I could find much to tell of my happy childhood, for then everything seems new; but it profits not to tell of what every one has known in his own life, and what more can a Nuremberg child have to say of her early growth and school life than ever another. The blades in one field and the trees in one wood share the same lot without any favour. It is true that in many ways I was unlike other children; for my cousin Maud would often say that I would not abide rule as beseems a maid, and Herdegen's lament that I was not born a boy still sounds in my ears when I call to mind our wild games. Any one who knows the window on the first floor, at the back of our house, from which I would jump into the courtyard to do as my brothers did, would be fairly frightened, and think it a wonder that I came out of it with whole bones; but yet I was not always minded to riot with the boys, and from my tenderest years I was a very thoughtful little maid. But there were things; in my young life very apt to sharpen my wits.

We Schoppers are nearly allied with every worshipful family in the town, or of a rank to sit in the council and bear a coat of arms; these being, in fact, in Nuremberg, the class answering to the families of the Signoria in Venice, whose names are enrolled in the Libro d'Oro. What the Barberighi, the Foscari, the Grimaldi, the Giustiniani and the like, are there, the families of Stromer, Behaim, Im Hoff, Tucher, Kresz, Baumgartner, Pfinzing, Pukheimer, Holzschuher, and so forth, are with us; and the Schoppers certainly do not rank lowest on the list. We who hold ourselves entitled to bear arms, to ride in tournaments, and take office in the Church, and who have a right to call ourselves nobles and patricians, are all more or less kith and kin. Wherever in Nuremberg there was a fine house we could find there an uncle and aunt, cousins and kinsmen, or at least godparents, and good friends of our deceased parents. Wherever one of them might chance to meet us, even if it were in the street, he would say: "Poor little orphans! God be good to the fatherless!" and tears would sparkle in the eyes of many a kindhearted woman. Even the gentlemen of the Council—for most of the elders of our friends were members of it—would stroke my fair hair and look at me as pitifully as though I were some poor sinner for whom there could be no mercy in the eyes of the judges of a court of justice.

Why was it that men deemed me so unfortunate when I knew no sorrow and my heart was as gay as a singing bird? I could not ask cousin Maud, for she was sorely troubled if I had but a finger-ache, and how could I tell her that I was such a miserable creature in the eyes of other folks? But I presently found out for myself why and wherefore they pitied me; for seven who called me fatherless, seventy would speak of me as motherless when they addressed me with pity. Our misfortune was that we had no mother. But was there not Cousin Maud, and was not she as good as any mother? To be sure she was only a cousin, and she must lack something of what a real mother feels.

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And though I was but a heedless, foolish child I kept my eyes open and began to look about me. I took no one into the secret but my brothers, and though my elder brother chid me, and bid me only be thankful to our cousin for all her goodness, I nevertheless began to watch and learn.

There were a number of children at the Stromers' house—the Golden Rose was its name—and they were still happy in having their mother. She was a very cheerful young woman, as plump as a cherry, and pink and white like blood on snow; and she never fixed her gaze on me as others did, but would frolic with me or scold me sharply when I did any wrong. At the Muffels, on the contrary, the mistress was dead, and the master had not long after brought home another mother to his little ones, a stepmother, Susan, who was my maid, was wont to call her; and such a mother was no more a real mother than our good cousin—I knew that much from the fairy tales to which I was ever ready to hearken. But I saw this very stepmother wash and dress little Elsie, her husband's youngest babe and not her own, and lull her till she fell asleep; and she did it right tenderly, and quite as she ought. And then, when the child was asleep she kissed it, too, on its brow and cheeks.

And yet Mistress Stromer, of the Golden-Rose House, did differently; for when she took little Clare that was her own babe out of the water, and laid it on warm clouts on the swaddling board, she buried her face in the sweet, soft flesh, and kissed the whole of its little body all over, before and behind, from head to foot, as if it were all one sweet, rosy mouth; and they both laughed with hearty, loving merriment, as the mother pressed her lips against the babe's white, clean skin and trumpeted till the room rang, or clasped it, wrapped in napkins to her warm breast, as if she could hug it to death. And she broke into a loud, strange laugh, and cried as she fondled it: "My treasure, my darling, my God-sent jewel! My own, my own—I could eat thee!"

No, Mistress Muffel never behaved so to Elsie, her husband's babe. Notwithstanding I knew right well that Cousin Maud had been just as fond of me as Dame Stromer of her own babes, and so far our cousin was no way different from a real mother. And I said as much to myself, when I laid me down to sleep in my little white bed at night, and my cousin came and folded her hands as I folded mine and, after we had said the prayers for the Angelus together, as we did every evening, she laid her head by the side of mine, and pressed my baby face to her own big face. I liked this well enough, and I whispered in her ear: "Tell me, Cousin Maud, are you not my real, true mother?"

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And she hastily replied, "In my heart I am, most truly; and you are a very lucky maid, my Margery, for instead of only one mother you have two: me, here below, to care for you and foster you, and the other up among the angels above, looking down on you and beseeching the all-gracious Virgin who is so nigh to her, to keep your little heart pure, and to preserve you from all ill; nay, perhaps she herself is wearing a glory and a heavenly crown. Look at her face." And Cousin Maud held up the lamp so that the light fell on a large picture. My eyes beheld the lovely portrait in front of me, and meseemed it looked at me with a deep gaze and stretched out loving arms to me. I sat up in my bed; the feelings which filled my little heart overflowed my lips, and I said in a whisper: "Oh, Cousin Maud! Surely my mammy might kiss me for once, and fondle me as Mistress Stromer does her little Clare."

Cousin Maud set the lamp on the table, and without a word she lifted me out of bed and held me up quite close to the face of the picture; and I understood. My lips softly touched the red lips on the canvas; and, as I was all the happier, I fancied that my mother in Heaven must be glad too.

Then my cousin sighed: "Well, well!" and murmured other words to herself; she laid me in the bed again, tucked the coverlet tightly round me as I loved to have it, gave me another kiss, waited till I had settled my head on the pillow, and whispered: "Now go to sleep and dream of your sainted mother."

She quitted the room; but she had left the lamp, and as soon as I was alone I looked once more at the picture, which showed me my mother in right goodly array. She had a rose on her breast, her golden fillet looked like the crown of the Queen of Heaven, and in her robe of rich, stiff brocade she was like some great Saint. But what seemed to me more heavenly than all the rest was her rose and white young face, and the sweet mouth which I had touched with my lips. Oh if I had but once had the happiness of kissing that mouth in life! A sudden feeling glowed in my heart, and an inward voice told me that a thousand kisses from Cousin Maud would never be worth one single kiss from that lovely young mother, and that I had indeed lost almost as much as my pitying friends had said. And I could not help sorrowing, weeping for a long time; I felt as though I had lost just what was best and dearest, and for the first time I saw that my good cousin was right ugly as other folks said, and my silly little head conceived that a real mother must be fair to look upon, and that however kind any one else might be she could never be so gracious and lovable.

And so I fell asleep; and in my dreams the picture came towards me out of the frame and took me in her arms as Madonna takes her Holy Child, and looked at me with a gaze as if all the love on earth had met in those eyes. I threw my arms round her neck and waited for her to fondle and play with me like Mistress Stromer with her little Clare; but she gently and sadly shook her head with the golden crownlet, and went up to Cousin Maud and set me in her lap.

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"I have never forgot that dream, and often in my prayers have I lifted up my heart to my sainted mother, and cried to her as to the blessed Virgin and Saint Margaret, my name-saint; and how often she has heard me and rescued me in need and jeopardy! As to my cousin, she was ever dearer to me from that night; for had not my own mother given me to her, and when folks looked at me pitifully and bewailed my lot, I could laugh in my heart and think: 'If only you knew! Your children have only one mother, but we have two; and our own real mother is prettier than any one's, while the other, for all that she is so ugly, is the best.'"

It was the compassion of folks that first led me to such thoughts, and as I grew older I began to deem that their pity had done little good to my young soul. Friends are ever at hand to comfort every job; but few are they who come to share his heaviness, all the more so because all men take pleasure in comparing their own fair lot with the evil lot of others. Compassion—and I am the last to deny it—is a noble and right healing grace; but those who are so ready to extend it should be cautious how they do so, especially in the case of a child, for a child is like a sapling which needs light, and those who darken the sun that shines on it sin against it, and hinder its growth. Instead of bewailing it, make it glad; that is the comfort that befits it.

I felt I had discovered a great and important secret and I was eager to make our sainted mother known to my brothers; but they had found her already without any aid from their little sister. I told first one and then the other all that stirred within me, and when I spoke to Herdegen, the elder, I saw at once that it was nothing new to him. Kunz, the younger, I found in the swing; he flew so high that I thought he would fling himself out, and I cried to him to stop a minute; but, as he clutched the rope tighter and pulled himself together to stand firm on the board, he cried: "Leave me now, Margery; I want to go up, up; up to Heaven—up to where mother is!"

That was enough for me; and from that hour we often spoke together of our sainted mother, and Cousin Maud took care that we should likewise keep our father in mind. She had his portrait—as she had had my mother's—brought from the great dining-room, where it had hung, into the large children's room where she slept with me. And this picture, too, left its mark on my after-life; for when I had the measles, and Master Paul Rieter, the town physician and our doctor, came to see me, he stayed a long time, as though he could not bear to depart, standing in front of the portrait; and when he turned to me again, his face was quite red with sorrowful feeling—for he had been a favorite friend of my father, at Padua—and he exclaimed: "What a fortunate child art thou, little Margery!"

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I must have looked at him puzzled enough, for no one had ever esteemed me fortunate, unless it were Cousin Maud or the Waldstromers in the forest; and Master Paul must have observed my amazement, for he went on. "Yea, a happy child art thou; for so are all babes, maids or boys, who come into the world after their father's death." As I gazed into his face, no less astonished than before, he laid the gold knob of his cane against his nose and said: "Remember, little simpleton, the good God would not be what he is, would not be a man of honor—God forgive the words—if he did not take a babe whom He had robbed of its father before it had seen the light or had one proof of his love under His own special care. Mark what I say, child. Is it a small thing to be the ward of a guardian who is not only Almighty but true above all truth?" And those words have followed me through all my life till this very hour.

CHAPTER II.

Thus passed our childhood, as I have already said, in very great happiness; and by the time that my brothers had left the leading strings far behind them, and were studying their 'Donatus', Cousin Maud was teaching me to read and write, and that with much mirth and the most frolicsome ways. For instance, she would stamp four copies of each letter out of sweet honey-cakes, and when I knew them well she gave me these tiny little A. B. C. cakes, and one I ate myself, and gave the others to my brothers, or Susan, or my cousin. Often I put them in my satchel to carry them into the woods with me, and give them to my Cousin Gotz's favorite hound or his cross-beak; for he himself did not care for sweets. I shall have many things to tell of him and the forest; even when I was very small it was my greatest joy to be told that we were going to the woods, for there dwelt the dearest and most faithful of all our kinsmen: my uncle Waldstromer and his family. The stately hunting-lodge in which he dwelt as head forester of the Lorenzerwald in the service of the Emperor and of our town, had greater joys for me than any other, since not only were there the woods with all their delights and wonders, but also, besides many hounds, a number of strange beasts, and other pastimes such as a town child knows little of.

But what I most loved was the only son of my uncle and aunt Waldstromer, for whose dog I kept my cake letters; for though Cousin Gotz was older than I by eleven years, he nevertheless did not scorn me, but whenever I asked him to show me this or that, or teach me some light woodland craft, he would leave his elders to please me.

When I was six years old I went to the forest one day in a scarlet velvet hood, and after that he ever called me his little "Red riding-hood," and I liked to be called so; and of all the boys and lads I ever met among my brothers' friends or others I deemed none could compare with Gotz; my guileless heart was so wholly his that I always mentioned his name in my little prayers.

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Till I was nine we had gone out into the forest three or four times in each year to pass some weeks; but after this I was sent to school, and as Cousin Maud took it much to heart, because she knew that my father had set great store by good learning, we paid such visits more rarely; and indeed, the strict mistress who ruled my teaching would never have allowed me to break through my learning for pastime's sake.

Sister Margaret, commonly called the Carthusian nun, was the name of the singular woman who was chosen to be my teacher. She was at once the most pious and learned soul living; she was Prioress of a Carthusian nunnery and had written ten large choirbooks, besides others. Though the rule of her order forbade discourse, she was permitted to teach.

Oh, how I trembled when Cousin Maud first took me to the convent.

As a rule my tongue was never still, unless it were when Herdegen sang to me, or thought aloud, telling me his dreams of what he would do when he had risen to be chancellor, or captain-in chief of the Imperial army, and had found a count's or a prince's daughter to carry home to his grand castle. Besides, the wild wood was a second home to me, and now I was shut up in a convent where the silence about me crushed me like a too tight bodice. The walls of the vast antechamber, where I was left to wait, were covered with various texts in Latin, and several times repeated were these words under a skull.

"Bitter as it is to live a Carthusian, it is right sweet to die one."

There was a crucifix in a shrine, and so much bright red blood flowed from the Crown of Thorns and the Wounds that the Sacred Body was half covered with it, and I was sore afraid at the sight—oh I can find no words for it! And all the while one nun after another glided through the chamber in silence, and with bowed head, her arms folded, and never so much as lifting an eye to look at me.

It was in May; the day was fine and pleasant, but I began to shiver, and I felt as if the Spring had bloomed and gone, and I had suddenly forgotten how to laugh and be glad. Presently a cat stole in, leapt on to the bench where I sat, and arched her back to rub up against me; but I drew away, albeit I commonly laved to play with animals; for it glared at me strangely with its green eyes, and I had a sudden fear that it would turn into a werewolf and do me a hurt.

At length the door opened, and a woman in nun's weeds came in with my cousin; she was the taller by a head. I had never seen so tall a woman, but the nun was very thin, too, and her shoulders scarce broader than my own. Ere long, indeed, she stooped a good deal, and as time went on I saw her ever with her back bent and her head bowed. They said she had some hurt of the back-bone, and that she had taken this bent shape from writing, which she always did at night.

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At first I dared not look up in her face, for my cousin had told me that with her I must be very diligent, that idleness never escaped her keen eyes; and Gotz Waldstromer knew the meaning of the Latin motto with which she began all her writings: "Beware lest Satan find thee idle!" These words flashed through my mind at this moment; I felt her eye fixed upon me, and I started as she laid her cold, thin fingers on my brow and firmly, but not ungently, made me lift my drooping head. I raised my eyes, and how glad I was when in her pale, thin face I saw nothing but true, sweet good will.

She asked me in a low, clear voice, though hardly above a whisper, how old I was, what was my name, and what I had learnt already. She spoke in brief sentences, not a word too little or too many; and she ever set me my tasks in the same manner; for though, by a dispensation, she might speak, she ever bore in mind that at the Last Day we shall be called to account for every word we utter.

At last she spoke of my sainted parents, but she only said: "Thy father and mother behold thee ever; therefore be diligent in school that they may rejoice in thee.—Tomorrow and every morning at seven." Then she kissed me gently on my head, bowed to my cousin without a word, and turned her back upon us. But afterwards, as I walked on in the open air glad to be moving, and saw the blue sky and the green meadows once more, and heard the birds sing and the children at play, I felt as it were a load lifted from my breast; but I likewise felt the tall, silent nun's kiss, and as if she had given me something which did me honor.

Next morning I went to school for the first time; and whereas it is commonly the part of a child's godparents only to send it parcels of sweetmeats when it goes to school, I had many from various kinsfolks and other of our friends, because they pitied me as a hapless orphan.

I thought more of my riches, and how to dispense them, than of school and tasks; and as my cousin would only put one parcel into my little satchel I stuffed another—quite a little one, sent me by rich mistress Grosz, with a better kind of sweeties—into the wallet which hung from my girdle.

On the way I looked about at the folks to see if they observed how I had got on, and my little heart beat fast as I met my cousin Gotz in front of Master Pernhart's brass-smithy. He had come from the forest to live in the town, that he might learn book-keeping under the tax-gatherers. We greeted each other merrily, and he pulled my plait of hair and went on his way, while I felt as if this meeting had brought me good luck indeed.

In school of course I had to forget such follies at once; for among Sister Margaret's sixteen scholars I was far below most of them, not, indeed in stature, for I was well-grown for my years, but in age and learning and this I was to discover before the first hour was past.

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Fifteen of us were of the great city families, and this day, being the first day of the school-term, we were all neatly clad in fine woollen stuffs of Florence or of Flanders make, and colored knitted hose. We all had fine lace ruffs round the cuffs of our tight sleeves and the square cut fronts of our bodices; each little maid wore a silken ribbon to tie her plaits, and almost all had gold rings in her ears and a gold pin at her breast or in her girdle. Only one was in a simple garb, unlike the others, and she, notwithstanding her weed was clean and fitting, was arrayed in poor, grey home spun. As I looked on her I could not but mind me of Cinderella; and when I looked in her face, and then at her feet to see whether they were as neat and as little as in the tale, I saw that she had small ankles and sweet little shoes; and as for her face, I deemed I had never seen one so lovely and at the same time so strange to me. Yea, she seemed to have come from another world than this that I and the others lived in; for we were light or brown haired, with blue or grey eyes, and healthy red and white faces; while Cinderella had a low forehead and with big dark eyes strange, long, fine silky lashes; and heavy plaits of black hair hung down her back.

Ursula Tetzl was accounted by the lads the comeliest maiden of us all; and I knew full well that the flower she wore in her bodice had been given to her by my brother Herdegen early that morning, because he had chosen her for his "Lady," and said she was the fairest; but as I looked at her beside this stranger I deemed that she was of poorer stuff.

Moreover Cinderella was a stranger to me, and all the others I knew well, but I had to take patience for a whole hour ere I could ask who this fair Cinderella was, for Sister Margaret kept her eye on us, and so long as I was taught by her, no one at any time made so bold as to speak during lessons or venture on any pastime.

At last, in a few minutes for rest, I asked Ursula Tetzl, who had come to the convent school for a year past. She put out her red nether-lip with a look of scorn and said the new scholar had been thrust among us but did not belong to the like of us. Sister Margaret, though of a noble house herself, had forgot what was due to us and our families, and had taken in this grey bat out of pity. Her father was a simple clerk in the Chancery office and was accountant to the convent for some small wage. His name was Veit Spiesz, and she had heard her father say that the scribe was the son of a simple lute-player and could hardly earn enough to live. He had formerly served in a merchant's house at Venice. There he had wed an Italian woman, and all his children, which were many, had, like her, hair and eyes as black as the devil. For the sake of a "God repay thee!" this maid, named Ann, had been brought to mix with us daughters of noble houses. "But we will harry her out," said Ursula, "you will see!"

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This shocked me sorely, and I said that would be cruel and I would have no part in such a matter; but Ursula laughed and said I was yet but a green thing, and turned away to the window-shelf where all the new-comers had laid out their sweetmeats at the behest of the eldest or first of the class; for, by old custom, all the sweetmeats brought by the novices on the first day were in common.

All the party crowded round the heap of sweetmeats, which waxed greater and greater, and I was standing among the others when I saw that the scribe's daughter Ann, Cinderella, was standing lonely and hanging her head by the tiled stove at the end of the room. I forthwith hastened to her, pressed the little packet which Mistress Grosz had given me into her hand—for I had it still hidden in my poke—and, whispered to her: "I had two of them, little Ann; make haste and pour them on the heap."

She gave me a questioning look with her great eyes, and when she saw that I meant it truly she nodded, and there was something in her tearful look which I never can forget; and I mind, too, that when I passed the little packet into her hand it seemed that I, and not she, had received the favor.

She gave the sweetmeats she had taken from me to the eldest, and spoke not a word, and did not seem to mark that they all mocked at the smallness of the packet. But soon enough their scorn was turned to glee and praises; for out of Cinderella's parcel such fine sweetmeats fell on to the heap as never another one had brought with her, and among them was a little phial of attar of roses from the Levant.

At first Ann had cast an anxious look at me, then she seemed as though she cared not; but when the oil of roses came to light she took it firmly in her hand to give to me. But Ursula cried out: "Nay. Whatsoever the new-comers bring is for all to share in common!" Notwithstanding, Ann laid her hand on mine, which already held the phial, and said boldly: "I give this to Margery, and I renounce all the rest."

And there was not one to say her nay, or hinder her; and when she refused to eat with them, each one strove to press upon her so much as fell to her share.

When Sister Margaret came back into the room she looked to find us in good order and holding our peace; and while we awaited her Ann whispered to me, as though to put herself right in my eyes: "I had a packet of sweetmeats; but there are four little ones at home."

Cousin Maud was waiting at the convent gate to take me home. As I was setting forth at good speed, hand in hand with my new friend, she looked at the little maid's plain garb from top to toe, and not kindly. And she made me leave hold, but yet as though it were by chance, for she came between us to put my hood straight. Then she busied herself with my neckkerchief and whispered in my ear: "Who is that?"

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So I replied: "Little Ann;" and when she went on to ask who her father might be, I told her she was a scrivener's daughter, and was about to speak of her with hearty good will, when my cousin stopped me by saying to Ann: "God save you child; Margery and I must hurry." And she strove to get me on and away; but I struggled to be free from her, and cried out with the wilful pride which at that time I was wont to show when I thought folks would hinder that which seemed good and right in my eyes: "Little Ann shall come with us."

But the little maid had her pride likewise, and said firmly: "Be dutiful, Margery; I can go alone." At this Cousin Maud looked at her more closely, and thereupon her eyes had the soft light of good will which I loved so well, and she herself began to question Ann about her kinsfolk. The little maid answered readily but modestly, and when my Cousin understood that her father was a certain writer in the Chancery of whom she had heard a good report, she was softer and more gentle, so that when I took hold again of Ann's little hand she let it pass, and presently, at parting, kissed her on the brow and bid her carry a greeting to her worthy father.

Now, when I was alone with Cousin Maud and gave her to understand that I loved the scribe's little daughter and wished for no dearer friend, she answered gravely; "Little maids can hold no conversation with any but those whose mothers meet in each other's houses. Take patience till I can speak to Sister Margaret." So when my Cousin went out in the afternoon I tarried in the most anxious expectation; but she came home with famous good tidings, and thenceforward Ann was a friend to whom I clung almost as closely as to my brothers. And which of us was the chief gainer it would be hard to say, for whereas I found in her a trusted companion to whom I might impart every thing which was scarce worthy of my brothers' or my Cousin's ears, and foremost of all things my childish good-will for my Cousin Gotz and love of the Forest, to her the place in my heart and in our house were as a haven of peace when she craved rest after the heavy duties which, for all she was so young, she had already taken upon herself.

CHAPTER III.

True it is that the class I learnt in at the convent was under the strictest rule, and that my teacher was a Carthusian nun; and yet I take pleasure in calling to mind the years when my spirit enjoyed the benefit of schooling with friendly companions and by the side of my best friend. Nay, even in the midst of the silent dwelling of the speechless Sisters, right merry laughter might be heard during the hours of rest, and in spite of the thick walls of the class-room it reached the nuns' ears. Albeit at first I was stricken with awe, and shy in their presence, I soon became familiar with their strange manner of life, and there was many an one whom I learnt truly to love: with some, too, we could talk and jest right merrily, for they, to be sure, had good ears, and we, were not slow in learning the language of their eyes and fingers.

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As concerning the rule of silence no one, to my knowledge, ever broke it in the presence of us little ones, save only Sister Renata, and she was dismissed from the convent; yet, as I waxed older, I could see that the nuns were as fain to hear any tidings of the outer life that might find a way into the cloister as though there was nothing they held more dear than the world which they had withdrawn from by their own free choice.

For my part, I have ever been, and remain to the end, one of those least fitted for the Carthusian habit, notwithstanding that Sister Margaret would paint the beatitudes and the purifying power of her Order in fair and tempting colors. In the hours given up to sacred teaching, when she would shed out upon us the overflowing wealth and abundant grace of her loving spirit—insomuch that she won not less than four souls of our small number to the sisterhood—she was wont and glad to speak of this matter, and would say that there was a heavenly spirit living and moving in every human breast. That it told us, with the clear and holy voice of angels, what was divine and true, but that the noise of the world and our own vain imaginings sounded louder and would not suffer us to hear. But that they who took upon them the Carthusian rule and hearkened to it speechless, in a silent home, lending no ear to distant outer voices, but only to those within, would ere long learn to mark the heavenly voice with the inward ear and know its warning. That voice would declare to them the glory and the will of the Most High God, and reveal the things that are hidden in such wise as that even here below he should take part in the joys of paradise.

But, for all that I never was a Carthusian nun, and that my tongue was ever apt to run too freely, I conceive that I have found the Heavenly Spirit in the depths of my own soul and heard its voice; but in truth this has befallen me most clearly, and with most joy, when my heart has been most filled with that worldly love which the Carthusian Sisters shut out with a hundred doors. And again, when I have been moved by that love towards my neighbor which is called Charity, and wearied myself out for him, sparing nothing that was my own, I have felt those divine emotions plainly enough in my breast.

The Sister bid us to question her at all times without fear, and I was ever the foremost of us all to plague her with communings. Of a certainty she could not at all times satisfy my soul, which thirsted for knowledge, though she never failed to calm it; for I stood firm in the faith, and all she could tell me of God's revelation to man I accepted gladly, without doubt or cavil. She had taught us that faith and knowledge are things apart, and I felt that there could be no more peace for my soul if I suffered knowledge to meddle with faith.

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Led by her, I saw the Saviour as love incarnate; and that the love which He brought into the world was still and ever a living thing working after His will, I strove to confess with my thinking mind. But I beheld even the Archbishops and Bishops go forth to battle, and shed the blood of their fellow men with vengeful rage; I saw Pope excommunicate Pope—for the great Schism only came to an end while I was yet at school; peaceful cities in their sore need bound themselves by treaties, under our eyes, for defence against Christian knights and lords. The robber bands of the great nobles plundered merchants on the Emperor's highway, though they were of the same creed, while the citizens strove to seize the strongholds of the knights. We heard of many more letters of defiance than of peacemaking and friendship. Even the burgesses of our good Christian town—could not the love taught by the Redeemer prevail even among them? And as with the great so with the simple; for was it love alone that reigned among us maidens in a Christian school? Nay, verily; for never shall I forget how that Ursula Tetzl, and in fellowship with her a good half of the others, pursued my sweet, sage Ann, the most diligent and best of us all, to drive her out of our midst; but in vain, thanks to Sister Margaret's upright justice. Nay, the shrewish plotters were fain at last to see the scrivener's daughter uplifted to be our head, and this compelled them to bend their pride before her.

All this and much more I would say to the good Sister; nay, and I made so bold as to ask her whether Christ's behest that we should love our enemy were not too high for attainment by the spirit of man. This made her grave and thoughtful; yet she found no lack of comforting words, and said that the Lord had only showed the way and the end. That men had turned sadly from both; but that many a stream wandered through divers windings from the path to its goal, the sea, before it reached it; and that mankind was wondrous like the stream, for, albeit they even now rend each other in bloody fights, the day will come when foe shall offer to foe the palm of peace, and when there shall be but one fold on earth and one Shepherd.

But my anxious questioning, albeit I was but a child, had without doubt troubled her pure and truthful spirit. It was in Passion week, of the fifth year of my school-life—and ever through those years she had become more bent and her voice had sunk lower, so that many a time we found it hard to hear her—that it felt that she could no longer quit her cell; and she sent me a bidding to go to her bedside, and with me only two of us all: to wit my Ann, and Elsa Ebner, a right good child and a diligent bee in her work.

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And it befell that as Sister Margaret on her deathbed bid us farewell for ever, with many a God speed and much good council for the rest likewise, her heart waxed soft and she went on to speak of the love each Christian soul oweth to his neighbor and eke to his enemy. She fixed her eye in especial on me, and confessed with her pale lips that she herself had oftentimes found it hard to love evil-minded adversaries and those whose ways had been contrary to hers, as the law of the Saviour bid her. To those young ones among us who had made their minds up to take the veil she had, ere this, more especially shown what was needful; for their way lay plain before them, to walk as followers of Christ how bitter soever it might be to their human nature; but we were bound to live in the world, and she could but counsel us to flee from hate as the soul's worst foe and the most cunning of all the devils. But an if it should befall that our heart could not be subdued after a brave struggle to love such or such an one, then ought we to strive at least to respect all that was good and praiseworthy in him, inasmuch as we should ever find something worthy of honor even in the most froward and least pleasing to ourselves. And these words I have ever kept in mind, and many times have they given me pause, when the hot blood of the Schoppers has bid me stoop and pick up a stone to fling at my neighbor.

No longer than three days after she had thus bidden us to her side, Sister Margaret entered into her rest; she had been our strait but gentle teacher, and her learning was as far above that of most women of her time as the heavens are high; and as her mortal body lay, no longer bent, but at full length in the coffin, the saintly lady, who before she took the vows had been a Countess of Lupfen, belonged, meseemed, to a race taller than ours by a head. A calm, queenlike dignity was on her noble thin face; and, this corpse being the first, as it fell, that I had ever looked on, it so worked on my mind that death, of which I had heretofore been in terror, took the image in my young soul of a great Master to whom we must indeed bow, but who is not our foe.

I never could earn such praise as Ann, who was by good right at our head; notwithstanding I ever stood high. And the vouchers I carried home were enough to content Cousin Maud, for her great wish that her foster-children should out-do others was amply fulfilled by Herdegen, the eldest. He was indeed filled with sleeping learning, as it were, and I often conceived that he needed only fitting instruction and a fair start to wake it up. For even he did not attain his learning without pains, and they who deem that it flew into his mouth agape are sorely mistaken. Many a time have I sat by his side while he pored over his books, and I could see how he set to work in right earnest when once he had cast away sports and pastime. Thus with three mighty blows he would smite the nail home, which a weaker hand could not do with twenty. For whole weeks he might be idle and about divers matters which had no concern with schooling; and then, of a sudden, set to work; and it would so wholly possess his soul that he would not have seen a stone drop close at his feet.

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My second brother, Kunz, was not at all on this wise. Not that he was soft-witted; far from it. His head was as clear as ever another's for all matters of daily life; but he found it hard to learn scholarship, and what Herdegen could master in one hour, it took him a whole livelong day to get. Notwithstanding he was not one of the dunces, for he strove hard with all diligence, and rather would he have lost a night's sleep than have left what he deemed a duty only half done. Thus there were sore half-hours for him in school-time; but he was not therefor to be pitied, for he had a right merry soul and was easily content, and loved many things. Good temper and a high spirit looked out of his great blue eyes; aye, and when he had played some prank which was like to bring him into trouble he had a look in his eyes—a look that might have melted a stone to pity, much more good Cousin Maud.

But this did not altogether profit him, for after that Herdegen had discovered one day how easily Kunz got off chastisement he would pray him to take upon himself many a misdeed which the elder had done; and Kunz, who was soft-hearted, was fain rather to suffer the penalty than to see it laid on his well-beloved brother. Add to this that Kunz was a well-favored, slender youth; but as compared with Herdegen's splendid looks and stalwart frame he looked no more than common. For this cause he had no ill-wishers while our eldest's uncommon beauty in all respects, and his hasty temper, ever ready to boil over for good or evil, brought upon him much ill-will and misliking.

When Cousin Maud beheld how little good Kunz got out of his learning, in spite of his zeal, she was minded to get him a private governor to teach him; and this she did by the advice of a learned doctor of Church-law, Albrecht Fleischmann, the vicar and provost of Saint Sebald's and member of the Imperial council, because we Schoppers were of the parish of Saint Sebald's, to which church Albrecht and Friedrich Schopper, God rest their souls, had attached a rich prebendary endowment.

His Reverence the prebendary Fleischmann, having attended the Council at Costnitz, whither he was sent by the town elders with divers errands to the Emperor Sigismund, who was engaged in a disputation with John Huss the Bohemian schismatic, brought to my cousin's knowledge a governor whose name was Peter Pihringer, a native of Nuremberg. He it was who brought the Greek tongue, which was not yet taught in the Latin schools of our city, not in our house alone, but likewise into others; he was not indeed at all like the high-souled men and heroes of whom his Plutarch wrote; nay, he was a right pitiable little man, who had learnt nothing of life, though all the more out of books. He had journeyed long in Italy, from one great humanistic doctor to another, and while he had sat at their feet, feeding his soul with learning, his money had melted away in his hands—all that he had inherited

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from his father, a worthy tavern-keeper and master baker. Much of his substance he had lent to false friends never to see it more, and it would scarce be believed how many times knavish rogues had beguiled this learned man of his goods. At length he came home to Nuremberg, a needy traveller, entering the city by the same gate as that by which Huss had that same day departed, having tarried in Nuremberg on his way to Costnitz and won over divers of our learned scholars to his doctrine. Now, after Magister Peter had written a very learned homily against the said Hans Huss, full of much Greek— of which, indeed, it was reported that it had brought a smile to the dauntless Bohemian's lips in the midst of his sorrow—he found a patron in Doctor Fleischmann, who was well pleased with this tractate, and he thenceforth made a living by teaching divers matters. But he sped but ill, dwelling alone, inasmuch as he would forget to eat and drink and mislay or lose his hardly won wage. Once the town watch had to see him home because, instead of a book, he was carrying a ham which a gossip had given him; and another day he was seen speeding down the streets with his nightcap on, to the great mirth of the lads and lasses.

Notwithstanding he showed himself no whit unworthy of the high praise wherewith his Reverence the Prebendary had commended him, inasmuch as he was not only a right learned, but likewise a faithful and longsuffering teacher. But his wisdom profited Herdegen and Ann and me rather than Kunz, though it was for his sake that he had come to us; and as, touching this strange man's person, my cousin told me later that when she saw him for the first time she took such a horror of his wretched looks that she was ready to bid him depart and desire the Reverend doctor to send us another governor. But out of pity she would nevertheless give him a trial, and considering that I should ere long be fully grown, and that a young maid's heart is a strange thing, she deemed that a younger teacher might lead it into peril.

At the time when Master Pihringer came to dwell with us, Herdegen was already high enough to pass into the upper school, for he was first in his 'ordo'; but our guardian, the old knight Hans Im Hoff, of whom I shall have much to tell, held that he was yet too young for the risks of a free scholar's life in a high school away from home, and he kept him two years more in Nuremberg at the school of the Brethren of the Holy Ghost, albeit the teaching there was not of the best. At any rate Master Pihringer avowed that in all matters of learning we were out of all measure behind the Italians; and how rough and barbarous was the Latin spoken by the reverend Fathers and taught by them in the schools, I myself had later the means of judging.

Their way of imparting that tongue was in truth a strange thing; for to fix the quantity of the syllables in the learners' mind, they were made to sing verses in chorus, while one of them, on whose head Father Hieronymus would set a paper cap to mark his office, beat the measure with a wooden sword; but what pranks of mischief the unruly rout would be playing all the time Kunz could describe better than I can.

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The great and famous works of the Roman chroniclers and poets, which our Master had come to know well in Italy—having besides fine copies of them—were never heard of in the Fathers' school, by reason, that those writers had all been mere blind heathen; but, verily, the common school catechisms which were given to the lads for their instruction, contained such foolish and ill-conceived matters, that any sage heathen would have been ashamed of them. The highest exercise consisted of disputations on all manner of subtle and captious questions, and the Latin verses which the scholars hammered out under the rule of Father Jodocus were so vile as to rouse Magister Peter to great and righteous wrath. Each morning, before the day's tasks began, the fine old hymn *Salve Regina* was chanted, and this was much better done in the Brothers' school than in ever another, for those Monks gave especial heed to the practice of good music. My Herdegen profited much thereby, and he was the foremost of all the singing scholars. He likewise gladly and of his own free will took part in the exercises of the Alumni, of whom twelve, called the *Pueri*, had to sing at holy mass, and at burials and festivals, as well as in the streets before the houses of the great city families and other worthy citizens. The money they thus earned served to help maintain the poorer scholars, and to be sure, my brother was ready to forego his share; nay, and a great part of his own pocket-money went to those twelve, for among them were comrades he truly loved.

There was something lordly in my elder brother, and his fellows were ever subject to his will. Even at the shooting matches in sport he was ever chosen captain, and the singing *pueri* soon would do his every behest. Cousin Maud would give them free commons on many a Sunday and holy-day, and when they had well filled their hungry young crops at our table for the coming week of lean fare, they went out with us into the garden, and it presently rang with mirthful songs, Herdegen beating the measure, while we young maids joined in with a will.

For the most part we three: Ann, Elsa Ebner, and I—were the only maids with the lads, but Ursula Tetzl was sometimes with us, for she was ever fain to be where Herdegen was. And he had been diligent enough in waiting upon her ere ever I went to school. There was a giving and taking of flowers and nosegays, for he had chosen her for his Lady, and she called him her knight; and if I saw him with a red knot on his cap I knew right well it was to wear her color; and I liked all this child's-play myself right well, inasmuch as I likewise had my chosen color: green, as pertaining to my cousin in the forest.

But when I went to the convent-school all this was at an end, and I had no choice but to forego my childish love matters, not only for my tasks' sake, but forasmuch as I discerned that Gotz had a graver love matter on hand, and that such an one as moved his parents to great sorrow.

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The wench to whom he plighted his love was the daughter of a common craftsman, Pernhart the coppersmith, and when this came to my ears it angered me greatly; nay, and cost me bitter tears, as I told it to Ann. But ere long we were playing with our dollies again right happily.

I took this matter to heart nevertheless, more than many another of my years might have done; and when we went again to the Forest Lodge and I missed Gotz from his place, and once, as it fell, heard my aunt lamenting to Cousin Maud bitterly indeed of the sorrows brought upon her by her only son—for he was fully bent on taking the working wench to wife in holy wedlock—in my heart I took my aunt's part. And I deemed it a shameful and grievous thing that so fine a young gentleman could abase himself to bring heaviness on the best of parents for the sake of a lowborn maid.

After this, one Sunday, it fell by chance that I went to mass with Ann to the church of St. Laurence, instead of St. Sebald's to which we belonged. Having said my prayer, looking about me I beheld Gotz, and saw how, as he leaned against a pillar, he held his gaze fixed on one certain spot. My eyes followed his, and at once I saw whither they were drawn, for I saw a young maid of the citizen class in goodly, nay—in rich array, and she was herself of such rare and wonderful beauty that I myself could not take my eyes off her. And I remembered that I had met the wench erewhile on the feast-day of St. John, and that uncle Christian Pfinzing, my worshipful godfather, had pointed her out to Cousin Maud, and had said that she was the fairest maid in Nuremberg whom they called, and rightly, Fair Gertrude.

Now the longer I gazed at her the fairer I deemed her, and when Ann discovered to me, what I had at once divined, that this sweet maid was the daughter of Pernhart the coppersmith, my child's heart was glad, for if my cousin was without dispute the finest figure of a man in the whole assembly Fair Gertrude was the sweetest maid, I thought, in the whole wide world.

If it had been possible that she could be of yet greater beauty it would but have added to my joy. And henceforth I would go as often as I might to St. Laurence's, and past the coppersmith's house to behold Fair Gertrude; and my heart beat high with gladness when she one day saw me pass and graciously bowed to my silent greeting, and looked in my face with friendly inquiry.

After this when Gotz came to our house I welcomed him gladly as heretofore; and one day, when I made bold to whisper in his ear that I had seen his fair Gertrude, and for certain no saint in heaven could have a sweeter face than hers, he thanked me with a bright look and it was from the bottom of his soul that he said: "If you could but know her faithful heart of gold!"

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For all this Gotz was dearer to me than of old, and it uplifted me in my own conceit that he should put such trust in a foolish young thing as I was. But in later days it made me sad to see his frank and noble face grow ever more sorrowful, nay, and full of gloom; and I knew full well what pained him, for a child can often see much more than its elders deem. Matters had come to a sharp quarrel betwixt the son and the parents, and I knew my cousin well, and his iron will which was a by-word with us. And my aunt in the Forest was of the same temper; albeit her body was sickly, she was one of those women who will not bear to be withstood, and my heart hung heavy with fear when I conceived of the outcome of this matter.

Hence it was a boon indeed to me that I had my Ann for a friend, and could pour out to her all that filled my young soul with fears. How our cheeks would burn when many a time we spoke of the love which was the bond between Gotz and his fair Gertrude. To us, indeed, it was as yet a mystery, but that it was sweet and full of joy we deemed a certainty. We would have been fain to cry out to the Emperor and the world to take arms against the ruthless parents who were minded to tread so holy a blossom in the dust; but since this was not in our power we had dreams of essaying to touch the heart of my forest aunt, for she had but that one son and no daughter to make her glad, and I had ever been her favorite.

Thus passed many weeks, and one morning, when I came forth from school, I found Gotz with Cousin Maud who had been speaking with him, and her eyes were wet with tears; and I heard him cry out:

"It is in my mother's power to drive me to misery and ruin; but no power in heaven or on earth can drive me to break the oath and forswear the faith I have sworn!"

And his cheeks were red, and I had never seen him look so great and tall.

Then, when he saw me, he held out both hands to me in his frank, loving way, and I took them with all my heart. At this he looked into my eyes which were full of tears, and he drew me hastily to him and kissed me on my brow for the first time in all his life, with strange passion; and without another word he ran out of the house-door into the street. My cousin gazed after him, shaking her head sadly and wiping her eyes; but when I asked her what was wrong with my cousin she would give me no tidings of the matter.

The next day we should have gone out to the forest, but we remained at home; Aunt Jacoba would see no one. Her son had turned his back on his parents' dwelling, and had gone out as a stranger among strangers. And this was the first sore grief sent by Heaven on my young heart.

CHAPTER IV.

Many of the fairest memories of my childhood are linked with the house where Ann's parents dwelt. It was indeed but a simple home and not to be named with ours—the Schopperhof—for greatness or for riches; but it was a snug nest, and in divers ways so unlike ever another that it was full of pleasures for a child.

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Master Spiesz, Ann's father, had been bidden from Venice, where he had been in the service of the Mendel's merchant house, to become head clerk in Nuremberg, first in the Chamber of Taxes, and then in the Chancery, a respectable post of much trust. His father was, as Ursula Tetzl had said in the school, a luteplayer; but he had long been held the head and chief of teachers of the noble art of music, and was so greatly respected by the clergy and laity that he was made master and leader of the church choir, and even in the houses of the city nobles his teaching of the lute and of singing was deemed the best. He was a right well-disposed and cheerful old man, of a rare good heart and temper, and of wondrous good devices. When the worshipful town council bid his son Veit Spiesz come back to Nuremberg, the old man must need fit up a proper house for him, since he himself was content with a small chamber, and the scribe was by this time married to the fair Giovanna, the daughter of one of the Sensali or brokers of the German Fondaco, and must have a home and hearth of his own.

[Sensali—Agents who conducted all matters of business between the German and Venetian merchants. Not even the smallest affair was settled without their intervention, on account of the duties demanded by the Republic. The Fondaco was the name of the great exchange established by the Republic itself for the German trade.]

The musician, who had as a student dwelt in Venice, hit on the fancy that he would give his daughter-in-law a home in Nuremberg like her father's house, which stood on one of the canals in Venice; so he found a house with windows looking to the river, and which he therefore deemed fit to ease her homesickness. And verily the Venetian lady was pleased with the placing of her house, and yet more with the old man's loving care for her; although the house was over tall, and so narrow that there were but two windows on each floor. Thus there was no manner of going to and fro in the Spiesz's house, but only up and down. Notwithstanding, the Venetian lady loved it, and I have heard her say that there was no spot so sweet in all Nuremberg as the window seat on the second story of her house. There stood her spinning-wheel and sewing-box; and a bright Venice mirror, which, in jest, she would call "Dame Inquisitive," showed her all that passed on the river and the Fleisch-brucke, for her house was not far from those which stood facing the Franciscan Friars. There she ruled in peace and good order, in love and all sweetness, and her children thrive even as the flowers did under her hand: roses, auriculas, pinks and pansies; and whosoever went past the house in a boat could hear mirth within and the voice of song. For the Spiesz children had a fine ear for music, both from their grandsire and their mother, and sweet, clear, bell-like voices. My Ann was the queen of them all, and her nightingale's throat drew even Herdegen to her with great power.

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Only one of the scribe's children, little Mario, was shut out from the world of sound, for he was a deaf-mute born; and when Ann tarried under our roof, rarely indeed and for but a short while, her stay was brief for his sake; for she tended him with such care and love as though she had been his own mother. Albeit she thereby was put to much pains, these were as nothing to the heartfelt joys which the love and good speed of this child brought her; for notwithstanding he was thus born to sorrow, by his sister's faithful care he grew a happy and thankful creature. Ofttimes my Cousin Maud was witness to her teaching of her little brother, and all Ann did for the child seemed to her so pious and so wonderful, that it broke down the last bar that stood in the way of our close fellowship. And Ann's well-favored mother likewise won my cousin's good graces, albeit she was swift to mark that the Italian lady could fall in but ill with German ways, and in especial with those of Nuremberg, and was ever ready to let Ann bear the burthen of the household.

All our closest friends, and foremost of these my worshipful godfather Uncle Christian Pfinzing, ere long truly loved my little Ann; and of all our fellows I knew of only one who was ill-disposed towards her, and that was Ursula Tetzl, who marked, with ill-cloaked wrath, that my brother Herdegen cared less and less for her, and did Ann many a little courtesy wherewith he had formerly favored her. She could not dissemble her anger, and when my eldest brother waited on Ann on her name day with the 'pueri' to give her a 'serenata' on the water, whereas, a year ago, he had done Ursula the like honor, she fell upon my friend in our garden with such fierce and cruel words that my cousin had to come betwixt them, and then to temper my great wrath by saying that Ursula was a motherless child, whose hasty ways had never been bridled by a loving hand.

As I mind me now of those days I do so with heartfelt thankfulness and joy. To be sure it but ill-pleased our grand-uncle and guardian, the knight Im Hoff, that Cousin Maud should suffer me, the daughter of a noble house, to mix with the low born race of a simple scrivener; but in sooth Ann was more like by far to get harm in our house, among my brethren and their fellows, than I in the peaceful home by the river, where none but seemly speech was ever heard and sweet singing, nor ever seen but labor and good order and content.

Right glad was I to tarry there; but yet how good it was when Ann got leave to come to us for the whole of Sunday from noon till eventide; when we would first sit and chatter and play alone together, and talk over all we had done in school; thereafter we had my brothers with us, and would go out to take the air under the care of my cousin or of Magister Peter, or abide at home to sing or have merry pastime.

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After the Ave Maria, the old organist, Adam Heyden, Ann's grand uncle, would come to seek her, and many sweet memories dwell in my mind of that worthy and gifted man, which I might set down were it not that I am Ann's debtor for so many things that made my childhood happy. It was she, for a certainty, who first taught me truly to play; for whereas my dolls, and men-at-arms and shop games, albeit they were small, were in all points like the true great ones, she had but a staff of wood wrapped round with a kerchief which she rocked in her arms for a babe; and when she played a shop game with the little ones, she marked stones and leaves to be their wares and their money, and so found far greater pastime than we when we played with figs and almonds and cloves out of little wooden chests and linen-cloth sacks, and weighed them with brass weights on little scales with a tongue and string. It was she who brought imagination to bear on my pastimes, and many a time has she borne my fancy far enough from the Pegnitz, over seas and rivers to groves of palm and golden fairy lands.

Our fellowship with my brethren was grateful to her as it was to me; but meseems it was a different thing in those early years from what it was in later days. While I write a certain summer day from that long past time comes back to my mind strangely clear. We had played long enough in our chamber, and we found it too hot in the loft under the roof, where we had climbed on to the beams, which were great, so we went down into the garden. Herdegen had quitted us in haste after noon, and we found none but Kunz, who was shaping arrows for his cross-bow. But he ere long threw away his knife and came to be with us, and as he was well-disposed to Ann as being my friend, he did his best to make himself pleasing, or at least noteworthy in her sight. He stood on his head and then climbed to the top of the tallest fruit-tree and flung down pears, but they smote her head so that she cried out; then he turned a wheel on his hands and feet, and a little more and his shoe would hit her in the face; and when he marked that he was but troubling us, he went away sorrowful, but only to hide behind a bush, and as we went past, to rush out on a sudden and put us in fear by wild shouting.

My eldest brother well-nigh affrighted us more when he presently joined us, for his hair was all unkempt and his looks wild. He was now of an age when men-children deem maids to be weak and unfit for true sport, but nevertheless strive their utmost to be marked and chosen by them. Hence Ursula's good graces, which she had shown right openly, had for a long while greatly pleased him, but by this time he was weary of her and began to conceive that good little Ann, with her nightingale's voice, was more to his liking.

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After hastily greeting us, he forthwith made us privy to an evil matter. One of his fellowship, Laurence Abenberger, the son of an apothecary, who was diligent in school, and of a wondrous pious spirit, gave up all his spare time to all manner of magic arts, and albeit he was but seventeen years of age, he had already cast nativities for many folks and for us maids, and had told us of divers ill-omens for the future. This Abenberger, a little fellow of no note, had found in some ancient papers a recipe for discovering treasure, and had told the secret to Herdegen and some other few. To begin, they went at his bidding to the graveyard with him, and there, at the full moon, they poured hot lead into the left eye-hole of a skull and made it into arrow-heads. Yesternight they had journeyed forth as far as Sinterspuhel, and there, at midnight, had stood at the cross-roads and shot with these same arrow-heads to the four quarters, to the end that they might dig for treasure wheresoever the shafts might fall. But they found no treasure, but a newly-buried body, and on this had taken to their heels in all haste. Herdegen only had tarried behind with Abenberger, and when he saw that there were deep wounds on the head of the dead man his intent was to carry the tidings to the justices in council; nevertheless he would delay a while, because Abenberger had besought him to keep silence and not to bring him to an evil end. But as he had gone past the school of arms he had learnt that an apprentice was missing, and that it was feared lest he had been waylaid by pillagers, or had fallen into evil hands; so he now deemed it his plain duty to keep no longer silence concerning the finding of the body, and desired to be advised by me and Ann. While I, for my part, shortly and clearly declared that information must at once be laid before his worship the Mayor, a strange trembling fell on Ann, and notwithstanding she could not say me nay, she was in such fear that grave mischief might overtake Herdegen by reason of his thoughtless deed, that tears ran in streams down her cheeks, and it cost me great pains or ever I could comfort her, so brave and reasonable as she commonly was. But Herdegen was greatly pleased by her too great terrors; and albeit he laughed at her, he called her his faithful, fearful little hare, and stuck the pink he wore in his jerkin into her hair. At this she was soon herself again; she counselled him forthwith to do that it was his duty to do; and when thereafter the authorities had made inquisition, it came to light that our lads had in truth come upon the body of the slain apprentice. And though Herdegen did his best to keep silence as touching Abenberger's evildoings, they nevertheless came out through other ways, and the poor wight was dismissed from the school.

By the end of two years after this, matters had changed in our household.

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The twelve 'pueri' had been our guests at dinner, and were in the garden singing merry rounds well known to us, and I joined in, with Ann and Ursula Tetzl. Now, while Herdegen beat the time, his ear was intent on Ann's singing, as though there were revelation on her lips; and his well-beloved companion, Heinrich Trardorf, who erewhile had, with due modesty, preferred me, Margery, seemed likewise well affected to her singing; and when we ceased he fell into eager talk with her, for he had bewailed to her that, albeit he loved me well, as being the son of simple folk he might never lift up his eyes so high.

Herdegen's eyes rested on the twain with some little wrath; then he hastily got up! He snatched the last of Cousin Maud's precious roses from her favorite bush and gave them to Ursula, and then waited on her as though she were the only maid there present. But ere long her father came to fetch her, and so soon as she had departed, beaming, with her roses, Herdegen hastily came to me and, without deeming Ann worthy to be looked at even, bid me good even. I held his hand and called to her to come to me, to help me hinder him from departing, inasmuch as one of the pueri was about to play the lute for the rest to dance. She came forward as an honest maid should, looked up at him with her great eyes, and besought him full sweetly to tarry with us.

He pointed with his hand to Trardorf and answered roughly: "I care not to go halves!" And he turned to go to the gate.

Ann took him by the hand, and without a word of his ways with Ursula, not in chiding but as in deep grief, she said: "If you depart, you do me a hurt. I have no pleasure but when you are by, and what do I care for Heinrich?"

This was all he needed; his eye again met hers with bright looks, and from that hour of our childhood she knew no will but his.

From that hour likewise Ann held off from all other lads, and when he was by it seemed as though she had no eyes nor ears save for him and me alone. To Kunz she paid little heed; yet he never failed to wait on her and watch to do her service, as though she were the daughter of some great lord, and he no more than her page.

Ann freely owned to me that she held Herdegen to be the noblest youth on earth, nor could I marvel, when I was myself of the same mind. What should I know, when I was still but fourteen and fifteen years old, of love and its dangers? I had felt such love for Gotz as Ann for my elder brother, and as I had then been glad that my dear Cousin had won the love of so fair a maid as Gertrude, I likewise believed that Ann would some day be glad if Herdegen should plight his troth to a fair damsel of high degree. Hence I did all that in me lay to bring them together whenever it might be, and in truth this befell often enough without my aid; for not music alone was a bond between them, nor yet that Herdegen and I taught her to ride on a horse, on the sandy way behind our horse-

stalls —the Greek lessons for which Magister Peter had come into the household were a plea on which they passed many an hour together.

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I was slow to learn that tongue; but Ann's head was not less apt than my brother's, and he was eager and diligent to keep her good speed at the like mark with his own, as she was so quick to apprehend. Thus both were at last forward enough to put Greek into German, and then Magister Peter was bidden to lend them his aid. Now, the change in the worthy man, after eating for four years at our table, was such that many an one would have said it was a miracle. At his first coming to us he himself said he weened he was a doomed son of ill-luck, and he scarce dared look man or woman in the face; and what a good figure he made now, notwithstanding the divers pranks played on his simplicity by my brothers and their fellows, nay, and some whiles by me.

Many an one before this has marked that the god Amor is the best schoolmaster; and when our Magister had learnt to stoop less, nay almost to hold himself straight, when as now, he wore his good new coat with wide hanging sleeves, tight-fitting hose, a well-stiffened, snow-white collar, and even a smart black feather in his beretta, when he not alone smoothed his hair but anointed it, all this, in its beginnings, was by reason of his great and true love for my Ann, while she was yet but a child.

My cautious Cousin Maud had, it is true, done the blind god of Love good service; for many a time she would, with her own hand, set some matter straight which the Magister had put on all askew, and on divers occasions would give him a piece of fine cloth, and with it the cost of the tailor's work, in bright new coin wrapped in colored paper. She brought him to order and to keep his hours, and when grave speech availed not she could laugh at him with friendly mockery, such as hurts no man, inasmuch as it is the outcome of a good heart. Thus it was, that, by the time when Herdegen was to go to the high school at Erfurt, Magister Peter was not strangely unlike other learned men of his standing; and when it fell that he had to discourse of the great masters of learning in Italy, or of the glorious Greek writers, I have seen his eye light up like that of a youth.

Our guardian kept watch over my brothers' speed in learning. The old knight Im Hoff was a somewhat stern man and shy of his kind, but scarce another had such great wealth, or was so highly respected in our town. He was our grand-uncle, as old Adam Heyden was Ann's, and two men less alike it would be hard to find.

When we were bid to pay our devoir to my guardian it was seldom done but with much complaining and churlishness; whereas it was ever a festival to be suffered to go with Ann to the organist's house. He dwelt in a fine lodging high up in the tower above the city, and he could look down from his windows, as God Almighty looks down on the earth from the bright heavens, over Nuremberg, and the fortress on the hill, the wide ring of forest which guards it on the north and east and south, the meadows and villages stretching between

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the woods, and the walls and turrets of our good city, and the windings of the river Pegnitz. He loved to boast that he was the first to bid the sun welcome and the last to bid it good-night; and perchance it was to the light, of which he had so goodly a share, that his spirit owed its ever gay good-cheer. He was ever ready with a jest and some little gift for us children; and, albeit these were of little money's worth, they brought us much joy. And indeed there was never another man in Nuremberg who had given away so many tokens and made so many glad hearts and faces thereby as Adam Heyden. True, indeed, after a short but blessed wedded life he had been left a widower and childless, and had no care to save for his heirs; and yet Gottfried Spiesz, Ann's grandfather, was in the right when he said that he had more children than ever another in Nuremberg, inasmuch as that he was like a father to every lad and maid in the town.

When he walked down the street all the little ones were as glad though they had met Christ the Lord or Saint Nicholas; and as they hung on to his long gown with the left hand, with the right they crammed their mouths with the apples or cakes whereof his pockets seemed never to be empty.

But Master Adam had his weak side, and there were many to blame him for that he was over fond of good liquor. Albeit he did his drinking after a manner of his own, in no unseemly wise. To wit, on certain year-days he would tarry alone in his tower, and his lamp might be seen gleaming till midnight. There he would sit alone, with his wine jar and cup, and he would drink the first and second and third in silence, to the good speed of Elsa, his late departed wife. After that he began to sing in a low voice, and before each fresh cup as he raised it he cried aloud "Prosit, Adam!" and when it was empty: "I Heartily thank you, Heyden!"

Thus would he go on till he had drunk out divers jugs, and the tower seemed to be spinning round him. Then to his bed, where he would dream of his Elsa and the good old days, the folks he had loved, his youthful courtships, and all the fine and wondrous things which his lonely drinking bout had brought to his inward eye. Next morning he was faithfully at his duty. Common evenings, which were of no mark to him, he spent with the Spiesz folks in the little house by the river, or else in the Gentlemen's tavern in the Frohnwage; for albeit none met there but such as belonged to the noble families of the town, and learned men, and artists of mark, Adam Heyden the organist was held as their equal and a right welcome guest.

And now as touching our grand-uncle and guardian the Knight Sir Sebald Im Hoff.

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Many an one will understand how that my fear of him grew greater after that I one evening by mishap chanced to go into his bed chamber, and there saw a black coffin wherein he was wont to sleep each night, as it were in a bed. It was easy to see in the man himself that some deep sorrow or heavy sin gnawed at his heart, and nevertheless he was one of the stateliest old gentlemen I have met in a long life. His face seemed as though cast in metal, and was of wondrous fine mould, but deadly and unchangeably pale. His snowy hair fell in long locks over his collar of sable fur, and his short beard, cut in a point, was likewise of a silver whiteness. When he stood up he was much taller than common, and he walked with princelike dignity. For many years he had ceased to go to other folks' houses, nevertheless many others sought him out. In every family of rank, excepting in his own, the Im Hoff family, wherever there was a manchild or a maid growing up they were brought to him; but of them all there were but two who dare come nigh him without fear. These were my brother Herdegen and Ursula Tetzels; and throughout my young days she was the one soul whom mine altogether shut out.

Notwithstanding I must for justice sake confess that she grew up to be a well-favored damsel. Besides this, she was the only offspring of a rich and noble house. She went from school a year before Ann and I did, and after that her father, a haughty and eke a surly man, who had long since lost his wife, her mother, prided himself on giving her such attires as might have beseemed the daughter of a Count or a Prince-Elector. And the brocades and fine furs and costly chains and clasps she wore graced her lofty, round shape exceeding well, and she lorded it so haughtily in them that the worshipful town-council were moved to put forth an order against over much splendor in women's weed.

She was, verily and indeed, the last damsel I could have wished to see brought home as mistress of the "Schopperhof," and nevertheless I knew full well, before my brother went away to the high school, that our grand uncle was counting on giving her and him to each other in marriage. Master Tetzels likewise would point to them when they stood side by side, so high and goodly, as though they were a pair; and this old man, whose face was as grey and cold and hueless as all about his daughter was bright and gay, would demean himself with utter humbleness and homage to the lad who scarce showed the first down on his lip and chin, by reason that he looked upon him, who was his granduncle's heir, as his own son-in-law.

It was, to be sure, known to many that rich old Im Hoff was minded to leave great endowments to the Holy Church, and meseemed that it was praiseworthy and wise that he should do all that in him lay to gain the prayers of the Blessed Virgin and the dear Saints; for the evil deed which had turned him from a dashing knight into a lonely penitent might well weigh in torment on his poor soul. I will here shortly rehearse all I myself knew of that matter.

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In his young days my grand uncle had carried his head high indeed, and deemed so greatly of his scutcheon and his knightly forbears that he scorned all civic dignities as but a small matter. Then, whereas in the middle of the past century all towns were forbid by imperial law to hold tournaments, he went to Court, and had been dubbed knight by the Emperor Charles, and won fame and honor by many a shrewd lance-thrust. His more than common manly beauty gained him favor with the ladies, and since he preferred what was noble and knightly to all other graces he would wed no daughter of Nuremberg but the penniless child of Baron von Frauentrift. But my grand-uncle had made an evil choice; his wife was high-tempered and filled full of conceits. When princes and great lords came into our city, they were ever ready to find lodging in the great and wealthy house of the Im Hoffs; but then she would suffer them to pay court to her, and grant them greater freedom than becomes the decent honor of a Nuremberg citizen's hearth. Once, then, when my lord the duke of Bavaria lay at their house with a numerous fellowship, a fine young count, who had courted my grand uncle's wife while she was yet a maid, fanned his jealousy to a flame; and, one evening, at a late hour, while his wife was yet not come home from seeing some friends, as it fell he heard a noise and whispering of voices, beneath their lodging, in the courtyard wherein all these folks' chests and bales were bestowed. He rushed forth, beside himself; and whereas he shouted out to the courtyard and got no reply, he thrust right and left at haphazard with his naked sword among the chests whence he had heard the voices, and a pitiful cry warned him that he had struck home. Then there came the wailing of a woman; and when the squires and yeomen came forth with torches and lanterns, he could see that he had slain Ludwig Tetzels, Ursula's uncle, a young unwedded man. He had stolen into the courtyard to hold a tryst with the fair daughter of the master-weigher in the Im Hoffs' house of trade, and the loving pair, in their fear of the master, had not answered his call, but had crept behind the baggage. Thus, by ill guidance, had my grand-uncle become a murderer, and the judges broke their staff over him; albeit, since he freely confessed the deed of death, and had done it with no evil intent, they were content to make him pay a fine in money. But some said that they likewise commanded the hangman to nail up a gallows-cord behind his house door; others, rather, that he had taken upon himself the penance of ever wearing such a cord about his neck day and night.

As touching the Tetzels themselves, they made no claim for blood; and for this he was so thankful to them, all his life through, that he gave them his word that he would name Ursula in his testament; whereas he ever hated the Im Hoffs to the end, after that they, on whom he had brought so much vexation by his wilful and haughty temper, took counsel after the judgment as to whether it behooved them not to strip him of their good old name and thrust him forth from their kinship. Four only, as against three, spoke in his favor, and this his haughty spirit could so ill endure that never an Im Hoff dared cross his threshold, though one and another often strove to win back his favor.

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He had little comfort from his wife in his grief, for when he was found guilty of manslaughter she quitted him to return to the Emperor's court at Prague, and there she died after a wild hunt which she had followed in King Wenzel's train, while she was not yet past her youth.

CHAPTER V.

Three years were past since Herdegen had first gone to the High School, and we had never seen him but for a few weeks at the end of the first year, when he was on his way from Erfurt to Padua. In the letters he wrote from thence there was ever a greeting for Mistress Anna, and often there would be a few words in Greek for her and me; yet, as he knew full well that she alone could crack such nuts, he bid me to the feast only as the fox bid the stork. While he was with us he ever demeaned himself both to me and to her as a true and loving brother, when he was not at the school of arms proving to the amazement of the knights and nobles his wondrous skill in the handling of the sword, which he had got in the High School. And during this same brief while he at divers times had speech of Ursula, but he showed plainly enough that he had lost all delight in her.

He had found but half of what he sought at Erfurt, but deemed that he was ripe to go to Padua; for there, alone, he thought—and Magister Peter said likewise—could he find the true grist for his mill. And when he told us of what he hoped to gain at that place we could but account his judgment good, and wish him good speed and that he might come home from that famous Italian school a luminary of learning. When, at his departing, I saw that Ann was in no better heart than I was, but looked right doleful, I thought it was by reason of the sickness which for some while past had now and again fallen on her good father. Kunz likewise had quitted school, and he could not complain that learning weighed too heavily on his light heart and merry spirit. He was now serving his apprenticeship in our grand uncle's business, and whereas the traffic was mainly with Venice he was to learn the Italian tongue with all diligence. Our Magister, who was well-skilled in it, taught him therein, and was, as heretofore, well content to be with us. Cousin Maud would never suffer him to depart, for it had grown to be a habit with her to care for him; albeit many an one can less easily suffer the presence of a man who needs help, than of one who is himself of use and service.

Master Peter himself, under pretence of exercising himself in the Italian tongue, would often wait upon Dame Giovanna. We on our part would remember the fable of the Sack and the Ass and laugh; while Ann slipped off to her garret chamber when the Magister was coming; and she could never fail to know of it, for no son of man ever smote so feebly as he with the knocker on the door plate.

Thus the years in which we grew from children into maidens ran past in sheer peace and gladness. Cousin Maud allowed us to have every pastime and delight; and if at

times her face was less content, it was only by reason that I craved to wear a longer kirtle than she deemed fitting for my tender years, or that I proved myself over-rash in riding in the riding school or the open country.

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My close friendship with Ann brought me to mark and enjoy many other and better things; and in this I differed from the maidens of some noble families, who, to this day, sit in stalls of their own in church, apart from such as have no scutcheon of arms. But indeed Ann was an honored guest in many a lordly house wherein our school and playmates dwelt.

In summer days we would sometimes go forth to the farm belonging to us Schoppers outside the town, or else to Jorg Stromer our worthy cousin at the mill where paper is made; and at holy Whitsuntide we would ride forth to the farm at Laub, which his sister Dame Anna Borchtlin had by inheritance of her father. Nevertheless, and for all that there was to see and learn at the paper-mill, and much as I relished the good fresh butter and the black home-bread and the lard cakes with which Dame Borchtlin made cheer for us, my heart best loved the green forest where dwelt our uncle Conrad Waldstromer, father to my cousin Gotz, who still was far abroad.

Now, since I shall have much to tell of this well-beloved kinsman and of his kith and kin, I will here take leave to make mention that all the Stromers were descended from a certain knight, Conrad von Reichenbach, who erewhile had come from his castle of Kammerstein, hard by Schwabach, as far forth as Nuremberg. There had he married a daughter of the Waldstromers, and the children and grandchildren, issue of this marriage, were all named Stromer or Waldstromer. And the style Wald—or wood—Stromer is to be set down to the fact that this branch had, from a long past time, heretofore held the dignity of Rangers of the great forest which is the pride of Nuremberg to this very day. But at the end of the last century the municipality had bought the offices and dignities which were theirs by inheritance, both from Waldstromer and eke from Koler the second ranger; albeit the worshipful council entrusted none others than a Waldstromer or a Koler with the care of its woods; and in my young days our Uncle Conrad Waldstromer was chief Forester, and a right bold hunter.

Whensoever he crossed our threshold meseemed as though the fresh and wholesome breath of pine-woods was in the air; and when he gave me his hand it hurt mine, so firm and strong and loving withal was his grip, and that his heart was the same all men might see. His thick, red-gold hair and beard, streaked with snowy white, his light, flax-blue eyes and his green forester's garb, with high tan boots and a cap of otter fur garnished with the feather of some bird he had slain—all this gave him a strange, gladsome, and gaudy look. And as the stalwart man stepped forth with his hanger and hunting-knife at his girdle, followed by his hounds and badger-dogs, other children might have been affrighted, but to me, betimes, there was no dearer sight than this of the terrible-looking forester, who was besides Cousin Gotz's father.

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Well, on the second Sunday after Whitsunday, when the apple blossoms were all shed, my uncle came in to town to bid me and Cousin Maud to the forest lodge once more; for he ever dwelt there from one Springtide till the next, albeit he was under a bond to the Council to keep a house in the city. I was nigh upon seventeen years old; Ann was past seventeen already, and I would have expressed my joy as freely as heretofore but that somewhat lay at my heart, and that was concerning my Ann. She was not as she was wont to be; she was apt to suffer pains in her head, and the blood had fled from her fresh cheeks. Nay, at her worst she was all pale, and the sight of her thus cut me to the heart, so I gladly agreed when Cousin Maud said that the little house by the river was doing her a mischief, and the grievous care of her deaf-mute brother and the other little ones, and that she lacked fresh air. And indeed her own parents did not fail to mark it; but they lacked the means to obey the leech's orders and to give Ann the good chance of a change to fresh forest air.

When my uncle had given his bidding, I made so bold as to beseech him with coaxing words that he would bid her go with me. And if any should deem that it was but a light matter to ask of a good-hearted old man that he should harbor a fair young maid for a while, in a large and wealthy house, he will be mistaken, inasmuch as my uncle was wont, at all times and in all places, to have regard first to his wife's goodwill and pleasure.

This lady was a Behaim, of the same noble race as my mother, whom God keep; and what great pride she set on her ancient and noble blood she had plainly proven in the matter of her son's love-match. This matter had in truth no less heavily stricken his father's soul, but he had held his peace, inasmuch as he could never bring himself to play the lord over his wife; albeit he was in other matters a strict and thorough man; nay a right stern master, who ruled the host of foresters and hewers, warders and beaters, bee-keepers and woodmen who were under him with prudence and straitness. And yet my aunt Jacoba was a feeble, sickly woman, who rarely went forth to drink in God's fresh air in the lordly forest, having lost the use of her feet, so that she must be borne from her couch to her bed.

My uncle knew her full well, and he knew that she had a good and pitiful heart and was minded to do good to her kind; nevertheless he said his power over her would not stretch to the point of making her take a scrivener's child into her noble house, and entertaining her as an equal. Thus he withstood my fondest prayers, till he granted so much as that Ann should come and speak for herself or ever he should leave the house.

When she had hastily greeted my cousin and me, and Cousin Maud had told her who my uncle was, she went up to him in her decent way, made him a curtesy, and held out her hand, no whit abashed, while her great eyes looked up at him lovingly, inasmuch as she had heard all that was good of him from me.

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Thereupon I saw in the old forester's face that he was "on the scent" of my Ann—to use his own words—so I took heart again and said: "Well, little uncle?"

"Well," said he slowly and doubtingly. But he presently uplifted Ann's chin, gazed her in the face, and said: "To be sure, to be sure! Peaches get they red cheeks better where we dwell than here among stone walls." And he pulled down his belt and went on quickly, as though he weened that he might have to rue his hasty words: "Margery is to be our welcome guest out in the forest; and if she should bring thee with her, child, thou'lt be welcome."

Nor need I here set down how gladly the bidding was received; and Ann's parents were more than content to let her go. Thenceforth had Cousin Maud, and our house maids, and Beata the tailor-wife, enough on their hands; for they deemed it a pleasure to take care to outfit Ann as well as me, since there were many noble guests at the forest lodge, especially about St. Hubert's day, when there was ever a grand hunt.

Dame Giovanna, Ann's mother, was in truth at all times choicely clad, and she ever kept Ann in more seemly and richer habit than others of her standing; yet she was greatly content with the summer holiday raiment which Cousin Maud had made for us. Likewise, for each of us, a green riding habit, fit for the forest, was made of good Florence cloth; and if ever two young maids rode out with glad and thankful hearts into the fair, sunny world, we were those maids when, on Saint Margaret's day in the morning—[The 13th July, old style.]—we bid adieu and, mounted on our saddles, followed Balzer, the old forester, whom my uncle had sent with four men at arms on horseback to attend us, and two beasts of burthen to carry Susan and the "woman's gear."

As we rode forth at this early hour, across the fields, and saw the lark mount singing, we likewise lifted up our voices, and did not stop singing till we entered the wood. Then in the dewy silence our minds were turned to devotion and a Sabbath mood, and we spoke not of what was in our minds; only once—and it seems as I could hear her now—these simple words rose from Ann's heart to her lips: "I am so thankful!"

And I was thankful at that hour, with my whole heart; and as the great hills of the Alps cover their heads with pure snow as they get nearer to heaven, so should every good man or woman, when in some happy hour he feels God's mercy nigh him, deck his heart with pure and joyful thanksgiving.

At last we drew up on a plot shut in by tall trees, in front of a bee-keeper's hut, and while we were there, refreshing on some new milk and the store Cousin Maud had put into our saddle bags, we heard the barking of hounds and a noise of hoofs, and ere long Uncle Conrad was giving us a welcome.

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He was right glad to let us wait upon him and fell to with a will; but he made us set forth again sooner than was our pleasure, and as we fared farther the old forest rang with many a merry jest and much laughter. To Ann it seemed that my uncle was but now opening her eyes and ears to the mystery of the forest, which Gotz had shown me long years ago. How many a bird's pipe did he teach her to know which till now she had never marked! And each had its special significance, for my uncle named them all by their names and described them; whereas his son could copy them so as to deceive the ear, twittering, singing, whistling and calling, each after his kind. To the end that Ann and my uncle should learn to come together closely I put no word into his teaching.

Not till we came to the skirts of the clearing, where the forest lodge came in sight against the screen of trees, was my uncle silent; then, while he lifted me from the saddle, he asked me in a low tone if I had already warned Ann of my aunt's strange demeanor. This I could tell him I had indeed done; nevertheless I saw by his face that he was not easy till he could lead Ann to his wife, and had learnt that the maid had found such favor in her eyes as, in truth, nor he nor I were so bold as to hope. But with what sweet dignity did the clerk's daughter kiss the somewhat stern lady's hand—as I had bidden her, and how modestly, though with due self-respect, did she go through Dame Jacoba's inquisition. For my part I should have lost patience all too soon, if I had thus been questioned touching matters concerning myself alone; but Ann kept calm till the end, and at the same time she spoke as openly as though the inquisitor had been her own mother. This, in truth, somewhat moved me to fear; for, albeit I likewise cling to the truth, meseemed it showed it a lack of prudence and foresight to discover so freely and frankly all that was poor or lacking in her home; inasmuch as there was much, even there, which could not be better or more seemly in the richest man's dwelling. In truth, to my knowledge there was not the smallest thing in the little house by the river of which a virtuous damsel need feel ashamed. But at night, in our bed-chamber, Ann confessed to me that she had taken it as a favor of fortune that she should be allowed, at once, to lay bare to the great lady who had been so unwilling to open her doors to her, exactly what she was and to whom she belonged.

"To be deemed unworthy of heed by my lady hostess," said she, "would have been hard to bear; but whereas she truly cared to question me, a simple maid, and I have nothing hid, all is clear and plain betwixt us."

My aunt doubtless thought in like manner; for she was a truthful woman, and Ann's honest, firm, and withal gentle way had won her heart. And yet, since she was strait in her opinions, and must deem it unseemly in me and my kinsfolk to receive a maid of lower birth as one of ourselves, she stoutly avowed that Ann's worthy father, as being chief clerk in the Chancery, might claim to be accounted one of the Council. Never, as she said to my uncle, would she have suffered a workingman's daughter to cross her threshold, whereas she had a large place, not alone at her table but in her heart, for this gentle daughter of a worthy member of the worshipful Council.

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And such speech was good to my ears and to my uncle Conrad's; but the best of all was that already, by the end of a week or two, Ann seemed likely to supplant me wholly in the love my aunt had erewhile shown to me; Ann thenceforth was diligent in waiting on the sick lady, and such loving duty won her more and more of my uncle's love, who found his weakly, suffering wife much on his hands, and that in the plainest sense of the words, since, whenever he might be at home, she would allow no other creature to lift her from one spot to another.

Now, whereas Uncle Conrad had taught Ann to mark the divers voices of the forest, so did she open my eyes to the many virtues of my aunt, which, heretofore, I had been wont to veil from my own sight out of wrath at her hardness to my cousin Gotz.

Ann, in her compassion and thankfulness, had truly learnt to love her, and she now led me to perceive that she was in many ways a right wise and good woman. Her low, sheltered couch in the peaceful chimney-corner was, as it were, the centre of a wide net, and she herself the spider-wife who had spun it, for in truth her good counsel stretched forth over the whole range of forest, and over all her husband's rough henchmen. She knew the name of every child in the furthest warders' huts, and never did she suffer one of the forest folks to die unholpen. She was, indeed, forced to see with other eyes and give with other hands than her own, and notwithstanding this she ever gave help where it was most needed, since she chose her messengers well and lent an ear to all who sought her.

She soon found work for us, making us do many a Samaritan-task; and many a time have we marvelled to mark the skill with which she wove her web, and the wisdom coupled with her open-handed bounty.

No one else could have found a place in the great books which she filled with her records; but to her they were so clear that the craft of the most cunning was put to shame when she looked into them. Never a soul, whether master or man, said her nay in the lightest thing, to my knowledge, and this was a plea for the one fault which had hitherto set me against her.

Everything here was new to Ann; and what could be more delightful, what could give me greater joy than to be able to show all that was noteworthy and pleasant, and to me well-known, to a well-beloved friend, and to tell her the use and end of each thing. In this two men were ever ready to help me: Uncle Conrad and the young Baron von Kalenbach, a Swabian who had come to be my uncle's disciple and to learn forestry.

This same young Baron was a slender stripling, well-grown and not ill-favored; but it seemed as though his lips were locked, and if a man was fain to hear the sound of his voice and get from him a "yea" or "nay" there was no way but by asking him a plain question. His eye, on the other hand, was full of speech, and by the time I had been no more than three weeks at the Lodge it told me, as often as it might, that he was deeply

in love with me; nay, he told the reverend chaplain in so many words that his first desire was that he might take me home as his wife to Swabia, where he had rich estates.

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Never would I have said him yea, albeit I liked him well; nor did I hide it from him; nay indeed, now and again I may have lent him courage, though truly with no evil intent, since I was not ill pleased with the tale his eyes told me. And I was but a young thing then, and wist not as yet that a maid who gives hope to a suitor though she has no mind to hear him, is guilty of a sin grievous enough to bring forth much sorrow and heart-ache. It was not till I had had a lesson which came upon me all too soon, that I took heed in such matters; and the time was at hand when men folks thought more about me than I deemed convenient.

As I have gone so far as to put this down on paper, I, an old woman now, will put aside bashfulness and freely confess that both Ann and I were at that time well-favored and good to look upon.

I was of the greater height and stouter build, while she was more slender and supple; and for gentle sweetness I have never seen her like. I was rose and white, and my golden hair was no whit less fine than Ursula Tetzels; but whoso would care to know what we were to look upon in our youth, let him gaze on our portraits, before which each one of you has stood many a time. But I will leave speaking of such foolish things and come now to the point.

Though for most days common wear was good enough at the Forest Lodge, we sometimes had occasion to wear our bravery, for now and again we went forth to hunt with my uncle or with the Junker, on foot or on horseback, or hawking with a falcon on the wrist. There was no lack of these noble birds, and the bravest of them all, a falcon from Iceland beyond seas, had been brought thence by Seyfried Kubbeling of Brunswick. That same strange man, who was my right good friend, had ere now taught me to handle a falcon, and I could help my uncle to teach my friend the art.

I went out shooting but seldom, by reason that Ann loved it not ever after she had hit one of the best hounds in the pack with her arrow; and my uncle must have been well affected to her to forgive such a shot, inasmuch as the dogs were only less near his heart than his closest kin. They had to make up to him for much that he lacked, and when he stood in their midst he saw round him, yelping and barking on four legs, well nigh all that he had thought most noteworthy from his childhood up. They bore names, indeed, of no more than one or two syllables, but each had its sense. They were for the most part the beginning of some word which reminded him of a thing he cared to remember. First he had, in sport, named some of them after the metrical feet of Latin verse, which had been but ill friends of his in his school days, and in his kennel there was a Troch, Iamb, Spond and Dact, whose full names were Trochee, Iambus, Spondee and Dactyl. Now Spond was the greatest and heaviest of the wolfhounds; Anap, rightly Anapaest, was a slender and swift greyhound; and whereas he found this pastime of names good sport

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he carried it further. Thus it came to pass that the witless creatures who shared his loneliness were reminders of many pleasant things. One of a pair of fleet bloodhounds which were ever leashed together was named Nich, and the other Syn, in memory that he had been betrothed on the festival of Saint Nicodemus and wedded on Saint Synesius' day. A noble hound called Salve, or as we should say Welcome, spoke to him of the birth of his first born, and every dog in like manner had a name of some signification; thus Ann took it not at all amiss that he should call a fine young setter after her name. There had long been a Gred, short for Margaret.

Nevertheless we spent much more time in seeing the sick to whom my aunt sent us on her errands, than we did in shooting or heron-hawking. She ever packed the little basket we were to carry with her own hands, and there was never a physic which she did not mingle, nor a garment she had not made choice of, nor a victual she had not judged fit for each one it was sent to.

Thus many a time our souls ached to see want and pain lying in darksome chambers on wretched straw, though we earned thanks and true joy when we saw that healing and ease followed in our steps. And whatever seemed to me the most praiseworthy grace in my Aunt Jacoba, was, that albeit she could never hear the hearty thanksgiving of those she had comforted and healed, she nevertheless, to the end of her days, ceased not from caring for the poor folks in the forest like a very mother.

My Ann was never made for such work, inasmuch as she could never endure to see blood or wounds; yet was it in this tending of the sick that I had reason to mark and understand how strong was the spirit of this frail, slender flower.

Since a certain army surgeon, by name Haberlein, had departed this life, there was no leech at the Forest lodge, but my aunt and the chaplain, a man of few words but well trained in good works and a right pious servant of the Lord, were disciples of Galen, and the leech from Nuremberg came forth once a week, on each Tuesday; and since the death of Doctor Paul Rieter, of whom I have made mention, it was his successor Master Ulsenius. His duty it was to attend on the sick mistress, and on any other sick folks if they needed it; and then it was our part to wait on the leech, and my aunt would diligently instruct us in the right way to use healing drugs, or bandages.

The first time we were bidden to a woman who gathered berries, who had been stung in the toe by an adder; and when I set to work to wash the wound, as my aunt had taught me, Ann turned as white as a linen cloth. And whereas I saw that she was nigh swooning I would not have her help; but she gave her help nevertheless, though she held her breath and half turned away her face. And thus she ever did with sores; but she ever paid the penalty of the violence she did herself. As it fell Master Ulsenius came to the Forest one

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day when my aunt's waiting-woman had fared forth on a pilgrimage to Vierzelmheiligen, and my uncle likewise being out of the way, the leech called us to him to lend him a helping hand. Then I came to know that a fall unawares with her horse had been the beginning of my aunt's long sickness. She had at that time done her backbone a mischief, and some few months later a wound had broken forth which was part of her hurt.

Now when all was made ready Aunt Jacoba begged of Ann that she should hold the sore closed while Master Ulsenius made the linen bands wet. I remembered my friend's weakness and came close to her, to take her place unmarked; but she whispered: "Nay, leave me," in a commanding voice, so that I saw full well she meant it in earnest, and withdrew without a word. And then I beheld a noble sight; for though she was pale she did as she was bidden, nor did she turn her eyes off the wound. But her bosom rose and fell fast, as if some danger threatened her, and her nostrils quivered, and I was minded to hold out my arms to save her from falling. But she stood firm till all was done, and none but I was aware of her having defied the base foe with such true valor.

Thenceforth she ever did me good service without shrinking; and whensoever thereafter I had some hateful duty to do which meseemed I might never bring myself to fulfil, I would remember Ann holding my aunt's wound. And out of all this grew the good saying, "They who will, can"—which the children are wont to call my motto.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

As every word came straight from her heart
Be cautious how they are compassionate
Beware lest Satan find thee idle!
Brought imagination to bear on my pastimes
Comparing their own fair lot with the evil lot of others
Faith and knowledge are things apart
Flee from hate as the soul's worst foe
For the sake of those eyes you forgot all else
Her eyes were like open windows
Last Day we shall be called to account for every word we utter
Laugh at him with friendly mockery, such as hurts no man
Maid who gives hope to a suitor though she has no mind to hear
May they avoid the rocks on which I have bruised my feet
Men folks thought more about me than I deemed convenient
No man gains profit by any experience other than his own
One of those women who will not bear to be withstood
The god Amor is the best schoolmaster



They who will, can
When men-children deem maids to be weak and unfit for true sport

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100 1994 January
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