THE FOREST SCHOOLMASTER

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*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE FOREST SCHOOLMASTER ***

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The Forest Schoolmaster

By Peter Rosegger

Authorized Translation
by
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For the use of the following autobiographical sketch, I am indebted to the courtesy of Herr Staackmann, the author's publisher in Leipzig.

THE TRANSLATOR.

PREFACE

The author of the following work is a man well on in the fifties and lives—as he should—on his native soil. Born in Steiermark, Austria, in a lonely mountain region, he led the life of a forest peasant until he reached the age of eighteen, when he became apprenticed to a travelling peasant tailor. On the expiration of

this apprenticeship, which covered a period of four years, he spent other four years as charity scholar in the commercial school at Graz.

After these experiences, and after having mastered such a variety of subjects, he began to work at something which he not only had not mastered but with which he was wholly unfamiliar—literature. He had always had a passion for books, but having no money with which to buy them, he had made them for himself.

In the peasant hut and in the workshop had been brought forth no less than twenty-four magnificent volumes, closely written with ink made from soot, illustrated with lead-pencil, and painted in water-colours with a brush made from his own hair—*édition de luxe*! But worthy to be printed!—not a single line.

Thus this youth had worked for ten long years, every Sunday, every holiday, and often late into the night, by the light of a pine torch and in the midst of the noise of his house companions, who occupied the same room. The intellectual and spiritual life of the poor lad was a very lonely one.

He did not write for print; the innocent boy scarcely knew that books were already being printed in this age, for the most of those which he had seen were old folios. He simply wrote to make two out of one, to place himself before himself, in his thoughts, in poems, in all kinds of yarns and tales, that in his great loneliness he might at least have a comrade. Beyond this he did not think or strive, was happy rather than unhappy, cherishing a vague hope that his life would at some time change. Whenever he asked himself what this change might be, he would calmly answer:—"Probably death."

But at this point things took a strange turn. The young man was completely transformed; not only from boy to youth, from youth to man; he changed not his coat alone, but in his fustian jacket, in his workman's blouse or student's garb, there appeared each time another being, which during all these transformations had not once died.

It finally seemed to him as though three or four different natures were dwelling in him, and as the original one had formerly tried to express itself, so now, in great confusion, they all struggled with one another to do the same. He was twenty-six years old, he had seen something of life, had read many books and had seen how they were made. Thus he was inspired to write afresh, and this time—*for print.*

I should envy him his good fortune were I not the man myself. So nothing remains for me but to thank Heaven for the pleasant paths over which I have been led. I have not deserved it, for I was not conscious of any definite aim, being satisfied to fill my days with work which appealed to me. I could now write to my heart's content. That which was written with the least effort was always the most successful, but if I attempted anything great, which it seemed to

me might even prove itself immortal, it was usually a failure.

It was finally decided by one of my friends that for the future I should neither do tailoring nor handle the plough or the yard-stick, but instead become an author. My youth had not spoiled me, far from it, but such an aim as this seemed beyond my reach.

I married and had children. I wrote, and my books found friends. And now the time had come when one might truly say, "*Augenblick verweile!*" But the moment did not stay, it flew and with it took from me my dearest, my all,—my wife. In the *Waldheimath* and in *Mein Weltleben* those events have been depicted.

But my work was my salvation, and another transformation took place. In the neighbourhood of my forest home I built myself a little house and after a number of years I married a second time. More children came, and as my hair whitened, I was surrounded by a lively circle of gay young people.

In the meantime I had seen something of the world, wandering from the north to the south, visiting friends over in the dear German Empire, being invited to various cities to give readings from my works in *steierisch* dialect.

For twenty-three years I edited a monthly magazine in Graz, called "*Der Heimgarten*," where my various writings were placed on trial. Those which were worthy to endure but a day died with the day, those which struck a deeper chord appeared in books. During the last thirty years forty volumes have gone out into the world. Their merits must be judged by the reader. They are not so impassioned as formerly; but the little forest springs are clearer than the greater ones. I shall be proud if my critics will only call them: "*Frisch Wasser*."

PETER ROSEGGER.

KRIEGLACH, Autumn, 1899

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INTRODUCTORY

"ROAD TO WINKELSTEG."

These words are on the sign-post. But the rain has nearly washed out the old-fashioned letters, and the post itself totters in the wind.

Round about stretches a rugged pine-forest; on the heights above are a few ancient larches, their bare branches reaching out to the sky. In the depths of a defile is a roaring torrent which the old mountain road frequently crosses by means of half-sunken wooden bridges, leading to an opening where the wanderer from peopled regions catches the first glimpse of the glaciers.

Here the Wildbach comes rushing down, and the road, after having traversed wastes and wildernesses, turns toward more peaceful woodlands, at last leading to the habitations of man. Along the river-bed extends a dry rocky ravine, across which storms have thrown pine-trunks, bleached from long exposure to the sun.

At the parting of the ways, upon a high rock stands a tall wooden cross, with triple cross-bars, upon which are carved the instruments of martyrdom of the holy passion: spear, sponge, reed, pincers, hammer, and the three nails. The wood is weather-beaten and overgrown with moss. Close by is the post with the arm and the inscription: "Road to Winkelsteg."

This sign points to the neglected stony path leading toward the narrow valley, beyond which lie the snow-fields. On the farthest heights, above the gently rising, snow-covered peaks, towers a grey cone, about whose summit cloud flakes love to gather.

I seated myself upon a block of stone near the cross and gazed up at the grey peak. While sitting there, my soul was possessed with that vague feeling, the source and meaning of which no one can tell, nor why it so oppresses the heart; clothes it, as it were, with the armour of resignation, preparing it against a something which must come. We call this strange experience of the soul, fore-

boding.

I might have rested for some time on the stone, listening to the roar of the wild waters, had it not seemed to me that the wooden arm was stretching itself out longer and longer, while the words grew into a pressing reminder: "Road to Winkelsteg."

On rising I perceived that my shadow was already lengthening, and it was uncertain how great a distance still lay between me and that remotest and smallest of all villages, Winkelsteg.

I walked rapidly, taking little heed of my surroundings. I only noticed that the wilderness became more and more imposing. I heard deer belling in the forest, I heard vultures whistling through the air. The sky darkened, although too early for nightfall. A storm was gathering over the rocky peaks. First a half smothered rumbling was heard, then a thundering and rolling, as if all the rocks and masses of ice in the high mountains were crashing a thousand times against each other. The great trees swayed, and in the broad leaves of a maple already rattled the big icy drops.

With these few drops the storm passed. Farther in it must have been more severe, for suddenly through the gorge a wild torrent, bringing with it earth, stones, ice, and bits of wood, rushed toward me. I saved myself from falling by clambering up the slope, and with great difficulty made my way forward. The whole country was now wrapped in fog, which descended from the branches of the pines to the damp heather on the ground.

As twilight approached and the defile widened a little, I reached a narrow valley, the length of which I could not measure on account of the fog. The grass was covered with hailstones. The brook had overflowed its banks and torn away the bridge which led to the opposite shore, where through the grey mist shone the wooden roofs of a few houses and a little white church. The air was frosty and cold. I called across to the men who were trying to catch the blocks of wood and regulate the current. They shouted back that they could not help me, and that I must wait until the water had lowered again.

One might wait the whole night for such a torrent to subside; so, taking the risk, I attempted to wade through the stream. But those on the other side motioned to me warningly. Soon a tall, black-bearded man appeared with a long pole, by means of which he swung himself across to me. Close to the bank he piled a few stones, and upon these laid a board which the others had shoved to him. Then taking me by the hand, he cautiously led me over the tottering bridge to the opposite shore.

While we were swaying over the water, the sound of the Ave-bells reached our ears, and the men reverently removed their hats.

The tall, dark man walked with me over the crackling hailstones up to the

village. ”So it goes,” he grumbled on the way. ”If God lets anything grow, the devil strikes it down into the ground again. The cabbage plants are gone to the last stump, and the last stump is gone also. The oats are lying on their backs now with their knees raised toward heaven.”

”Has the storm done so much harm?” I asked.

”You see that,” he replied.

”And farther out there it hardly sprinkled.”

”I can well believe it. It is always meant only for us Winkelstegers. From to-day on not one of us will dare eat his fill all summer, unless we wish to hang our stomachs up in the chimney flue for the winter.” Such was his answer.

The village consisted of three or four wooden houses, a few huts, some smoking charcoal-pits, and the little church.

In front of one of the larger houses, before the door of which lay a broad stepping-stone, worn by many feet, my companion paused and said: ”Will you stop here, sir? I am the Winkel innkeeper.” With these words he pointed to the house, as if that were his real self.

Entering the guest-room, I was met by the landlady who took my travelling-bag and damp overcoat and, bringing me a pair of straw shoes, said: ”Off with the wet leather and on with the slippers; be quick; a wet shoe on the foot runs for the doctor.” Very soon I was sitting dry and comfortable by the large table under the *Haus Altar* and some shelves, upon which stood a row of gaily painted earthen- and china-ware. Upon a rack were a number of bottles, and I was asked at once if I would take some brandy.

On requesting some wine mine host replied: ”There has n’t been a drop in the cellar since the house was built, but I can give you some excellent cider.”

As I accepted his offer, he started for the cellar, but his wife stepped hastily up to him and, taking the key out of his hand, said: ”Go, Lazarus, and snuff the candle for the gentleman; and be quick about it, Lazarus; you’ll get your little drop soon enough.”

He came back to the table grumbling, snuffed the wick of the tallow candle, looked at me for awhile, and finally asked: ”The gentleman is possibly our new schoolmaster?—No? Then your way leads up the Graue Zahn? That you will hardly do to-morrow. No one has climbed it this summer. That must be done in the early autumn; at other times there’s no depending on the weather. Indeed, how one does speculate about things; now I thought you might be the new schoolmaster. Hardly anyone finds his way up here who does n’t belong to the place, and we are expecting him every day. The old one has run away from us;—have you heard nothing about it?”

”So, Lazarus, you ’re having a fine chat with the gentleman,” said the landlady in a coaxing tone to her husband, as she set the cider and at the same time

the evening soup before me.

The woman was no longer young, but was what the foresters call "round as a ball." She had a double chin, from under which about the full throat, a silver chain peeped out. Her little eyes had a shrewd and gentle expression as she spoke or moved about, cheerfully presiding in the house, each corner and nail of which was familiar to her and had almost grown to be a part of herself. In a merry mood she directed everything, joked with the guests, and laughed with the servants in the kitchen. That the storm had ruined the crops was indeed no joke, she said; but it was far better that ice should fall from heaven upon the earth than that it should fall into heaven and break everything to pieces there. Then indeed one would have nothing more to hope for. And as she talked she fairly bubbled over with fun, and the whole circle about her was cheered, each one seeming simply to follow his own bent in whatever he did, felt, and said; yet all went on in perfect order.

"You have an excellent little wife," I said to my landlord.

"Yes, indeed, yes, indeed," he answered with animation; "she is good, my Juliana, yet—yet——" the word seemed to choke him, or rather he ground it between his teeth and forced it down; springing up, with his hands clinched behind him, he strode across the room and back again, finally draining a glass of water at one draught.

Then he seated himself upon the bench and was quiet. But he was by no means himself. He had doubled his fists and was staring hard at the table.... I once saw at a fair an Arab, a tall, powerful figure, haggard, rough, brown as leather, with a full black beard, gleaming eyes, a long hooked nose, snow-white teeth, thick eye-brows, and soft woolly hair.... Thus appeared the man now brooding so gloomily before me.

"There is n't another little wife so good-hearted and faithful," he murmured suddenly; he finished the sentence with a sullen growl.

Observing his painful mood, I tried to help him out of it.

"So you say the old schoolmaster has run away?" At this the landlord raised his head: "One can't exactly say he has run away; he had nothing to complain of here. I should think one who had been school-teacher, and I-don't-know-what-all, in Winkelsteg for fifty years, would n't run away like a horse-thief in the fifty-first."

"School-teacher here fifty years!" I exclaimed.

"He was school-teacher, doctor, bailiff, and awhile even our pastor."

"And half a fool in the bargain!" called a man from a neighbouring table, where a number of swarthy fellows, mostly wood-cutters and charcoal-burners, were sitting before their brandy-glasses. "Aye! aye!" cried the same voice; "he would sit outside there by the juniper bush muttering to himself, hours at a time;

he must have been trying to teach the bullfinches to sing by note. Whenever he spied a gay butterfly, he would flounder after it the livelong day;—a baby in arms could n't have been more childish. Maybe some such creature has enticed him away now, so that the old man can never find his way home again, but is lost out in the woods somewhere."

"There are no butterflies about at Christmas-time, Josel," said the landlord, half correctingly, half reprovingly; "and that he was lost on Christmas eve, you know very well."

"The devil has taken him, the old sinner!" growled another voice from the darkest corner of the room, by the big stove.

As I looked in that direction, I saw in the darkness sparks from a tinder-box.

"You mustn't, you mustn't talk so!" said one of the charcoal men. "You should remember that the old man had snow-white hair!"

"Yes, and horns under it," was called from the corner by the stove; "perhaps no one knew him so well, the old sneak, as Schorschl! Do you think he did n't connive with the great men so that none of us could win in the lottery? How then did Kranabetsepp make a *tern* the second week after the schoolmaster went away? To be sure, the hunch-backed hypocrite had money enough, but he buried it, so that if he did n't need it himself the poor could n't use it either. Oh—perhaps one might tell other stories, too, if certain people were not in the room."

The voice was silent; nothing could be heard but the sound of lips puffing smoke, and the shutting of a pipe-lid.

The landlord arose, threw aside his fustian jacket, and, with flowing shirt-sleeves, walked a few steps toward the stove. In the middle of the room he paused.

"So there are certain people in the room, are there," he said under his breath. "Schorschl, I thought so myself; but they don't sit at an honest table before everybody's eyes; they cower in the pitch-dark corner, like good-for-nothing rascals, like—like——"

He stopped, and it could be seen how he forced himself to be calm; he pulled himself together with a jerk, but remained standing in the middle of the room.

"Oh, of course the brandy-distillers could n't endure the old man," said one of the charcoal-burners. Then turning to me: "My dear sir, he meant well! God comfort his poor soul! He played the organ Christmas eve, but Christmas morning there were no bells rung for prayers. In the night he had told Reiter-Peter—he is our musician, you know—to take charge of the music on Christmas day;—that was his last word, and the schoolmaster was seen no more. By St. Anthony, how we hunted for the man! It was impossible to trace him; the snow was as hard as stone everywhere, even in the forest. All Winkelsteg was up searching the woods far and near, and even the roads in the country outside."

The man was silent; a shrug of the shoulders and a motion of the hand

indicated that they had not found him.

"And so we Winkelstegers have no schoolmaster," said the landlord.

"As for myself, I don't need one; I never have learned anything, and never shall now. I manage anyway. But I see very well that there must be a schoolmaster. Therefore, we peasants of the parish and the wood-cutters have agreed that we must have a new——"

At this moment I raised the cider glass to my lips, to swallow the rest of the excellent drink, and the action seemed to check the man's power of speech. Staring at the empty glass, he tried to go on with his story, which apparently was entirely driven from his mind.

"I know what I think," answered one of the charcoal-burners, "and I say the same, just exactly the same, as Wurzentoni. The old schoolmaster, says he, knew a bit more than other people; a good bit more. Wurzentoni—not only once, ten, nay a hundred times,—has seen the schoolmaster praying out of a little book in which were all sorts of sayings, magic and witchcraft signs. If the schoolmaster had died anywhere in the woods, says Wurzentoni, then someone would have found the body; if the devil had taken him, then his cloak would have been left behind; for the cloak, says Wurzentoni, is innocent; the devil has no power over that, not the least! Something altogether different has happened, my friends! The schoolmaster has bewitched himself, and so, invisible, he wanders around day and night in Winkelsteg—day and night at every hour. That's because he 's curious to see what the people are doing, and to hear what stories they are telling about him, and because——. I 'm not saying anything bad about the schoolmaster, not I; I should n't know what to say, indeed I should n't!"

"Oh, if the devil was n't any wiser than the black charcoal-burner!" coughed the voice behind the stove. "The old scoundrel still leads the Winkelstegers around by the nose!"

An enraged lion could not have started up more angrily than did the rough and sullen landlord. Fairly groaning with impatience, he plunged behind the stove, from whence issued alarming cries.

Hastening forward, the landlady cried: "Come, Lazarus, don't mind that stupid rascal there! It is n't worth while that you should lift a finger on his account. Come, be sensible, Lazarus; see, here I have poured out your drink of cider for you."

He yielded at last, and Schorschl sneaked out through the door like a dog, leaving Lazarus with bits of hair in his fist. Grumbling, he walked towards the chest upon which his wife had placed a mug of cider. Almost choking, he tremblingly seized it and, carrying it to his lips, took a long draught. With staring eyes he stopped a moment, then, beginning again, he drained the mug to the last drop! That must have been a terrible thirst! The hand holding the empty mug

sank slowly; with a deep breath the landlord glowered straight before him.

So the time passed, until the landlady came to me and said: "We can give you a good bed up in the attic; but I will tell you at once, sir, that the wind has carried away a few shingles from the roof to-day, and so it drips through a little. In the schoolhouse above here, is a very nice, comfortable room, which has already been arranged for the new teacher; it heats well, too, and we have the key; for my old man is Winkel Magistrate, and has charge of it. Now, if you would n't mind sleeping in the schoolhouse, I would advise you to do it. Indeed it's not in the least gloomy, and it 's very quiet and clean. I think I should like to live there the year round."

So I chose the schoolhouse instead of the attic. Not long afterwards, a maid with a lantern accompanied me out into the dark, rainy night, through the village to the church beyond the graveyard, on the edge of which stood the schoolhouse. The hall was bare, and the shadows from the lantern chased each other up and down the walls.

Then we entered a little room, where, in the tile stove, a bright fire was crackling. My companion placed a candle on the table, threw back the brown cover of the bed, and opened a drawer of the bureau, that I might put away my things. All at once she exclaimed: "No, really, we should all of us be ashamed of ourselves; here are these scraps still scattered about!" She hastily seized an armful of sheets of paper, which were lying in confusion in the drawer. "I 'll take care of you soon enough, you bits of trash; the stove is the place for you!"

"Stop, stop," I interrupted, "perhaps there are things there that the new teacher can use."

She threw the papers back into the drawer with an impatient gesture. In her frenzy for cleaning up, it would doubtless have given her great pleasure to burn them; just as indeed many ignorant people are possessed with a desire to destroy everything which seems to them useless.

"The gentleman can put on the old schoolmaster's night-cap," said the girl roguishly, laying a blue striped night-cap on the pillow. She then gave me some advice in regard to the door-key, and said: "So, *in Gottesnamen*, now I will go!" and with this she left me.

She closed the outside door, and, turning the key of the inner, I was alone in the room of the missing schoolmaster.

How strange had been the fortunes of this man, and how curious the reports of the people! And how contradictory these reports! A good, excellent man, a fool; and what's more, one whom at last the devil claims for his own!

I looked around me in the room. There was a worm-eaten table and a brown chest. On the wall hung an old clock; the figures were entirely effaced from the dial under which the short pendulum swung busily backward and forward, as

if trying to hasten faster and faster out of a sad past into a better future. And, curiously enough, I could also hear the ticking of the church-tower clock outside!

Near this time-piece hung a few pipes, carved out of juniper wood, with disproportionately long stems; then a violin, and an old zither with three strings. There were besides the usual furnishings in the room, from the boot-jack under the bedstead to the calendar on the wall. The calendar was last year's. The windows were much larger than is usual in wooden houses, and were provided with lattices, through which dried birch-twigs were twined.

Pushing aside one of the blue curtains, I looked out into the darkness. From one corner of the churchyard, something shone like a stray moonbeam. It was probably the phosphorous light from a mouldering wooden cross, or from the remains of a coffin. The rain pattered, the wind blew in chilly gusts, as is usual after hailstorms.

I had given up the mountain trip for the next day. I decided either to wait in Winkelsteg for fine weather, or, by means of one of the coal waggons, to go away again. Sometimes, even in summer, the damp fogs last for weeks in the mountains, while in the outlying districts the sun is still shining.

Before I retired, I rummaged a little among the old papers in the drawer. There were sheets of music, writing exercises, notes, and all kinds of scribbling on rough grey paper, written partly with pencil, partly with pale, yellowish ink, some hastily, and some with great care. And between the leaves lay pressed plants, butterflies, which had long lost the dust from their wings, and a lot of animal and landscape drawings, mostly rather clumsily done. But one picture struck me particularly, a curious picture, painted in bright colours. It represented the bent figure of an old man, sitting upon the trunk of a tree, smoking a long-stemmed pipe. He wore a flat, black cap, with a broad, projecting brim, under which his hair was combed straight back. Whoever had drawn the picture must have been an artist; one could see that from the expression of the face. Out of one eye, which was wide open, gazed an earnest, though gentle soul; the other, which was half closed, twinkled roguishly. When such guests look forth from the windows of a house, it surely cannot be poor and barren within. Above the cheeks, made perhaps too rosy by the well-meaning artist, were deep furrows, as if storms and torrents had swept over them. On the other hand, the long white beard gave a very droll appearance to the otherwise smoothly-shaven face; it was for all the world like an icicle hanging from under the chin. About the throat a bright red kerchief was twisted a number of times and tied in several knots in front. Then came the high wall of coat-collar and the blue cloth tail-coat itself, with its loosely-hanging pockets, from one of which the humorous artist had made a bun peep out. The coat was loosely buttoned up to the icicle. The trousers were grey, very tight and short; the boots, also grey, were broad and long. So the

little man sat there, holding the pipe-stem with both hands, smoking contentedly. The smoke rose in delicate rings and hearts.

The artist must have been an odd genius, and the subject still more odd. One or the other was surely the old schoolmaster, who had disappeared in such an inexplicable manner, after having taught for fifty years in this place. "And invisible he wanders around day and night in Winkelsteg, at every hour!"

I went to bed, and lay there thinking, not in the least realising what manner of man had built this house, and rested in this place before me.

The fire in the stove crackled fainter and fainter and was dying out. Outside the rain pattered, yet such a silence lay over all that I seemed to hear the breathing of the night. I was just falling asleep, when all at once, quite close above me, began a cheerful sound, and several times in succession the call of the quail rang out loud and merrily. It was deceptively like the beautiful voice of the bird in the cornfield. It was the old clock, which in such a strange way had announced to me the eleventh hour.

And the sweet tones led my thoughts and dreams out into the sunny cornfields, to the waving stalks, to the bright blue flowers, to the dazzling butterflies, and thus I fell asleep that night in the mysterious schoolhouse in Winkelsteg.

As the call of the quail had lulled me to sleep, so it awakened me again. It was the sixth hour of the morning.

The mild warmth from the stove filled the room; the walls and ceiling were as though bathed in moonlight. It was the month of July, and the sun must have already risen. I arose and drew back one of the blue window-curtains. The large panes were wet and grey; here and there a pearly drop, freeing itself, rolled down through the countless bubbles, leaving behind a narrow path, through which the dark-brown church roof could be seen.

I opened the window; a chilly air penetrated the room. The rain had ceased; upon the graveyard wall lay icicles, lodged there by the storm, together with broken bark and tops of branches. By the church were bits of shingle from the roof; the windows were protected with boards. Some ash trees stood near by, and the water dripped from the few leaves which the hail had spared. Yonder rose the vanishing image of a chimney; everything beyond that was hidden by the fog.

I had abandoned all thought of the Alpine climb for that day. While dressing, I looked at the mechanism of the old Black Forest clock, which, by means of two flat bits of wood beating against each other, so strikingly reproduced the warbling notes of the quail. Afterwards I rummaged awhile among the papers in the drawer, as it was still too early for breakfast. I noticed that, excepting

the drawings, calculations, and those papers which served as an album for the plants, all the written sheets were of the same size, and numbered with red ink. I tried to arrange the leaves, and occasionally cast a glance at their contents. It seemed to be a kind of diary, bearing reference to Winkelsteg. But the writings were so full of peculiar expressions and irregularly-formed sentences that study and some translation would be necessary to make them intelligible.

This task, however, did not discourage me; for here I hoped to find an account of the isolated Alpine village, and perhaps even facts concerning the life of the lost schoolmaster. While busily arranging the papers and thoroughly absorbed in my work, I suddenly discovered a thick grey sheet upon which was written in large red letters: "THE SCHOOLMASTER'S STORY."

So, in a way, I had put a book together, and the leaf with the red letters I had laid by chance on top as a title.

In the meanwhile, my quail had announced the eighth hour, and from the church tower two clear little bells rang out for mass. The priest, a slender man with a pale face, walked from his house up the stone steps to the church. A few men and women followed him, and, while still far from the door, bared their heads, or, taking out their rosaries at the entrance, sprinkled themselves reverently with holy water.

Leaving the schoolhouse, I crossed the rough, sandy ground, and, attracted by the friendly sound of the organ, entered the place of worship. Upon the first glance, the interior seemed much the same as in any village church—yet in reality it was quite different.

Usually the poorer such a church, the more silver and gold is seen sparkling within—all the candlesticks and vessels, of silver, all the decorations, the robes of the saints, the angels' wings, and even the clouds in the sky, of gold. But it is only make-believe. I cannot blame that peasant for exclaiming, the first time he arranged the service for mass, thus making nearer acquaintance with the images and altars: "Our saints seem so fine and sparkle so from a distance, one would suppose heaven to be filled with very grand people; but when one looks closer, they are nothing but trash."

In the church at Winkelsteg I found it otherwise. Although here everything was made of wood, mostly of the commonest pine, it was not decorated with gaudy colors, glittering tinsel and such ornaments; it was simply itself, not attempting to be anything more.

The walls were grey, and almost bare. In one corner of the nave clung a few swallows' nests, the occupants of which had remained for the service, and in their own way were joining in the Sanctus. It was evident that the floor of the choir above, the confessional, chancel, and praying-benches, had been made by common home carpenters. The baptismal font had never seen a stone-cutter, nor

the high altar a sculptor. But there were taste and design in everything. The altar was a high, dignified table, reached by three broad steps. It was covered with simple white linen, and under a canopy of white silk were the holy relics, surrounded by six slender candle-sticks, carved from linden-wood. But that which impressed me the most, which touched and almost overpowered me, was a high, bare wooden cross towering above the canopy.

It could not always have stood there; it was grey and weather-beaten, the fibre washed by the rain, and with deep fissures formed by the sun. That was the Winkelsteg altar-piece. I have never heard a preacher speak more earnestly or impressively of love and patience, of sacrifice and renunciation, than did this silent cross upon the altar.

I next observed something which seemed almost out of keeping with the poverty and simplicity, otherwise reigning in this house of God, but which in reality added to its peace and harmony. On either side of the altar were two high, narrow, painted windows, casting a soft, roseate half light over the chancel.

The priest was celebrating mass; the few present knelt in their chairs, praying quietly; the soft, trembling notes of the organ seemed to join reverently with them, like a weeping intercessor before God, supplicating for the poor parish which, through the storm of yesterday, had a new burden to bear in the loss of its harvest.

When the mass was over, and the people had risen, crossed themselves and left the church, a handsome young man descended from the choir. At the door I asked him if he were not the organist. He nodded and walked away toward the village; accompanying him, I endeavoured to enter into conversation. Several times he looked sadly and confidingly into my face, but uttered not a word; his fresh red lips almost trembled, and he soon turned and wandered off towards the brook. He was dumb.

Not long afterwards, I was sitting at my breakfast in the inn. It consisted of a bowl of milk, flavoured with roasted rye-meal, which is the Winkelsteg coffee.

And now—what were my plans?

I told the cheerful landlady of my intention to wait for favourable weather in Winkelsteg, to live in the little room at the schoolhouse, and to read the records of the schoolmaster—"If I may have permission."

"Oh dear, yes; of course you may!" she exclaimed; "whom could you disturb up there, sir? And no one else would look at those old papers—no one that I know of! So you may select those that you want. The new schoolmaster will bring all such things with him. But I hardly think one will come now. Certainly you may stay, and I will see that the room is kept nice and warm."

So I went up to the schoolhouse again. This time I examined the exterior. It was built for convenience and comfort; there was a wide projecting shingle roof,

which, with its bright windows, seemed in some way related to the good-natured roguish face in the picture, of the old man wearing the visor cap.

Then I entered the little room. It was already in order, with a fresh fire crackling in the stove. Through the shining windows I could see the gloomy day and the heavy fog hanging over the forest; but that only made the room seem the more cosy and homelike.

The papers, which I had arranged in the morning, rough, grey and closely written, I now took from the drawer, and seated myself before the well-scoured table at the window, that the daylight might fall on them in a friendly way.

And what the strange man had written, I now began to read. Yet I found portions which needed to be smoothed and changed from the original form. In some places I was obliged to omit, or even insert, entire sentences, at least enough to make the whole intelligible. For only thus was I able to make clear the unusual expressions, and to order and connect the irregular, carelessly formed sentences. However, let it be noticed, that in a few cases many of the quaint, old forms and terms of speech are left, in order to preserve, as far as possible, the peculiar character of these writings.

The first sheet tells nothing and everything; it contains three words: "The Schoolmaster's Story."

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S STORY

PART FIRST

"DEAR GOD!

"I greet Thee, and write Thee a piece of news. My father died to-day. He has been ill two years. Everybody says it is most fortunate. My aunt Lies says so too. They have carried father away now. The body goes to the mortuary, the soul through purgatory, then up to heaven. And now, dear God, I have a great favour to ask. Please send an angel to meet my father and show him the way. I will enclose my christening-money for the angel; there are three groschen. I am sure my father will be happy in heaven, and please take him directly to my mother. Many greetings to Thee, dear God, and to my father and mother.

”ANDREAS ERDMANN.

”**SALZBURG. In the year of our Lord 1797**. Apostle Simon’s Day.”

This letter has been preserved by chance, so I will begin with it. I remember the day still. In my great innocence, I was about to wrap the three groschen in the paper, when my Aunt Lies came in, read the letter with her glassy eyes, and clapping her hands together, cried: ”What a stupid boy!” Hastily taking my christening-money, she ran away, telling my story all over the house, from the porter’s room up to the third floor, where lived an old umbrella-maker. Our room was soon filled with neighbours, curious to see the stupid boy.

They laughed at me until I began to cry. Then they laughed still more provokingly. The old umbrella-maker, with his sky-blue apron, was also there. Raising his hand, he said: ”My friends, this is foolish laughter; perhaps the child is wiser than any of you. Come to me, little one; thy good father died to-day; thy aunt is far too clever, and her house too small for thee, my wee lad. Come with me, and I will teach thee to make umbrellas.”

Oh, how my aunt scolded at that! But I believe that in her heart of hearts she was glad; for I went up the two flights of stairs with the old man.

At the time of my father’s death, I must have been in my seventh year. I only know that, up to my fifth year, my parents lived in the forest, by the side of a lake. Rocky mountains, woods, and water enclosed the place, and here my father held an official position in the salt-works. When my mother died, his health began to fail, and since he was obliged to give up his work, we moved to his well-to-do sister’s in town. He wished to take an easier situation there, that he might compensate his sister, who was the very pattern of economy, for food and lodging. But he was ill a long time, and, besides teaching me to read and write, he did nothing. And so it came about as I have already written.

I remained with the old man in the third story a number of years. Like him, I too, wore a sky-blue apron. In that way one saves clothes. We made nothing but blue and red umbrellas, which we carried in big bundles to the fairs and sold. Opening one large umbrella over our wares, our booth was ready. If business flourished, so that we could sell the booth itself, we went to the inn for a good dinner; otherwise we made the wares up in bundles, and carried them home again, there satisfying our hunger with a warm soup.

When my master was over seventy years old, he suddenly became weary of the blue and red canvas; he was forced to seek another tent—he died—died and left me, as my father had done.

I was his heir. Two dozen and a half umbrellas were my inheritance. These I packed up one day and carried to the fair, where we had previously been successful in selling our goods.

Suddenly at noon, a storm comes up; the people are as though swept from the market-place, and with them my umbrellas; a single one being left with which to cover myself and my hard-earned money. Just then a gentleman, splashing through the puddles, hurries across the square to buy my umbrella.

"Then I should have none for myself," I say.

"I have seen many a shoemaker going barefoot," laughs the man; "but, see here, youngster, we will find some way to arrange it. Are you from town?"

"Yes," I answer, but no "shoemaker." "That does not matter. There is no carriage to be had; so we will walk together, boy, and use the same umbrella; afterwards you may either keep it or have the money for it."

Thinking to myself, it were a thousand pities to spoil his fine coat, I assented to his proposal.

So I, the poor umbrella-maker's boy, walked into town arm-in-arm with the grand gentleman. On the way we chatted with one another. He understood drawing me out, and after awhile I had told him my whole history, with all its circumstances.

The rain ceased, and as we approached the town I tried to fall behind, as I thought it unseemly to walk through the streets with such a finely dressed man. But, in a very friendly way, he invited me to keep beside him, at last taking me into his house, offering me food and drink, and finally asking me to remain with him altogether; he was a bookseller, and in need of an assistant.

Unskilled even in umbrella-making, and not knowing what occupation to take up next, I accepted the situation.

Fortune smiled upon me in those days. I was pleased with my master; he had fully recompensed me for the shelter of my umbrella; but as an assistant I was not a success. I was filled with curiosity; I wished to examine the contents of every book which I took into my hand. The placing and putting the volumes in order was entirely forgotten.

My master surprised me one day by saying: "Boy, you are useless for the outside of books; you must devote yourself to the inside. I think it would be wise to send you to school."

"Oh, if you only could! That is just what I have been secretly longing for."

"We shall probably succeed in placing you in the Academy, where, if honest and industrious, you will advance rapidly, and before you know it—hear yourself called: Doctor Erdmann!"

On hearing this, I became greatly excited, and still more so when my master had accomplished his purpose. I entered the Academy and plunged straight into

the inside of books. But in school one has only the dullest kind; the interesting ones are all forbidden, and I was forced to crowd my brain with subjects which appealed to me neither from without nor from within.

My bills of fare through the week were varied. My dinners I took: Mondays with a teacher; Tuesdays with a baron; Wednesdays with a merchant; Thursdays with a schoolmate, the son of a rich manufacturer; Fridays with an old lieutenant; Saturdays with some very poor people in an attic, and in payment I gave the children lessons in arithmetic; and Sundays I was with my protector, the bookseller. And I have also worn clothing given me by all these people.

So it went on for a number of years. Then my Tuesday's host engaged me as tutor to his little son. My prospects now seemed brighter. I gave up dining with my attic friends, but continued the instruction of their children. One day, I donned my dress-coat—very fine and respectable, but not made for me—and visited my aunt. Making me a most elegant bow, she called me her dear, her very dear Sir Nephew.

Although I entered into my studies with great eagerness at first, they soon become distasteful to me. I had always supposed that in an Academy one could grasp both heaven and earth, and learn to know the beautiful harmony of everything therein.

Fine subjects were on the prospectus. Even in the lower classes, we had geography, history, geometry and languages. But it was a world turned upside down. In geography, in place of countries and nations, we merely studied principalities and their cities. In history, instead of searching after the natural development of mankind, we were learning about statecraft; the teacher was constantly discussing the high royal families and their genealogies, intrigues, and battles; the fool knew nothing else to talk about. In geometry, we puzzled our heads with problems, which neither the teacher nor the pupils understood, and which would be useless to us in after life. The study of languages was a perfect misery. Alas! Our beautiful German is dressed up in a way to break one's heart. For many years it has been laden by foreign words, yes, even sentenced to death by their high jurisdiction. If a German lad wishes to do honour to his pure mother-tongue, then dozens of highly learned men rush in with their Greek and Latin, the dead letters of the dead language destroying even the German sounds. I very well know what great blessings the literature of Homer and Virgil contain for the badly-abused German tongue; our Klopstock and Schiller bear witness to that. But the Pharisees of whom I speak insist on the letter, and not on the spirit. We are obliged to learn by heart the most absurd theories, evolved by blundering men centuries ago. And whoever does not like, or cannot comprehend the dry stuff, will be abused by the teachers. We are defenceless; they have us in their power. We must laugh at their jokes; if they have the toothache, we are made to

suffer for it. Alas! what a wretched competition and strife; for penniless boys, utter misery!

While I was in the institution, two scholars committed suicide. "Very well," said the Director of the school, "he who does not bend must break." And that was the funeral sermon.

On the day following one of these sad occurrences, it happened to be my turn to deliver a Latin oration, before my teachers and fellow-students, on the character of the Roman kings. I came directly from the bier of my unfortunate comrade and with excited brain mounted the platform. "I will compare the Romans with the Germans," I cried; "the old tyrants enslaved the body, the new ones enslave the intellect. Outside there in the dark chamber, deserted and dishonoured, lies one hunted to death, not the only victim who has sought refuge in the grave...."

I may have said a few words more; but they then approached, and smiling led me down from the platform. "Erdmann is out his mind," said one of the masters; "he should not speak in German but in Latin. The next time he will do better."

Nearly crazed, I staggered home. Heinrich, the cloth-maker's son, my table and school companion, hurried after me. "What hast thou done, Andreas? What hast thou said?"

"Too little, too little," I replied.

"That will be thy ruin, Andreas; return at once and ask pardon for thy offence."

I laughed in my friend's face. Moved, he grasped me by the hand saying: "By Heaven, thou hast spoken the truth, and for that very reason they will never forgive thee for those words!"

"Nor do I care." I replied defiantly.

Heinrich walked beside me in silence. Finally he said: "Thou must learn wisdom, Andreas; but now go and compose thyself."

My hand trembles as I write this; yet it was all over long ago.

One year previous to this occurrence, I had through my friend Heinrich obtained the position of tutor in the aristocratic family of Baron von Schrankenheim.

My task was not heavy. I had one boy to teach and prepare for the *Hochschule*. Here I fared well and I was no longer obliged to beg my dinners at different tables. My pupil, Hermann, a fine, studious boy, was fond of me, as was also his sister, an extraordinarily beautiful girl,—and I was her devoted friend.

But, as the time passed, it became oppressive and uncomfortable for me in the wealthy household. Always somewhat timid and self-conscious, I now felt

my position more keenly than ever, for they were all aware of my poverty, and even the servants often slipped little presents into my hand.

But my pupil possessed delicacy of feeling, and was happy and confidential with me; and the girl—oh, what a beautiful child she was!

Evenings, when strolling outside of the city, or over distant flowery meadows and wooded slopes, I would often find myself thinking: What a blissful thing to be beautiful and rich! My heart was hot; I dreamed of "flowers and stars and her eyes."—Whose eyes? Then springing up in alarm—*Mein Gott*, what am I doing? Andreas, Andreas, what will come of it?

I was eighteen years old at that time. In my perplexity I one day confided in my friend Heinrich, who had always understood me better than anyone, and he counselled me to conquer myself, telling me that nearly all young people were afflicted with the same malady, which would soon pass. Hardly five years older than I, and this was his advice.

Left alone in my trouble, I decided that, although young in years, I would consider the matter calmly—notwithstanding the advice of clever people. Of my poverty I was well aware; my ordinary ancestry impelled me to make something of myself. He was right; in the presence of my teachers I should control myself, tame my obstinate will, and with perseverance and industry submit to the institution. Notwithstanding the injustice that must be endured, in a few years I should become Doctor, or a most learned Master of Arts.

And a Master of Arts may surely ask the hand of a baron's daughter. Like a man, I will then go and woo her.

However, keeping my intentions secret, I devoted myself earnestly to my studies, becoming one of the first among my fellow-students. I progressed rapidly and drew nearer and nearer to my goal. I already saw the day when as a man of dignity and standing I might pay court to the maiden. The family seemed fond of me and the Baron, not over-proud of his aristocracy, would not object to a learned man for son-in-law. I was indeed most fortunate and happy. Then the final examinations were taken, and my professors—rejected me.

I went directly home, and appeared before the father of my pupil: "Sir, I thank you for all your kindness to me. I cannot remain longer in your house."

Looking at me in great astonishment, he asked, "Where are you going?"

"I do not know, but I must leave this town at once."

The good man told me that I was over excited and ill. What had happened to me, might happen to others as well; he would see that I was cared for, and in the quiet of his home I would soon recover, and in a year pass the examination successfully.

But I persisted in my determination to go away; I was well aware that the cause of my failure was the German speech on the Latin kings, and for this reason

I should never be allowed to pass the examination. Heinrich was right.

"Very well, my obstinate sir," concluded the nobleman, "then I release you."

Of whom should I take leave? Of my young pupil? Of the young lady? *Mein Gott*, lead me not into temptation! She was still so young. She dismissed me pleasantly, and in a friendly manner. A poor wretch was leaving to return a made man. I was more defiant than courageous.

I paid one more visit to my aged aunt. And, as I this time appeared in a coarse cotton jacket, instead of a fine coat, and announced my intention of going away, I knew not where,—I all but received my expressive appellation again. "No," she cried, "no, but thou art a—a—most extraordinary man! To think, after having been so good and upright, and now,—oh, dear, be off with thee!"

She was the only relative I had in the world.

Last of all I went to Heinrich: "I thank thee a thousand times for thy love, my faithful friend. Would that I could reward thee for it. Thou knowest what has happened. There is nothing left for me but to go away. When I have accomplished something worthy I will come back and repay thee."

I was very young when I set my foot into the wide world. Heinrich accompanied me a long distance. At parting he forced me to accept his ready money. Heart to heart we swore one another eternal faithfulness, then we separated.

O Heinrich! Thou good heart, true as gold, thou hast kept thy word with me. And I have repaid thee badly—yes, *infernally*, Heinrich!

TO THE WARS

The sun moves from east to west; it pointed out my way. "Farewell, old world," I said, "I am going to the Tyrol!" There the people are now uniting against the enemy. The demon Bonaparte is leading in the French, and our fatherland will be entirely crushed.

A few days later I am at Innsbruck. Mounting the citadel steps, I ask the gatekeeper if I may speak with Andreas Hofer.

"Who will hinder you, then?" he replies, striking his sword against the marble with a resounding clash. Entering, I pass through a series of apartments, gorgeous with large mirrors, sparkling chandeliers, and floors which shine like glass and precious wood. Noisy peasant lads, dressed in Alpine costumes, are walking to and fro, singing, whistling, and smoking. At last I find myself in a large room filled with men, apparently peasants. Asking if I may speak with Andreas Hofer, I am informed that I must wait my turn, as he is occupied with affairs of state. I place myself in line, and watch the various people going in and

out, until at last I am summoned into his presence.

A man in shirt-sleeves, with a full, heavy beard, rises and asks, "What do you want, then?"

"I want to join the army!" I reply.

The bearded man—he is Hofer all over—observing me closely, remarks in a low voice: "And so young! Have you father and mother?"

"No, sir."

"Are you from the Tyrol?"

"No, but from the immediate neighbourhood."

"A student, I presume! Do you wish to become a clergyman?"

"I should like to join the army, and fight for the fatherland."

Putting his hand into his leather girdle, he takes out some silver pieces. "There my boy, God bless you! you had better go to Vienna and enlist with Carl. You are only an inexperienced youth. And besides, you are no countryman of ours."

I make my salutation and start to go.

"Halloa, there!" he calls after me, holding the money towards me.

"Thank you, I do not want the money."

At this his eye brightens. "Bravo! Bravo!" he cries. "Stay and become my secretary; I need one possessing both a good penmanship and a good conscience."

"My conscience is also good enough for a soldier," I answer gloomily.

"Here, Seppli!" cries Hofer at this, "bring this man rifle and knife! Oh, that 's brave!" and he presses my hand, adding, "We shall soon have work enough."

So I become a warrior, a Tyrolese guardsman. And soon I have work.

The French and the Bavarians and even the Austrians would not suffer a peasant king in the citadel at Innsbruck. The enemy, three times overthrown by the Tyrolese, had invaded the country in hordes. The rifle worked better in my hands than I had supposed possible. Everything in the past was forgotten, but I longed for my friend Heinrich at my side while fighting the enemy. I captured one French flag, and in trying for the second I was taken. Three bearded Frenchmen laughingly disarmed me, enraged boy that I was.... They made me prisoner and dragged me away, through Bavaria and Suabia on into France.

It is painful for me to describe that time. It was a very dog's life,—a dog's life, not because I lay for three years in prison in a foreign land, but because I was a rebel against my own country. In defiance of the Emperor—so it was reported—the Tyrolese had risen against Bavaria to which he had apportioned them. My German fellow-countrymen acknowledged it themselves, and so my unhappiness was complete. Instead of performing an heroic act, thou hast aided in an evil deed, Andreas; not as brave warrior but as deserter thou liest in chains.

A long march to Russia and to the Orient is talked of. Among many others

of my countrymen I am liberated. Several try to reach their homes. I know nothing of any home and may know nothing. Poor fools like myself are worse off at home than elsewhere. And as a rebel, which I now am, I shall never return to my own land. I will do penance for my sad mistake of illegally bearing arms against the great conqueror. I will go with his troops and help to free the people of the Orient, and place them in subjection to the leader of the Occident. A great aim, Andreas, but a long journey. The Germans make the way very hard for us, but our commander marches with lightning-like rapidity in among the disorganised and scattered people, who can neither think great thoughts nor do great deeds. And for many weeks we drive the Russian army before us, over the wild steppes and endless snow-fields. But in Moscow the Russians throw firebrands between themselves and us, in the midst of their own capital. And we find ourselves buried in the land of unending winter, without support, resting-place, or means of subsistence. Man and nature are alike our enemy. Our chief, seeing that everything is lost, turns us back. Oh, the many desert storms, the hundreds of ice streams, the thousands and thousands of snowy graves, between us and the fatherland! Whoever can march with benumbed limbs bruised to the knees; whoever can tear the last tatters from the body of his dying comrade to cover himself; whoever is able to suck the warm blood from his own veins and eat the flesh of fallen horses and dead wolves; whoever understands warming himself with the snow for a cover and wrestling with the waves and flakes of ice; and, besides all this, knows how to conquer the fright, the terror, and the despair—he, perhaps, may see his home again.

Benumbed like my body are my soul and my brain; in a wilderness, under the snow-laden branches of a pine tree, I am left lying.

A smoky cabin, a bright fire, a long-bearded man and a dark-skinned maiden meet my gaze as I awake upon a couch of mats. A fur skin has been thrown over me. Outside is a roaring sound, like the raging of waters or like a storm. Those are good, friendly eyes which look at me from the two people. The man is tending the fire; the girl feeding me with milk. They are talking in their rough language, of which I cannot understand a word. I think of Heinrich and long for the pleasant sound of his voice. I am suffering terrible pains all over my body, which the man has wrapped in a wet cloth. The maiden holds a little cross before my eyes, murmuring something like a prayer. She is praying a dying blessing for thee, Andreas!

Thou dear, friendly house in the enemy's land! What afterwards occurred there, I can no longer recall. The swarthy maiden often laid her hand on my brow. Had it only come then, it would have been a beautiful death; but it happened otherwise. Even now I can hear the blow that shattered the door. Soldiers forced their way in, maltreated the old man, and pushed the dark-skinned girl from

my bedside. They carried me away from there, away through the storm and the wilderness—back to the army.

I felt as though I were being dragged from my home;—but it is God's world everywhere. However my comrades had not deserted me; and that rejoiced my heart. Constant and true I resolved to stay by them and serve my great general.

On the Rhine I recovered. And in the young springtime I felt a new life stirring within me. A lad, counting but three-and twenty-years, I was inflamed with desire for all that was noble and just, for the common weal, for the brotherhood of man; in my enthusiasm I cried out with my comrades, "One God in heaven and one Lord on earth!" He is the deliverer, the quarrel of princes must now end. The nations must become one great, united people! Such thoughts inspired me. The dark eye of the general, like lightning in the night, inflamed us all. Against Saxony we marched, there to fight the battle for our leader, and to place the beautiful German country under his protection.

At Lützen I defended the life of a French general; at Dresden I killed Blücher's horse from under him; at Leipzig I shot my Heinrich....

A NEW MISSION

"Andreas!" is his death-cry. Thus I know him. The blood bursts forth from his breast. I now come to myself. I throw my gun against a rock, shattering it in pieces; disarmed, I rush into battle; with his own sword I split the skull of a French officer.

What good has it done? I have fought against my fatherland, against the brothers who speak my language, while that of my French comrades I have scarcely understood. And I have shot my Heinrich. Alas, how late my eyes are opened!

"Thou art an inexperienced fellow; go to Vienna, to Carl!" Thou faithful Hofer, had I but followed thy advice! Thy flag was good, more glorious than all others in the wide land. From that hour when my faith in it was torn from my heart, my misfortunes began. Love for freedom in the world has made me captive; the expiation of my own mistake has led me into danger and torment; loyalty to my general and longing for a great, united whole has made me traitor to my fatherland, the murderer of my friend. Andreas, if virtue leads thee to crime, to what depths would evil intention have plunged thee? Thou hast proudly repelled the true leader, experience and guidance failed thee there. Andreas, thou hast given thyself to trade, to science, and to a soldier's life; poverty, confusion, and repentance hast thou reaped. Foreigners have cared for and nursed thee like a

son and a brother, and they have been maltreated for it. Thou bringest nothing good to the world or to mankind. Andreas, thou must go to the depths of the wilderness and become a hermit!

In Saxony, under the arms of a windmill, I repeated these truths to myself. And thereupon I departed, fled through Bohemia and Austria, and after many days arrived in the town of Salzburg. That anyone in this town should recognise me, a poor, sick, ruined fellow, I did not fear. In *Peters-Friedhof* my father lay buried. I wished to see the mound before seeking a cave for myself in some deserted ravine of the forest. And as I lay upon the cold, frozen earth, once more able to weep my heart out over my life, so young and so unfortunate, a gentleman appeared walking among the graves; he asked what troubled me, then with a gesture of astonishment exclaimed: "Erdmann, you here? And how changed you are! Gone scarcely four years and hardly to be recognised!"

Herr von Schrankenheim, the father of my former pupil was standing before me.

Walking up and down with him among the graves, I told him all. With wet eyes he pressed money into my hand: "There, get yourself some new clothes and then come to my house. Become a hermit!—that is no career for a brave young lad. You must overcome your despondency and begin life anew."

I went to his house with great dread, for there was one folly which I had not yet conquered.

Herr von Schrankenheim presented his son to me. He had already become a tall, elegant gentleman. With his hands behind his back, he made me a silent bow, and after a little left us. Then his father, conducting me into his study, bade me take a seat in the softest easy-chair.

"Erdmann," he began after awhile, "are you really in earnest in your desire to live a life of seclusion in the wilderness?"

"That is the best thing for me," I answered. "I am worthless among people who live in joy and pleasure; in wandering and confusion, the few years of my youth have tossed me about from one land to another and amongst the misery of nations. Sir, I know the world and have enough of it."

"You are hardly in your twenty-fourth year, and not yet at the height of your powers, and you wish to give up the service you might render your fellowmen?"

At that I listened attentively; the words impressed me.

"If you think that up to the present time you have only been the author of evil, why do you wish to escape from the dust without also giving the world and the community the good which surely slumbers in rich measure within you?"

I rose from my chair. "Sir, show me, then, the way to do it!

"Very well," said Herr von Schrankenheim, "possibly I can, if you will sit

down again and listen to me. Erdmann, I know of a distant and real hermitage, in which one could serve humanity and perhaps do something great for the community. Far from here, deep in among the Alps, stretches a large forest between rocky hills, where shepherds, herdsmen, wood-cutters, and charcoal-burners are working, and where others are also living who have perhaps honestly secluded themselves or dishonestly taken refuge there, and who drag out an existence by means of lawful or unlawful business. It is true churlish men are among them, whose hearts are gnawed by misfortune or something worse. They have neither priest nor doctor and also no school-teacher in their vicinity; they are quite deserted and isolated and have only their own incompetency and misguided natures upon which to depend. I am the owner of the forest. For a long time I have had the intention of sending someone to this region who should guide the inhabitants a little, assist them with good advice, and teach the children to read and write. The man might make himself very useful. And, indeed, it is not so easy to find one for the place; for it should be someone who, weary of the world, would like to live in seclusion, yet work for mankind. Erdmann, what do you think of that?"

At these words I felt impelled to seize his hand and say: "I am the man for it; dissatisfied with the condition of things in this old world, I will found a new one in the wilderness. A new school, a new parish,—a new life. Let me go to-day!" So the fire was not quite extinguished; sparks sometimes fly from ashes.

"Cold weather is at hand," continued the Baron. "For the winter remain in my house and give the matter due consideration and when summer comes, if my offer still pleases you, then go to the forest."

The rustling of a dress in the adjoining room filled me with alarm, and I finally took my leave, begging permission to go away for the winter, with the promise to return with the swallows and accept his proposal.

He would not be dissuaded from giving me the "means" for the coming season, but then I fled. In the front hall I caught a glimpse of a woman's figure, past which I glided like a spectre.

One day I wandered as far as the woodland by the lake where my childhood and my mother lie buried. And here in this place I rented a small room for the winter. I often climbed the snowy slopes and, standing under moss-covered trees, was impressed with the feeling of having once stood there with my mother and father. I often walked over the frozen lake thinking of the days when I had crossed the gentle waves in a boat at my parents' side, watching the sunset glow on the mountains and listening to the song echoes of a yellow-hammer resounding on the cliffs. My father and mother also sang. That was long ago; long ago.

I have lain in prison in France; I have wandered ill and dying over the deserts of Russia; and now I am living here in this dear, precious little room by

the lake. All would have been well, the time of poverty forgotten like the image in a dream,—only it should never have dawned, that unhappy day in Saxonland—that will haunt me forever. Heinrich, I do not fear thy ghost; only come to me once, that I may say to thee: "It happened in blindness; I cannot alter it now; I will wipe it out with my own life." ...

RESOLVED

Now it is well. I have searched myself for many days; I have reviewed my former life and written it out here in a few words, that I may always keep it the more clearly before my eyes when new perplexities and troubles overwhelm me. In fact I think I have endured and am still able to endure the school of life better than the school of books and dead precepts. I have acquired understanding and have become calm. Having carefully considered my experiences and circumstances, my talents and inclinations, I think it no presumption to accept the proposal of Herr von Schrankenheim. Although outwardly still quite young, inwardly I am very old. The advice of an old man will surely be welcome to the dwellers in the forest.

THE FEAST OF ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA, SALZBURG, 1814.

It is right that I should go to the woods. I am equipped and all is ready. The Baron has promised me his assistance in everything. His son Hermann greeted me again with a friendly bow. The young gentleman is a little pale; he is probably very studious. His sister ... (In the original two lines were here crossed out so many times that they had become entirely illegible.)

They say that my aunt is well. Not wishing to cause her the pain which she would have experienced at my appearance and my undertaking, I did not visit her again. Now they are blowing the post-horn. Farewell, beautiful town.

Already three days on the journey. However, this is a pleasanter expedition than the one over the winter steppes. Day before yesterday the green uplands changed into picturesque mountain regions. Yesterday we entered a broad, pleasant valley. To-day we are going up and down hills, through woods and ravines and by rocky cliffs. Now the road is becoming narrower and rougher; sometimes it is necessary

to alight from the waggon and shove aside the broken blocks of stone. We see more chamois and deer than people. I was obliged to remain in debt for my night's lodging to-day. The bank-note which I have with me the people in this region cannot change. I would have given my host something as security, but he assured me if I were to remain in the forests of the Winkel, I could easily send him the money by a messenger who came occasionally from that region. I must return the bank-note and ask for small coin.

On this the fourth day I have been set down. The post-chaise has gone on its way; for a while I still hear the clear horn resounding through the woods, and then all is silent and I sit here beside my bundle in the midst of the wilderness.

Through the ravine flows a stream which they call the Winkel, along which is a footpath. It leads over stones and roots and is sown with hard pine-needles of last year. By this road I must travel.

Through the branches yonder I see the gleam of a white plateau; that is a snow-field. And do people live in there?

IN THE WINKEL

So I will write it all out. For whom I do not know. Perhaps for the dear God to whom in my innocence I wrote the letter when my father died. My heart would break could I not talk over all that is unusual and sorrowful in my life. I will tell it to the sheet of paper. Perchance in the future it may be found by someone whom I can trust, though he but half understands me. You, pure, white leaves, shall now be my friends and share the years which may come to me. To-day my hair is still dark, while you are somewhat grey, but you may yet outlive me and become my future generation.

A little leaf of paper may live longer
Than the freshest spring-leaf upon God's earth,
Than the fleetest chamois on the rocky cliff,
Than the curly-haired child in the peaceful dale.
A little sheet of paper, pale and fragile,
Is oft the one image, faithful and true,
That man leaves behind him for future time,
When o'er his dust his descendants tread.
His bones are scattered, the grave-stone gone,

The house destroyed, the works have vanished.
Who will then our footsteps trace
In the eternal Nature where we once held sway?
New men wrestle with fortunes new,
And think no more of those who are gone;
Then a leaf, with its pale ink tracings,
Is often the only enduring sign
Of the being who once lived and suffered,
Laughed and wept, enjoyed and struggled,
And the thought that from the heart was born
In pain or joy, or in mad jest,
Remains, and the eternal kiss
Casts it in an everlasting mould.
Oh, may it in future times,
Purified, touch the hearts of men!

I arrived here on a Saturday. As I stumbled along by the Winkel Water, I met here and there wood satyrs, brown and hairy, covered with moss and pitch, going about in their fustian smocks. They looked like exiled, withered tree-trunks, seeking for new ground where they might grow and flourish again.

Stopping in front of me, they stared in astonishment or glanced at me threateningly, while they struck fire with tinder and flint for their pipes. Some of them had flashing eyes which sent forth sparks like those from the fire-stones; others very good-naturedly showed me the way. One rough, sturdy fellow, carrying a pack on his back with saws, axe, meal buckets, etc., stepped to one side, as he saw me coming, and murmured, "*Gelobt sei Jesu Christ!*"

"Forever and ever, amen!" was my answer, which seemed to give him confidence, for he accompanied me a short distance.

At last the valley widens a little. It is a small basin into which flow a number of streams from the different ravines, as well as from the cliffs that rise at my left hand. These form the Winkel. Here a thick log, hewn flat on the upper side, is laid across the brook, forming the path to a frame house standing on the edge of the woods.

This is the forestry, the only house of any size in the vicinity. Farther away in the defiles and valleys are the cabins of the shepherds and wood-cutters, and beyond, on the wooded hillsides, where large clearings have been made and charcoal-pits started, are villages of huts for the charcoal-burners.

They call this little valley *Im Winkel*. It still remains almost entirely in its primeval state, excepting the one large house, with its domestic surroundings

and the footpath leading up to it.

The forestry is also called the Winkel-warden's house. Here I entered and, placing my bundle upon a chest in the hall, seated myself beside it.

The forester was busy with workmen who were settling their accounts and receiving their monthly wages. He was a domineering, red-bearded man, and he dismissed the people somewhat roughly and curtly; but the men bore it good-naturedly and pocketed their money in silence.

The business finished, he rose and stretched his strong limbs, which were clothed in genuine and correct hunter's costume. I now approached, handing him the credentials which I had brought from the owner of the forest.

This document contained everything essential. A nicely furnished room was assigned to me. A sturdy woman who was there to look after and arrange it, according to her own ideas, stopped suddenly before my open door, and with arms akimbo called out loud and shrilly, "*Du lieber Himmel*, is that how a schoolmaster looks?" She had never seen one in her life.

I was soon settled and had all my possessions in order. Politely knocking at my door, the forester then entered my room. Looking at my apartment, he asked, "Does it answer your purpose?"

"Oh, yes, very well," I replied.

"Are you satisfied?"

"Yes, and I hope to be quite contented here."

"Then I trust everything will be all right."

He walked many times up and down over the plank floor, his hands thrust into his trousers' pockets, and finally stopping in front of me he said:

"Now look about you and see what method you would like to adopt for your work. I leave here to-morrow and only come every Saturday into the Winkel. The remainder of the time I am busy in other localities, and my home is in Holdenschlag, four hours from here by the road. The idea of beginning a school immediately dismiss from your mind, my dear man. First we must do away with the old one. They are blockheads, I tell you! And you may as well know at once that we have all kinds of people in our woods. Nothing very bad can be charged against any one of them, but they have come here from the east and west—for what reason God only knows. They are mostly peasants from the outlying regions, who have fled into the forest to escape military service. There are also fellows among them whom one would hardly like to meet on a dark night. Poachers are they all. So long as they only shoot the game of the forest, we let them go about free; that cannot be helped, and the labour of their hands is needed. But if they shoot down a hunter, then of course we are obliged to arrest them. The most of them are married, but they did not all bring their brides from the altar. You will run across men and women who, even in this century, have never heard a church bell

or seen a vestment. You will soon observe what an effect that has upon the people. Do it in whatever way you think best; but first you must become acquainted with them. And if you find that you can exert an influence over them, we will support you in it. You are still quite young, my friend; take care and be prudent! If you think best, take a boy for the first part of the time to show you your way about. And if you need anything, apply to me. I wish you well!"

With these words he departed. He, it seems, is now my master; may he also be my protector!

Although it was my first night in the Winkel, I slept soundly on the straw bed. The murmuring of the brook cheered my heart. It was the month of June, but the sun rose late over the forest and looked into my room in a friendly way.

In the morning I wander out of doors. All is fresh and green and sparkling with dew-drops, while on the wooded heights, as far as the eye can reach in the narrow valley, the bluish sun-web spins itself over the shadowy tree-trunks. Toward the west towers the battlement of rocks above which lie the meadows of the Alm, then rocky cliffs again, and over all stretch the wide, inhospitable fields of snow and ice, glittering like a white plateau.

If I am successful in my task here below, then sometime I will climb up to the glaciers. And above the glaciers towers at last the Graue Zahn, from whose summit, I am told, in the farthest distance can be seen the great water. Am I successful here, then sometime from the high mountain I shall behold the sea.

In war and storm I have rushed over half the world and have seen nothing but dust and stone; now, in the peace of solitude my eyes are opened to nature.

But—poachers, deserters, wild fellows whom one would not like to meet at night! Andreas, that will be no easy task.

PEACE OF THE PRIMEVAL FOREST

I already feel contented in the woods. The few people who see me going about in the forest gaze after me, unable to understand why I, a young fellow, should be roaming here in the wilderness. Ah yes, it is true, from day to day I am growing younger and am beginning to take a new lease of life. I am recovering. That comes from the fresh, primitive nature which surrounds me.

Romantic fancies I do not indulge in. As it is absorbed through the eye and the ear and all the senses, the much loved, the beautiful forest, so I like to enjoy it. The solitary one alone finds the forest; where many seek, it flees and only the trees remain. The woods are lost to them on account of the trees. Nay, still more, or, indeed, still less, they do not even see the trees, but only the wood

which serves for timber or fuel and the twigs which may be used for brooms. Or they open the grey eyes of wisdom and say,—"That belongs to this class, or to that"—as if the pines and oaks, centuries old, were nothing but schoolboys.

I already feel contented in the woods. As long as I enjoy it, I do not wish to hear a single word of the purpose it serves, as man's love of gain understands this purpose; I wish to be as childishly ignorant as if I had to-day just fallen from heaven upon the soft, cool moss in the shade.

A network of roots surrounds me, partly sucking the mother's milk from the earth for its trees, partly seeking to entwine itself about the mossy bank and Andreas Erdmann sitting upon it. Softly I rest upon the arms of the network—upon mother-arms.

The brown trunk of the fir towers straight upward, stretching a rich garland of rugged branches in all directions. They have long grey beards, hairy, twisted mosses hanging from bough to bough. Well polished and dripping with balsam is the silvery, shimmering pine. But in the rough, furrowed, knotted bark of the larch-tree, with the mysterious signs and innumerable scars, is engraved the whole world's legend, from that day when the exiled murderer Cain rested for the first time under the wild interwoven branches of the larch, up to the hour when another, also homeless, inhales the perfume of the tender, light-green needles.

It is dark, as in a Gothic temple; the pine-forest builds the pointed arch. Above rise the thousand little turrets of branches, between which the deep blue sky lights up the shady ground beneath, forming tiny mosaics. Or white clouds are sailing high above, trying to espy me,—me, a little worm in the woods,—and they waft a greeting to me—from—No, she is hidden by the hand of man under a baronial roof. Clouds, ye have not seen her—or have ye? Alas, no, they are drifted hither from distant deserts and seas.

There is a whispering, a rustling. The trees are speaking with one another. The forest dreams.

In all my life I have never seen such a remarkable woven mat as this variegated, wonderful network of mossy earth. It is a miniature forest, and in the bosom of its shade perhaps other beings rest, who like myself are watching the endless web of nature. Ah, how the ants hasten and run, embracing the smallest of small things with their slender arms, while endeavouring to poison everything hostile with their corroding fluid! A brilliant beetle has been contemptuously regarding the tiny, painstaking creatures, for it is endowed with wings. It now flutters haughtily upward, and glittering, circles away; suddenly it is ensnared and captured in a net. The spider, quiet and industrious, has been toiling long on this net; a veil, softer than any made on earth, has become the beetle's shroud.

The little birds in the branches are also planning their works of art; where the boughs are thickest, they weave a cradle-basket from straws and twigs for

their beloved young.

Can it then be true that a red thread spins itself on through all races of the human and animal kingdoms, down to the very smallest creature? Does everything then follow one and the same law, the acts of King Solomon on his throne of gold and those of the lazy, writhing worm under the stone? I should like very much to know.

Hush! yonder darts a rabbit; the crowned stag is making his way through the underbrush. Each shrub acts as mysteriously as if concealing a hundred beings and wood-spirits within itself. Sharply defined shadow-forms lie upon the ground, over which strings of light spin themselves. And the breath of the forest plays upon these strings.

I step out into the clearing. A trembling breeze ripples towards me, plays with my curls, and kisses my cheeks. Here are light-green furze bushes, with their clusters of little red berries, dark, gleaming bilberry, and the evergreen laurel of our Alps, for the worthy poet of the forest. The wood-bee is buzzing about among the bushes, and each leaf is a table spread for her.

And above this dim, perfumed field rises the charred trunk of a tree, its one bare branch lifted in defiance, threatening heaven for having once shattered its head with a lightning-stroke. And yonder towers a grey, cloven rock, in whose fissures the nimble lizard and the shimmering adder hide, and at whose feet flourish the serrated leaves of the fern, and the blue gentians, constantly waving greetings with their little caps.

Where there is no path, there is mine—where it is steepest, where the tangle of the alder-bushes and briars is thickest, where the dogberry grows, where the adder rustles in the yellow foliage of last year's beech. The partridges are afraid of me and I of them, and my feet are the greatest misfortune of the ants, my advancing body the scourge of God to the spiders, whose house falls in ruins on this summer day.

It is a delight to penetrate thus into the wilderness, into the dim and uncertain; that which I anticipate attracts me more than that which I know; that which I hope for is dearer to me than that which I have. I stand on the edge of a green meadow, enclosed by young fir-woods. Close to me a deer springs from the thicket, bounds over the meadow, stopping on the other side, where it now stands in a listening attitude with head thrown high. Following an inborn instinct of man, I raise my juniper stick, lay it beside my cheek like a gun, aiming towards the breast of the deer. It looks over at me, well aware that a juniper stick does not go off. Finally it begins to graze. Laying the stick on the ground again, I walk farther out on the meadow. The deer raises its head quickly and I now expect it to dart away. But it does not hasten, it licks its back and scratches itself behind the ear, and again begins to eat.

”Little deer,” I say, ”thou forgettest the respect due to mankind! Dost thou think me incapable of injuring thee? I wonder at that; here in the forest wander poachers and hunters. Thou dost not seem to be a novice, yet thou pretendest to be very inexperienced. Among us men, such behaviour would be called stupidity.”

The creature, gradually grazing in my direction, stops often to look at me, but tosses its head in fright, preparing for a spring, whenever hearing a noise from any other side. With ears constantly pricked up, its whole being is a picture of anxious watchfulness and readiness for flight.

”Thou knowest then,” I say, ”that thou art in the land of the enemy? Not a moment safe from the shot? That is indeed cause for fear.”

I draw gradually nearer, the deer taking no heed.

”I am glad,” I say, ”that I do not repel thee. It cannot be denied that I belong to those monsters who walk on two legs. But all bipeds are not dangerous. I, not at all. A short time ago I composed a few verses, which I should like to recite to thee.”

At this the creature, startled, leaps to one side.

”They would not have been long,” I say, sorry to have frightened the deer.

”It is not crafty of thee to hurt my feelings. The poem is written for my sweetheart. Somewhere lives one whom I love from the depths of my soul, but no one suspects it, nor does she herself. So I have composed these verses for her. But they must be forgotten again. How dost thou manage in such affairs?”

The animal, stepping two paces nearer to me, again begins to sniff. I now become quite bold.

”Beloved deer!” I continue, holding out my arms, ”I cannot say how interesting thou art to me. If I had a rifle, I might shoot thee down. No, fear nothing from me, for thou breathest the same air as I, thy little eye beholds the same sunshine as mine—thy blood is as warm and as red as my own—why should I kill thee? But if I were hungry and had a rifle, then I should shoot thee after all, then nothing would help thee.”

In spite of all this, the little deer is coming nearer. I stand there motionless, and ten paces away is the creature looking at me. My sensations are most uncomfortable. There must be something wrong with a man with whom wild game associates.

”Thou art curious,” I say, ”to see how I look near by. Well, observe me closely. These rags of linen and woollen stuff do not belong to me. This is only the outer covering. And if thou shouldst see us bare and naked as thyself, then all anxiety and fear of us would disappear. In the beginning we cannot shoot, cannot run as thou dost, cannot nourish ourselves from weeds, cannot dwell in the thicket. So pitiable are we. We—so it is said—would have been able to

do it once, but in the same degree in which our reason has grown, have our bodies degenerated, become tender and sensitive, effeminate and weak. And if it continues in this way, all mankind will dissolve in spirit, which must also perish, as the flame dies when wick and oil are gone,—and you will take our place.

"I do not know," I say, "whether thou art unconsciously searching for something which, when acquired, still does not satisfy. I do not know if it be hatred which animates thee, ambition which hunts and urges thee on, love which makes thee unhappy, pleasure which kills thee. With us it is so. Do I pity thee or dost thou pity me? Whatever thou hast, thou art able to enjoy in full measure, while with us the sweet pleasures of the heart become embittered by the hardness and pitilessness of reason and prejudice. Our feeling degenerates into thought, and that is our misfortune. But after all, thou wouldst willingly exchange places? No, thou art not advanced enough to be discontented. Thy fear is the hunter, as ours is man. Our own kind threaten us with the greatest dangers. Hast thou already seen the latest weekly journal? Ah, thou dost not read leaves, thou eatest them, which is far more wholesome, only beware of newspaper leaves, they are poisonous. They should not be so, but they suck the venom from the ground upon which they stand, from the air that blows around them, from the times which they serve. Thank God, they do not grow in the Winkel forest. There grows the sorrel, and that is something for thee, and the mushroom, which is something for me. For the rest, my little deer, how long shall we stand here? How goes eating from the hand?"

I pull some grass from the ground, an occupation which the deer follows with the eye of a connoisseur.

A shot is fired. A short whizzing through the air, the deer makes one high bound—and with the utmost display of its speed, runs across the meadow straight into the thicket.

In the near branches the sulphurous smoke slowly disappears. I hasten to look for the poacher, to deliver him up to justice because he has fired, and to beg mercy for him because he has not hit. Seeing neither the poacher nor the deer, I am furious with the thought that the creature might take me for the guilty one, for the betrayer, or even for the assassin, and in his eyes I wish to be neither a bad friend nor a bad protector.

But what does it all amount to? Such enthusiasm is not enduring; in the late autumn, when, as I hope, the roast venison will appear upon my table, the friendly feelings will surely reawaken, however they will not come from the heart, but from the stomach.

The triumphant roaring of a bull or the bells and bleating of a goat is now heard. The shepherd-boy comes skipping by. He will have nothing to do with the juniper-bushes; the thorns prick, the blueberries are bitter. He picks straw-

berries into his cap, or, what he likes better, into his mouth. Then, plucking the narrow pointed leaf of the goat-majoram he carries it to his lips, and through it brings forth a whistle which re-echoes far away on the slopes and which other shepherd-lads in the distance give back to him. To the little folks of the woods this is the sign of brotherhood. Through the raspberry-bushes wriggles the ant-grubber, searching for the resinous kernels in the ant-hills from which to prepare the incense, that wonderful grain whose smoky veil enchants the eye of mortals, so that they fall before the sacrificial bread and see the Lord.

On the ridge beside the purple erica, under the blackberry leaves, flourishes the sweet-root; that is a toothsome spice for the shepherd-boy, and the herdswoman also likes to nibble it, that she may have a ringing voice for yodling on the Alm. The herdswoman, I notice, is often affected in a singular manner; surely she has many, yes, a great many words upon her tongue, but the right one for her heart's desire is not among them; she therefore expresses it in another way and sings a song *without* words which in this region, as far as it is heard, is called the *Jodel*.

I proceed down through a defile torn away by the wild torrents of the Kar. Trees and bushes arch over it, forming an arbour. A cool breeze fans me as I stand upon the shady bank of a forest lake, enclosed by dark walls and slender brown trunks of the primeval forest. A perfect stillness rests upon the water. The stray leaf of a beech or an oak rustles toward me. I hear that eternal murmuring of deepest silence. A little bell somewhere in space, we know not if on the earth below or in the starry heaven above, is constantly calling us. And in a quiet hour our soul catches the familiar sound and longs,—and longs.

Peace of the primeval forest, thou still, thou holy refuge of the orphaned, the deserted, the pursued and world-weary; thou only Eden which remains for the unhappy!

Listen, Andreas! Dost thou hear the sound and echo of the song without words? That is the shepherd's hymn. Dost thou also hear the distant hammering and reverberating? That is the woodsman with the axe—the angel with the sword.

WITH THE HERDSMEN

The earliest people were the herdsmen. They are the most harmless that one meets in these wooded hills. So I have begun with them.

And I have already learned something of pastoral life. With the exception of the couple up in the Miesenbach hut, none of them live at home; the herdsmen

really have no homes, they are wanderers. They spend the winter in the lower, outlying districts, dwelling in the farmyards to which the herds belong. They eat with the people and sleep with the cows and goats. In the spring-time, when the freshets are over and the maple blossoms are peeping forth from their green sheaves toward heaven to see if the swallows are not already there, the cattle are taken from the stalls and led by the herdsman to the Alm. The cows are bedecked with tinkling bells, the calves and steers with green wreaths, such as the people wear at the feast of Corpus Christi. In the procession to the Alm, when the young people and cattle walk together, the ceremony of crowning with wreaths is conducted with great propriety; but when, after many honeymoons upon the airy heights, the cattle return to the valley in the late autumn with fresh wreaths, the garland of the herdswoman does not always remain green in her hair. On the Alm there is much sun and little shade, and the Alm-boy must bring the fresh water a long distance—then nothing withers more easily than such a tender nosegay in the curly locks.

In the lovely summer-time these people lead a good and happy life upon the hills and I—truly and by my faith, I am good and happy with them. Sorrow and woe are like hot-house plants, they will not flourish in the fresh Alpine air. Even the old keeper of oxen, usually so surly, is constantly heard singing and piping his flute.

Within the herdsman's hut everything is well arranged and conveniently near at hand. By the hearth sits Domesticity in front of the fire and the brown jugs, and before the shaky table kneels Religion at the crudely ornamented *Hausaltar*. And where the bedstead stands, the Lord Himself would have been unable to put anything better. The bed is made from rough boards, upholstered with moss and rushes—it must be like that if the young woman of the Alm is to dream happily therein. In the next room are the buckets and pitchers, and here the milk and butter business is carried on, the profits of which are honestly delivered to the owner of the herd.

The whole household is shut in by four wooden walls, on which the Alm woman hears at night the little gold man knocking; this is the token of the fulfilment of her most secret heart's desire. I did not like to tell the credulous Aga that I thought the little gold man might be an industrious wood-worm. What in heaven's name would a wood-worm have to do with her heart's desires? But these will be fulfilled all the same: the simple folk about here wish for nothing which cannot be attained. And the maid in the hut, as well as the shepherd-boy and the herd in the stall, sleep with an easy conscience.

In the morning the bright sun peeps through the window, calling, "Time to be up!" Now the herdswoman goes with the bucket into the stall, where between four legs flow the little white fountains of milk and butter. The fire on the hearth

is ready for the milk and the herdsman is waiting for the soup. He yodles and shouts, and so the time passes. But Berthold manages in the simplest way; he lays himself under the belly of the cow and drinks his breakfast directly from the udder.

It was with Berthold and Aga in the Miesenbach hut that I made my observations. After the morning soup Aga takes the basket on her back and descends toward the grazing meadows of the Thalmulde, that like a careful mistress she may prepare the table for her four-footed menials. The herd's meal lasts the whole day; for in the early morning Berthold has already led them down to the pastures wet with dew.

Once in such an hour I listened to Aga. She was trilling and singing, and these are the things I like to record.

"If the Winkel brook were milk,
And the Winkel vale were beef as well,
And the hills were all of butter,
That were a feast, my lad, to tell."

Berthold hearing it does not reflect long; a song so grossly material calls for one still more material. Standing upon the wall, he sings to the maid:

"If thy red hair were gold,
Of thalers full thy throat,
Thy bodice stuffed with diamonds,
Upon thee I would dote."

And then she:

"Thy fingers would burn for the thalers,
The jewels thou wouldst embrace,
But the golden hair were much too fine
For thy rough and bearded face."

Oh, they do not remain in one another's debt; they know how to tease. But how does it happen that in the forest-land grow fewer and less appropriate expressions for love and tenderness than for jesting and fun? If love down in the valleys is not exactly communicative, up here with the firs and little cabbage-roses it is as dumb as fish in water. The kiss is not as customary here as in other places. It

is, I should say, as if the warm blood did not take the time to mount to the lips, when there is so much to do elsewhere. Everything expresses itself in the arms, and when a love-sick lad knows no other way of showing his feelings, he seizes his maiden, as the miller does a sack of grain, and swings her high in the air, at the same time giving a shout that verily tears the clouds asunder.

Berthold does it not a whit differently. They are two poor young people, left to themselves on the lonely Alpine heights. What is there to do? Alas! alas! nothing, I think, for me as yet.

WITH THE WOOD-DEVILS

In this wilderness there are trades of which I had no idea. The people literally dig their bread out of the earth and stones. They scrape it from the trees, and by the many-sided resources of their wit force it out of inedible fruits. How strange that man should know so well how to utilise everything! But has he already done so? And was the necessity there before the means were discovered, or was it the result of the things obtained? If the latter were the case, I should consider the thousand acquisitions as no gain.

The starved or daring wood-devils hold closer communication with the mass of mankind outside than one would suppose, and than they themselves perhaps imagine. Yet after all they know it well enough. For example, there is the root-digger. His fustian jacket reaches to the calves of his legs; his hat is a veritable family roof, but in places it is already breaking and full of holes. One knows him at once from afar. He climbs around among the rocks and digs out the aromatic roots with his crooked iron puncheon. He then sometimes sings the little song:

”When I uproot the spikenard here,
That grows upon the Alm,
I like to think of the women-folk.—
Canst thou guess where the spices go?
To Turkey land, that the women-folk,
A sweeter perfume may receive.
In Turkey land, the women-folk.”

I do not yet know if it be true that spikenard travels from here over to Turkey. But these people believe it and so it is truth to them. The proud assertion of the

root-digger, that he is sending a sweeter perfume to the woman's world in the Orient, is contested.

Yonder upon the cliff stands an old comrade, who, hearing the song, unfastens the brass clasp of his jacket, and retorts:

"That thou 'rt always thinking
Of the Turkish women-folk,
O Lota, is well-known!
Go rather and perfume thyself
With spikenard on the Alm,
It might not do thee any harm."

Thus they tease one another, and that is their harmless side. But the wood-devil has his cloven foot. The genuine man of the woods has a double-barrelled shotgun; one barrel is called *Gemsennoth* (Danger to the chamois), the other *Jägertod* (Death to the hunter). If he could write, he would engrave these names upon the steel with his crooked knife; but he keeps it in his mind, that about *Gemsennoth* and *Jägertod*.

He would have given up the digging long ago, to lead solely a poacher's life, but he imagines that sometime he is going to find a buried treasure under the stones. Digging for treasures, gold and diamonds under the ground, that he has heard in fairy-tales and can never forget.

Gold and diamonds under the ground! Treasure-digging! The fairy-tale is right; the root-digger is right; the ploughman is right; the miner is right. But the treasure-digger is not right.

Of one thing I am careful, that is, not to offend the root-digger, the pitch-scraper, or the ant-grubber. These are the people who are said to cause the bad weather, which is all devils' work, and since they live in the forests, thence the many hard storms in the wooded and Alpine regions. But how they manage that the atoms of dew condense into water, that the drops freeze into bits of ice, that the bits of ice become heavy hail-stones, that flaming darts of lightning hiss through the night, and that the mighty thunder rolls, until at last it all bursts upon the trembling men and beasts of the earth—how they manage that, must be a profound secret of these wild fellows which I have not been able to discover.

It is a fearful delusion of these people, when they think themselves able to perform deeds which are beyond human power, while neglecting that by which they might accomplish something great.—However, in the world outside, other mistakes occur, still more harmful because made by men of superior wisdom and with greater resources than here. Glorious, O mankind, is thy progress, but with

thy monstrous prejudices art thou still very incomplete!

Up among the hills is a glen called the Wolfsgrube. I recently visited this place, arriving there just in time to witness the burial of a man, who had been neither root-digger, ant-grubber, pitch-scraper, brandy-distiller, nor poacher, but the most extraordinary wood-devil.

He had never worked, but had earned his bread by eating. He was called "the Gormand"; I think he had no other name. He was a human wreck, although physically very strong. His hair had become a hopelessly tangled mat with sweat and resin; so he had no need of a hat. His beard resembled dried pine-needles. His broad and powerful chest was as though spun over with a tenfold spider's web, thus saving a doublet. An entire horny skin had formed itself upon his bulky feet, making shoes superfluous. Almost a terrible sight! I met him a few days ago in the Winkel. Seeing me, he snatched a handful of sand from the ground, offering to swallow it for a small remuneration. He often went to the surrounding villages on church-festival days to exhibit his tricks before the people. He did not consume tow and ribbons and that sort of thing, as jugglers usually do, but cloth, leather, and bits of glass. He has even been known to swallow rusty shoe-nails. His favourite repast was an old boot or felt hat, torn into bits and prepared with oil and vinegar. That paid him well, and his purse, like his stomach, had a good digestion. "For us such food would not be good," said Rhyme-Rüpel, "though a little drink of *Schnapps* or wine might cut the pebbles very fine." Day in, day out, he performed this feat; but everything has an end, Easter Sunday as well as Good Friday. He was sitting before his glass of toddy in Kranabethannes' hut, saying in his arrogant way, "Eat your black bread yourself, Hannes; I 'll drink the brandy and take a bite of the glass with it." Just then an old root-digger crawled out from a dark corner of the hearth: "Despise the black bread, do you? You!" At which the Gormand retorted: "Get out, root-digger; I 'll eat you and the yoke on your back!" The old man then drew forth a small root, saying, "Here 's something, you rascal, that's a little stronger than you are." "Bring it on!" screamed the Gormand, seizing the root and thrusting it down his throat. "You 're done for!" chuckled the old man, and he disappeared into the forest. Suddenly springing up, the Gormand staggered out of the house and fell upon the grass, stone-dead. The meaning of it all was now plain. No one knew the old root-digger—he was the devil.

Half-fact, half-legend, so the superstitious people interpreted and related it to me. And they would not bury the man in the Holdenschlag churchyard. In the marshy ground of the Wolfsgrube, where only the rushes grow and wave their little woolly flags, they made the grave. Winding the body in thick fir-boughs, they shoved it with a pole, until it rolled into its final resting-place.

At the same time a little troop of worshippers came over the heath through the Wolfsgrube. They had been in a defile in the high mountains where a cross is

said to be standing among the rocks. The little company paused before the grave, repeating the Lord's prayer for the dead man. Then suddenly a swarthy woman, a charcoal-burner, cried out: "You miserable wretches, your pious prayers will be as useful to that man as dry clothes to a fish in water. He 's already yonder in torment, for he 's the eater of broken glass!"

"The holy Lord's prayer will serve afterwards for our live-stock at home!" murmured the worshippers as they walked away.

A pale, black-haired man, with a melancholy face though restless bearing, still remained standing beside the grave. Gazing into it, with a trembling hand he threw a clump of earth upon the form wrapped in the green travelling-dress and, looking about him, said: "We will cover him with earth nevertheless. The devil has not taken him because of his good appetite; and his heart may have been no worse than his stomach."

This was the funeral sermon. And then a few men came and shovelled earth into the grave.

Later I again met the sad, pale man, whom they call the *Einspanig*. "Can you tell me something," I asked, "about the eater of broken glass? It is really a strange, weird tale."

"Strange and weird is the whole woodland," he answered; "a better digestion than ours, such a son of the wilderness may have. And superstition is the intellectual life of these people." With these words he turned and quickly stumbled away.

What, old man, art thou not thyself a son of the wilderness? Thou art truly strange and weird enough. The *Einspanig*, "The Lone One," they call him; of his history they know nothing.

I have also made the acquaintance of the pitch-maker. He is a very peculiar fellow. One can scent him from afar and see him glistening through the thicket. The hatchet glistens with which he scrapes the resin from the trees, and the grappling-iron glistens, by means of which he climbs like a wild-cat up the smooth trunks to reap a harvest from their tops, or to make an incision for the resin to flow out later on. And the leather trousers glisten, and the fustian jacket, covered with pitch, and the blade of the long knife at his side—and finally one sees his black, glistening eye. If a blossom or a falling pine-needle grazes him, it sticks to his arm, to his hair, to his beard. If a fly or a butterfly is flitting about, or a spider, swinging from its web, the little insect remains clinging to him; and his dress is gaily decorated with tiny creatures from the plant and animal kingdom when in the darkness of the forest or at evening he returns home to his hermitage. The pitch-maker wounds the trees seriously, at last killing them, and the primeval forest has succumbed to the destruction. He has crippled the old pines and firs, and they now stretch out their long arms after him, as if desiring

to strike down their deadly enemy.

By a process of evaporation, the pitch-maker prepares turpentine and other oils such as are used in the forest regions for every conceivable malady. I often visit these distilleries, watching the black mass boil and bubble, until it is put into closed earthen receptacles, from which the valuable contents are drawn through slender tubes into kegs and bottles. Packing these in a large basket, the man peddles them from house to house. The wood-cutter buys pitch-oil for every injury which he may receive in his battle with the forest. The charcoal-burner buys it for burns; the brandy-distiller for his casks. The root-digger buys for sprains and colic, the last of which he contracts from so much uncooked food. The small peasant farther out buys pitch-oil for his whole household and cattle, as a remedy against every ill.

O thou pitch-oil man! A tiny worm has been gnawing long at my heart—might it not be destroyed with thy gall-bitter oil?

In the pitch-maker's hut it is unsafe to sit down, for one would stick fast. And then the little unwashed, tousled children would come and clamber upon one's neck until there would be no escape.

The pitch-maker's dwelling is simple enough. Underneath is the bare earth; above, the bark-shingled roof; while the walls are of rough logs, stopped up with moss. The uneven hearth serves at the same time as a table. Under the bedstead is the storehouse for potatoes, mushrooms, and wild pears. The worm-eaten wardrobe is the revered object in the house; it guards the sacred souvenirs of the forefathers, the baptismal gifts of the children, and the rain-coat of the pitch-maker when not in use. The windows have hardly enough glass to have satisfied the appetite of the Gormand. "Besides," as the pitch-maker says, "rags and straw paper are as good as glass panes, if one cannot show a clean face through them." Behind the wardrobe hangs the gun. If my lord, the hunter, on one of his visits, should happen to discover it, it is all right—a gun is a necessity, for there are wolves in the woods. If he does not see it, so much the better. It is the same with the pitch-maker's housekeeper; seeing her, one is compelled to acknowledge that the spring-time of life will return no more to one in the fortieth year; that, as the proverb says, a wen on the throat is better than a hole; that one-eyed is not blind, and that a little crookedness in the legs is neither to be ashamed nor boasted of. If one does not see her, so much the better.

But as I have often noticed, to many a pitch-maker clings a young wife. Country wenches are sometimes very different from city maids. The latter are usually well pleased when their lovers are white and delicate, slender, docile, and amorous as doves. The country lass on the contrary prefers one who is hard, rough, and bristly, angular and wild. If a girl has a choice between one who cheerfully darns stockings for her and one who thunders at her with every

word—then she takes the thunderer. For after all she has him in her power. How does the song go which the pitch-maker likes so well to sing?

”For the pitch I have my axe,
For the hare I ’ve gun and ball,
For the hunter two stout fists,
For the wench I ’ve nothing at all.
’That,’ she says, ’is far too little.’
So she drives me out the door;
Then I go and flog the hunter
Till he troubles me no more.”

It may not be poetical,—however, the man who occasionally sings such a song does not harm the hunter. He who goes about with gloomy thoughts sings no merry song.

Among the wood-devils, the most cordial and, according to my judgment, the most dangerous, is the brandy-distiller. He wears finer cloth than the others and shaves his beard every week. He always carries about with him a little flask, affably treating each person who comes in his way. Whoever drinks is ruined, and follows him to the tavern.

The brandy-distiller reaps a double harvest; first the red berries from the mountain-ash, from the hop, from the sweet-broom, from everything that here produces fruit. He believes in the Spirit of Nature, that lives in all created things, and conjures it out of the fruits of the forest and, like the magician in the fairy-tale, into the bottle and, putting the stopple in quickly, imprisons it there. His distillery is a magic circle under a high, gloomy pine, a circle like that which the spider draws and weaves. Soon a few flies are there, wriggling in the net. The woods-people, as they go about, or to and from their work, are at last enticed into the tavern—these are the flies of the two-legged spider, and from them the brandy-distiller now reaps his second harvest.

Each man is advised by his wife to avoid the road by ”the Pine,” it is so dark and rough, as well as being longer than any other. The man appears to be convinced, and besides he has nothing to call him there,—but health is such an uncertain thing, and as he walks along he is suddenly attacked by a pressure in the throat, followed by a most distressing colic. Having no pitch-oil with him, he knows but one remedy and—he takes the road by ”the Pine.” ”The first little glass,” says Rüpel, ”soothes the smart; the second glass makes warm the heart; the third glass makes it still more warm; one’s purse by the fourth will receive no harm; at the fifth, the man wishes to stretch his limbs; at the sixth, the pines

sway and his poor head swims; at the seventh, his body is all aglow; at the eighth, to his wife he longs to go."

But stumbling homewards, the good man swears at the "bad" wife who is coming to meet him without a light through this ghastly fog; and when finally, his hat awry and jammed low on his forehead, he tumbles into the hut, the woman knows what beatings she has already borne and may receive again, if she does not hasten and escape into the garret or some safe place.

My voyages of discovery have cheered me more than I should have thought possible. A sad fate hangs over this little people, but this fate sometimes makes an unspeakably droll face. Besides I do not consider these foresters so utterly depraved and wretched. They are neglected and uncouth. Perhaps something might be made of them; but first the leaven must be added.

The race will not die out so easily. Right here in the damp, dark forest-land the little ones flourish like mushrooms. The youngsters follow the path of their elders and carry the grappling-iron for roots, or the herdsman's staff, or the hatchet for pitch, or the axe for wood.

But, according to the reports made to the priest in Holdenschlag, the forest children are all girls. The boys are mostly christened with the water of the woods; they are recorded in no parish-register, that they may remain unnoticed outside by the bailiffs and omitted from the military list. The men here say that the government and whatever belongs to it costs them more than it would be worth to them, and they will renounce it. That may be all true, but the government does not renounce the healthy Winkelstegers.

The girls also, when they are somewhat fledged, soon take up ant- and root-digging, gathering herbs, and they know of a market for everything; they pick strawberries and hops and the fruit of the juniper for the brandy-distillers. And the little boys, still too young to look after themselves, already help with the brandy-drinking.

A short time ago I watched a troop of children. They are playing under a larch-tree. The fallen larch-cones are their stags and roes, which they are pretending to feed with green brushwood. Others run about playing "Hide and Seek" behind the bushes, "Holding Salt," "Driving out Hawks," "Going to Heaven and Hell," and whatever all the tricks and games are called. It is pleasant to watch them; to be sure they are all half naked, but they have well-formed and healthy limbs, and their games are more childishly gay than any which I have ever seen other children play. This is the vulnerable spot of the horny Siegfried, who is here called *Waldteufel*.

Smiling at the little ones under the larch-tree, I try after a while to mingle with them in their games, but they draw back shyly, only a few keeping near me; but when I attempt to get the better of them in a race or game of tag, then they

all join in. And soon I am a good and welcome friend in the mad, whirling circle of these young people. I prattle many things to them, but more often I let them talk to me. I go to school to the children to learn the schoolmaster's art.

The forest people do not allow themselves to be drawn up by force; he who would win them for higher things must descend quite to them, must lead them up arm in arm and indeed by a long, circuitous route.

IN THE FELSENTHAL

Below the slopes of the fore-alps and the cliffs of the Hochzahn with its chain of glaciers, the wooded hills extend on and on toward the west. Seen from above they lie there like a dark-blue sea, concealing in their depths the everlasting shadows and the strange people.

A day's journey from the valley of the Winkel toward the west, far below the last hut, is a place where, according to the legend, the world is fastened in with boards.

It were better said, walled in with stones; deep fissured precipices shut off the forest-land and here begin the Alps, where the rocky boulders no longer lie or lean, but soar straight up into the sky. A sea of snow and ice with crags, about which hover everlasting mists, extends endlessly, it is said, over the giant strongholds above, which in olden times guarded an Eden now turned to stone. Thus the legend. Strange that this wonderful dream of a lost paradise yet to be regained should dawn in the hearts of *all* people and nations!

These foresters will not believe that on the other side of the Alps there are again regions inhabited by man. Only one old, shy, blinking charcoal-burner repeats the story told him by his grandfather, that over there were human beings, who wore such high pointed hats that they could not walk about on the mountains in the evening without knocking down the stars. So the Lord God was obliged to carefully draw down the clouds every night in order to keep a single star in heaven. The rogue meant the pointed hats of the Tyrolese.

In this mountain glen are a number of places held in ill repute. Here many a dead chamois-hunter has been found, shot through the breast by a ball of lead. There is also a legend that a monster, which keeps watch over an inexhaustible treasure of diamonds in the mountains, sometimes bursts forth from one of the numerous rocky caverns. If the forest-land endures a while longer, then a hero is expected to come and slay the beast and recover the treasure. Up to the present such a one has not appeared. Ah, if I could give this monster its true name!

The region is adapted to the gloomy myths. It is a dead valley in which

no little finch will sing, no wild pigeon coo, no woodpecker chatter, in which loneliness itself has fallen asleep. Upon the grey moss-covered ground piles of rock lie about, just as they have been broken from the high cliff. Here and there a bold little fir-tree has climbed up on one of these grey, weather-beaten boulders and proudly looks about, thinking itself now more fortunate than the other half-dead trees on the sandy soil below. It will not be long before it too will perish from hunger and thirst, and will fall from the barren rock. Here the forest cannot flourish, and if a straight and slender fir shoots up anywhere, its days are numbered. A storm-wind suddenly comes rushing down from the rocky defile and almost gently lays the young tree, together with its broken roots, upon the ground.

The Scotch fir alone is still courageous; it climbs the steep sides between the precipices to discover how it looks up there with the *Edelweiss*, with the Alpine roses, with the chamois, and how far it is yet to the snow. But the good Scotch fir is no daughter of the Alps; soon a dizziness seizes it, and, frightened, it crouches down and crawls painfully upon its knees, with its twisted, crippled arms always reaching out and clutching something, the little heads of the cones stretching themselves upward in curiosity, until finally it comes out into the damp veil of mist and aimlessly wanders about among the stones.

Upon one of the fallen rocks of this remotest valley in the forest stands a cross. It is very clumsily made out of two rough pieces of wood; in places the bark is still clinging to it. Silent it stands there in the barren waste; it is like the first message concerning the Redeemer of the world, which in olden times the holy Boniface made from the trees of the forest and set up in the German wilderness.

I have often asked the meaning of this cross. Since time immemorial it has stood upon the rock, and no man can say who placed it there. According to the legend it was never placed there. Every thousand years a little bird flew into the forest, bringing a seed of grain from unknown lands. Previously it was not known what had become of the seeds, whether they had been lost, or whether the poisonous plant with the blue berries, or the thorn-bush with the white rose, or something else, evil or good, had sprung from them. But when the bird last appeared it laid the seed upon the rock in the Felsenthal, and from it sprang the cross. Sometimes one goes there to pray before it; the prayer has often brought a blessing at once, but often a misfortune has followed it. So it is uncertain whether the cross is for weal or woe. The Einspanig is the most frequently seen in the Felsenthal, and here he performs his devotions before the symbol; but it is also uncertain whether the Einspanig is good or evil.

After many days of wandering I returned once more to my house in the Winkel, much puzzled in my mind about the cross in the Felsenthal and the Einspanig. I learned a little concerning the latter on reaching home.

I was surprised to find my housekeeper, usually so good-natured, quite irritable to-day. It appears that seeing the Einspanig passing, the woman, who happened to look out at that moment, thought to herself, "Oh, how I should like to gossip a little with this queer man, and find out something about him." And as he accidentally turned his face toward the door, she cordially invited him to enter and rest a little on the bench. On his accepting her invitation, she hastily brought him bread and milk, and in her own peculiar way asked, "Good man of God, where do you then come from?"

"Down from the Felsenthal," was the answer.

"*Ihr Närrchen!*" cried the woman, "you don't mean that horrible place! Up there in the Felsenthal the world is fastened in with boards."

The Einspanig then replied quietly: "Nowhere is the world fastened in with boards. The mountains stretch far, far back behind the Hochzahn, then comes the hilly country, then the plains, then the water which extends many thousand miles, then land again with mountains and valleys and little hills, and again water, and again land and water and land and land——"

Interrupting him here, the woman cried, "*Mein Gott*, Einspanig, how much farther then?"

"As far as home, into our country, into our forest, into the Winkel, into the Felsenthal. Worthy woman, if God should give you wings and you should fly away toward the setting sun and on and always on, following your nose and the sun, then one day you would come flying from where the sun rises toward your peaceful house."

"Oh, you humbug!" cried the woman, "go tell your tales to someone else; I am the Winkel-warden's wife. I 'll give you the milk and with it the honest opinion of old people: Somewhere there is a place where the world is fastened in with boards. That is the old faith, and therein will I live and die."

"Woman, all honour to your old faith!" replied the Einspanig, "but I have already travelled the road toward the setting sun and back here from the rising sun."

These words seemed to have thoroughly embittered her. "*O Du Fabelhans!*" she screamed, "the devil has set his mark upon you." And then shaking his head the man walked away.

The good woman must have found it hard waiting for me to give further vent to her feelings. As I approached the house she called to me over the fence: "By my troth! By my troth! What kind of people there are upon God's dear earth, to be sure! Now they do not even believe in the end of the world! But I say: Our Lord God has made it all right, and I 'll stick to my old faith, and the world is fastened in with boards!"

"Of course, of course," I acknowledged, as I climbed over the board fence.

"Quite right—fastened in with boards!"

And so we will cling to the old faith.

WITH THE WOOD-CUTTERS

Alas, that the forest also should have its enemies—the silent, unending forest, as it stretches over hill and vale—lying there, boundless, green and dark, and farther on, dimly blue in the sunny horizon.

What a beautiful rustling, murmuring, echoing, living wall, protecting all within it from the wild discord without! But—the peace of the woods is dead.

In the forest the wind roars, striking off the joyfully waving arm of many a young pine, breaking the neck of many a daring giant. And in the depths, rushing and foaming in white frothy flakes—like a gathering storm—is the Wildbach, which washes, digs, and gnaws the earth away from the roots, ever deeper and deeper, until at last the mighty tree is almost standing in the air, only supporting itself above by resting its strong arms upon its neighbours, and finally plunging into the grave, which the water has mischievously been digging for it,—that water which the tree has fed with its falling dew, protected with its thick branches from the thirst of the wind and guarded with its shade from the consuming kiss of the sun. And the woodpecker pecks the bark in the airy tree-top, while the sharp-toothed wheel of time revolves constantly, and the chips fly—in the spring as blossoms, in the autumn as withered needles and leaves.

It is eternally ending and in the end are always the germs of beginning.

Then man comes for the first time with his rage for destruction. The blows and strokes resound, the saw buzzes, the axe is heard upon the iron wedge in the dark valley,—if you look from above over the silent sea of trees, you do not dream which one it concerns.

But the axe and the wedge pierce deeper and deeper; then the tree, a century old, shakes its lofty head, not in the least comprehending what the little man below there wants, the droll, tiny creature—it cannot understand and again shakes its head. Then comes the thrust through its heart; it cracks, snaps, and now the giant totters and bends; whizzing and whistling in an immense circle, it falls with a wild crash to the earth. There is an empty space in the air, the forest has a gap. A hundred spring-times have borne it up with their love and gentleness; now it is dead, and the world exists and also remains intact without it—the living tree.

Silent stand the two or three men, supporting themselves upon the handles of their axes, and gaze upon their sacrifice. They do not mourn, they do not exult,

a cruel indifference rests upon their rough, sunburnt features; their very faces and hands resemble the fir bark. Filling their pipes, they sharpen the hatchets and return to work. They chop the branches from the fallen trunk, they shave off the bark with a broad knife, cutting it perhaps into cord-lengths, and now the proud tree lies there transformed into bare logs.

These are converted into charcoal, which is forwarded to the foundries in the outlying regions. The beeches and maples and other deciduous trees are usually left standing until they inwardly decay and fall to the ground. Upon the mouldering trunks appear fungous growths, and from these the pitch-maker or the root-digger prepares the tinder, by hammering them flat and steeping them in saltpetre.

The wood-cutter has no thought for the beauty of the wilderness. To him the forest is nothing more than a hostile shelter from which he must wrest bread and existence with the gleaming axe. And what a long day's work it is from early morning until twilight, with but a single hour's rest at noon! While the wood-devil is his own master, the woodcutter is the slave of others. As for his food, the wood-cutter is a being who nourishes himself from plants, unless he be a genuine poacher, who is shrewd enough to avoid being captured. However, he luxuriates in imagination and likes to name his flour-dumplings after the animals of the forest. So for breakfast, dinner, and supper he always eats venison, foxes, sparrows, or whatever he christens his meal-cakes. One Friday a young man invited me to a "Venison." Ah, I think, he does not keep Fast Day,—he is certainly one of the Evangelicals who was left in the Alps after the peasant wars. But the "Venison" proved to be harmless little meal-cakes.

Eighteen groschen wages for a day's work,—that is indeed prosperity; from it many a woodsman has bought himself a little house and goat, and supported a wife and troop of children. So at last he has his own hearth, and in addition to the meal-cakes a rich soup of goat's milk.

However, the expenses of the forest cabin are not very great. Fortunately not much is required of the good fathers of families.

"Man can live as he likes,
If lucky he be,—
For the children some bread,
Tobacco for me"

is the song of the forest householder.

But others, and indeed the most of them, drown their earnings in brandy, thus forfeiting the few comforts which their unambitious natures demand. Such spendthrifts live together by the dozen in a single hut, cooking their dinner at a

common hearth which is in the middle of the cabin. Along the walls are spread the straw beds.

In each hut they have a *Goggen* and a *Thomerl*; the first is a wooden frame on the hearth, which holds the frying-pan over the fire—there are often half a dozen set up around the flames. The second is a man, who, however, may be called *Hansl* or *Lippl*, or whatever he likes, but who usually has a massive head, high shoulders, and short feet, hands hanging down to his knees, and a vacant smile continually upon his face. He is chambermaid, kitchen-boy, wood- and water-carrier, at the same time goatherd, butt for empty jokes and—the honour of the house.

Furthermore, in each woodman's hut, in some one of the corners, or under some board, rifles are always concealed.

The working-day garb of the wood-cutter has no striking characteristics; it consists of a combination of tattered fustian, dull-coloured knitted wool, and a horny leather hide, everything more or less sticky with resin and almost entirely hiding the form beneath. But the badge is the high, yellowish-green hat with the tuft of feathers. The feather tuft is most important, for that is the mark of some poaching adventure, love affair, or savage broil. Occasionally these people go outside to the more distant places to celebrate the *Kirmess*—and this is a necessity to them, as here there are no Sundays, indeed the very heart of Sunday—the church itself—is missing.

At these feasts the rough woods-people wear dress-coats and tall hats,—one would hardly believe it. But the coat is of coarse fustian edged with green; miniature trees, cut out of the same green material, decorate the sleeves and back above the coat-tails; large brass buttons glisten in the distance, and a high standing collar reaches to the head, which is covered by the tall hat, broad brimmed and with flaring crown. This is made from rough hair, with a wide green band and shining brass buckle.

Even into the wilderness of the Alps the foreign fashions have penetrated!

For the most part they are good-hearted people; but if irritated they can become savage past all belief. Their eyes, although deep-set, are bright and sparkling. Kindness is clearly read there as well as quickness of temper.

But they are pious, suspiciously pious. Each one has his flask of holy water and tells his beads, with the parenthesis, "Bless all poor souls in purgatory, and help us to find the money and goods so uselessly buried in the ground." And each has seen at least one ghost in his life.

According to my observation a bloody fight seems to be quite an ordinary occurrence with these people, and a death-blow no rarity. On the other hand, thefts are never committed.

The wood-cutter is born under the tree; his father places, one might almost

say, the axe-handle in his hand before the spoon, and instead of the nursing-bottle the little one grasps after the tobacco-pouch. He who is unable to buy tobacco makes it for himself from beech leaves.

A remarkable amiability is not a native trait of these people. They scarcely know peaceful joy; they strive for noisy pleasure. They are not even sensitive to pain. If one of them drives the sharp axe into his leg he merely says it *tickles* him a little. But in a few days all is healed again. And if a man loses a finger, it is a misfortune only because of the inconvenience in lighting his pipe.

An old setter of broken bones and an extractor of teeth form the entire medical faculty, while pine-resin and pitch-oil are the only drugs used in this shadowy wood-world.

When these people go away homesickness is their greatest woe. The homeless ones homesick? Their real trouble is a longing for the forest hills where they have once passed a portion of their lives.

BLACK MATHES

In the Hinter Winkel stands the haunted hut. A short time ago I was there to see Mathes the fighter, a hard, rough-appearing man, although small and thin. He was lying stretched upon a bed of moss, his arm and head being bound in rags. He was badly hurt.

The windows of the hut were covered with bits of cloth; the sufferer could not bear the light. His wife, young and amiable, but grieving piteously, was kneeling beside him, moistening his forehead with apple vinegar. His eyes stared at her almost lifelessly, but about his mouth played a smile, showing the snow-white teeth. A strong odour of pitch-oil filled the room.

As I entered, a pale, black-haired boy and a bright-eyed little maid were cowering at his feet, playing with bits of moss.

"That is to be a garden," said the girl, "and there I am going to plant roses!"

The boy was carving a cross out of a small piece of wood, and he cried: "Father, now I know what I am making; it 's the Holdenschlag graveyard!"

The mother in alarm reproved the children for their noise; but Mathes said: "Oh, never mind; I 'll soon be in the graveyard myself. But, one thing, wife, don't let Lazarus's temper pass unheeded. For God's sake, don't do that! Thou hast nothing to say? Thou wilt not follow my advice? Dost thou perhaps know better than I? Oh, I tell thee, wife!——"

Tearing the rags from his arm, he endeavoured to rise. The woman, repeating loving words to him, pushed him gently back. Yielding to weakness even

more than to her efforts, he sank upon his bed. The children were sent from the room and on the sunny grass-plot I stayed with them awhile, entertaining them with games and fairy-tales.

A few days later I visited the family again. The sick man was feeling much worse. He could no longer sit up, even when in a fit of rage.

"He is so exhausted," the sorrowing wife said to me.

First I was introduced by the children, and now I enjoy in Mathes's house a certain amount of confidence. I go up there often; it is my special desire to become acquainted with the misery of the forest.

Once, while Mathes was lying in a profound, peaceful sleep and I was sitting beside the bed, the woman drew a long, hard breath, as if she were carrying a burden. Then she spoke: "I can truly say that there is no better soul in the world than Mathes. But when a man has once been so tormented and oppressed by the people and painted so black, he would indeed become a savage, if he had a single drop of blood left in his veins."

And a little later she continued, "I ought to know; I have known him from childhood."

"Speak then," I replied; "in me you see a man who never mistakes the sorrow of the heart for something evil."

"He used to be as gay as a bird in the air; it was a joy to him simply to be alive. And at that time he did n't know that he was to inherit two large farms; nor would he have cared, for best of all he loved God's earth, as it lies there in the bright sunshine. But you shall see, it did not always go on in that way."

And after a long pause the woman continued: "It may have been in his twentieth year, when one day he drove into the capital of the province, with a load of corn. The team was brought back by a mounted patrol; Mathes never came home again."

"O ho! I 'm already home!" interrupted the sick man, endeavouring to rise. "There is nothing wrong about thy story, wife, but thou canst not know it exactly; thou wast not there, Adelheid, when they caught me. I 'll tell it myself. When I had finished my business in town, I went into the tavern to moisten my tongue a little. In the corn-market, you must know, one's talking apparatus becomes very dry before the last sack is shouted off from the waggon. As I entered the tavern, I found three or four gentlemen sitting at a table, and they invited me to drink a glass of wine with them. They were friendly and treated me."

The man stopped a moment to catch his breath; his wife begged him to spare himself. He did not heed her and continued: "They were telling stories about the French, who would never give us any rest, about the war times and the gay soldier's life; and immediately afterwards they asked me how the sale of corn had succeeded and what was the price of sheep. I grew very lively, and was

pleased to find that one could chat so well on all sorts of subjects with perfect strangers. Then one of them raised his glass, saying, 'Long live our King!' We touched glasses until they almost broke; I cried out three times as loud as the others, 'Long live the King!'" The sick man stopped and his lips trembled. After a while he murmured: "With this cry my misfortune began. As I was about to leave, they sprang up and held me fast. 'O ho, boy, you are ours!' I had fallen among the recruiting officers. They led me away,—-me, a mere boy; they concealed me among the soldiers and I was sold."

Mathes rolled up bits of moss with his bony fingers.

"Don't grieve, wife," he muttered, "I 'm better now. I 'll expose the whole crowd yet with my last words. But this I can say, upon the broad, open field I have never been so savage as I was at that time. I longed to go home; heavy, golden chains drew me thither. And once, in the middle of a stormy winter night, I ran away. In Rainhausel I stopped with an old aunt. And now my own people betrayed me. Soon the officers were there to hunt for me. In an instant I was out of the house and, slipping into the woods, I thought, 'If they have played a trick on me, I will do the same by them.' Two huge hunting dogs were scenting around, but I ran for quite a distance through the brook, until the hounds lost track. And the officers rummaged through everything in the hut; they thrust their knives into the straw bedding and hay, turning the whole house quite upside down. But as they did n't find me, one of them, placing the muzzle of his gun against the breast of my old aunt, said: 'Tell me this instant where he is, or I 'll shoot you down like a dog!' 'Yes, yes, he 's been here,' she answered, 'but where he is now I don't know.' They dragged the woman out before the door, three muskets were pointed at her breast, and threateningly they whispered to her: 'Call out quickly, as loud as you can: "Come here, Hiesel; the officers have been gone a long time!" If you don't do it you will be buried to-morrow.' Of course I knew nothing of all this; being concealed in the thicket, and hearing no sound, I thought I was safe. Then I heard my aunt call, 'Come here, Hiesel; the officers have been gone a long time!' I sprang up and, running towards the hut, I saw the woman strike her hands over her head, and I already heard laughing, and I was seized by the officers. *Allmächtiger Gott*! I tried to pull out my pocket dagger; but one of the men hit my arm with a club, so that to this day I cannot turn my left hand properly. They were much cleverer and stronger than I, the poor, starved devil, Mathes. And a few days later they fell upon me. *Mein Gott!* if each whip-lash had been a stroke of lightning which did not kill, I should have liked it a thousand times better than to be beaten and treated like a dog by a man. The two hundred lashes knocked the very devil into me. Since then, whenever my blood was up, I have repaid them ten-fold, even to my comrades in the woods. But it was meant for the others, meant for the rascals who gave me the whipping. In those days I

should have liked to be the Lord God Himself just for once, by my soul!—I would have crushed the cursed earth into a thousand million pieces! My wounded back was seasoned with vinegar and salt to make it heal. Oh, there was great haste. The foreigner had descended upon the country like the fiend incarnate. Then of course I became excited and fired away like the evil one himself. When the enemy was driven back I had just one charge of powder left; for this I might have found some other victim, in our own regiment mounted on a high horse. But not that, not that! I thought to myself. Face to face, to tear him down from his white steed with my hands,—that might do,—but from ambush, no, never! But I did something cleverer yet, I ran away from the battle-field and gave my cloak to a peasant for taking me in his hay waggon across country. My home I reached in safety."

"And if you loved your home so much, why did you not wish to fight for it?" I interrupted him. "Why did you run away?"

"It may be that it was rascality," said Mathes, "it may be. Or perhaps—maybe it was n't either."

"I know a man," I answered, "who not only did not fight for his country, but against the same."

"I did not stay at home," continued Mathes, "I left everything behind me and hid myself in this farthermost wilderness, so that they might never find me. Hunted, hunted, good Lord! And it was not until I reached here that I became a wild beast. My wife, thou knowest that."

The voice was shrill, but the words were the faltering utterances of the dying. He then became silent and closed his eyes. It was as the last flare of a flame before extinction.

"The people took him for a poor abandoned wretch, when he came back," continued the woman; "they threw groschen and pfennige into a hat and tried to present him with hat and all. For that Mathes would have killed a few of them; he wanted no alms. As the people were following him by the dozen, he climbed up a large tree, and swung himself like a wild-cat from one branch to another, until his pursuers finally saw that they were mistaken. But in mockery they called him Hieselein. Later on—yes, of course—he hunted up a wife for himself—"

"The most beautiful one in the forest!" the sick man interrupted her again, "and there was such an insolent devil in him, that he—the half-cripple—plighted his troth to this same maiden only on condition that he should not find one still more beautiful. By the holy cross, what a struggle there was over it! Others wanted the girl, too. But I led my Adelheid right under the noses of the most aristocratic and the finest of them to my home, and I would not wish to have a better girl than she is."

Again he became silent and dropped into a half-slumber.

"He received terrible blows sometimes," said the woman, "but because he never lost his footing or was thrown upon the ground, they called him *Stehmandel*. We have both of us got on right well together," she continued in a low tone, "but he never would give up his savage ways. Every Saturday evening he used to sharpen his knife for cutting wood; but I often begged him: '*Um Gotteswillen*, let the sharpening of the knife be!' On Sundays he would go to Kranabethannes's and late at night he would come home with a bleeding head. I always knew that some day they would bring him home on a litter. But, when he was calm and sober, there was n't a better, more industrious, or more helpful man in the whole forest than Mathes. Then he could be gay and laugh and weep like a child. Of course, as he was a deserter, he forfeited his farm outside in the country; but he supported the children with his own hands, and some other people as well, who could no longer earn anything. He visited the sick and comforted them, just as a priest would do. On account of his honesty and reliability, he was made master wood-cutter. However, the innkeeper was always in despair on Sundays, when Hieselein arrived, whom they had already begun to call Black Hieselein. No matter how good-naturedly he may have stumbled in at the door, they swore that he would not go away without a terrible fight. He would n't give it up. He tried to drown his sorrow in brandy; but the brandy brought the two hundred whip-lashes to life again. He would start quarrels until the blood ran. They would throw him down, screaming, 'So, Hieselein, now perhaps you won't begin any more disturbance!' He would soon be on his feet. But it is a fact that when he became sober, he would beg pardon of everyone. But at last, thou holy Mother of God, the begging pardon did not work any more. All the wood-cutters came one night to Kranabethannes's, to show the fighter that even though he was their master at work, they were for once masters in the tavern. At first, as they see that he is drinking brandy, one glass after another, they begin to tease and mock him, until he becomes wild and attacks them. They are all over him, throw him down, tearing his hair and beard. And in this same hour his guardian angel deserts him; one hand free, he seizes his knife and plunges it into the breast of Bastian, the charcoal-burner. They then beat Mathes until he is thrown upon the ground. Two root-diggers brought him home. Perhaps to-morrow I 'll be a widow, and the poor children——"

The woman burst into sobs. Then Mathes raised himself once more: "The Lord God has done well by thee. Perhaps I might have beaten thee in a fit of anger. But I say this, I don't want to die so. I will get up and go to court and confess that I have stabbed Bastian. From the deceitful recruiting officers who took me from my peaceful youth and delivered me over to the bloody world, where I was disgraced with whip-lashes and hunted like a dog, and condemned for murder—to the charcoal-burner Bastian, who with scorn and mockery himself enticed the

knife from its sheath—all of them I will call before the tribunal; they must all be there when I am condemned to death."

The woman shrieked; the man sank choking, back on the moss.

Just then the children came skipping and shouting in at the door. They were dragging by the ears a white rabbit which they let loose in the room, the boy pursuing it. The little besieged animal hopped upon the bed of moss and over the limbs of the sick man. It remained sitting in the corner, sniffing and looking anxiously about with its great eyes. The boy slipped up to it and seized it by its legs. The poor tormented creature whined piteously and bit the finger of its pursuer.—"Stop! stop! you rascal!" cried the enraged boy, becoming very red in the face, while tears filled his eyes, his lips were drawn, and his fingers convulsively clutched the throat of the animal and—before either his mother or sister could interfere—the rabbit was dead.

Mathes beat his face with his hands, crying out so that my very heart quaked: "Oh, horrible! Now the angry devil lives on in my children! Must I endure that also?"

A few moments later the man fell into a terrible death struggle. He died that same evening.

They buried Black Mathes in the forest, because he had stabbed Bastian. The woman wept bitterly upon the mound, and when at last she was led away from it, the Einspanig came and planted a little pine-tree upon the grave.

THE FEAST OF THE VIRGIN MARY, 1814.

And thus I have wandered about the Winkel forests. I have been in the Hinter Winkel and in the ravines of the Miesenbach, in the forests of the Kar, in Lautergräben, and in the Wolfsgrube, in the Felsenthal and on the pastures of the Alm, and yonder in the glen where lies the beautiful lake. I have introduced myself to the old and made myself known to the young. It costs trouble and there are misunderstandings. With a few exceptions, the best of these people are not so good or the worst so bad as I formerly believed.

I am even obliged to be a little deceptive; they must not know why I am here. Many take me for a deserter and for that reason are friendly toward me. To please these foresters a man must be despised and exiled from the world, must indeed be as savage and happy-go-lucky as themselves. Then I have been obliged to look about me for some work. I weave baskets out of straw, I gather and prepare tinder and carve toys for the children out of beech wood. I have already so fully gained the confidence of the people, that they have taught me

how to whet the tools, and now I understand sharpening the axes and saws of the wood-cutters. This brings me in many a groschen and I accept it—I must, indeed, depend upon the work of my hands, like everyone here. My room presents a somewhat confused appearance. And here I sit and work, when the weather is bad outside or on long autumn evenings, among the willow branches, the bits of wood, and the various tools. I am seldom alone; either my housekeeper is chatting with me, or a pitch-maker, root-digger, or charcoal-burner sits by me and smokes his pipe, watching with a grin while I begin and finish the different things, and finally going to work himself. Or there are children about me, listening to the fairy-tales which I relate, or playing with the chips, until I have finished the toy in my hands. On Sundays the forester sits with me for hours together, hearing the story of my experiences and my plans for the people of the Winkel woods. We talk over everything and I occasionally write a long letter to the owner of the forest.

The wood-cutters from Lautergräben are approaching nearer and nearer the Winkel, and already through the silent forest I have heard the crashing of many a falling tree. Upon the summit of the Lauter, a pale reddish plain is spreading from day to day and in the morning sunlight shines down in a friendly way through the dark green of the forest.

In the ravines of the Winkel, stone-breakers and ditchers are working; a waggon road is to be built for the transportation of coal and wood.

I like to go about with the workmen, watching them and talking with them, desirous of learning something of their life.

But occasionally the people are a little mistrustful of me and approach me with prejudice. I often carry a little volume of Goethe with me, and seat myself in some attractive nook to read. Many a time I have been secretly watched while so occupied. And then the report circulates through the forest that I am a wizard and have a book containing magic signs. I have wondered if this peculiar reputation may not at first have given me some advantage in carrying out my plans. The children would surely be allowed by their parents to learn to read, if I told them that by first understanding the magic signs, one could exorcise devils, dig for treasure, and control the weather. I think that the grown people themselves and even the grey-beards would drop their tools and come to school to me. But that would be dishonourable and I should only produce the opposite result from that which I desire. The chief thing is, not that the people learn to read and write, but that they may be freed from harmful prejudices and have pure hearts. Of course I might later substitute books of morals and say,—"Here are the true magic signs"; but those whom I had deceived would have no further confidence in me, and the evil would be greater rather than less.

We will not sneak through a roundabout way; we will hew a straight path

through the midst of the old trees.

A few times I have read songs to the people; to the girls *Heideröslein*, and have taught *Christel* to the boys. They learn the verses quickly, and they are already much sung in the forest.

UNREST

And now the autumn has come. The clouds are dispersed with the morning mists, leaving the sky bright and clear. The brilliant foliage of the maples stands out in relief against the dark brown of the pine-forest, while in the valley, the meadow has become green anew or glistens with the silvery hoar-frost. In these woods the autumn is more brilliant and almost lovelier than the spring. In the spring there is a capricious brightness and splendour, song and exultation everywhere. The autumn, on the contrary, is like a quiet, solemn Sabbath. No longer mindful of the earth, Nature is then expectantly listening to heaven, and the breath of the Almighty stirs harmonious melodies upon the golden strings of mellow sunshine.

The sky has become so trustworthy, that it more than fulfils through the day that which it promises in the morning with its sad and misty eyes. One gazes into its still, blue depths.

Yonder beside the forest fire sits the shepherd-boy. He is taking some little round things from a bag and shoving them into the fire.

"Tell me, boy, where did you get the potatoes?"

Turning red, he replies, "The potatoes, I—I found them."

"May God bless them to you, and another time do not find them, but go to the Winkel-warden's wife when you are hungry; she will give you some."

"Those which are given don't taste good," is the answer; "those that are found are better, the salt is already on them."

Yonder stands a bush, which has decorated itself in the night with a chain of dew pearls; to-day the dew is congealed and is destroying the very heart of the plant.

On such a late autumn day I saw at one time an old woman sitting in the woods. This woman once had a child. He went out to the world, to hot Brazil, seeking for gold. The horizon is so perfectly clear, that the mother is able to gaze into the distant past, where the beloved boy is standing. She looks at him, smiles at him, and falls asleep. The next morning she is still sitting upon the stone, and now she has a white mantle about her. The snow has come, the autumn is over. And across the sea a ship is bearing a letter bound for the hot zones of South

America. It carries news to a sun-burnt man from his distant home,—"Mother died in the woods." A tiny tear laboriously winds its way from under his lashes, the sun quickly dries it, and afterwards as before the watchword is: Gold! Gold! If a single letter might come back to the old motherland, its message would be,—"The son crushed with gold."

What am I dreaming here? It is the way of the world, and is no concern of mine. I long for peace in the midst of the quiet autumn of this forest.

Up there in the top of the beech-tree, a weary leaf loosens itself, falls from branch to branch and dangles by an infinitesimally tender, shining spider's web, down to me upon the cool, shadowy earth. The people far away with whom I used to live, what may they be doing? That wonderful maiden is always blooming—always—even in the autumn; and in Saxonland the dry leaves are wafted over the graves.

Loneliness cannot banish the sorrow of loneliness. I must look for something to distract and elevate me that I may not become one-sided in my surroundings.

I have commenced the study of botany; I have read from books how the erica grows, and the heath-rose, and other flowers; and I have watched the same plants hours and hours at a time. And I have found no connection between the dead leaf in the book and the living one in the woods. The book says of the gentian: "This plant belongs to the fifth class, among those of the first order, is found in the Alps, has a bluish juice, and serves as medicine." It speaks of a number of anthers, pistils, embryos, etc. And that is the family and baptismal certificate of the poor gentian. Oh, if such a plant could read, it would freeze on the spot! That is indeed more chilling than the hoar-frost of autumn.

The forest people know better. The flower lives and loves and speaks a wonderful language. But the gentian trembles with foreboding, when man approaches; and it is more afraid of his passionately glowing breath than of the deathly cold kiss of the first snow.

So I am one who does not understand and is not understood. Without aim or plan I am whirling in the monstrous, living wheel of nature.

Ah, if I but only understood myself! Scarcely at rest, after the fever of the world and enjoying the peace of the woods, I already long again to cast one glance into the distance, as far as the eye of man can reach.

Yonder upon the blue forest's edge, I would I might stand and look far out into the land over at other men. They are no better than the foresters, and know scarcely more; yet they are striving after, hoping for, and seeking Thee, O God!

ON JACOB'S LADDER

One beautiful autumn morning I felt inclined to climb the high mountain, whose loftiest peak is called the Graue Zahn. With us down here in the Winkel, there is altogether too much shade, and up there one stands in the bright circle of the wide world. There is no path thither; one must go straight on, through underbrush, thickets, stones, and tangled mosses.

After some hours I arrived at the Miesenbach hut. The gay young pair have already departed. The living summer-time is over; the hut stands in autumn abandonment. The windows from which Aga used to peep at the lad are fastened with bars; the spring in front is neglected and has become nearly dry; and the icicle on the end of the gutter grows downwards—toward the earth. The bell of a colchicum swings near it, and rings to the last gasp of the dying fountain.

I seated myself upon the top of a watering-trough and ate my breakfast. It consisted of a piece of bread made of rye- and oat-flour, such as is eaten everywhere in this forest-land. That is a meal which, literally, tickles the palate, very coarse-grained and full of bits of bran. In the country outside, where wheat grows, such food would not be to our taste; here it is all we ask for when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread!" But there are also times in this region when the Lord is sparing even with the oat-bread; then dried straw and moss come under the grindstone. God bless to me the piece of bread and the swallow of water with it! Prepared with God's blessing, ye master cooks, everything becomes palatable.

I then begin to climb farther. First I cross the Kar, from whose bed project stones washed smooth by the waves. Between the stones stand tufts of pale feather-grass and lichens. Some tender, snow-white flowers are also swaying to and fro, looking anxiously about, as if they had lost their way up here on the rocky waste and longed to return whence they came. From the once so beautiful red sea of Alpine roses, the sharp bristles of the bush alone remain. I climb higher, wending my way around the walls of rock and the peak of the Kleinzahn; I then stride along a ridge which extends toward the main mountain range.

There I have before me the blinding fields of the glaciers, smooth, softly gleaming like ivory, lying there in broad, gentle slopes and hollows, or in creviced multiform precipices of ice reaching from height to height. Between, tower battlements of rock, and yonder, in the airy distance, above the gleaming glaciers, rises many a dark-grey, sharp-toothed cone, soaring far above the highest peak of the mountains. That is my goal, the Graue Zahn.

Towards the east the ground descends to the waving depths of the dusky forest. And the undulating meadows of the Alm lie deep as in a gulf. Here and there is the grey dot of an Alm hut, of which the shining roof alone is visible. On the northern side yawns the awful abyss, beneath whose shadow is the dim, black lake.

I walked a few hours over the difficult and dangerous path, along the edge to the glaciers. Here I bound on my climbing-irons, strapped on my knapsack tighter, and held my stick more firmly in my hand. The alpenstock is an inheritance from Black Mathes. It is covered with innumerable little notches, which do not show, however, how often its former possessor may have climbed the Zahn or any other mountain, but how many people he has knocked to the ground in a fight. A dismal companion! yet this has helped me up over the smooth, white snow-slopes, on over the wild ice crevasses, and finally up the last steep precipice to the summit of the Zahn. It has done it faithfully. And how gladly from this high mountain would I have called out to Mathes in eternity, "Friend, this is a good stick; had you climbed high with it, you would have understood it!"

Now I stand on the summit.

Would that I were a being that might spin itself by the threads of sunlight up to the Kingdom of God.

Under a jutting stone I seat myself upon the weather-beaten ground and look about me. Near by are the fine, broken spires of immovable, perpendicular slabs of slate. Above me a sharp breeze may be gently stirring; I do not hear it; I do not feel it; the jutting rock, the highest peak of the Zahn, protects me. The friendly warmth of the sun touches my limbs. The quiet and the nearness to heaven bring peace to my soul. I wonder how it would be in the everlasting rest. To be happy in heaven, to live always in joy, always contented and without pain; to wish for nothing, to long for nothing, to hope for nothing, and to fear nothing, on through all time. Would it not after all be a little wearisome? Should I not perhaps wish to take a leave of absence sometimes, to look down here at the world once more? My possessions here would easily go into a nutshell. But I think were I once up there I should long to be down here again. How strange are earthly joy and sorrow!

But if I came back, a good angel would have to lend me his wings that I might fly across the white mountains and sunny peaks and ridges, on into the distance yonder, where the edge of the mountain chain cuts through the airy heaven; and upon that last white peak I would rest and look over into the expanse of plain and to the towers of the city. Perhaps I might see the gable of the house, or even the gleam of the window where she is standing.

And if I saw the gleam of that window, then would I willingly turn about and enter heaven again.

Is it then really true that one can behold the sea from this peak? My eyes are not clear, and yonder, in the south, the grey of the earth blends with the grey of the sky. I already know the firm ground, the mould which they call the fruitful earth. Couldst thou, mine eye, only once reach the wide sea!

When the sun changed, so that a deep shadow appeared upon my stony

resting-place, I arose and climbed to the very highest point. I took in the whole picture of the mighty, battlemented kingdom of the Alps.

And then I descended by the precipices, the crevasses of the glaciers and the snow-fields; I crossed the long ridge, finally reaching the soft, yielding meadows, where the wooded hills were before me once more. Twilight was settling over the valleys, which was most comforting to my overstrained eyes. For a while I covered them with my hand, and when at last I was able to look once more, the gold of the setting sun was illuminating the heights.

As I come to the Miesenbach hut before which I sat in the morning, a curious incident occurs.

While passing the hut, I think how friendly and homelike an inhabited human dwelling looks to the wanderer, but how forbidding and dreary the same place appears, when it stands, like an upright coffin, empty and deserted! Suddenly I hear groaning from within.

My feet, already very tired, at once become as light as a feather, and would run away, but my reason forbids, and, straining my ears to listen, I stand and gaze. From under one corner of the jutting roof proceed a pounding and snorting, and I then behold a strange spectacle. From out the rough, brown wooden wall, project a man's head and breast, two shoulders and one hand, a living, wriggling mass, and from within I hear the noise of the knees and feet.

Ah! I think, a thief, who has filled his pockets too full and is unfortunately caught fast on coming out. It is a young head, with curly hair, waxed moustache, white shirt collar and red silk neckerchief, such as one seldom meets with in these forests.

Perceiving me, he cries loudly: "Holy cross, how lucky that someone has come at last! Could n't you help me a little?—it needs only a jerk. Curse this window."

"Yes, my friend," I say; "but first, I must ask you a few questions. The man who could get you out the easiest would be the hangman, who would gently put a rope about your neck, pull a little, and all at once you would be in the free air."

"Stupid!" he replies; "just as if an honest Christian could n't get caught if the hole is too small. I am the son of the master wood-cutter from Lautergräben and on my way across the Alm, down to the Winkelegg forest. As I pass the hut, I see that the door stands wide open. 'There is nothing in there,' I said,—'nothing at all that would be worth while to carry away, but 't is a bad thing to leave an open door in an empty house; the snow will fly in all winter long. The herdswoman must have been in a hurry when she moved back to the valley—she must be a nice sort of a person to go and leave everything open.' Well, I enter, close the door and from within place a few blocks of wood against it, afterwards climb upon the bench, and as I try to get out by this smoke-window, here I stick

like the devil."

But I do not yet trust the lad, and look at him awhile as he dangles.

"And you think you don't want to remain fastened there under the roof until someone comes to-morrow and recognises you." At this he grinds his teeth and struggles violently to escape from his ugly situation.

"I must be in Holdenschlag early to-morrow," he mutters.

"What do you want in Holdenschlag?" I say.

"*Mein Gott*, because there is to be a wedding!" he growls, already quite indignant.

"And why must you be present?"

At first he refuses to answer, but finally bursts out,—"By Jessas and Anna, because I 'm needed there!"

"Oh, then of course, we must try to help you," I say, and climbing a little way up the wall I begin pulling at the lad, until at last we have the second hand out; then it is easier. He is soon standing on the ground, where he hunts up his pointed hat which has rolled away, stretches his stiffened limbs, and with flushed face looks up once more at the little smoke-window, exclaiming, "The devil take you, that was a trap, sure enough!"

In the twilight we went down together towards the Winkelegg forest. The lad showed no disposition to talk with me. I tried to make amends for my apparent unfriendliness, assuring him that I recognised at once that he was no thief. "And to-morrow then, you will be in Holdenschlag at the wedding? Are you the groomsman?" I asked.

"The groomsman, no, I am not that."

"Perhaps then the ceremony could have been performed without you."

He pulled his hat over his eyes, which were fixed on the ground.

"Without me," he said at last; "no, I don't think it could. For you see, this is the way of it, it could n't be done without me, because—because, it looks very much as if I were the bridegroom."

On hearing these words, I stopped and stared a moment at the lad, thinking how dreadful it would have been if the bride and the whole wedding should have waited and waited below, while the bridegroom was struggling up there in the smoke-window of the herdsman's hut. The young man then politely invited me to his wedding. He guided me faithfully as we walked down through the dark forest to the narrow valley of the Winkelegg.

Here we passed a huge pile of bare logs, which had been sent down through a long shoot from the Winkelegg forest. Near the pile of wood were three large charcoal-kilns, from which, slowly and silently, the milk-white smoke rose to the tops of the trees and into the dark autumn sky.

The wood-cutter's son from Lautergräben urged me to accompany him into

the hut which stands under the spreading pine.

In the cabin are three people, two hens, one cat, and the fire on the hearth. No other living creature is visible.

A young woman is standing by the hearth, laying larch-branches crosswise on the fire. My companion informs me that she is his betrothed.

Behind the broad tile stove, which reaches to the sooty ceiling, sits a little woman. She glares at me, the strange intruder, with her large green eyes, while with unsteady fingers she is drawing the strings through a new pair of shoes. At the same time she continually wipes her eyes, which are already dimmed like an old window-pane that for many years has been exposed to the smoke of the charcoal-burner's hut. My companion tells me that this is the mother of his betrothed, who is everywhere called by the people, Russkathel.

Beyond, in the darkest corner, I see a rough, manly figure, his body bared to the waist, washing and scrubbing himself over a massive wooden basin with such force that he snorts like a beast of burden.

"That is the brother of my betrothed," explains the young man; "he is the charcoal-burner here and they call him Russ-Bartelmei."

Then the wood-cutter's son approaches his sweetheart to tell her that he has come at last, and has brought with him the highly learned man who wanders over the whole forest, and who will give them the honour of his presence on their wedding-day.

The young woman, turning toward me, says, "Find a seat somewhere if you can; everything is so dilapidated with us, we have n't even a decent chair."

Then the young man speaks to her in a low voice, apparently telling her the story of the herdsman's hut, for all at once she cries out: "Oh, what a stupid fellow! Thou must needs pry into everything, or has it come to be a habit of thine, up there with the herdswoman?"

The lad turns to his mother-in-law: "Give me the shoe,—thou art leaving out half of the eyelets; such work is much too fine for thy weak eyes, *Mütterchen*!"

"Yes, Paul, that's true," mumbles the old woman good-naturedly from her toothless mouth, "but, listen, Paul; my grandmother laced my mother's shoes, and my mother did it for me; and I, why should such an old, crooked creature as I be in the world, if I could n't lace my Annamirl's shoes?"

"Perhaps you 'll soon have other work, *Mütterchen*; by the cradle you 'll not need to see," answers Paul mischievously.

At this, Annamirl shakes her finger at him, saying, "Thou good-for-nothing!"

In the dark corner the splashing and snorting continue. It is not so easy a matter for a man who has once become so blackened as Russ-Bartelmei to wash himself white enough to appear before the world, even though his sister should

marry the master wood-cutter's son from Lautergräben.

And my wood-cutter's son draws the lacing through the shoes of his betrothed. The old woman, having once found her tongue, begins to prattle: "And don't forget, Annamirl," says she, "thou must try it also. It will succeed yet."

"Dost thou mean that I should plant the christening-money, *Mütterchen*?"

"Yes, that 's it. Under a branching pine-tree thou must bury a groschen on thy wedding-night. That is the money-seed, and thou shalt see, in three days it will bloom, and in three months it may indeed be ripe. Our ancestors did it, but they were not all successful. It was this way: my grandmother missed the time, my mother never found the spreading pine-tree again, and I planted a false groschen. On that account, my daughter, take careful note of the hour as well as of the tree, then the groschen will grow, and thou shalt have money enough all thy days."

Annamirl opens an old chest and begins to rummage among the clothes and other contents. I believe she was seeking the christening-money.

The charcoal-burner washes and rubs himself. He changes the water many times, but it is always as black as ink. But finally it remains only grey; then Russ-Bartelmei stops and dries himself; he dresses, sits down on the door-sill, and, taking a long breath, says, "Yes, folks, I 've got rid of one skin now, and the other is beginning to show a little." The new one, however, has grown very red, although in places it is still somewhat dingy; but it is Russ-Bartelmei all the same, who is going to his sister's wedding on the morrow.

I am invited to spend the night in the hut, and the bride hospitably sets a dish of eggs before me, because I am the "learned man," who might sometime be of use, should the occasion offer itself and the children prove to be intelligent.

The smoke has driven the hens from their evening rest; so now they come to me upon the little table, and stretch their long necks over the edge of the dish into my food. Do they wish to have their eggs back again?

The old woman, too, is all the time coming closer to me; twice she opens her mouth as if to speak, then closes it again, murmuring into her blue neckerchief: "I won't say it after all; 'twill be more sensible." Seeing her timidity, I come to her aid: "Well, what is it, *Mütterchen*?"

"God bless you for the question," she replies, drawing still nearer to me. "People like us can't see into the future. To speak out plainly,—you are a learned man, they say, so you will surely understand fortune-telling?—No, not at all?—But I should think a man like you ought to learn that. And now that we have become so well acquainted, do you know no numbers for the lottery?"

"Jesstl and Joseph," suddenly screams the young woman, "hurry, hurry, *Mütterchen*! I think the kitten has tumbled into the water-pail!"

The old woman stumbles toward the corner, from which Bartelmei has just

come; but the kitten has already disappeared, was perhaps never in the water. Annamirl, ashamed of her mother's childish questions, has stopped them by this trick.

The next day, when the morning red is glowing through the white smoke, the people come from all parts of the forest. They are dressed and decked out as I have never seen them before. They bring wedding-presents with them. The pitch-maker comes with a black, glistening jug of pitch-oil. "For the health of the bridal couple," he announces, and then adds: "What is the message of the pitch-oil? If in life you have trouble to bear, you must apply at once the oil of patience. That says the pitch-oil." Root-diggers come with seeds and bunches of fragrant herbs, and the ant-grubbers, with incense; children bring wild fruit in little baskets of fir-bark; wood-cutters come bearing household utensils. Schwamelfuchs, an old hunchbacked, rough little man, is dragging a huge earthenware bowl, a veritable family kettle, large enough to feed a dozen mouths. Others bring wooden spoons for it; again others unpack meal- and lard-buckets, and a charcoal-burner's wife comes staggering in quite embarrassed and hands the bride a carefully wrapped package. As with awkward words of thanks she opens it, two fat stuffed capons come to light. These are spied by Russkathel, who, already in gala dress, and full of eager expectation, is creeping along the walls, and she whispers to her daughter: "Dost thou know, Annamirl, where the best wedding-gift should be put? Ah, yes, it should be buried in the cool earth. Later a beautiful woman will come in a golden waggon, drawn by two little kittens; these will dig out the wedding-gift with their claws, and the woman, taking it in her snow-white hand, will drive three times around the hut; afterwards no sorrow can come to your holy wedlock." So the tale of Freya is still told in the German forest.

Annamirl is silent for a moment, and, turning the heavy, neatly picked and stuffed fowls around and around in her hands, as if they were already on the spit, she finally remarks: "I think, mother, they would spoil in the earth, or the cats would eat them, and for that reason, I say, let us eat them ourselves."

At last even the elegant brandy-distiller arrives with his huge earthen jug, which immediately spreads an odour of spirits throughout the house. Scenting it, Russ-Bartelmei, curious to see how such a jug is made and corked up, hurries forward at once.

But here Annamirl interferes: "May God bless you a thousand times, Brandyhannes; that is altogether too much, we could never repay you for it. Perhaps this is the most valuable wedding-gift, so with it I will carry out the old custom."

Quickly drawing the stopper, she pours the sparkling, smoking brandy upon the ground, to the last drop. The old woman giggles and grumbles, "Thou

fool, thou! now both thy kittens will be drunk; and then what a row we shall have!"

By the time all are assembled, the sun is already shining in at the door. During the night a meal has been cooked, which the people now devour with good appetites and gay conversation. I also take part in it, afterwards joining the children who are present, giving them some of the food in their wooden dishes, that they too may have their share of the feast.

Then we all depart. With the charcoal-burners a single old man remains behind. He stands a long time before the door, resting upon his iron hook and smoking a short-stemmed pipe, while with a grin he gazes after us, until we have disappeared in the shady defile. Then only the silent, friendly morning sun still rests upon the pine-trees.

A number of men in the wedding-procession have even brought rifles with them; but to-day they do not shoot at the creatures of the forest, they fire into the air, considering that they are thus adding greatly to the festive occasion.

There is singing and shouting, until the summer day fairly trembles. Many a gay song is sung, tricks are played, old-fashioned games are tried on the way, and it is already noon when we reach the church at Holdenschlag. Five men come to meet us with trumpets, fifes, and a huge drum which the drummer beats with true festive fury; and what an excitement and roar of laughter there is, when suddenly the drum-stick breaks through the much martyred skin and, shooting into the inside, catches its tact upon the other end. A young man is stealing around the procession, and according to the old custom trying to take the bride away from us; but the groomsman is on guard, although in reality watching more closely over his purse than over the bride; for should he lose the former, the robber would drag him to some distant tavern, where he would have to pay for the drinks.

The bridegroom accompanies the first bridesmaid; not until after the ceremony does he approach his wife, and then the groomsman walks with the bridesmaid, so that the seed is sown again for a new wedding. The groomsman is well known to me; his name is Berthold; the bridesmaid is called Aga.

In the church wine is drunk and the priest gives a very edifying talk upon the sacrament of marriage and its divine purpose. The good old man speaks most beautifully, but the people from the woods do not fully understand his high German. Not until we are in the tavern, and have all eaten, drunken, and played tricks, is the real sermon for the people delivered. Then the old, bearded Rüpel raises his wine-glass and begins to speak:

"I am not learned, I wear no doctor's cap, or monkish cowl, and if my glass were not at hand, alas! no clever word from me, my friends, would here be heard. As once did Moses, so do I, you see, with cheering wine my tongue now free. As

aged Bible-reader am I known, but if a knight I were, I own, upon a snowy steed I 'd ride across the land. Once close at hand a proverb I did spy: the Lord, the Crucified, did cry,—'Is man alone, then is he naught, but are there many,' then he taught their worthlessness; 'so will I try and shut a pair within a hut,—alas! too little; now a house, and later even heaven 's too small to cover and protect them all, but through the world to forests strange they go, to suffer, wandering to and fro,—to part again.' But for His sheep the Son of God will care, though they go straying everywhere. I hear the hammer-stroke upon the cross, at foot, at left, at right; my heart is breaking at the sight. The red blood flows, which wins your heaven and mine. To Thee, O Lamb, I offer wine, for Thou didst suffer—die!"

There is silence throughout the large room, and the old man drains his glass.

But soon he fills it again and continues:

"To Him be praise! As at the feast in Galilee, so with us may our Master be, to change the water into wine, the whole of Winkel brook to-day, the whole of Winkel brook for aye! The wine is clear and pure, the white and red together flow, as sure as youthful hearts that onward go, in honour bound and love. From light of sun and moon, the wine has caught its fire, between the earth and sky—as grow our souls and bodies from on high, and from below. To bridegroom and to bride to-day, may this sweet wine bring health, I pray."

What a merry-making and shouting now follows, and the fifes and fiddles resound as the wine is poured upon the green wreath of the bride.

Each one now raises his glass and extemporaneously delivers his wedding-speech or bridal-poem. Finally old Russ-Kath staggers to her feet and with an incredibly clear voice sings:

"Cut down the pear-tree,
Cut down the box-tree,
Cut both the pear- and box-tree down,
Sweetheart, to make thee
Out of the box-tree
Bedstead, the finest in all the town."

As things are now going, it seems to me that the noise and clamour must burst through all four walls, out into the quiet evening.

Gradually, however, it grows quieter and the people turn their eyes towards me, to see if I, the learned man, have no toast for the bride.

So I then arise and say: "Joy and blessing to the bridal pair! And when, after five-and-twenty years, their descendants enter the marriage state, may it be

in the parish church by the Winkel bridge! I drink to your health!" This is my bridal toast.

Thereupon follow a murmuring and whispering, and one of the oldest of the company approaches and politely asks me the meaning of my speech.

All night the inn at Holdenschlag resounds with the music, dancing, and singing of the wedding-guests.

The next morning we escort the bridal couple from their room. Then for a long time there is a search for the groomsman, who is nowhere to be found. We wish him to join us in the old-fashioned wedding-game, "Carrying the wood for the Cradle."

Who would have thought that the excited boy was at this moment standing in a room in the priest's house, wearing on his cheek a veritable Alpine glow, while with both hands he was crushing the brim of his hat!

The priest at Holdenschlag—he must be a shrewd man—walks with dignified steps up and down the room and with a fatherly voice repeats the words: "Control thyself, my son, and pray; lengthen thy evening prayer three times or seven times, if need be. The temptation will leave you at last. Marry! A penniless fellow! What for then? Hast thou house and land, hast thou servants, children, that thou needest a wife? Now, then! To marry with a beggar's staff, such a folly is not to be thought of. How old art thou?"

At this question the lad blushes more deeply than ever. It is so unpardonably stupid not to know one's age. And he does not know it, but he would be right within ten years if he should straightway say twenty.

"Wait until thou art thirty; earn house and land for thyself, and then come again!" is the priest's decision. He now goes into the next room, but Berthold remains standing where he is, feeling as though he must say something more,—some weighty word which would overthrow all objections, so that the priest would answer; "Ah, that is quite another thing; then marry, in God's name!" But the lad knows no such word, to explain and make clear why he wishes to be united, forever united, with Aga, the Alm maiden.

As the priest does not return from the neighbouring room, where he is taking his breakfast, the lad finally turns sadly towards the door and descends the steps, the Jacob's Ladder of his love's happiness, which a short time before he climbed with joyous confidence.

But having reached the green earth, he is another being. And the wild, overbearing way in which the boy conducts himself on this second wedding-day, makes one suspicious.

In the afternoon, man and wife, boy and maiden, depart in couples; Andreas Erdmann joins the old, bearded Rüpel and we all return to the forests of the

Winkel.

PART SECOND

1815.

Many centuries ago according to tradition, a people dwelt in this region who supported themselves by farming and hunting. They had shown much forethought in damming up the Winkel, while along its banks were carefully tended green meadows and a waggon road led to the adjoining country. Not far from the place where the master wood-cutter's house now stands the remains of a wall show the spot upon which it is supposed a church once stood. Indeed, the opinion is advanced that it was no church, but the temple of an idol, where it was still the custom to drink mead to Wotan and to sacrifice animals whenever the full moonbeams shimmered through the leaves of the linden. In the same olden time, a snow-white raven would fly down each year from the wastes of the Alps, pick up the corn which had been strewn upon a stone for it, and fly away again. Once, however, no corn was scattered for the bird, because the year had been a sterile one, and someone had declared the whole thing to be a foolish superstition. Then the white raven was seen no more. But the winter was scarcely over when from the East savage hordes came streaming hither, with ugly brown faces, wearing blood-red caps and horses' tails, riding strange beasts, and carrying unusual weapons,—and they invaded even the Winkel woods. These bands plundered and carried off the inhabitants by hundreds, and thus the region became deserted.

Then the houses and the temple fell into ruins, the water destroyed the dams and roads and covered the fields with pebbles and stones. The fruit-trees grew wild; larch-woods sprang up in the meadows. But the larches were afterwards supplanted by firs and pines. And thus the dark, high forests, now centuries old, came into existence.

It is not certain whether the present race of foresters are descendants of those ancient people. I rather think that, as the old inhabitants were washed away by a surging flood over the Alps in savage ages, so after many years in the storms of time, fragments of other races have been driven into these forests. Indeed, one can tell by observing the present inhabitants that this is not their

native soil, but notwithstanding, they have been impelled to take root here and to prepare a safe and orderly dwelling-place for their descendants.

However, the old German legends of the wood-gods live on in these people. In the autumn they leave the last wild fruit upon the trees, or decorate their crosses and *Haus Altare* with the same, in order to secure fruitfulness for the coming year. They throw bread into the water, when a flood is impending; they scatter meal to the wind, to appease threatening storms—even as the ancients sacrificed to the gods. At the sacred hour of twelve they hear the wild hunt, even as the ancients heard with terror the thundering of Father Wotan. Instead of Freya of the olden time, they call to mind the beautiful woman who presides at the wedding-feasts, with her two kittens harnessed to a golden waggon. And when the Winkel foresters bury one of their comrades outside in Holdenschlag, they empty the cup of mead to his memory. Everywhere still linger the old Germanic superstitions and customs, but above them all is heard the lofty song of the Cross.

To a certain extent the Winkel foresters appreciate what is needed here, but only the few are able to give it a name. However, that root-digger was right when, a year ago at the charcoal-burner's wedding, he said these words: "Neither God nor priest troubles himself about us. We are made over to sorrow and the devil. A dog's life is good enough for us; we are only Winkel people!"

But the root-digger may yet live to see my toast fulfilled. Since the wedding I have become a year younger. The foresters of the Winkel are to have a church.

If a nation desires to rise from its barbarism to a perfect, harmonious height, God's temple must form the foundation. Therefore I will begin with the church in the Winkel woods.

I have been obliged to urge and press the matter. Herr von Schrankenheim dwells in his palace in the city, where from every window church bells are heard, while upon dainty shelves are displayed hundreds of books for the mind and heart. Who there imagines what a pulpit and a sound of bells would mean in the distant forest? But at last the proprietor of these lands has comprehended, and to-day the men are already here to examine the site.

Yonder, near the house of the Winkel-warden, straight up from the path which leads across the Winkel, is a piece of high, rocky ground, secure from caving, slides, and torrents. It lies between the Upper and Lower Winkel, and is equally distant from Lautergräben, the Miesenbach valley and the banks of the Kar. That is the right place for God's house. I have presented plans which I think are suitable for such a forest church.

It should be large enough for all to find room therein who have sad and hungry hearts, of which there are many and always will be in the forest country. It should not be too low, for the high woods and rocky walls have changed and broadened our conceptions; and then again the human dwellings are small, so

it will be doubly comforting to the eye if it can look upward in the house of God. In city churches a solemn half-light should always reign, that it may offer a contrast to the gay and joyous lives of the rich and great; but in God's house of the woods must smile a bright and gentle friendliness, for gloomy and solemn are the forest and the forester's house and heart. So the worship of God should balance and even life; and that which the working-day and home deny, Sunday and the church should offer. The temple should be a refuge from the storms of this world, and the entrance to eternity.

The tower of the little forest church should be slender and airy, like an upward-pointing finger, warning, threatening, or promising. Three bells should proclaim the Trinity in the Unity of God, and the three-toned melody sing of faith, love, and hope. The organ should be well placed, for its music must be the word of God to the souls of the poor ones who do not understand the sermon.

Gilded pictures and dazzling decorations are objectionable; the worship of God should not coquette with the treasures of this earth. Simplicity and unity most eloquently and worthily render comprehensible the thoughts of God and eternity.

But other things must be considered as well. In order to secure dryness I have proposed bricks for the walls. The benches and chairs must be arranged as resting-places, since Sunday is a day of rest. If during the sound of the organ one should fall asleep, what then? One would only dream one's self into heaven. For the floor, flagstones are too damp and cold; thick fir planks are more suitable. For the roof, on account of hail-storms, neither tiles nor large flat boards are practicable; small larch shingles are the best.

My plans have been accepted. Already roads are being cut through and building material brought here. In the Bins valley, where clay is found, a brick-kiln has been constructed and by the Breitwand a stone-quarry opened.

The foresters stand and watch the strange workmen. They too have their thoughts about it.

"They want to build us a church, do they?" says one; "'t would be more sensible to divide the money among the poor. The Lord God should build Himself a house only when He is unwilling to remain under the open sky or dwell in the Winkel forest."

"I wonder what saint they will set up for us!"

"Hubertus, I think."

"Hubertus,—ah, he carries a rifle and could stop the poachers too easily. The hunters would never endure him. I say, the *Vierzehn Nothelfer*[#] would be right for us."

[#] *Vierzehn Nolhelfer*, fourteen saints to whom the Catholics prayed in times of great need.

"Not to be thought of; they would cost too much, and besides, the great Christopher is among them, and no church door would be large enough for him."

"To him who wishes to find lost things, Saint Anthony many a wonder brings!" says Rüpel, the old bristly-beard, whose words seem to rhyme, let him twist his tongue as he will.

One little old woman very sagely remarks that, as there is no one in the whole Winkel forest who can play the organ, Saint Cecilia should be chosen as parish saint.

Others wish to dedicate the church to Florian, who protects against fire; but those living by the water prefer Sebastian.

Thereupon an old shepherd responds: "That's no way to talk. The people can help each other; but you mustn't forget the poor cattle! The holy Erhart (patron saint of cattle) should be the one for us in the Winkel."

Another speaks: "I care nothing for the cattle. We need the church for the people. And as long as we have to pay for the saint, we may as well have something fine. I am no heathen; I go to church, and I like a pretty woman. What do you say to the Magdalen?"

"Thou wretch," cries his wife, "thou wouldst place that wicked person upon the altar!"

"Thou art right, old woman; for such as thou, we must have one who will set a good example."

So the people argue, half in fun, half in earnest. They have rummaged through the whole heaven and have found no saint satisfactory to everyone.

And we must have one who will suit them all. I have already my own idea about it.

The wooded hills are growing lighter and lighter, as if the day were dawning. The jagged clefts in the mountains and a greater expanse of sky are visible. Many a marten is deprived of his hollow tree, many a fox of his hole. Innocent little birds and greedy vultures are made homeless, for branch after branch falls upon the damp, mossy earth, upon which at last the sun shines again. Through the winter the wood-cutters have been busy. In the country outside coal and wood have been in great demand.

This summer I have no longer much leisure.

Outside there is war, which will end God only knows when. In Holdenschlag the foundries are closed again and no coal-waggon enters the forest. The

wood-cutter's work is suspended; the stalwart men wander idly about.

I have advised them to join the defenders of the fatherland. They will listen to nothing of the kind. They have no home, they know no fatherland. The foreigners are welcome if they bring money and better times.

God grant the better times, and keep the foreigners at a distance!

It is fortunate for me that I am cool-blooded. That one wild year killed the germs of my passion. Now I can bend my whole energy toward this end: out of a scattered, divided people, to form one, united and whole. Am I successful, we shall have something upon which to build. I will found a home for them and myself. But we must first gain the co-operation of the Baron, after which we must influence the woodspeople.

Extraordinary strength does not seem to me necessary, but certainly persistent effort. These people are like balls of clay—a push, and they roll along for a while. They will go on of themselves, but they must be guided in order to reach one and the same goal. There are enough members, but they are self-willed and perverse. When the church is once finished, so that the parish has a heart, we will attend to the head and build the schoolhouse.

AUTUMN, 1816.

A few weeks ago I visited all the huts, carrying with me a note-book. I questioned the fathers about their households, the number in their families, the year of birth and the names of the little people. The birthdays can usually be remembered only by events and circumstances. This boy was born in the summer when the great flood occurred; this girl, the same winter that straw bread had to be eaten. Such incidents are striking landmarks.

Designation by name is not of frequent occurrence. The male inhabitants are called Hannes or Sepp, Berthold, Toni, or Mathes; those of the female sex are named Kathrein, or Maria, the last of which is converted into Mini, Mirzel, Mirl, Mili, Mirz, or Marz. It is much the same with other names; and a stranger coming here must submit at once to such a change, according to the custom of the people. For a while they called me Andredl; but that they found too long a name for such a small man, and to-day I am only Redl.

Very few know anything of a surname. Some have either lost or forgotten theirs, others have never had any. These people need a special form by which to designate their ancestry and relationship. Hansel-Toni-Sepp! That is a household

name and by it is meant, that the owner of the house is called Sepp, whose father was named Toni, and grandfather Hansel. Kathi-Hani-Waba-Mirz-Margareth! Here Kathi was the great-great-grandmother of Margareth. So the race may have existed a long time in the solitude of the forest.

And thus a person is often known by half a dozen names, and each one drags the rusty chain of his ancestors after him. It is the only heritage and monument.

But this confusion must not continue. The names must be prepared for the parish-book. New surnames will have to be invented and it will not be difficult to choose those which are fitting. We will call the people after their characteristics or occupations; that is easily remembered and preserved for the future. The wood-cutter Paul, who married Annamirl, is no longer Hiesel-Franzel-Paul, but briefly Paul Holzer (woodman), because he transports the tree-trunks upon a slide to the coal-pit, which work is called *wooding*. The tinder-maker and his descendants, do what they will, shall remain Schwammschlager. A hut in Lautergräben I call Brünnhütte (spring hut), because a large spring flows before it. Why then should the owner of the hut be named Hiesel-Michel-Hiesel-Hannes? He is a Brünnhütter, as well as his wife, and if his son goes out into the world, whatever his occupation, he shall always remain a Brünnhütter.

An old thick-necked dwarf, the coal-driver Sepp, has for a long time been called Kropfjodel. I recently asked the little man whether he would be satisfied to be registered in my book under the name of Joseph Kropfjodel. He assented quite willingly. I then explained to him that his children and grandchildren would also be called Kropfjodel. At that he grinned and gurgled, "Let him be called Kropfjodel ten times over, that boy of mine!" And a little later he added mischievously: "The name, thank God, we have that at least! Oh, if we but had the boy as well!"

The new names meet with approval, and each person bearing one carries his head higher and is more independent and self-sufficient than formerly. Now he knows who he is. But everything depends upon keeping the name in good repute and doing it honour.

When I came to the Alm boy, Berthold, he shocked me greatly. "A name," he screamed, "for me? I need no name, I am nobody. God did not make me a woman, and the priest does not allow me to be a man. Marriage is denied me because I am as poor as a beggar. Call me Berthold *Elend*! (misery). Call me Satan! I know I break the law, but I will not betray my flesh and blood!"

After these words he hastened away like one mad. The lad, once so merry, is hardly to be recognised. I have written the name Berthold in the book and added a cross to it.

Another man wanders about in the Winkel forests, whose name I do not

know, or if any he bears; it may be evil. The man avoids us all, and buries himself often for a long time, one knows not where, then appears again at unusual hours, one knows not why. It is the Einspanig.

MAY, 1817.

This winter I have suffered from a severe illness, caused by frequently visiting Marcus Jager, who had been shot by a gamekeeper in Lautergräben. As fever threatened to appear in the wound and as there was no one else who would or could nurse the sick man, I often went over to see him. The people here, instead of cleansing a wound with tepid water and lint, apply all kinds of salves and ointments. It must indeed be a powerful constitution which can recover in spite of such hindrances, and I had a hard struggle keeping Jager alive.

The last time I was with him was a stormy March day. On the way back the paths were blocked with snow. In places it reached to my shoulders. For a number of hours I struggled along, but as night approached I was still far from the Winkel valley. An indescribable weariness came over me, which I resisted a long time, but at last could not conquer. My only thought was that I must perish there in the midst of the snow, and that I should be found in the spring and be carried past the new church in the Winkel to Holdenschlag. Here in the forest I should like to lie, but I would far rather be walking about within it.

Not until weeks afterwards did I know that I was not frozen, that on the same evening two wood-cutters came to meet me on snow-shoes, found me unconscious and carried me into the house of the Winkel-warden; and as I lay for many days seriously ill, it seems that once they even called the doctor from Holdenschlag. The messenger who brought him was also commissioned, as he himself has since told me, to speak at once with the grave-digger. The latter said, "If the man would only do me the favour not to die now; one can't dig a hole in this hard, frozen ground."

I am glad that I was able to spare the good man his labour.

After the danger of the illness had passed I was attacked by a serious trouble with my eyes, which has not yet quite left me. For a long time I shall be obliged to remain in my room, indeed until the warm weather comes and the freshets are over. I am not at all lonely, for I busy myself with wood-carving. I intend to make a zither or something of the kind for myself, so that I may practise music until the organ is ready in the church.

The people come often and, sitting down beside me on the bench, inquire after my health. Russ-Annamirl, who has moved with her family into the master

wood-cutter's house in Lautergräben and according to the new order of things is called Anna Maria Russ, sent me three big doughnuts last week. They are some of those which have been baked in great quantities to celebrate the arrival of a wee Russ. They have christened the little one with doughnuts.

The widow of Black Mathes has also been to see me once. She asked me in great sorrow what was to be done with her boy Lazarus. She then told me how he was often attacked by a *frenzy*. A frenzy, she explained, was when one broke out into a passion at the slightest provocation, threatening everything. Lazarus had this malady in a much worse degree than his father; sister and mother would be in danger when he became a little stronger. Did, then, no remedy exist for such a trouble?

What can I advise the distressed woman? A continuous, regular employment, and a loving but earnest treatment should be given to the lad; that is my proposition.

Of all the people in the Winkel forests, I have the greatest sympathy for this woman. Her husband, after an unfortunate life, died a violent death and was dishonourably buried. Nothing better is in store for the child. And his mother, formerly accustomed to better days, is so soft-hearted and gentle.

Day before yesterday a boy came to me dragging a bird-cage with him. The lad was so small that he could not even reach the door-handle, so he timidly knocked for a while until I opened the door. Still standing on the steps, he said, "I am the son of Marcus Jager, and my father sends me here—father sends me here——"

The little fellow had learned the speech by heart, but he stopped short, blushed, and would have liked to make his escape. I had some trouble in discovering that his father's message was, that he was entirely well and wished me the same; that soon he would come to thank me, and that he presented me with a pair of fine crested titmice, for, being aware that I could not yet go out of doors, he would be glad to send the whole spring to me in my room.

What shall I do with the little creatures? If one approaches them, they flutter confusedly about in the cage and beat their heads against the wires in their fright. I let them fly out into our Father's bird-cage, out into the May.

And when the time is finally fulfilled, I myself walk out early one morning into the open May. The cock crows, the morning star is peeping brightly over the dark forest hill. The morning star is a good companion; it shines faithfully as long as it is night, and modestly retires when the sun appears.

Softly I steal through the front door, so that I may not awaken the people who have not rested for weeks, as I have; the weariness of yesterday still weighs upon the eyelids, which the dawning day is already forcing open.

In the forest there is a trembling, rustling awakening from deep rest. How

strange is the first walk of a convalescent! One feels as if the whole earth were rocking one—rocking her newly born child in her arms. O thou holy May morning, bathed in dew and sweet perfumes, trembling and reverberating with eternal thoughts of God! How I think of thee and thy fairy magic, which at this hour hath sunk into my soul from the dome of heaven and the crown of the forest!

And now I experience a strange sorrow. Youth has been given to me in vain. What is my aim? What do I signify? A short time ago and from eternity I was nothing; a short time hence and through all eternity I shall be nothing. What shall I do? Why am I in this small place, and conscious of myself for this brief period? Why have I awakened? What must I do?

Then I vow to myself anew to work with all my might, and also to pray that such difficult, heart-burning thoughts may not return to me.

As the sun appears, I am still standing on the edge of the woods. Below splashes the water of the Winkel, from the chimney of the house rises a silvery wreath of smoke, and in the church building the masons are hammering.

My housekeeper, having noticed that I was not in my room, reproved me for my carelessness. As soon as she discovered that I had been lying on the damp moss in the cool early morning, she asked me quite seriously if I then found it so uncomfortable in her house, or if I had something on my mind, that I risked my life in such a way; yes, and did I not know that he who lies down on the dewy ground in the spring is giving his measure to the grave-digger?

SUMMER SOLSTICE, 1817.

This has been a strange walk in the woods, and for what has happened I feel that I shall not be held responsible either in heaven or on earth. Where the little stream splashes in the shadowy denies of the Winkelegger forest, there I remain standing.

Here upon these ripples let thy thoughts drift without aim or purpose. Thou knowest the Greek legend of the river Lethe. That was a strange water. Whoever drank of it, forgot the past. Still stranger are the waters of the little forest brook. He whose soul floats upon the same, e'en though his locks be wintry, finds again the long past time of his childhood and youth.

I penetrate deeper into the wilderness and rest in the moss, listening to the ever present murmuring silence. Many a little flower, just opened, is cradled close to my breast, endeavouring to knock softly at the gate of my heart. And many a beetle crawls anxiously up, who has lost his way to his sweetheart in the thicket of grasses and moss. Now he lifts his head and asks for the right path. Do I know

the right path myself? O tell us where is the longing satisfied which follows us everywhere? A spider lets itself down from the branches; it has worked its way to the top, and now that it is there, it wishes to be upon the ground again. It spins threads, I spin thoughts. Who is the weaver who knows how to weave a beautiful garment from loose threads of thought?

While thus dreaming, I hear a rustling in the thicket. It is no deer, it is no doe; it is a human being; a young, blooming woman, excited and frightened, like a hunted creature. It is Aga, the Alm maiden. She hastens up to me, seizes my hands and cries: "Oh, I am so glad it is you!"

Then she looks at me and stops for breath, unable to overcome her excitement. "It is a horrible fate!" she cries again; "but I know no other way. The evil one follows us both, and now we fear the people; but I 'm not afraid of you, for you are good and learned! I 'm sure you will help us out of our trouble, Berthold and me! We should so like to live a decent life; pray give us the marriage blessing!"

At first I do not understand, but, comprehending her at last, I say: "If you are honest in your purpose, the church will not withhold its blessing."

"*Mein Gott im Himmel!*" cries the girl; "with the church we will have nothing more to do; it refuses us marriage because we have no money. But if God should be angry with us, that would be terrible indeed. My conscience gives me no peace, and I beg you a thousand times, give us the blessing which every man may bestow. You are still young yourself, and if you have a sweetheart, then you must know there is no parting or leaving one another. And so we live together in the wilderness; we have n't a single soul to be our friend and wish us happiness. We should so like to hear one good word, and if someone would only come and say: 'By God's will and with His blessing remain together until death!' Just a single word, and we should be freed from the sin, and a wedded pair before God in heaven!"

This longing for deliverance from their sin, this struggling for the right, for human sympathy, for peace of heart—who would not be moved by that!

"You true-hearted people!" I cry. "May the Lord God be with you."

The lad has already knelt beside the maiden. And so, with my words I have done something for which I am not responsible in heaven or on earth. I have consummated a marriage in the midst of the green woods.

THE FEAST OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL, 1817.

Strange,—what is the matter with this lad, Black Mathes's son! He has his

mother's heart and his father's blood. No, he has a still larger heart than his mother's, and blood three times as savage as his father's. This boy will become either a saint or a terrible murderer.

Old Russ-Kath has been ill for months. The people say she lacks young blood. Little Lazarus, hearing of it, came to me yesterday with a small wooden bowl and his father's huge pocket-knife, and asked me to draw some blood from his hand to send to Russ-Kath.

His face was flushed, otherwise he was quiet. I remonstrated with him for making such a request. He darted away, and soon afterwards in the Winkelwarden's yard he was wringing a pigeon's neck: for anger, for love—I cannot tell which.

I went out to the dead creature. "Lazarus," I said; "now thou hast deprived a mother of her life. Seest thou the poor, helpless young yonder? Dost thou hear how they cry?"

The boy stood there trembling, pale as marble, struggling for breath, and biting his underlip until the blood trickled down his chin. Loosening his clenched fist, I poured water on his forehead and led him back into his hut. There he fell exhausted upon the moss, and sank into a deep sleep.

Something must be done to save the child. How would it be if I should take him, be father and brother to him, curb and guide him according to my strength, teach him and keep him at work, seeking in every way to kill his passion?

But perhaps the boy has too much blood ... the people say.

DOG-DAYS, 1817.

Like Sturmhanns's little dog, friendly one moment and the next snapping at one's calf, are these uncertain dog-days. In the morning all promises well, and the skies are bright and clear. And the sun caresses and kisses thee, embracing the world with passionate love—who would not then stroll out into the comforting shade of the woods? Thou wanderest freely about and gazest on the green earth thinking: Beloved, beautiful day! Then, all at once, the dark clouds are over thee, and the storm tears thy hat from thy head, and the rain madly beats thee in the face; find a shelter for thyself quickly—the hail comes rushing down.

The dog-days. Can Nature be unfaithful also? It is man who accuses her of evil, because his thoughts are unreasonable and his wisdom is lacking. There is nothing evil and nothing good, excepting in the heart of man, the one being to whom is given free-will.

If we could lay aside our free-will, we should then have no conscience. In

the forest there are many to whom that would be very agreeable.

THE FEAST OF ST. JAMES, 1817.

To-day I was in the Hinter Winkel again, in Mathes's house. The woman is inconsolable. Two days ago the boy Lazarus disappeared.

Something horrible has happened. In his rage he hurled a stone at his mother. Then, with a wild cry, he ran away. Upon Mathes's grave the fresh imprints of two knees were discovered yesterday.

We have summoned people to hunt for the boy. He is not in any of the huts. They will also search along the ravines and streams.

"He did n't mean to hit me!" sobs the mother; "and it was only a *little* stone, but a large one lies upon my heart. He could never have thrown a greater one at me than by running away."

THE FEAST OF ST. PETER IN CHAINS, 1817.

The following story has spread like wild-fire through the forest. Early this morning as the little daughter of Mathes was on her way to plant wild-rose trees upon her father's grave, she saw the gleam of something white. Upon the mound had been placed a staff from which a piece of paper was fluttering. The girl ran home to her mother, and the latter hastened to me, begging me to come and explain it to her.

It is most remarkable. It is news from the boy. On the paper in strange handwriting were the words:

"My mother and my sister! Bear me no ill-will and do not worry. I am in the school of the Cross.

"LAZARUS."

They all looked to me for an explanation. The boy could neither read nor write, as can hardly anyone in the forest. They think that I, being learned, ought to know everything.

I know nothing.

THE FEAST OF ALL SOULS, 1817.

The people come and go in silence.

A little drop collects on the high branch of a tree, travels along out to the farthest needle, trembles, glistens, and sparkles, now grey like lead, now red like a carbuncle. It has hardly reflected the glorious colour of the woods and sky, when a breath of wind stirs and the little drop frees itself from the swaying pine-branch and falls upon the ground. The earth sucks it in, and there is no longer a trace of the tiny, sparkling star.

Thus lives the child of the forest and thus it dies.

Outside it is otherwise. There the drops congeal in the frosty breath of conventionality, and the icicles tinkle against each other, tinkling even as they fall and rest upon the ground, reflecting for a while the glory of the world until they dissolve and melt, like our thoughts of a dear departed one.

Outside, the churchyards are not for the dead, but for the living. There we pay honour to the memory of our forefathers and to our own future resting-place. The flowers and the inscriptions are for us, and we feel peace in our hearts as we think of the sleeper who is freed from trial. We realise the dissolution of the departed but hope for him the resurrection. No one walks upon burial-ground unrewarded; these clods cool the passions and warm the heart, and not only is the peace of death written on the flowery mounds, but also the worth of life.

The forest brings rest to whom rest belongs. There the dead sleeper has no candle, nor has the living one had one. May the *everlasting* light give them light! is our only petition. The faint autumn sun smiles gently, promising eternal brightness, and the coming spring will care for the flowers and wreaths.

In the forest our thoughts are not for the bodies of the dead, but for the agony of the living souls of those who, having died in sin, are languishing in purgatory!

When the starving Hans stole the piece of bread from his starving neighbour in the field and then died, the primeval forest was not yet standing. The body has decayed. Hans is forgotten, the soul lies in purgatory. The meadow has become a forest, the forest a wilderness; the wolves howl and there is no man far or near. On the mountain sides blow summer breezes and winter storms, and with each moment a grain of sand; and with each century a mass of mountain plunges into the depths of the ravines. And the poor soul lies in the fire. Again man comes into the wilderness, the high forests fall, huts and houses appear and

a parish is founded—the soul belonging to olden times and to days long past lies in the flames of purgatory, is abandoned and forgotten.

But there is one day in the year for the consolation of such forgotten souls.

When Christ, the Lord, died upon the cross and but one drop of blood was left in His heart, His Heavenly Father asked Him: "My dear Son, mankind is saved; to whom wilt thou give the last drop of thy red blood?" Then Christ, the Lord, answered: "To my beloved mother, who stands at the cross; that her pain may be soothed." "Oh no, my child Jesus," the Mother Mary replied, "if thou wilt suffer the bitter death for the souls of men, then can I also bear the pain of a mother's heart, e'en though the agony were so great that the sea could not quench it, and the whole earth a grave which could not bury it. I give the last drop of thy blood to the forgotten souls in purgatory, that they may have one day in the year, when they are freed from the fire."

And thus—according to the legend—originated All Souls' Day. On this day even the most abandoned and forgotten souls are delivered from their pain and they stand in the outer courts of heaven, until the stroke of the last hour in the day summons them back into the flames.

Such is the idea and meaning of the feast of All Souls in the forest, and many a good deed is performed with the thought of soothing the fiery anguish of departed souls.

But over the lonely graves the late autumn mists are gathering, and the remainder of the hill is concealed by newly fallen snow, upon which the claws of a jay may have traced a little chain—the only sign of life which still reigns here above—symbol of the indissoluble band: About life and death an eternal chain is wound.

To-day I am reminded of Lucas, a charcoal-burner, who lies buried in Lautergräben. One night a goat was stolen from the wood-cutter Luger, and afterwards, not far from Lucas's hut, they found the animal's skin and entrails. Thus it was clear Lucas was the thief, and as slothfulness rules everywhere in the forest, they did not prosecute the charcoal-burner, and so he could not clear himself. He noticed, however, how he was suspected, and once he called out: "Had you cut off my hands, or put out my eyes, I should be content. But you have robbed me of my honour—now my life is ruined." Still the people said: "Let him turn and twist as he will, he stole the goat all the same." And this nearly crazed the poor man. "Thieves must be hanged," he said,—and afterwards he was found suspended from the branch of a fir-tree. From time immemorial suicides have chosen their own graves; so they buried the man among the roots of the fir.

It was not until a few weeks ago, that an unemployed wood-cutter made the confession on his death-bed, that it was he who had taken the goat from Luger. I shall go to-day to Lucas's grave in Lautergräben.

There is still another grave in the Winkel forests, known and despised by the people. On this anniversary day, however, it was not deserted. For here, upon her father's grave, the little daughter of Black Mathes again discovered a bit of paper with the words:

"I am well. I think of my mother and sister and father. "LAZARUS."

That is the message, the only news from the vanished boy for many days. The handwriting is the same as before.

No footsteps excepting those of the girl lead to the grave, none away from it. Paths for foxes, and deer, and other animals wind zig-zag through the wintry woods.

THE FEAST OF ST. CATHARINE, 1817.

A letter has been written begging the lad to return home for his mother's sake. It has been carefully fastened upon the little cross above the grave. It is still there; no one has opened it.

CHRISTMAS, 1817.

To-day I am homesick for the sound of bells, for the sad, melting tones of an organ. I sit in my room and play manger songs on the zither. My zither has but three strings; a more perfect one I did not know how to make.

The three strings are enough for me; one is my mother, the other my wife, the third my child. One always spends Christmas with one's family.

Only a few of the forest people go with pine-torches to the midnight service in Holdenschlag. The distance is too great. The rest remain in their huts, yet, having no desire to sleep, they sit together and tell stories, for to-day they have a peculiar impulse to leave their commonplace life and create a world of their own. Many a one carries out old pagan customs, hoping thereby to satisfy an unspeakable longing of the heart. Many a one strains his eyes and gazes over the dark forests, confidently expecting to see the heavens illumined. He listens for the ringing of festival bells and soft angel voices. But only the stars gleam

above the forest hills, to-day as yesterday and always. A cold breeze stirs among the tree-tops; there is a glitter of ice, and now and then a branch shakes off its burden of snow.

But on this night the glistening and falling of the snow affect one in an unusual way, and the hearts of men tremble in longing expectation of the Redeemer.

I have trimmed a simple little Christmas-tree, such as they have in northern countries, and have sent the same to Anna Maria Russ in Lautergräben. I think the light of the candles will be reflected in a friendly way in the eyes of the little one. Perhaps a bit of the brightness will sink into the young heart never to be extinguished.

In the widow's hut, there can be no Christmas-tree. Mathes's grave is buried deep in snow; the branch which served as letter-box wears a tall cap. The pleading letter from the mother to the child will be destroyed without having been opened or read.

MARCH, 1818.

Over in one corner of Karwässer Berthold has earned himself a hut. He has joined the wood-cutters.

Yesterday a child was born to Aga. It is a girl. They did not carry her to Holdenschlag, but sent for me to christen the little one. I am no priest and may not steal a name from the church calendar. I have called the girl *Waldlilie* and have baptised her with the water of the woods.

EASTER, 1818.

When will the angel come to roll away the stone?

"Alas, alas, our Lord is dead! But as I have already said, one hardly knows anything in this back country. Well, well, He cannot have been very young, for I have heard of Him all my life. But all the same His time has come at last. Ah, who can escape!..." Thus spoke old Schwammelfuchs, when he learned that on Good Friday it had been proclaimed from the chancel in Holdenschlag that our Lord had died for the sins of the world.

The old man meant it seriously and in the greatest reverence, although every evening at his prayers he repeats the words: "Suffered under Pontius Pilate,

crucified, dead."

It is a prayer of the lips. True prayer, the heart offers only in its need, in its joy, but these people are not conscious of this. Deeply buried is that which we call true worship or religious feeling.

The people hasten Easter eve or in the morning out into the open woods, where they kindle fires, discharge their guns, and gaze into the air for the papal blessing, which from the pinnacle of St. Peter's at Rome is scattered to the four winds on Easter morning.

There is always present the unconscious longing and struggle. One sees that something lies hidden in the heart which is not dead. But when will the angel come to roll away the stone?

THE FEAST OF ST. MARK, 1818.

The snow is melted. Yonder in the gorge the avalanches still thunder. A year ago we planted a few fruit-trees; these are now becoming quite green and the cherry-tree bears five snow-white blossoms.

The building of the church has commenced again. The masons have also gone to work on the parsonage. That is to be a stately house, built after plans from the owner of the forest. Why then must the parsonage be larger than the schoolhouse? The latter is for an entire family and a troop of young guests; the parsonage harbours one or a few single people, whose world does not extend outwards, but is absorbed within.

But the parsonage is the home and refuge for all those needing help or advice; an asylum for the persecuted and defenceless—the centre of the parish.

As in the changing seasons the old is constantly reappearing in the new, so these people continue the occupations, and in their ignorance and poverty repeat the lives of their ancestors.

I no longer have time to wander about in the forest, watching the people and studying nature. I must oversee the building constantly; the workmen and foremen depend upon my advice. It requires much thought, and I am obliged to call to my aid books and the experiences of others, so that nothing may go wrong.

But I enjoy this active life and I am becoming younger and stronger.

Yesterday the roof of the church was raised. Many people were present, each one wishing to contribute his mite to the church. The widow of Mathes and her daughter were also working on the building. Not long ago the woman brought a little stone from her hut, saying: "I should like to have this pebble lie

under the altar."

It is the stone which the lad threw at his mother.

PENTECOST, 1818.

The first celebration of the new church. Not inside however, but in front of it. Yesterday the cross was placed on the tower. It is made of steel and gilded—a present from the Baron.

A great crowd of people assembled; there are many inhabitants in the forest after all.

From Holdenschlag there was no one present, not even the priest. Can it be that they begrudge us the new church? But the Einspanig has been seen on the other side of the Winkel brook, lurking about listening. He draws his grey mantle over his disordered hair, and hastens along by the brook, finally disappearing in the thicket. He is a strange creature; he avoids the people more and more, and is only seen on special days. No one knows who he is or whence he comes, and what he is weaving no weaver can tell.

The master wood-cutter also takes part in the celebration; he has arrayed himself in gala attire and has even combed his red beard. He carries a knotted stick, and I notice at once that something unusual is about to take place. I am not mistaken, for he proceeds to make a speech in which he says that in the name of the master of the forest he to-day delivers over the new church to the new parish.

A stalwart man carries up the cross, bound to his left arm. It is Paul, the young head journeyman from Lautergräben. From the tower window, through which he climbs, a very simple staging is placed upon the almost perpendicular shingle roof, reaching to the summit. Calmly the bearer of the cross climbs along the beam. Having reached the top, he stands upright, loosening the cross from his arm. The crowd below is silent, and round about there is not a sound; it is as if it were still a wilderness on the banks of the Winkel. Each one holds his breath, as if fearing to disturb the equilibrium of the man on the dizzy height.

Paul avoids looking about him, and his movements are slow and regular. I am seized with terror as I fancy that he makes an unnecessary start and turn—then the cross sinks into its resting-place and stands firmly. In the same moment the man stumbles—a cry resounds in my vicinity. But Paul is still standing on the summit.

The cry proceeds from Anna Maria. She is deathly pale, and without uttering another sound she seats herself upon a stone.

And now the merry-making begins. Paul takes out a glass and, raising it to

his lips, drains it, then hurls it upon the ground. It breaks into a thousand pieces, and the people struggle with one another for the bits, that they may preserve them for their descendants and be able to say: "See, this is a part of the glass which was used at the raising of the cross on the church tower."

Paul still stands upon the pinnacle, arm in arm with the cross; in the tower window the grey head of our rhymster Rüpel now appears. Contracting his white eyebrows so violently that it can be seen even from below, the man begins thus to speak: "As the dizzy spire I cannot reach, so from this window I 'll make my speech. On the highest point a youth doth stand, with handsome looks and glass in hand. But aged ones like me should teach, yet sermons I will never preach. For that below a chancel's given, to honest priests, who guide to heaven. And the font baptismal stands near by—of no more use to such as I—but some folks in the parish here, need this wash-trough every year. The font should be both wide and long—in forest lands it must be strong; near by the confessional stands for all, where sins are left both great and small, which God forgives; though the priest his ears may close, the sins from his own heart he knows. Then there 's the altar, where one leaves one's woes, refreshed and young one homeward goes. And God twelve angels here will send, to guard this parish from end to end. Methinks I hear our bells ring clear: I see our sunlit cross in place, a sacred sign that by God's grace we all together at last may wend our way to heaven when life shall end. But I must be the bell to-day, to tell abroad what you fain would say, and send it forth o'er mountain and wood to the town where dwells our master good—a message of thanks from this parish new, for the house of God which he builds for you. May angels guide us to heaven's door,—this is my greeting, and still more—before above we have a happy birth, may we rejoice a little while on earth."

These words warmed the hearts of the people, and I would gladly have sent my own guardian angel to the Baron in the city with a most loving message of thanks.

As Paul has now safely descended from the tower to firm ground, his wife receives him with open arms: "God gives thee back to me from His own hands!"

They then approach the house which to-day has become a noisy tavern. Behold the fatality, here is Paul, now standing with less security upon the smooth, firm floor of the inn than he did a few hours ago above on the tower.

But the lofty cross is graciously stretching out its arm above the church and the tavern.

A FEW DAYS LATER.

That must be a false report which is circulating about the Baron's son. He is said to have become dissipated. Too much wealth was awaiting him when he came into this world. But with an illustrious name and an abundance of money, no wonder life is full of attractions!

I used to tell my good Hermann what it meant to work for one's daily bread. But there was one thing about him which did not please me: he never noticed the labourer in the field, or the flowers of spring, or the leaves of autumn.

Still, Hermann, thou canst not go very far astray. By thy side stands the holiest, truest guardian angel ever born in heaven or on earth.

Ah, if thou wouldst only come into our beautiful, silent forest!

MORGENROTH AND EDELWEISS, SUMMER, 1818.

It is sometimes very lonely for me here in the Winkel. But I know one remedy for this; at such times I go to still lonelier parts of the forest; I have been there even at night, have watched sleeping nature, and have found rest.

Night lies over the woodland. The last breath of the day that has passed has died away. The birds are resting and dreaming, at the same time composing songs for the future. The screech-owl hoots, and the branches sigh. The world has closed her eyes, yet her ear she opens to the eternal laments of mankind. To what purpose? Her heart is of stone and impossible to warm. Ah, but she warms us with her peaceful aspect. Above, constellation presses against constellation, dances its measure and rejoices in the everlasting day. The morning returns to the forest also, the branches are already beckoning to it.

The young king approaches from the east upon his steeds of cloud and with his flaming lance pierces the heart of night; with faint sobs she falls, and from the rocky height streams the blood.

Alpine glow the people call it, and if I were a poet I would celebrate it in song.

At this season it would be beautiful on the Graue Zahn. At night, while below in the dark valley man rests from misery, dreams of misery, and strengthens himself for new misery—the eternal spires tower aloft, silently glowing, and at midnight one day reaches its hand to the next across the Zahn.

"Oh, what a beautiful light is that!" old Rüpel once exclaimed. "To distant lands it sends its ray, its rosy splendour fills my heart, to God above it lights my way."

A strange yearning sometimes fills my soul; it is not a longing for space, for infinity; thirst for light would better express it. My poor eyes can never satisfy

the thirsting soul; they will yet perish in the sea of light and the thirst will still be unquenched.

A short time since I was on the Graue Zahn again. Soon I shall be tied to the bell-rope when other people are taking a holiday. The bell-rope may be compared to a long-drawn breath, always praising God and proclaiming good-will to man.

From the high mountain I gazed below, but I did not behold the sea. I looked toward the north to the farthest horizon, whence one might perhaps see the plain and the city, the turret of the house, and the gleam of the windows.... And how far my gaze must wander to find the grave in Saxon-land!...

A sharp wind interrupted my thoughts. Then I once more made my descent.

Beside an overhanging cliff I found something very beautiful.

On the banks of the distant lake I had already heard from the lips of my parents, and I have repeatedly been informed by the people of these woodlands, that in the midst of the sun the holy Virgin Mary sits at the spinning-wheel. She spins wool from a snow-white lamb, like those pastured in paradise. Once while spinning, she fell asleep and dreamed of the human race, and a bit of the wool falling to the earth remained clinging to a high cliff. The people found it and called it *Edelweiss*.

I picked two of the little stars and placed them on my breast. One of them, which has a slightly reddish tinge, shall be called *Heinrich-roth*, the other, snow-white, that ... I will leave its old name.

As towards evening I descend to the forest and the wood-cutting, I chance upon something unspeakably lovely. There, not far from my path, I see a bed of fresh green grass; its perfume is so inviting, that I think I will rest my weary limbs upon it for a little. And as I approach the grassy couch, I behold a child sleeping thereon. A flower-like, tender child wrapped in linen. I remain standing and hold my breath, that I may not cry out in astonishment and thus waken the little creature. I can scarcely imagine how it happens that this helpless, extremely young child should be in this isolated place at such an hour. Then it is explained. Up from the Thalmulde a load of grass comes swaying towards me, and under it Aga is panting. She is gathering fodder for her goats, and the child is her little daughter—my Waldlilie.

The woman now loads the grass on her back and the child on her arm, and together we proceed down the valley.

The same evening I entered her hut and drank goat's milk. Berthold came home late from his wood-cutting. The people lead a hard life; but they are of good courage, and the young Waldlilie is their happiness.

As Berthold sees the *Edelweiss* on my breast he says, with a warning gesture: "Take care, that is a dangerous weed!" As I fail to understand, he adds:

"*Edelweiss* nearly killed my father and *Edelweiss* poisons my love for my dead mother."

"How so, how so, Berthold?" I ask.

He then related the following story to me: On the other side of the Zahn, beyond the abyss, lived a young forester, who loved a herdsmaid. She was a proud lass and one day she said to the young man; "I love thee and wish to be thine, but one proof of thy true love thou must give to me. Thou art a nimble climber, wilt thou refuse, if I ask for an *Edelweiss* from the high cliff?"

"My life, an *Edelweiss* thou shalt have!" exclaimed the lad, but he forgot that the high cliff was called the Devil's Mountain, because it was impossible to climb, and that at its foot stood tablets, telling of root-diggers and chamois-hunters who had fallen there. And the herdsmaid did not realise that she was demanding a new tablet.

But it is very true that love drives one mad. The young forester started on the same day.

He climbs the lower cliff, over which the woodcutter is still obliged to walk with his axe; he ascends crags where the root-digger digs his spikenard; he swings himself over ravines and rocks where the chamois-hunter scarcely dares to venture. And finally he reaches that horrible place on the Devil's Mountain, with the yawning abyss below and the perpendicular rocks above.

Upon a neighbouring crag a chamois is standing, which spiritedly raises its head and looks mockingly across at the lad. It does not flee, up here the game becomes the hunter and man the helpless game. The chamois scrapes the ground with its fore-foot, and flaky bits fly into the air ... *Edelweiss*.

The lad well knows that he must shade his eyes to keep from becoming dizzy. He well knows that if he looks up the rocky wall above, it will be farewell to the light of heaven; and if his eye glances downwards it will gaze into his grave.

Not the chamois, but the ground upon which it stands, is the object of his quest to-day. He thrusts his alpenstock into the earth and turns and swings himself. A blue mist rises before his eyes. Sparks appear, circle, and fade away. He no longer sees aught but the smile of the herdswoman. Now he throws his stick away, now he jumps and makes long leaps. With a start the chamois springs wildly over his head and the young man sinks upon the white bed of *Edelweiss*.

On the second day after this, the head forester sent to ask the people if the lad had been seen. On the third day they saw the herdsmaid running in the woods with flowing hair. And on the evening of the same day the young forester walked through the valley leaning upon a staff.

How he came down from the Devil's Mountain, he told no one, perhaps he could not tell. He had *Edelweiss* with him—a bunch on his breast—a wreath on

his head; his hair had become snow-white—*Edelweiss*.

And the herdswoman, who in her arrogance had caused this to happen to the brown curly head, now loved and cherished the white locks until years later her own had become white as well.

Berthold told the story almost beautifully and finally he added that he was the child of the young forester and the herdswoman.

AUTUMN, 1818.

After wandering through other parts of the forest among the people both old and young, learning from the former, teaching the latter, I am always glad to return to the Winkel. Here in these last years, the people have been labouring with axe and hammer about the Winkel-warden's house and I have sometimes even lent a hand to the work myself. And now as I look around me I realise that we have a village.

Near the house a few huts have been erected originally intended for the builders but now being converted into permanent dwellings. Martin Grassteiger, a charcoal-burner, from Lautergräben, has recently bought two such little huts for a considerable sum, and to the astonishment of the people he paid at once for them in cash. From pitch-black coal, shining thalers are made, old Russ-Kath once said. And with gleaming thalers Grassteiger has paid for the huts and has become a man of influence.

The parsonage is approaching completion, likewise the church and next must come the schoolhouse;—*Mein Gott*, what a great joy I am experiencing in these forests!

Yesterday evening we locked the church for the first time. The architect, the carpenter from Holdenschlag, and the master wood-cutter were present, but I do not know how it came about that as we separated the key remained in my hand. I am hardly aware of it myself, yet the Baron has recently written that he was quite satisfied with my work as schoolmaster in the forest. But what am I accomplishing? I tell the children stories and show them many little things in the woods, which no person here has ever before noticed, but which fascinate these young people.

The windows in the church, on either side of the altar, do not quite satisfy me. The dazzling panes weary my eyes, and the wooded slopes and the wood-cutting stare in upon one. But, alas, the Sunday worshipper might be quite content with that, for then, instead of offering his poor soul humbly before the dear God, he would be constantly chopping wood, counting the felled trunks, the

sticks, the piles of brushwood, which on a week-day would not otherwise trouble him. Prayer would stream from the heart like a fountain of blood, if one's thoughts did not wander, but since they cannot always be controlled, we must guard the church like a fortress, so that the Sabbath may not leave it nor the work-day enter.

The two windows must be provided with paintings; so I have sent for red, yellow, blue, and green paper, and for a number of days I have been working as designer behind closed doors.

About the saint for the church the people are not yet united. But I have my ideas in regard to it. "My friends," I said, "we will not set up any saint. Let each one think of his own as he will. The saints are invisible in heaven, and ours could only be made from ordinary wood, which might simply arouse their anger."

"Perhaps you're right," answered a few of the people to this proposal, "and it would surely cost us less."

A wood-chopper from Karwasserschlag made the altar table. He is a poor man, blessed with many children; but for the work in the church he took no pay. "For a good reason I do it," said he; "I do it for my family, that none of its members may die, or any more be added to it."

The dear God cannot have rightly understood; scarcely is the altar table finished, when the wood-chopper's ninth boy comes into the world.

In order to show that it is an honour to the forest when such a poor man renders a public service we call the wood-chopper, as he is also one who does not know his name, Franz Ehrenwald (honour to the forest). The name will suffice for his nine boys and more.

Franz Ehrenwald has a clever, ambitious head. Having succeeded with the altar table, he now decides to change his business entirely to that of carpenter and cabinet-maker. He has already collected a number of tools, and furnished himself with two baskets full of planes, draw-knives, augers, saws, axes, chisels, and other things, which he does not in the least know how to handle, and which he will not use as long as he lives. But the tools are his pride; and his boys cause him no greater annoyance than when, in their own attempts at carpentry, they take possession of one of the augers or nick a knife. He is quite willing to have them learn to work correctly, the two baskets will indeed be their legacy some time.

I have drawn a number of plans for dwelling-houses, showing how they should be built, so that they may be durable, light, airy, easily heated, tasteful, and suited to the people's mode of life.

According to such plans, Franz Ehrenwald has already commenced a number of houses. One of them belongs to the master workman Paul in Lautergräben. The buildings are not expensive, since the owner of the forest gives the timber

free; besides, it is said that they are to remain exempt from taxes.

So Master Ehrenwald's business is beginning well; he is obliged to have assistants in addition to his sons. He has also made plans for his own house. As I was recently standing down by the brook fishing for trout, he suddenly came up to me, I have no idea from where, and whispered mysteriously into my ear: "Believe me, my new house will be devilish fine, devilish fine!" No one else was near us, and the fish in the Winkel were deaf. "But devilish fine," he whispered softly; "magnificent will be my house!" The man is really childish in his happiness; he is in his element; formerly it did not occur to anyone that fine houses could ever be built in the Winkel forests.

UPON THE ROAD TO THE CROSS, AUTUMN, 1818.

Above, in the wastes of the Felsenthal, stands a wooden cross. It is the same which is said to have grown from the seed of the little bird that flies into the valley every thousand years.

I consulted with the forester and a few of the older men, and I afterwards asked the old bearded story-teller Rüpel, who had no other important business, if he would go with me to Karwässer and into the Felsenthal to help bring down the moss-covered cross into the Winkel.

And so we start one bright autumn morning. We are both unspeakably happy. We thank the shady Winkel brook for its splashing and gurgling. We thank the green meadow for its verdure; we thank the dew, the birds, the deer, and the whole forest. We ascend the slippery floor of the woods, we clamber over mouldering trunks and mossy stones. The trees are old and wear long beards, and our story-teller stands on a brotherly footing with each one. Among the webs of moss we find beetles, ants, and lizards; we greet them all, and we invite airy, glittering butterflies to accompany us to the cross. The gay little world cares nothing about it.

My companion is a queer fellow. One has to know him to appreciate him. But among the woodspeople there are sometimes the strangest characters. Outside in the cultured and polished world, such men are called geniuses; here they are fools or imbeciles.

Rüpel is an imbecile of this sort. They also call him Story-teller, because he always has some kind of a tale to tell, and Rhyme-Rüpel, because—and that is the peculiarity—he cannot say ten words without rhyming. It is an absurd habit. On the way he told me the whole story of his life in rhyme. To be sure the rhymes stumble disgracefully, but who could avoid stumbling on such stony

forest ground? "A chorus boy was I, as none who read in Holdenschlag the record will deny. I pulled the rope and made the bells ring out, and as they rung, I sang, and keeping time, I mocked the clapper with my tongue. Into the chalice for the priest at service I poured wine, but the sight of water made him shrink, one drop, in fine, and he would haste away displeased. The water and the wine together, even as flesh and blood, our highest good combine, but too much water in the cup, Christ's rosy blood profanes, so I left the church and the blacksmith's trade I plied for honest gains. I heard the bellows' rhythmic sound, the merry anvil's ring; the hammer joined it, keeping time, the sparks flew, everything combined in perfect harmony, the whole world seemed to sing. But this my master did not please, so still in rhythmic tide, he seized me by the hair—and lo! through ringing, singing, side by side, the forge brought forth an endless rhyme, and though 't was born in peaceful eve, I still am keeping, keeping time. The forge produces only rhymes, there are no spades or horseshoes there, the blacksmith chased the rhymster out, to forest glades and open air. Within the woods I plucked the moss, I bounded with the deer, and pulled up tangled roots and herbs, the birds my voice could hear—light as a plume, and, joyous, gay, I singing passed the time away. A cousin forester of mine feared, with such idle life, I could but starve, so he transformed my pleasure into strife. A hunter, shouldering my first gun, the forest was aglee, I shot the game and hit the air, the deer he looked at me. Then after him in rhythm I ran, he paused, had I desired, I might have leaped upon his back, but ever I aspired to keep my life in rhythmic tune, and such uneven gait my progress would impede I knew, so I preferred to wait. This made my master sad, the hunter's craft for man like me, he looks upon as bad. Then for a while I wandered round, attempting more or less, with various gentlemen I lived, but never won success. Sometimes to leave their service, they kindly gave me word, sometimes they chased me out of doors, nor was a protest heard. And so it goes, behold me now, my story I have told, back to the woods I 've come again, my home is here—I 'm old. I sing for merry folks and kind, where happy words are said, at holy service, wedding-feasts, I sing for crumbs of bread. God bless it unto me! Though it be dry and black, if I am well and my tongue still moves, for nothing do I lack. And when at last Sir Death doth come, I 'll go, for ripe the time, and learn, when I have travelled home, the sweetest of all rhyme. And when the singing I do hear, and trumpet, sounding long, I 'll rise again—and that's the life of Rüpel and his song."

I should like to name the man the wild harpist or forest singer, or the sparrow of the New Testament; he sows not, he reaps not, and he does not beg, yet the good Winkel foresters nourish him, while without in the wide land singers starve.

After many hours we finally arrive in the Felsenthal. As we walk along the

jagged walls, where in the clefts fear slumbers, and as we see the cross towering in the midst of the mouldering trunks, my companion imagines that he sees a human figure disappearing among the stones. But with the exception of our two selves I notice no one.

Before the cross we pause. It towers upon the boulder as it towered years ago, as according to the legend of the people, it has stood since time immemorial. Storms have passed over it and have loosened the bark from the wood, though they have done it no further injury. But the warm sunny days have made fissures in the beam. The blue sky arches even over this remote corner of the world. The sinking sun shines aslant from behind the rocks, touches the bare, ancient runes, lighting up the right arm of the cross. A little brown worm crawls over the beam towards the sunny arm, but has scarcely reached it when the glow disappears. A beetle runs along the upright beam and hastens under the remaining bit of bark, perhaps to snatch away the pupa of an ant. To the one the gleaming cross is a paradise; to the other the battle-ground of his struggles and pleasures.

For our parish may it be the former!

It is well that no one knows who made and erected the cross, for the hands that have carved a symbol of divinity may never be folded in worship before it. From Mount Sinai, Moses brought the tables of the law down to the people as true image of God. The idol was not created until the Israelites formed one from their own ornaments and with their own hands.

As we climb upon the rock to remove the cross, Rüpel covers his face with both hands. "We are destroying the altar in Felsenkar," he cries excitedly. "Where shall the tree in the storm now pray, and the hunted deer that roams astray, on the forest's edge, with the cross away?"

My own hand trembles as we take up our burden. I place it so that the horizontal beam rests upon my neck like a yoke, Rüpel carrying the upright beam behind.

And so we go on amid the boulders and the ancient trees. As we come to the precipice, the shadows of evening are closing in.

The whole night we walk through the forest. In the ravines and narrow defiles the darkness is appalling, and our cross crashes against many an old tree-trunk. When our path leads over rising ground, the moonlight shimmers through the branches, revealing the white mosaics and hearts which lie upon the earth.

Many times we lay down our burden and wipe the sweat from our brows; we speak very little with one another. Only once Rüpel breaks the silence with the words: "The cross is heavy—hard, I 'll bear it till I die, and o'er my grave a tree shall rise, when they bury me by and by; and green it shall grow to greet the sun, nor o'er my bones decay, but heavenward ever soar, increasing day by day."

Once, while we are thus resting, a dark figure glides by us across the way. It

stretches out one hand, pointing to a broad stone, and then disappears. We both notice this apparition, but do not speak until on the meadow of the Karwässer we place the cross upright on the ground, its dark shadow peacefully resting upon the dewy grass, and then the old man utters these words: "He bore the cross unto the mount—our Lord—in bitter grief, and stopped to rest upon a stone, and, resting, found relief. A Jew stepped out and said: 'This stone belongs to me.' The Saviour staggered on in pain, the Jew must ever flee; he cannot die, but e'en to-day, there is no rest at hand—from age to age, in fiery shoes, he roams from land to land." After a little Rüpel continues: "Because we 've borne the cross to-night, we 've seen the Wandering Jew—he begged us rest upon the stone, 't were peace for him, but not for me and you."

At the coal-pit in upper Lautergräben, four men await us. Taking the cross, they lay it upon a bier of green branches and proceed with it towards the Winkel.

As we approach our valley the day is breaking. And a tone resounds and trembles through the air, which is not to be compared with song of man, lute, or any earthly music. It is many years since I have heard a sound like that, and I scarcely recognise it. We all stop and listen; it is the bell of our new church. While we were in the Felsenthal, the bells arrived and were hung.

As I hear them this morning, I cannot refrain from calling out: "My friends, now we shall never be alone! The parishes outside ring their bells at this hour; we have the same morning greeting as they, the same thoughts. We are no longer dumb, we have our united voice in the tower, which, in joy and in trouble, will proclaim what we feel but are unable to convey in words. And the eternal thought of God, which everywhere exists, but which is nowhere truly comprehended, and which no image or word can ever quite express, assumes form for our senses and becomes intelligible to our hearts only in the resounding circle of the bell. And so thou bringest to us, thou sweet music of bells, a comforting message from without and from within and from above!" The men gaze at me, wondering at my words and surprised that it is possible to say so much about the ringing of church bells, which one may hear every day over in Holdenschlag. Only the good Rüpel hastens away behind the alder-bushes so that, undisturbed by my hoarse voice he may listen to the pure tones.

Before the church many people are assembled to hear the bells and see the cross,—that cross, which sprang from the seed brought by the little bird, which once in every thousand years flies through the forest.

CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH, 1818.

It is Sunday—the first Sunday in the Winkel forests. The bells announced it at dawn, and the people have come from the Upper Winkel, from Miesenbach, from Lautergräben, from Karwässer, and from every hermitage and cave of the wide woods. To-day they are no longer wood-cutters and charcoal-burners as ordinarily, to-day for the first time they fuse into one, into one body, and are called the parish.

The church is finished. Above the altar towers the cross from the Felsenthal; it stands here as unpretentiously and almost as harmoniously as yonder in its loneliness. Among the people remarks are heard to the effect that this is the true cross of the Saviour. If they find comfort and exaltation in this thought, then it is as they say.

The canopy for the altar is a present from the Baron; the candlesticks and the credence were carved by Ehremvald. But who has given the two beautiful altar windows with the painted glass? I am asked. It is well that the windows are so high, otherwise it must be seen that only coloured paper is pasted over the panes. The two windows represent the Commandments of Moses, within a green crown of thorns mingled with red and white roses. Over the altar and the cross is a round window representing the eye of God, with the words: "I am the Lord thy God, who frees thee from bondage. Make thyself no graven image, to worship it."

The priest from Holdenschlag, who was here to perform the service of consecration, informed me that the above words were not suitable. "Thou shalt believe in one God!" it should say. I replied that the words here employed, I had read in a very old Bible.

The schoolmaster from Holdenschlag played the organ, which has a pure, sympathetic tone. "The gladness and woe, which the lips cannot tell, from music they flow, as rivulets run in the light of the sun," says the old forest singer.

In the same way that I have hitherto practised on the zither, I now practise on the organ. Each sweet sound sinks into the heart of the worshipper to lift his soul to the altar of God.

The priest from Holdenschlag preached a sermon on the significance of the consecration and the parish church, and on the life of man from the baptismal font to the grave. It then occurred to me that we had no graveyard. No one has thought of it or wishes to think of it, even though the font has been spoken of so often. I can no longer worship, and afterwards, during the mass while the veil of incense is rising, I cannot help wondering where we shall locate the burial-ground. After the high mass, when they all come out upon the square and approach the pedlars' booths to look at the treasures and works of art which the world is now beginning to send in to the new parish in the Winkel, I climb up the slope to the first gentle rise over which the dark high forest extends toward the

cliffs. There I lay myself upon the pine-needles with which the ground is strewn. I am nearly exhausted from the unusual excitement of recent events, and with the graveyard still on my mind, I try this couch to see how one would rest up here.

I hear the cries of the market people and the humming of the crowd below.

Many are dissatisfied with the church because no well-regulated inn stands near it. However, Brandy Hannes is there; he has set up a little table under the ash-trees and placed upon it some large bottles and small glasses. "What a dry consecration that would be with nothing to drink!" the people say, and the young men like to treat their sweethearts to a tiny glass as well. The devil is a pious fellow, he counterfeits each new church, but a tavern is always the result. The bar is his high altar, the gay hostess his priest, the tinkling of the glasses his bells and organ music, the purse of the host the offering, the playing-cards his prayer-book; and if a man is overcome with drunkenness and fighting, he is then his sacrificial lamb.

The tavern is the shadow of the church. And after the heat of the week, the workman is only too willing to rest within this shadow.

At the midday meal, which we ate together in the Winkel-warden's house, the master wood-cutter told us that Grassteiger wished permission granted to erect a tavern for dispensing brandy.

"We already have the tavern-keeper, but where is our priest?

"One would not care to come to this corner of the world, fastened in with boards," says the priest from Holdenschlag.

"That 's true, your highness!" interrupts the Winkel-warden's wife in a loud voice. "Indeed, I 'll say it a hundred times over, I should like to leave this wilderness myself, and the sooner the better. There 's nothing to do in this Winkel. What a good thing it would have been for us now, if we could have sold a little brandy of a Sunday, and I consider Grassteiger a lucky fellow!"

"Ha," laughs the priest, "taverns! It will yet become a lively place, this Winkel—Winkel—ah, the parish has no name!"

The name of the parish has already been decided upon. The settlement of this question would have been a welcome occasion for the people to assemble at the new tavern to christen the parish with *Schnapps*. But we baptise with water. Our water is called the Winkel; since time immemorial a bridge has led across this stream. The square about the Winkel-warden's house is briefly called *Am Steg* (by the bridge). Here stands the new church, and Winkelsteg shall it and the parish be called. Our master, Baron von Schrankenheim, has endorsed it.

As the bells were rung at the beginning of our church consecration, so they rang again at its close. On this day another very exciting occurrence has taken place. The gentlemen from Holdenschlag and the forester had left; it was quiet

once more in Winkelsteg. Twilight comes on early now and the mist lay over the high mountains. It was already dark when I went to my bells. To-day for the first time the little red lamp was burning before the altar, which from now on shall be called the everlasting light, and which shall never be extinguished as long as the house of God remains standing. It is the watch before the Lord.

As I entered the church I beheld a figure in the shadow by the credence. A man still knelt there praying. If one must live so long in the misery of the day, the Sunday which follows, when one is communing with the dear God or with one's self, is much too short. These were my thoughts, and I remained silent for a while, but finally advanced to remind the worshipper that the church was being closed. But as the figure became aware of my presence, it rose and sought to escape. After all it is no worshipper, I thought, seizing the fugitive and looking him in the face. It was a young lad.

"You rascal, you may well blush!" I cried.

"I am no rascal," he replied, "and you are blushing too; that comes from the lamp." Then I looked at him closely. Who should it prove to be but Lazarus, Adelheid's lost son.

Striking my hands together, I uttered a cry, as I stood there in the church.

"Boy, for God's sake tell me where thou hast been! We have hunted for thee, thy mother would even have overturned the Alps to find thee. And how dost thou come here to-day, Lazarus? Indeed this is beyond all belief!"

The boy stood there and to my questions he answered nothing—not one word.

Then I rang the bells. Lazarus was standing near me; his garment was composed of a woollen blanket, his hair fell over his shoulders, and his countenance was very pale. He watched me, for he had never seen bells rung before. And what a glad heart was mine! Now, with a clear ringing tongue, I could proclaim the event even as far as the mountains.

Finally my housekeeper came asking what was then the meaning of the ringing of the bells; a half dozen times she had already repeated the Ave Maria and still I did not stop.

I let go of the bell-rope and pointed to the boy. "See, he has finally come back. Did you not understand the ringing? Lazarus is found."

A woman is better than any bell to spread such news. Scarcely had the Winkel-warden's wife gone out screaming, when Lazarus was already surrounded by people. I hardly knew how to tell the story, and the lad murmured now and then, "Paulus," besides which he uttered not a word.

We asked him who Paulus might be? Instead of answering the question, he said with a peculiarly shy look: "He led me here to the cross." Then loudly and anxiously he called out, "Paulus!" His speech was awkward, his voice strange.

We led him into the house; the housekeeper placed something to eat before him. Sadly he gazed at the omelet, turned his head in all directions, and always back again to the food which he did not touch.

We all of us urged him to eat. He stretched his thin hands out from his rough mantle towards his plate but drew them back again. The boy trembled and began to sob. Later he asked for a piece of bread, which he swallowed with ravenous appetite. His black locks fell over his eyes and he did not brush them aside. Finally he dipped the bread into the water-jug and ate with increasing greed and drained the water to the last drop.

We stood around watching him, and we shook our wise heads, asking many questions; the lad heard nothing and stared at the pine-torch which gleamed on the wall, or out of the window into the darkness. The same night Grassteiger and I took the boy to his mother in the upper woods. A few times he sought to escape from us and to climb up the slopes of the dark forest. He was as dumb as a mole and as shy as a deer.

We reach Mathes's house, which is called the Black Hut. Profound peace reigns everywhere. The little stream is murmuring before the door; the branches of the pine-trees groan above the roof. In the night one listens to such things; in the daytime there is, if one might so express it, the continuous noise of the light, so these other sounds are seldom noticed.

Grassteiger holds the boy by the hand. I place myself at a little window and call in through the paper pane: "Adelheid, wake up a bit!"

Then follows a slight noise and a timorous request to know who is without.

"Andreas Erdmann from Winkelsteg is here and two others!" I say. "But do not be frightened. In the new church a miracle has been performed. The Lord has awakened Lazarus!"

In the hut a red gleam dances up and down the walls, like a feeble flash of lightning. The woman has blown a bit of wood into a blaze at the fire on the hearth.

She lights us in at the door, but as she sees the boy, the torch falls to the floor and is extinguished.

When I finally procure a light, the woman is leaning against the door-post and Lazarus is lying on his face. He is crying. Grassteiger lifts him to his feet and brushes the hair from his brow. Adelheid stands almost motionless in her worn night-dress; but in her breast there is a great commotion. Pressing both hands against her heart, she turns towards the wall struggling for breath, until I fear she is about to faint. At last she looks at the boy and says: "Art thou really here, Lazarus?" And to us: "Sit down on the bench yonder, I will make some soup directly!" And again to the boy: "Take off thy wet shoes, my lad!"

But he has no shoes; instead he wears nothing but soles made from the bark

of trees.

The woman goes to the bed, wakes the little girl, telling her to rise quickly for Lazarus has come. The child begins to weep.

The soup stands ready; the boy stares with his large eyes at the table and at his mother. Now at last her maternal love bursts forth: "My child, thou dost not know me! Yes, I have grown old, more than a hundred years! Where hast thou been this endless time! *Jesu Maria!*" Seizing the child, she presses him to her breast.

Lazarus gazes downwards; I notice how his lips quiver, but he does not weep and he utters not a word. He must have had some strange experience; his soul lies under a ban.

As he now removes his coarse blanket, to climb upon the freshly made bed, he takes out from under this rough mantle a handful of grey pebbles and with one movement strews them all over the floor. Hardly has he done this before he stoops and begins to collect them again. He counts them in his hand, then seeking in all the cracks and corners, he carefully picks up each pebble, counts them once more and hunts further, looking with great calmness a long time at the floor of the hut, until he finds the last one and has the full number in his hand. And now we see the lad smile for the first time. Then replacing the little stones in the pocket of his cloak he goes to bed, where he soon falls asleep.

We stand a long time by the hearth near the torch discussing the miraculous change which has taken place in this boy.

CHRISTMAS MONTH, 1818.

The boy Lazarus must have been in a very strict school. There is scarcely a trace left of his fiery temper; only, when he is excited, a quiver, short and quick as lightning, passes over him. He is also becoming cheerful and happy. Concerning his life during his year of absence he will tell but little. Paulus had forbidden him to repeat more than was necessary. Still occasionally he says something about it, but his words are vague and confused, almost like those of one talking in a dream. He tells of a stone hut, of a kind, grave man, of penances and of a crucifix.

His words become excited and definite only when he is placed in a position where he is obliged in any way to defend his own and the grave man's honour.

In the parish much is said about the *Wonder-boy*. Some believe that Lazarus has been apprenticed to a magician and will yet perform great things.

The old forest singer is of the opinion that the Messiah must soon appear; and that Lazarus is the forerunner, a new John the Baptist, who has nourished

himself in the wilderness with locusts and snails.

May God grant it! An active, warm-hearted priest would be the Messiah for Winkelsteg. But it is as the priest from Holdenschlag has said. No one will come into this remote forest valley.

I am the only one to take charge of the church, ring the bells, play the organ, sing, and read the prayers on Sunday. The christenings and funerals must go to Holdenschlag now as before.

FEBRUARY, 1819.

How does it concern me? It does not concern me in the least, yet I cannot cease thinking of what the forester has told about our young Baron.

The trouble began with a weakening of his constitution and was aggravated by loose and careless play, extravagance, drinking bouts, and sprees. Bah! I am a baron, a millionaire, a handsome young man, so, go ahead! Thus the forester explained it. Ah, but he cannot be so sure that the story is true.

Hermann is said to be in the capital, far from home and his sister. Yes, under such circumstances anything might indeed be possible. God protect thee, Hermann! It would be a reproach to me, the schoolmaster, if my first pupil should be a——

Away, ugly word! Hermann is a good young man. What does the forester know about it?

SPRING, 1819.

The region is changing rapidly. The mountains are becoming grey and bare; the forest is being burned over and there are smoking charcoal-pits in all the valleys.

With a great effort I have induced them to leave a little plot of ground up there on the knoll.

This is the last bit of the primeval forest, and in its shade the dead Winkelstegers shall rest.

The parsonage is finished. The parish has advertised for a priest. When this notice is read it will cause amusement: "That will be a fine sort of a curacy in this Winkelsteg: the communion wine is cider, the bread is made of oat-flour. Well, if the priest starves in Winkelsteg, it is his own fault, for he can at least eat the bark of trees! Even the wild-cats manage to keep alive on that."

Winkelsteg is terribly maligned; but it is not so bad here after all. For caring for the church and occasionally mounting the pulpit to read something for the edification of the people, I receive a plentiful supply of meal and game. They say it is a pity that I am not a priest.

From the owner of the forest money has been sent as a thank-offering to establish a service in the church at Winkelsteg and to celebrate mass. The daughter of the house is married.

Thank God that my body and my brain find such an abundance of occupation here. This Einspanig is the cause of much speculation.

More and more often he is seen in this place; bent like a living interrogation point, bent and crooked he goes about. But he still avoids the people; and yet when one has the courage to ask him a question he gives an answer that would suffice for three. He has also been seen in the church, in the farthermost corner, where the confessional is to stand.

Old Rüpel is quite sure that he is the Wandering Jew. That the Einspanig is so in part I can well believe. According to my theory, there are many million Wandering Jews.

SUMMER, 1819.

Now, all at once, we have a priest, and such a strange one, one as mysterious as our altar-piece the cross from the Felsenthal.

At noontide the last day of July, I entered the church to ring the bells. There, on the upper step of the altar, stood the Einspanig, reading mass.

I watched him for a while. Even the priest from Holdenschlag could have done it no better. But when he finished, solemnly descended the steps, and with downcast eyes walked towards the door, I then felt it my duty to intercept him and call him to account. "Sir," I said, "you enter this house of God, as anyone with an upright heart may do; but you ascend to the holiest place and do those things which are not fitting for everyone. I am the keeper of this church, and must ask you what your action means."

He stood there looking at me with great calmness.

"Good friend," he then replied, with a voice which rattled and grated as if rusty; "the question is short and easy, the answer long and difficult. But since

you have the right to demand it, it is my duty to give it. Name the day when you will go up to the three pines in the Wolfsgrube."

"For what purpose?" I asked.

"The answer is not to be found on the way. Under the pine-trees you may learn it."

"Very well," I said; "then next Saturday at three o'clock I will appear at the pines in the Wolfsgrube."

He bowed and walked away.

For the present I will not mention this incident to the people. He is a madman! would be the universal cry.

That may be. I shall go to the pines and perhaps learn something more definite about him. If I find in him a lunacy as singular and charming as in old Rüpel, I shall be satisfied. Even though nothing should come of the parsonage and schoolhouse in Winkelsteg, I shall be able at least to found a lunatic asylum.

And that would also be a good deed.

THE EINSPANIG'S ANSWER

MORNING.

Despair broods o'er the forest pines—death's cry, or terrors of the tomb—it pierces through the wall of trees, and all about is grief and gloom. Stretched on the ground at the forest's edge—a mossy, soft death-bed—behold the oldest of the trees, a giant fallen, dead. O see! the slayer madly flees o'er the heath, in wild despair; pursued by the avenging horde, he raves, with flying hair. Poor murderer! Ah! let him go—destruction he must spread—but new and brightest life shall spring from ashes of the dead.

It is not old Rüpel who infects me, causing me, even in the early morning, to write such lines as these, but rather an inward emotion, which fills me on hearing of the storm, and which finds its escape in words.

A storm has been raging during the night. We have not noticed it in Winkelsteg; we have heard only a loud crashing in the north. Within the graveyard not a twig has been injured.

EVENING.

But as I now go over the Lauterhöhe, having business in the new clearing on the other side, my path is barricaded by fallen trees, lying about in wild confusion, split and criss-crossed in every direction.

Many a desolate gap has been made in the forest, and when, in the afternoon, I approach the pines in the Wolfsgrube, I see that the middle tree has fallen. Of the three this is the largest and probably the oldest.

Upon the trunk, which has buried its branches deep in the earth, sits the Einspanig.

He has wrapped a woollen cloak about his shoulders, over which fall his black locks with their many silvery threads. The man sits with his knees crossed, resting his elbows upon them, while with his hands he supports his head with its pale face.

As I approach he rises.

"You have come after all," he says, "and I was almost prevented from coming. The storm barred my dwelling-place in the night; it hurled a rock against the entrance." And after a deep breath, which reminds me of the sighing of the wind, he pronounces these gloomy words: "Perhaps it would have been better if last night had buried me for all time in the rocky cave, than that I should give you the answer to-day. But since I give it, I would rather give it to you than to anyone. I have heard good things of you and am glad of the opportunity to know you better. My answer, young man, is a heavy burden; help me to bear it, just as you have laden yourself with the sorrows of the other dwellers in the forest. I well know that you understand filling the office of priest; so be my father confessor, and free me from a secret, concerning which I do not know if it be a black dove or a white raven. But what if you should be incapable of comprehending——"

He stops; in his glance is something like suspicion.

I answer that I wish to ask him about nothing excepting the cause of his action at the altar of our church.

"In that one question you ask me about everything!" he replies, laughing painfully; "you ask me about my life's history, about the torment of my soul, about my devil and about my God. Well, well, come here and sit down beside me on this fallen tree. No place could be better suited to my answer than a wreck like this. So, sit down with me on this ruin!"

A nervous dread almost overcomes me. It is so quiet among the pines, that one can hear the monotonous sighing of the branches; overhead clouds are flying from crag to crag.

I seat myself near the man, whose eyes and words express much more force than one would have imagined possible in the bent and weary Einspanig.

Yes, he is called *Einspanig*—single—because he has never been seen in the company of another. Now the *Zweispan*—the pair—sit upon the tree-trunk: the

question and the answer.

Turning upon me suddenly, the man begins his story: Do you know what it is to be a child of the nobility? Born in a palace, rocked in a golden cradle; the rough floor covered with soft rugs; the burning sunbeams and threatening clouds concealed from view by heavy silken curtains; for the slightest wish a troop of servants; the present full of peace and tenderly guarded happiness; the future full of pleasure and high dignities; this is the childhood of the nobility. Such a child was I, yet poorer than a beggar-boy. But at that time I did not know it, and not until I was twelve or fourteen years of age did the sorrowful question arise within me: Boy, where is thy mother?—My mother gave me life and the light of the sun—the life which she gave me was her own—she died at my birth.

My father I seldom saw; he was either hunting or travelling, or in the great city of Paris or at the Baths. The love in my heart designed for father and mother, I lavished upon my tutor, who was always with me as teacher and companion and who was deeply attached to me. He was a priest belonging to the Order of Jesus, a kindly, cheerful man, of great piety. I still remember how, when reading mass in our chapel, his countenance would often become glorified like that of Saint Francis Xavier in the picture above the altar; and how he confided to me that sometimes during the service he was filled with ecstasy, being continually inspired with the idea that I, his dear young friend, had been chosen for great and sacred things. By this I became aware of his extraordinary love for me.

And now the day arrives when I must lose him, my only friend. At this time an unjust law is made and the Order of Jesus is driven from the country. My good tutor must leave me, he weeps bitterly as he bids me farewell. But in a moment of inspiration he expresses the assurance that after trials overcome, we shall meet again.

And lo, the priestly word is, beyond all expectation, quickly fulfilled. After a few months my tutor is again in our house. He has left the Order of Jesus and now belongs to the "Fathers of the Faith," and thus he receives protection once more in our country.

I have grown to young manhood. I love my tutor as I would an elder brother. In secret I have often envied him his cheerful peace and the serene happiness of his soul. At the same time I begin to be tormented by a spirit of restlessness. It is too narrow for me within the house, nor is there space enough without; if it is quiet, I wish for noise, and if there is noise, I long for silence. My impulse is like that of a blind, hungry man who has lost his way on the heath.

Then my tutor says to me; "That, dear young friend, is the curse of the children of the world. It is the wild longing which, in spite of all the possessions and pleasures of the earth, can find nothing to satisfy it, unless one takes refuge in the fortress which Christ has founded upon earth, in God's Kingdom of the

Holy Church."

"If you are speaking to me, you well know that I am a Catholic," I answer.

"You are that only in your intellectual life"—he replies—"but it is your body, your heart that so thirsts to be satisfied. Your body, your heart you must lead into God's Kingdom on earth. My dear friend, each day I pray God that He may make you as happy as I am, that you may become a brother of Jesus Christ, like myself, for the healing of your soul and for the good of the holy Faith."

From that day when my priestly tutor spoke thus to me, the burden and the unrest grew to be doubly tormenting; but, on examining myself seriously, I perceived that it would be impossible for me to renounce the world.

"You have not understood me," said my tutor, "and I am astonished, that after the many years of instruction, you can so misunderstand your friend. Who tells you that you should renounce the joys of the world? The pleasures of the world are a gift of God; to enjoy them, not for their own sake, but for the glory of God, that is what brings us true satisfaction."

Thus a new life begins for me; my moral feeling, which has hitherto restrained me, now urges me on to satisfy all the cravings of my nature. In pleasure and enjoyment I shall serve the Lord—so there no longer exists any conflict in this life.

My friend smiles and does not interfere. The world is *beautiful* when one is young, and it is also *good* when one is rich. I make it very good for myself; and I drain its sweetest cups before drinking the sacred sacrificial-blood at the altar.

And after a few years I have emptied the cup of pleasure to its dregs. I am disgusted. I am sated, more than sated. And the world bores me.

Now, as I have become of age, my friend again speaks to me, and upon his advice I decide to devote my life to the service of God and the salvation of man. I enter the Order of the "Fathers of the Faith," and willingly I now take the oath of patience, chastity, and poverty. My entire property passes into the hands of the Order and I swear to absolute obedience.

And then—one day a young woman comes to me with whom I have had much to do in my former life. Now I dare not know her. She implores me not to abandon her with her child; she implores me for God's sake. But I am as poor as a beggar, and cannot apply to anyone else in her behalf; I have to live exclusively for my Order—and it enjoins obedience.

A few days later the girl is taken from a pond—a corpse. Bitterly I weep on the breast of my priestly friend, but he pushes me gently away, saying, "God has done all things well!"

After speaking thus, the man whom they called the Einspanig started as if in fear. A jay was flying over our heads.

He then quickly seized my hand and cried:

Even to-day I am married to her. That night she stood with the child before my bed. My Order has one beautiful gleaming star, but only one—that is the worship of Mary.

Many a youth, forced into the Order by external circumstances, thus renouncing everything, gazes eagerly and passionately up to the Virgin and the child Jesus. I always saw in it the betrayed girl.

I am consecrated as priest, and in exchange for my worldly title and honours receive simply the name of Paulus. But my rank enables me to skip one degree, and from novice I am advanced at once to holy orders.

I have sacrificed nature and property and my own will; only one thing do I still possess—the fatherland, and of that I am also deprived. Our Order is accused of being, by whatever name it may be called, nothing but masked Jesuitism, whose aims it serves in everything. And, as such, according to the existing law, it is deprived of a foothold in the land. My courage almost fails me at the thought of leaving my home and aged father; but here there is no rest for the soul. We are martyrs for the greater glory of God; and I am so much of an enthusiast that this thought sustains me, and I resolve to tear myself from everything.

We move to Italy. In Rome lives Pius the Seventh, the friend of our Order. I visit the graves of apostles and martyrs; I hope to lead a quiet, contemplative life in this blessed land. But prayer and edifying meditation are not always the affairs of the Society of Jesus. We are soon sent out to hard work in the Vineyard of the Lord. I scarcely know by what means, but, with the name of the Order changed, I find myself all at once transferred to the court of the king, in the western part of the country. It may be my ancestry or the good training which I have received, or perhaps even my scholarly attainments and a certain cleverness which by degrees I have acquired, or it may be my physique, which has been called fine—whether it is this or something else which advances me I do not know. I am soon appointed to an influential position in the State chancery. And my motto is: Be a secret wheel in the great workshop of the State and lead the people according to the will of God,—the will of God, that is indeed only known to His vicegerent at Rome.

Tact, gentleness, cheerfulness, and patience are the virtues which I have to adopt. Thus I become the friend at court, the desired companion, the counsellor much sought after; and when I read mass in the royal chapel, the whole world of aristocratic women are on their knees before the altar. Finally I become father confessor to the king.

About this time a commendatory written acknowledgment comes to me from Rome, charging me to persevere in my subtle policy—Subtle? Surely I do nothing secretly, but act as my head and heart dictate. It is a beautiful life for me. The world smiles, and her smiles please me. Easily I bear the oath of poverty, for

I dwell in the king's palace. I remain true to my oath of renunciation, for that which I enjoy I do not enjoy for myself but for the love of God. Even the image of Mary and the Child in the royal chapel, I am able once more to worship devoutly.

Then we enter upon stirring times. The revolution is raging in the world; in our land an insurrection is also spreading. More frequently than usual the king assembles the great and rich about him, and his monthly confession increases in importance. One day an order comes to me from Rome, fastened with a great seal. After reading and considering it, something rebels within me and asks aloud: How have I the right to force myself between the king and the people and to tear down the law from the altar of the fatherland? I then suddenly perceive what a power is given into my hands, and for the first time I understand why I have been urged to persevere in my subtle policy. My conscience warns me; at first I listen to its voice irresolutely, then I become bold and stifle it.

I might have taken the step and history would perhaps tell to-day of a second St. Bartholomew's Eve;—just at this time I receive news of my father's death. This arouses me. Filial love, sorrow, longing, homesickness, guilt, and remorse cut me to the heart and prey upon my mind. I write to Rome that I am incapable of that which they require of me.

What is the answer to this? It is an order to ask for my dismissal at court, as I must sail at once for India.

This commission crushes me completely. Instead of going to my fatherland, whither my heart leads me, I must travel to a distant part of the world. Why? For what purpose? Who asks? The first law of the Order is blind obedience!

Here the man made a pause in his story. He passed his fingers over his pale, thin cheeks down to the coal-black beard. His eyes, which had a restless, weary look, gazed sadly upwards. Above, the dark clouds were no longer flying, but had begun to settle upon the rocky cliffs. Deep silence and twilight reigned in the wooded ravine of the Wolfsgrube.

Finally the Einspanig continued: Four endless summers I lived with a few companions in hot India. The hardships were great, but still greater was the inward trouble, the awakened consciousness of an unsuccessful life. Only in the strict fulfilment of the priestly calling did I find some comfort, for now my service had become pure and unselfish. We no longer worked for the special advantage of an alliance, but for the great, common, and divine good of mankind, for civilisation. We preached to the Hindoos European customs, thought, and worship. We gave them the plough for their fields, upon the mountains we planted the cross. We preached the teachings of God, self-sacrifice and love. At first they regarded us with disfavour and suspicion, but finally they opened their hearts. As messengers from heaven they honoured us, and they had great respect for the people of the West, whose God had become man, in order to teach love by His

life and sacrifice by His death.

We had already organised a Christian parish in the Deccan, when troops of Westerners, English and French, arrived, made war upon a part of the land and subjugated the people. Now it was no longer a question of Christian love, but of rice and spices. And that put an end to the Hindoos' faith in our teachings. They would have murdered us. We fled to a French ship and returned to Europe.

At last I see my fatherland once more. The times have changed and our Order has a foothold and protection in the land. But the people have been greatly influenced by the trend of thought in recent years, and some have even threatened to leave the Catholic Church. Thus a new and difficult task begins for us. According to a systematic arrangement, we are sent to the towns and country places, and I receive the commission of missionary to the people. With three companions I wander from region to region, to hold the services in certain churches. Our priesthood is now compelled to reveal a new phase of character. With the great and powerful we have been suave and indulgent; among savage nations, apostles of civilisation, the strict but loving teachers of the Christian faith. But here, before the hardened, lazy, frivolous country folk, already influenced by the new ideas, we are obliged to appear as earnest remonstrators, as powerful judges of crime. With God, heaven, and love one accomplishes nothing amongst such people. The local curate has already exhausted himself with the effort. We preach a devil and everlasting punishment.

At first they come to the church full of arrogance and curiosity, to see the wandering priest; but when they hear our solemn words on life, death, and the judgment, they are soon prostrate; crushed and trembling before the black draped altar, they soon force their way to our confessional. They deny themselves bread until the setting of the sun, they put sand into their shoes and go on pilgrimages to distant churches and isolated chapels to pray for pardon.

Before each church we erect a high, bare cross. Christ has been crucified for you, now crucify yourselves in mortification and expiation.

I am filled with a new zeal which inspires me for my work. Like a flaming revelation from God it stands before my soul: Penance alone can save us.

However gay the life of the village we enter, the streets are soon silent and the fields and meadows deserted. God's house has become the refuge. The inhabitants show their readiness to exchange the earthly for the heavenly, for the fruits of the earth spoil through neglect, while the people pray in the churches.

And even the government perceives the necessity of a general conversion in the land. Should a man be found idling in the village square on a Sunday, he would be driven into the church at the point of the bayonet.

That was a time of rejoicing for our Order, which became powerful and established in the land to a degree never before known.

But for myself, I was not happy. When the hours of inspiration were over, I felt within me a void and a demon, constantly seeking to turn me away from my holy calling, which imposes the great task of taming rebellious human nature and leading it into the unity and universality of our church. I fought against this demon with work and prayer, for I considered it the devil. But I must have been mistaken.

"Night is now nearing, is it not?"

The man looked at me in an almost confused way, as if he expected me to answer his question.

"It cannot yet be night," I answered; "it is the dark mist hanging over the forest.'

"Yes, yes," continued the strange narrator, as if dreaming. "The night is nearing, young friend; you shall see, the dark night will come."

It was now so silent for a time, that one seemed to hear the mist weaving itself among the branches of the pines. Then the man proceeded with his story:

We were in a large village. Late one evening I am still sitting in the confessional. The church is empty at last and the lamp on the altar already casts its soft, rosy light on the walls. A single man remains standing near the confessional and seems undecided whether to approach or leave the church.

I beckon to him; he starts in terror, draws near and falls upon his knees before the window of the confessional. He crosses himself merely with a nervous movement of his right hand over his face. He does not repeat the customary prayer; in confused and hasty words he makes his confession. With tightly clasped and trembling hands, he stammers his request for pardon. My heart rises to my lips and I long to console the terrified one. But indignantly I banish my own feelings; for the law, in this case, requires unrelenting severity. The crime is no uncommon one. We will say, for example, the man has stolen property from his neighbour.

And as he kneels there, silent, I answer calmly that he may not be pardoned for the wrong until it is wholly redressed.

"Redress it, I cannot do that," he replies; "my neighbour has gone away; I do not know where to find him."

"Then wander over the world and seek him; better wear out your feet than allow your own precious soul to be everlastingly lost."

"But my wife, my young children!" he cries, passing his hand over his brow.

"Just so many souls you plunge with yourself into destruction, if you do not atone for the sin."

"For God's sake, yes, I will fast, I will pray! I will give alms, ten times more than that which I have stolen."

"All in vain. You must make atonement to the one whom you have de-

ceived; if he forgives, then God will strike it out."

"And I must go away now and seek, seek through the whole world?" he screams excitedly. "Did not the Lord die upon the cross that He might take upon Himself the sins of the world? Murder and death are pardoned, and my error may not be forgiven for the sake of Christ's blood?"

"Do not find fault with a just God in heaven!" I cry, indignant that one should rebel against the Highest. "Each drop of Christ's red blood becomes a flaming tongue of hell-fire to the criminal. Heaven is thrice as high, since it has been bought by the sacrifice on the cross; and hell is nine times as deep, since the men drove three nails through Christ's hands and feet."

At these words of mine I hear a groan, a curse, and the echo of hastily retreating footsteps. I am now alone in the dark church.

I leave the confessional, kneel before the high, towering altar and pray long for the hardened one. And as I gaze up at the image of the Queen of Confessors, she seems to step suddenly out of the niche—she and the Child—into the ruddy glow. I hasten toward the door, that I may reach the refreshing night air outside. But lo, the entrance is locked!

I had not noticed the hour of closing. The church is some distance from the town; close by is the charnel-house, but no one there will hear, call I ever so loudly.

So I am locked in the gloomy building where I have so often preached a personal devil and the everlasting pains of hell. Yonder under the holy canopy the eternal God is throned in reality and truth; now am I alone with Him; now shall I give account to Him, how, as His substitute, I have taught His holy doctrines among the people.

I dare not gaze upon the altar; the terrifying image stands there as if suspended in the air; the red light sways towards me. Hastening on tiptoe from one corner to the other, I finally steal into the confessional again and draw the curtain.

And there I sit in the greatest excitement. Now, now I fancy the curtain is moving and a cold hand is reaching in after my faithless heart. But all is quiet, only the clock on the tower from time to time strikes the quarter-hour—and before the high window, through which the moon is now shining, a bat occasionally flies. I lean back against the wall and close my eyes; sleep does not come to me,—but thoughts.

Yes, usually they kneel outside there at the confessional, the poor sinners, and search their consciences; and to-day the confessor searches his own. I look back over my whole life. How agitated it has been, how poor and lonely I myself have been! I left my father, even as he left me; my tutor was estranged from me when he thrust me out among the snares of the world; and in the pond a heart

ceased to beat. I no longer possess a single friend in the wide, wide world. Like a toy I have been tossed over land and sea. What has been the meaning of my empty deeds? For what have I been striving? Have I done well? I am a priest; have I honoured God with my heart? I am a mediator; have I reconciled God with man and man with himself? When I stand before God's judgment seat, when the scales are weighed down with my evil deeds, is there one soul who will cry, "He has saved me"?

And while this struggle is going on within me, I suddenly hear a pitiful groan before the window of the confessional, as if that man were still kneeling there with his sin. I start, but I am deceived; all is quiet and the bright moonlight is streaming through the window.

And so my years—the golden years—have run to waste in the sand. Good friend, such a misfortune you could never comprehend. At last I begin to weep painfully.

In my influential position I surely could have loved and served mankind. But I was led astray; and my only friend was not my friend. How many years will still be given to me to misuse? O God, lead me away from Thy altar, where I have been an unworthy servant; lead me forth from Thy temple, wherein I have taken Thy name in vain. And lead me away from men, to whom I have so wickedly misinterpreted Thee. Lead me to a still, lonely place where I can work out my own salvation!

This longing is like dew to my spirit; I become calmer and close my eyes.

But now I suddenly hear a voice without, calling: "Pater Paulus!" and a second voice: "What if something should have happened to him!" "Pater Paulus!" it calls again. Released at last!—I think; and I am about to rise that I may answer. At the same moment I hear a terrible screaming: "*Jesu Maria!* there he is; he is hanging there by a rope!"

I utter one cry, which terrifies me as it resounds through the nave of the church. Then, without, I hear another wail and the people hastily making their escape. The cry in the church, my call for help, has frightened them. I am alone and so agitated that I almost cease to breathe. It strikes midnight. What? Outside someone is hanging by a rope. That is what they called out. Were they not seeking me and then did they not cry: "There he is; he is hanging there by a rope"?

I fall upon my face,—Holy God, preserve me from suicide!

Suddenly a foreboding arises within me. What if it should be the man to whom I so lately refused the comfort of absolution, whose despairing soul, struggling for forgiveness, I repulsed? What if he should have gone away and taken his life? Who is his murderer, O God in heaven!—In that hour, my good friend, I endured torments.—In my feverish condition I hear the rattling of dead

men's bones; I see the suicide swinging by the churchyard wall, and how he stares at me with his fixed eyes! From the depths of the pond rises a woman with her child, and her damp locks become serpents which wind themselves about my limbs. And all the lost souls appear to whom I have preached damnation. In the midst stands the high cross, and I hear a voice calling: "Thou hast crucified the Saviour in the hearts of men; thou hast burdened them with a heavy cross—the cross without a Saviour, thou murderer of God."

With a sigh the man sank upon the branch of the tree. I was scarcely able to raise him again. I picked fern leaves wet with mist and laid them upon his burning forehead.

"Tell me the rest another time," I said, "and to-day we will return to our homes; night is now really approaching."

He straightened himself, and with the edge of his mantle he wiped his eyes.

"To-day I am at peace," he said, calmly, "but whenever I think of that hour, my blood is hot like the flames of hell. There, I feel better now." After a little he continued:

When I opened my eyes again, the glow of dawn was shining in at the church windows. Like a gentle smile it rested upon the altar and the image of the Mother of God. I arose and made a vow, whereupon a feeling awoke within me, that everything, everything must end well.

Soon afterwards the keys rattled in the church door; the schoolmaster entered with one of the Brothers of the Order, and others. They uttered a cry of joy when they saw me, and, taking me by the hand, they led me out. They related how they had sought for me, how they had heard a scream in the church, but in their confusion had imagined it to be the voice of a spirit. They led me away from the graveyard, for yonder the suicide was hanging from an iron cross.

Afterwards I locked myself in my room, where I remained the whole day. I was to have preached a sermon that morning on repentance and the mercy of God. One of my companions did it for me. There was a report among the people that I had purposely remained all night in the church and had received revelations, for I was considered the most pious of the four priests.

Late in the evening, when all were asleep, I wrote these words on a sheet of paper: "Farewell, my Brothers. Do not search for me. My new mission is self-redemption." And then I took what was mine, and left the house and village, and walked the entire night.

My wandering was without plan. I gave myself up to chance. I had nothing to lose. Endeavouring to escape from the more crowded regions, I turned in the direction of the mountains.

As morning approached I found myself among wooded hills; a brook gurgled towards me. I drank from the water and rested upon a stone. I observed

a woodsman coming down the path, who doffed his hat to me in honour of my priestly dress. I arose and asked him to show me the way, for I wished to go far in among the mountains, to the dwelling-place of the very last man.

"The very last man, that must indeed be the charcoal-burner, Russ-Bartelmei," he answered.

"Then show me the way to Russ-Bartelmei and put on your hat."

"Have you business with the charcoal-burner?" he asked me more boldly, when we were already on our way. "The charcoal-burner is most likely black, both body and soul; you can never wash him white. But then he 's no worse than others. What do you want with him?"

I believe I said something to my questioner about a distant relationship. He then stopped and looked at me:

"Relationship! I should be very glad! For I 'm Russ-Bartelmei myself."

I walked with the man over hills and through ravines. By noon we had reached his house.

I remained three days with his family. Black they were, indeed. Among the people of the Orient black is the colour of virtue and of departed spirits; and, on the contrary, they paint the devil white. With the idea of telling him something agreeable, I said this to the charcoal-burner. But he gazed at me in a peculiar way from under the brim of his hat and replied, "Then the priest would be a devil in the church and an angel on the street."

On the third day, after Bartelmei and I had discussed many things and both of us had related parts of our life history (his was coal-black and mine blacker yet), I asked him if he would be my friend. It was my intention to live in the wilderness and to work for my soul. My earnest desire was to strive to do good in solitude, since among men, even with the best intentions, one does not always advance the cause of righteousness. As a friend, he was, for a remuneration, to provide me with a few necessary articles, but for the rest to keep my secret.

The man considered a long time; then he said: "So you wish to become a hermit? And I am to be the raven that brings you the bread from heaven?"

I explained that I would seek for my own bread, but one needed also clothing and other little things; however, I would not fail to repay him from my small possessions.

He was ready to serve me. Only I had to promise to do a favour for him sometime, and perhaps a very peculiar one. He had his desires as well.

I left the charcoal-burner's house and Bartelmei led me still farther into the wilderness. I came up as far as the Felsenthal; here no man dwelt, here was only the primeval forest and the solid walls of rock. And here I was content; in a hidden cave, by which flows a gurgling stream, I took up my abode. In the Felsenthal stood a wooden cross, which a lost woodsman may have erected in his

day. This was my altar of reconciliation. A cross without a Saviour, like the one I had formerly held up before the needy souls, had finally come to be my own.

And so, young friend, I have lived in solitude, have worked with root-diggers and pitch-makers. And thus year after year has passed. I will say nothing of renunciation; harder for me has been the feeling of abandonment, and the longing for human society has often tormented me unspeakably. Only the thought that renunciation is my expiation has comforted me. I have often gone out into the valleys, where people live in pleasant companionship. I have refreshed myself with the knowledge of their peace of conscience and of their contentment, and I have then returned to my cave in the ever-lonely Felsenthal and to the silent cross upon the stony ground.

But the struggle within me, instead of growing less, has become greater, and sometimes the thought comes to me: What kind of a life is this, led in unprofitable idleness, in which one is of use to no man, and which consumes itself? Can that be the will of God?

To return to the Order would be impossible. To live in the open world as an apostate priest would be too great a reproach to the holy calling itself. What else remains to me but to work with all my power for the good of this little people in the forest? But I know not where to begin. With dry sermons one does not always establish truth. I have called on the devil so long, that he comes of himself. Teach God and Christian love? I had poor success at that in India. So I have no longer any inclination to serve mankind with words.

When I see children I approach them that I may show them a friendliness; but they are afraid of me. I am avoided, and the sight of me nowhere causes pleasure, not even in Bartelmei's hut. Besides, I am so strange, so weird; at last I begin to fear myself. An exile I live in the Felsenthal, thirsting to do good deeds. Then once more I wander out towards the streams.

I have taken the load of wood from the back of the old and feeble woman, to carry it for her into her hut. I have led the flocks away from the dangerous cliffs for the shepherd. And in winter, when there is no man far or near, I have fed the birds and deer with dried seeds and wild fruit. I have wept over this, my pitiable sphere of activity, and before the cross I have prayed,—"Lord, forgive! grant that I may yet perform one good deed!"

And so, with the intention of achieving something worthy, I took the boy from the Upper Winkel to live with me. I had heard that he had inherited his father's fiery temper, and I reflected that, since this had led Mathes to his ruin, Lazarus would probably meet with the same fate, if the evil could not be averted by discipline correspondingly severe. I also reflected that a weak, tender-hearted woman would never be fitted to give the imperilled boy the strict guidance that was necessary. One day in the woods I met the lad by the grave of his father. He

was weeping bitterly and did not flee from me like the other children. When I asked the cause of his trouble he replied that he had thrown a stone at his mother and now he wished to die.

I tried to comfort him; I also had once thrown a stone at mankind, but I had now come into the wilderness to do penance and to make of myself a better man, and I asked him if he would like to do the same. The boy looked beseechingly at me and said—Yes.

So I took him with me up to the Felsenthal and into my hut. I kept him with me over a year, endeavouring to hold him to strict rules, that he might overcome his fiery temper. Together we daily performed our devotions before the cross. I told him the story of the Crucified One; with all the warmth of my soul I depicted the love, patience, and gentleness of the Saviour, and I noticed how the heart of the boy was touched by it all. He is indeed a good lad.

We worked together, gathered wild fruits, herbs, and mushrooms for our nourishment. We did not shoot the deer, as Lazarus once proposed. We wove chairs and mats for our rocky dwelling and for the brandy-distiller, who knows how to dispose of them. We collected a pile of fire-wood before our entrance. If I went to Lautergräben or out into the Winkel forests, the boy willingly remained in the stone hut and worked alone. He liked to tell me about his little sister, but never a word of his mother, although he spoke of her often enough in his dreams. I noticed how his conscience tormented him for the deed which he had done.

That the boy might practise patience and gentleness, I discovered a means, which, curious and absurd as it may seem, still yielded valuable results. I made a rosary from grey beads, and every evening Lazarus was obliged to pray through the whole chaplet before he went to bed. He did not tell them with his lips, however, but with his fingers and eyes. He first stripped off all the beads from the string, so that they rolled away on the floor; and then his task was carefully to search for and pick up the pebbles which were scattered in all the corners. At first, his temper would indeed overcome him; but as he thereby hindered rather than hastened his work, he gradually accomplished it with more and more self-control, even though the search often lasted for many hours, until he found the last bead. And finally he acquired a calmness and self-mastery which were admirable. "Child," I once said, "that is the most beautiful prayer that thou canst make to show thy love for God and for thy mother, and thereby dost thou save thy father." Then the boy looked at me with ecstasy in his great eyes.

We did not talk much with one another, but so much the more important and well considered was each word spoken. He seemed to love me, he tried to fulfil my every wish. According to my direction he called me Brother Paulus.

The manner in which I had taken and instructed the boy was indeed daring; but I hope that he has been happily led into a better way. O my friend, how often

have I said to myself: "Of all the spiritual gifts which are at the disposal of a priest, if I succeed in bestowing that of self-control upon one being only, then am I saved."

In the course of the year I often looked after the mother of the boy; and no matter how much I had become accustomed to him, I still longed for the day when I might return the lost child to the poor woman like a piece of pure gold after its refining.

One evening we found the cross no longer on the rock. It had been our altar and the symbol of resignation and self-mastery. And now the mouldy hole from which it had soared aloft stared us in the face.

Who has taken this, my one comfort, away from me? Is it to be used for charcoal or for a hearth-fire in the cabin? Does the great forest then no longer suffice, that they must lay a hand on the cross? What has it done to them? Or is someone carving a Saviour for it? Or has some sick or dying man sent for it that he might pray before it?

So I asked and wondered about it. Later in the evening I was still hastening through the stony valley, thinking that my symbol of God must surely be lying somewhere. I ran down into the woods, to the footpath, and there I saw two men carrying the cross on their shoulders.

Then it occurred to me that it was to go to the new church *Am Steg*; the foresters wished to place it on the altar. They honour it, as I do; they also wish to learn of resignation and sacrifice; they are also beings who, like myself, are striving and struggling for the right. Then a joy was awakened within me and my heart was full almost to bursting. I longed to embrace you,—you and the whole parish. For, indeed, I belonged to you—a child of the parish.

And now there was no longer any time for idle thoughts, the hermit continued. Soon after that I sent Lazarus away from this Felsenthal, out to the new church, that he might pray before the cross. I gave him my heartfelt blessing, for I well knew that he would not return to me in my rocky abode.

I lived on alone, more abandoned than ever, but calmer, and my heart was lightened as though the ban were about to be removed. More and more often I went out to the new church where my cross stood. And the people avoided me no longer; they gave me alms that I might pray to God for the healing of their souls. Thereby I perceived with shame that they considered me better than themselves.

I went again to Bartelmei's house, where they know more about me than in the other huts. The charcoal-burner's mother, Kath, who has been ill now for years, begged me for God's sake to read a mass for her, that she might die a happy death. This I promised the old woman gladly, and thus I came to read mass before my cross in the church *Am Steg*.

With this the man ended his story.

We were both silent for a while. Finally I said: "As things sometimes happen strangely in this life, that may not have been your last mass in our church."

"I have given you the answer that was due you," replied the Einspanig. "What the result of it for you, for me may be, cannot be discussed to-day."

With these words he arose from the tree-trunk. And as he stood upright before me, he seemed taller and younger than usual. He drew a long breath, and suddenly seized my hands eagerly, and with a trembling voice cried, "I thank you, I thank you."

He then hastily took his departure.

He walked up the slope towards the Felsenthal; I, down to Lautergräben towards Winkelsteg.

I often stumbled against stones and fallen trees. A dark misty night enveloped the forests.

So my misgivings concerning the hermit were happily dispelled.

When a man renounces the world, let it be to him what it may, and lives for years in the wilderness, enduring unspeakable privations, and with an iron will subdues the longings of his heart—he is supremely in earnest. For what other reason would he have come into the forests, long before even a stone had been laid for the church *Am Steg*; for what other reason would he have caused himself to be avoided by the people or have sought to satisfy in solitude his impulse to do good? And before me, a poor man, he has torn away the very fibres of his heart, that I might look into the depths of his innermost soul, as it stands there in its sin.

I have often thought to myself, the first priest in Winkelsteg should not be a righteous, but a penitent man. Let him not be one who has never fallen, but one who has risen from his fall. In the depths and darkness of the forests he must be able to stand and find his way, that he may lead these people to the shining heights.

SUMMER, 1819.

How strange! How absurd! I have laughed and cried the whole day.

It can be nothing but a humorous report, but it is told seriously everywhere. And combined with what we have already heard, it may indeed be possible.

The wicked man is said to have gambled us all away,—the whole Winkel forest, with every stick and stone, every man and mouse, together with Andreas

Erdmann,—gambled us away at the green table in one single night. And he lost us to a Jew.

A FEW DAYS LATER.

Be that as it may, we will proceed with our daily work. To-day I was in the Miesenbach woods to look at the trees which are destined for the school-building.

As I passed by the black hut, the Einspanig came out. He had been to visit Lazarus, but the boy was not at home. He is now goatherd with the wood-cutters in the Upper Winkel. Adelheid reproached the Einspanig bitterly at first; but then she hid her face in her apron and sobbing, said: "I know it well, you deserve the Kingdom of Heaven for what you have done for my child!"

The Einspanig and I walked together toward Winkelsteg. The people whom we met were laughing over the story that we had been gambled away. Old Rüpel said: "In honour of Moses my beard I 'll retain, and as long as I live, I 'll not cut it again."

"Yes, yes," I said to my companion. "So now we are Jewish, and we shall have a Polish Rabbi in our temple. Our young master, Judas Schrankenheim, has betrayed us so neatly!"

The Einspanig stopped and stared at me in astonishment, finally saying: "I did not think you so stupid, Erdmann." And after a little he added: "A respectable man should not believe such foolish reports. How then could young Schrankenheim have gambled us away? He is not yet master of his father's possessions, and has not even reached his majority."

I looked at him quickly.

My heart was freed from a great burden; but the next moment I was troubled. Only yesterday, within the hearing of everyone, I had called the young Baron a wicked man.

But as I am a man of honour I will make amends. Of course he may be a wild fellow; still thou art honest and kind-hearted, Hermann, and the people must know it. For three Sundays in succession I will proclaim it from the chancel: "Our young future master, Hermann von Schrankenheim, is honest and good. May God preserve him!" And until death will I beg his pardon for my slanderous words.

The Einspanig entered my house with me. One of my windows opens towards the church and the parsonage. Sitting down by it, we fell into a conversation which lasted two hours.

We are now able, when the weather is fine, to measure the time by the hour;

Franz Ehrenwald has painted a sun-dial on the southern side of the tower.

When the Einspanig had gone my housekeeper cried: "*Wie närrisch*, now the *Kukuk* has brought *him* into the house again!"

"The *Kukuk*?" I answered gaily. "Yes, indeed, this man is himself like the cuckoo; he has no nest and must restlessly flutter from tree to tree, is avoided everywhere, and is at home nowhere. But all the same we are glad to see him in the spring, for he brings it with him; he is a soothsayer who can count our years for us."

"Yes," screamed the woman, "and tell us all sorts of extravagant tales, as he did me once; and if for him perhaps the world is not fastened in with boards, his own head surely is. Get away with your Einspanig!"

If the good Winkel-warden's wife could only have known what kind of a letter I wrote to the Baron an hour later!

MAY, 1820.

Here in the woods are day and night, winter and summer, peace and suffering, care and sometimes a little comfort in resting from our toil. And so it drags along. Our Chariot of Time has lost its fourth wheel, and it often goes badly and unevenly, but it goes.

Outside, they say, they are trying to overturn the world again. There are rumours of war. No one troubles himself any longer about us Winkelstegers. But I am pleased with one thing. Many of our young men wish to enlist and become soldiers. That is a sign of their awakened consciousness that they have a home and a fatherland which they must defend. It is the first good fruit of the young parish.

For a time the destruction of the forest has ceased; the foundries outside are closed. Many are now beginning to remove the stumps from the cleared land and to convert it into fields for planting. The wood-cutters and charcoal-burners are becoming tillers of the soil. That is right; the wood-cutter disappears, but the peasant arises in his place.

In reply to an appeal from me, a letter has come from the Baron. Now is no time for churches and priests; we must help ourselves.

That is very wise advice. But the people will no longer go to church. "When there is no mass and no sermon," they say, "one can pray for one's self under the green trees." However, they do not remain under the green trees, but in the tavern. The flock is scattered when there is no shepherd.

The forester is also away, for he has other regions to look after. So I

am alone with my Winkelstegers, as Moses was alone with the Israelites in the wilderness.

The commandments have been proclaimed, but the people are again working at the golden calf. And manna falls no longer from heaven.

PENTECOST, 1820.

To-day the hermit from the Felsenthal stood before the altar of our church and read mass.

The church vestments and sacred utensils we had from Holdenschlag, as they were lying there in the vestry unused. The mice had eaten holes in the robe, but the spiders had woven them together again.

I played the organ. The church is not so large but that from the choir one can see if tears are standing in the eyes of the priest at the altar.

The people prayed little and whispered, much. This Einspanig,—he must indeed be a second St. Jerome.

After the service the forest singer said these words to me: "Have you seen the Wandering Jew? For the suffering Christ he has borne to-day the heavy cross to Golgotha's heights. Hosanna, he thus casts his sins away!"

I repeated the words to the hermit, adding: "May they make you happy; the man is filled with the Holy Ghost!"

THE FEAST OF ALL SOULS, 1820.

I have urged the people to choose a chief officer from among themselves, that there may be someone to issue orders, settle disputes, and keep the parish united.

They have chosen Martin Grassteiger, and he is now called Judge.

At this same meeting the new Judge introduced the future schoolmaster of the Winkelsteg parish, who had been acknowledged as such by the master of the forest.

I then am this schoolmaster. The people declare that I might have known it for a long time, but Grassteiger says that everything must be done according to legal form.

A few days after the above occurrence the Judge ordered me to call a parish meeting to elect a priest. Everyone laughed over this. "Shall we choose him from among the pitch-makers and charcoal-burners? But there is n't one that would

be fit for it. There is just one man who is learned enough for us Winklers, but our men have such foolish notions, that they would be scandalised at the idea of a priest being his own housekeeper."

So they make their jokes, knowing very well for whom they are meant.

And they have chosen him, too.

We must help ourselves, the owner of the forest has said; and that we have done.

The hermit from the Felsenthal is the priest of Winkelsteg.

THE FEAST OF ST. MARTIN, 1820.

Russ-Kath is dead. She was ninety years old. Her last wish was that after her death strong, nailed shoes should be put on her feet; she would be obliged to traverse the road back to earth many times, to see how her children and grandchildren were faring. And the road was full of sharp thorns.

Russ-Kath is the first one who will rest in our new forest burying-ground.

Two men brought her over from Lautergräben on a bier consisting of two poles. The white pine-board coffin, still fragrant with resin, was fastened upon the bier with strips of alder-boughs. Russ-Bartelmei and his brother-in-law, Paul Holzer, accompanied by a little boy, walked behind the bearers. They prayed aloud, at the same time looking out for the roots of the trees which lay across their pathway. The bearers were also obliged to walk cautiously, for the ground was already slippery with the late autumn hoar-frost.

There is a story that years ago as some men were carrying a shepherd to the Holdenschlag cemetery, one of the bearers stumbled on the narrow path and the coffin rolled over the precipice, plunging into the abyss, so that no splinter of it was ever seen again. This was exceedingly trying for the people, they say, for the grave-digger had to be paid all the same.

We Winkelstegers have no grave-digger. We could not maintain one, and besides no one dies here until his last groschen is spent. So a few wood-cutters are obliged to come and do this work. They charge nothing for it. They are glad if they can crawl out of the grave again, well and hearty.

During the mass for the dead the coffin stood quite alone upon the hard ground before the church. A little bird flew hither, hopped upon the coffin-lid and pecked and pecked and then fluttered away again.

When Rüpel saw it he was almost sure that it was the bird that flies into

the forest once in every thousand years.

After the mass we carried Russ-Kath up to the grave which had been prepared for her. The family stood about gazing fixedly into it.

When the burial service was over, the priest spoke briefly. The words which impressed me the most were these: "By the death of our dear ones we gain fortitude to bear the adversities of this life, and a calm, perhaps even a joyous, anticipation of our own death. Each hour is one step towards our meeting again; and until that gate of reunion is opened for us, our departed ones live on in the sacred peace of our hearts."

He is well able to expound it. Indeed, we all feel it also, but do not know the words by which to express it. He has not forgotten his vocation, although he has lived for years up in the Felsenthal.

But now another man appears. Rüpel comes quietly forward, and the people make way for him: "Let us see what Rüpel knows to-day."

And as the forest singer stands upon the mound, supporting himself by the handle of the spade, so as not to make a misstep upon the loose earth, and as he looks down upon the coffin, he begins to speak: "Born ninety years ago; on her own feet o'er vales and mountains she has walked to meet those who in sorrow and in troublous ways might need her succour; for in all her days a horse she never rode, and thus outwore a hundred pair of shoes. And yet a hundred more in earning children's bread she wore, and other hundreds still, alas, she rent upon the paths of pain o'er which she went. But ne'er for dancing and like mirth, forsooth, was used a single pair, e'en in her youth. Then, when her whole long, weary life was o'er, she put her last shoes on her feet once more, and went away into eternal rest. The holy angels, at the Lord's behest, will lead her soul through purgatory straight, then on and up unto the heavenly gate. Beneath the ground shall the poor body rest within its wooden coffin, calm and blest. Sleep well, Kathrin, within thy cradle new; soon by thy side shall we be sleeping, too. Till to His heavenly hosts we hear God's call, and we may enter heaven, soul, body, all."

"Rüpel would be the right priest for the Winkelstegers!" said the man whom they have called the Einspanig.

Yes, if he had not grown up among them!

When we, the priest and I, had thrown a few clods of earth upon the coffin, Russ-Bartelmei, very sad, came to us and asked what then had his mother done, that we should fling dirt after her. We then explained to him that it signified a last act of love, and that the earth was the only offering which one could bestow upon the dead.

Thereupon Bartelmei began to shovel in the earth until not a trace of the white coffin could be seen, and the people took the spade from him to fill the

grave.

After the funeral they retired to Grassteiger's inn, where they refreshed themselves with brandy, just as the ancients offered libations after laying their dead to rest.

God counts His people, even in Winkelsteg, and not one escapes Him.

The little grave in the burying-ground was scarcely closed when the baptismal font in the church was opened. The first death and the first baptism in one day—in one family.

Over the same forest path where a few hours before the coffin was carried, two women brought a newly born babe from Lautergräben.

The child is a granddaughter of Russ-Kath and belongs to Anna Maria.

Someone knocks at the church door, requesting baptism, and the name of the child is to be Katharina. Her grandmother's name shall not be denied her, although we have the choice of all the saints in heaven.

PART THIRD

WINTER, 1830.

During all the sixteen years since I have been in the Winkel forests, I have seen no such snow as we have this winter. For days not a single child has come to school. The windows of my room resemble targets. Should this state of things last much longer, we shall all be snowed in together. From here to the parsonage a path is shoveled twice a day, passing by Grassteiger's house, where we, the priest and I, take our midday meal. Each prepares his own breakfast at home. In the evening we always meet either at the parsonage or at the schoolhouse. I wonder how the people are faring over at Karwässer and Graben! There the snow-storms are much more furious than in the Winkel. Just now many poor souls are lying sick in their huts, and it is impossible to keep the paths open, so that the people may help one another. And crossing the Lauterhöhe is quite out of the question. The signposts which stand by the cliffs are nearly buried in the snow; the branches and trunks of trees are torn off and broken by the heavy burden. There is no end to the snow. It falls no longer in flakes; it is like a heavy, dense whirlwind of dust. The caps upon the branches and sign-posts and upon

the gables of the roofs are growing higher every moment.

If the wind should rise, it might perhaps save the forest, but it would be our destruction. One hour of wind over the loose banks of snow, and we should be buried.

The priest has engaged all the workmen that are accessible to make paths in Lautergräben, Karwässer, and even from one hut to another. They succeeded in breaking the path in one direction, but were obliged to perform their labour a second time on their return. However, the snow-bound people over there will not suffer; their world is within their huts. In a cabin in Karwässer the corpse of an old man is said to have been lying for five days.

To-day the priest bound snow-shoes on his feet in order to make visits among the sick. But the snow was too soft, and he was obliged to turn back. Now he is making up little bundles from our landlord's pantry, and some sturdy wood-cutters are to carry them to the sick people in Lautergräben.

These are short days and yet so long. I have my zither, I have the new violin given to me by the priest on my last birthday, I have other things with which to distract myself. But now nothing interests me. For hours at a time I walk up and down the room and wonder what the result of this winter will be. There are many huts in Graben where the men have not been with their shovels. We are anxious about the condition of things over there.

In order to relieve myself from the oppressive inactivity, I opened to-day the chest which is under the bench by the stove, and took out the leaves of my old journal, to see what had been the fortunes of this parish since its beginning.

And I find that nothing has been written for ten years. There may have been two reasons for this interruption in my records. In the first place, I no longer felt the need of writing out my thoughts and feelings, for in our priest I have found a friend in whom I can confide unreservedly, as he has confided in me, telling me the strange story of his life before we were even acquainted. He is one of the few who, refined by suffering, have emerged from the entanglements and mistakes of the world pure and noble. The woodspeople love him devotedly; he leads them not by words alone but by his deeds. His Sunday sermons he puts into practice during the week. He sacrifices himself, he is everything to the people. His hair is no longer black, as at that time in the Felsenthal; his face is earnest, and bright as the gleam of a rainbow. Those who are sorrowful gaze into his eyes and find comfort there.

When we are all sitting together, he likes to tell us of the distant, beautiful world—of strange foreign countries, of the wonders of nature. Pipes grow cold while he talks, for everyone listens with the greatest eagerness. Only the old woman from the Winkelwarden's house declares that the priest's stories are silly fables; a proper priest, she thinks, should talk of heaven and purgatory, and not

always of the world. Nevertheless she listens and smiles.

A number of years ago the church authorities brought up the question of our parish, and refused to recognise our Father Paulus, wishing to install a new priest in his place. Oh! but the Winkelstegers rebelled against such a change and the attempt was finally abandoned. To offset this, however, Winkelsteg is not acknowledged outside as parish and curacy, but simply as a settlement of half-savage, ruined men, such as it was in former times.

At first this was a great trial to me, we would so gladly have united with the main body; but since they repulse us, I am finally reconciled and say: All the better; then they will leave us in peace.

The second cause of neglecting my journal is the great amount of work which my calling imposes upon me.

At first it was the building of the schoolhouse, which gave me no rest. For everything has been built exactly as I considered most suitable for an important project like this. The house is made of wood, for that retains heat better than stone, and allows of freer ventilation. It was important that I should erect an appropriate and tasteful wooden building as a model for the people. To my joy, the light, graceful, and yet solid design of my schoolhouse, with its convenient arrangement, has already been copied many times. My windows, doors, masonry, and locksmith's work are considered as models by the entire population.

About the schoolhouse is an extensive playground fitted out with implements for physical exercise. The building is provided with a broad, projecting roof to guard against injury from storms, but in such a way that the interior is in no way darkened. In the schoolroom, before everything else, thought has been taken for the health of the children.

As to my apartment in the schoolhouse, it is not large but cosey. And it is made a thousand times cosier by the memory of that winter march through Russia, which comes back to me sometimes like a wild dream. Since that dream, however, I have grown many years younger; even as the storms of the world crushed me to the earth, have I risen again in the primeval freshness of the forest.

A far more difficult office than that of keeping the school, and a much greater duty, is the supervision of the spiritual health of those confided to my care. Easily enough they learn prudence, and how to think and act to their own advantage; but it is far more difficult for them to learn to adjust themselves to the whole, and to make their existence harmonious with that of their fellows and with the outside world in general. It is a fact, that self-love is the first sign of life which is revealed in the budding soul of the young child. Whether love for humanity or selfishness be the result, the education decides.

I have my special ideas in regard to dealing with children and the conception of the world which should be presented to them. I am not thinking of the

little ones in the Winkel parish alone, but of the children who are obliged to dwell in cities, where the happiness of their childhood and the pure pleasures of this world are often embittered.

REFLECTIONS[#]

[#] Under this title an essay was found in the manuscript, the pages of which were neither dated nor numbered. It had probably been written in the winter of 1830, and since it bears upon the subject in hand I insert it here.
THE EDITOR.

The child is a book from which we read, and in which we should write.

Once upon a time a magician wandered about in these woods creating no little excitement among the peasants. He carried a book containing blank pages, which upon being held to his lips were immediately covered with legible script, as though his breath had been a pen. I then discovered that the words had previously been written with a colourless liquid which left no trace and became visible only when he had breathed upon it.

Children are like this book. Indifferent eyes discern nothing worthy of notice in them, and not until they are touched by the warm breath of love do the traits appear which frequently surprise, delight, or alarm us. And it rests largely with us which traits shall be called forth.

That is to say, the personal peculiarities must be taken into account. In children this individuality is perhaps not great, but it nevertheless exists. Up to a certain point we enjoy the pliant natures which appeal to our own, but when the real character once discloses itself, we must give it due regard. It may be absurd, yet I must say that I have a certain dislike for many of the educational institutions which now exist in the world outside, where all the pupils are cast in the same mould and then polished off, in the end producing but ordinary men. These, to be sure, constitute the best building material for society and the state, even as houses are most conveniently constructed with bricks. But characters, sturdy types which develop under unusual circumstances, sometimes seem to me preferable. A grindstone does not suit all knives; many scholars learn more in life than in school.

We should first test that which we intend to employ with the child, the physical care, games, moral and mental instruction, in order to be sure that they harmonise with his nature and with the conditions and demands of his future life.

Cherish childhood tenderly; it is quite different from our riper age; thoughtlessly forgetting our own childish happiness, we regard as unreasonable and foolish much of that which is in reality of great benefit to the little ones, and which they lose all too soon, never to find again.

I do not share the opinion of that philosopher who maintains that parents should allow themselves to be brought up by their children, although I acknowledge that we might learn much from them that is to be found in no book of worldly wisdom. Children seem to be born for a heaven, their young minds being constituted solely for happiness. We have to educate them for this earth, to which they must now adapt themselves, but not prematurely. Let the little hearts strengthen themselves with childish pleasure, warm themselves with faith in God and the world, for they may need this warmth and strength when, in later years, many things turn cold and fall in ruins about them. Their faith in God will change and become more spiritual, but if you—oh, teacher of a new school—do not instil this faith into the growing mind, then in the matured intellect there will be no room for belief in the divine, the ideal. Whoever has once prayed with all his heart before the cross, will never forget the image of love and self-sacrifice. Whoever has once been thrilled by the sweet worship of the Mother of God, whoever has been awed by the resurrection of the dead and the eternal glory of heaven, he, I think, must be armed for all time against the demon of unbelief and have unshaken faith in the final victory of the good and beautiful.

Each fortunate man upon whom nature has bestowed in his children the prospect of an earthly future, will wish that they may be as happy as he himself now is, or happier.

Human content and discontent depend greatly upon our view of the world. As the world enters our souls through our minds, such it is to us. It is not a question of truth for truth's sake, but of happiness, or rather of contentment. Only those pursue the truth for itself who either find or fancy they find in the search or in its results *contentment*.

We cannot greatly alter our own view of the world; our eyes are accustomed to their spectacles, be they dark or rosy. But the child who calls us father, although he does not yet know why we are responsible to him, with clear eyes gazes questioningly into the bright world and questioningly looks at us. Which glasses shall we give him—rosy, dark, magnifying, or diminishing?

Children wear no spectacles! In regard to this, the schoolmaster from Holdenschlag recently said to me that one should allow children to gaze upon the world with their natural eyes.

Here again I think differently. The gypsy boy on the heath looks at the world with his natural eye. Is he hungry, he takes what lies nearest him; he knows nothing of mine or thine. Our children must have instruction and education, the

former to show them what the world is according to our experience, the latter to teach them how to bear themselves towards it and how far they are to yield to its influence. The objection might be urged that the nature of the world itself determines one's conception of it, and a thing cannot be taken for other than it is. I answer: The contemplation of an object depends entirely upon the observer's point of view. It is not to be expected of man that, forgetting self, he should rise above himself and the world at large, for the eye with which he sees and the brain with which he thinks is far too human.

Our point of view is optional; the colour through which we look at the world is for the most part also optional; but the choice must be made sufficiently early. Children, as soon as they are conscious of their existence and their surroundings, consider their parents and teachers faultless beings; as a matter of course everything is good and perfect to them. They joyously gravitate towards all things as the flowers of the field turn towards the sun. Their first look into the world is full of trust.

Thinking over the numerous books of the modern school, which I occasionally receive from the owner of the forest, I often ask myself: What conception of the world should we teach children?

Should we say to them: The plan of the world is by no means good; mankind is imperfect, miserable; existence is aimless; life is a misfortune?

Should we show them the bad and good sides, and soberly explain everything to them, just as it seems to us?

Or should we acquiesce in their belief and strengthen them in their view, that everything is desirable and for the best?

A teacher who had neither sense nor heart would do the first; one who had sense alone, the second; one who had both sense and heart, the third.

The youngsters in ragged clothing, who run about under our feet in the streets, carrying their bags of books to school, are often a very saucy brood. They banter, chaff, sneer, and think themselves far wiser than their elders. We meet with this principally in cities. In their homes they are accustomed to bitter words. Many methods of education aim to transform the little ones rapidly into cool-headed, sensible men. The children must know and think, only this; all warm feeling is stifled, and then one wonders why there is so little ability and creative power! When such a youth has sated himself with the works of art and nature, which have become for him merely toys and objects of derision, he grows disheartened, fretful, and young men and maidens of twenty are weary of the world. They have soon convinced themselves that their own abilities and ambitions are no higher than those which they have so often scorned—nor scarcely so high; they become impotent and lose faith in themselves; and now they are fully convinced of that which they have so often heard, and in their inexperience

have so often maintained: The world is thoroughly bad—and they are *unhappy*. This element of pessimism, to which they have accustomed themselves, so disturbs their power of action that they have not even sufficient courage to take that step which seems to them the most desirable: suicide.

The second method is not inexpedient, indeed for progress in life it is often really necessary. We might show the children the world as it appears to us; relate to them our own experiences, that they may profit by them. Still this way, although perhaps necessary, is not the best; it too soon disturbs the ideals of youth which warm the child-heart like a breath of God and can never be replaced in later years. Therefore we must not initiate children into the hardships of life prematurely. Then again, this method is not always as useful as one would think; indeed, every day we see children who give no heed to the precepts which are the results of their parents' experiences and who pay for their carelessness and learn wisdom only by their own failures. Even were they able to profit by the trials of their parents, how shall they instruct *their* children, if not forced to undergo any experiences of their own? Such things cannot be handed down; only where they originate and grow, do they bear fruit.

My opinion is, that we should guard the fresh rosebud called "child-heart" as long as we are able. Let us interfere as late as possible with the intellectual life and vocation of the child. For indeed, even three-year-old children have often already chosen their life work. They hunt up and make toys for themselves, they hammer, they dig, they draw, plane, and build and are as much in earnest as we elders in our efforts. It is a great disadvantage to the children of the rich to receive their playthings ready made, the result of which is, that they simply destroy them; and this often happens even in the case of well-disposed children. How can the little ones become inventive and ingenious, how can they practise the art of acquiring and saving, of patience and perseverance, when everything which their hearts desire and which they often do not really desire, comes to them as if by the aid of a wishing-rod? It may partly account for the fact—and this is within my own knowledge—that children of the poor, who from their earliest youth must seek and make everything that they wish to have, are often intellectually superior to the children of the rich. But we should encourage and guide the little ones in their occupations and small creations.

It is wiser to check speech than action in children. And if they have done something wrong, or produced something faulty, then give them the opportunity to do it again and better.

Many parents and teachers have the custom of speaking disparagingly and critically of their children before strangers; that is almost more dangerous than pushing them forward and praising them in the presence of others. An embittered disposition is apt to follow wounded ambition.

Instead of analysing the excellences and defects in the works and standards of mankind, I consider it better to recognise their worth unconditionally, that the children may learn to honour and admire them. Critical knowledge of one's ideal has never been sufficient to inspire a man to strive to imitate it, although it may have caused respect and enthusiasm. The critical, fault-finding element means only too often repudiation—it is the chief characteristic of incapable natures and never imparts strength, but rather impedes the creative power. Whatever works upon the reason, chills; that which works upon the heart, warms; especially with children.

Children should hear only of the beautiful, the good, and the great. Our own ideals, the bright visions of our youth and our guiding star, even though they be now extinct, let us rekindle them in the children's hearts; or if Nature has herself performed this work, then let us feed and fan the flame; at such a fire we shall warm ourselves again. Human history is exceedingly rich in great deeds—I do not mean the campaigns and destruction wrought by victorious generals, nor the intrigues of land-greedy princes, with which one ordinarily seeks to *improve* our youth—I mean the blessed, beautiful deeds of noble men. Let us surround the child with these, and with them we shall plant in him a garden full of roses and glorious fruits!

And when the high and noble things in the earthly kingdom are exhausted, then let us with confidence open the gates to those eternal regions whence mankind for a thousand years has drawn courage and inspiration. The true man of culture, familiar with all the successes and failures of the human intellect, the man acquainted with the world, who knows that tolerance is a chief characteristic of noble minds, will not hesitate to portray to the child the great ideals of poetic souls.

But there are certain people in the world outside against whom I would make the charge that they are as lenient toward the weaknesses and sins of mankind as they are intolerant of religious opinions. These people are adherents to a doctrine asserting the animal supremacy in man, and make freedom of will and action wholly dependent on natural or accidental outward circumstances—modern fatalists, who are still more dangerous than those of the romantic school. They believe that they are satisfying their love for mankind, if they excuse the criminals and fallen ones according to prescribed precepts, thus justifying the crime to their children. That means making the criminal interesting to the children. However, we should instil into their minds neither hatred nor pharisaical pride, although the mistakes and crimes themselves cannot be too severely censured before the little ones. Even as nobility should be represented to them as worthy of their entire respect, so should evil be unconditionally condemned. One only confuses children with such subtle reasoning and philosoph-

ical explanations—everything must be distinct, clear, and tangible.

One more word in regard to the love of fatherland.

Child and home—how natural! We well know that the little ones long to go forth into the world, but still stronger is their desire to return home. So we might add, teach them love of home. A hearth of one's own, a family; here man is guarded from the greatest evils; here industry, self-sacrifice, self-confidence, and contentment are developed; here love for the parish and fidelity to the fatherland thrive. The attitude which many people in the outside world are now assuming toward the fatherland is said to be becoming somewhat revolutionary. This must be followed by results which I do not like to mention to the children here! I am consequently obliged to counteract these reports by telling them that it is difficult to remain on friendly terms with people who are always discontented and unthankful. How shall one demand of a citizen of the state that he shall work for the perfection, the strengthening, and freedom of his native land, when he is perfectly indifferent towards it! And the continual denunciations of the conditions of the country, of its rulers and laws, all combine to undermine gradually the love for the fatherland. I do not care for that patriotism which sends our sons upon the battle-field, chosen for them by leaders of the state, but rather for that which teaches how to *live* for the fatherland. Resist hostile invasions, for that is manly and right. But patriotism often springs from prejudice; the children should therefore be taught where it ceases to be a virtue.

Besides the love of one's native land, there is fortunately in mankind room for love of the whole world. Instead of inspiring children with admiration for the warrior heroes of history, it were better to instil into them the greatest horror for the profession of war. The idea that, for any reason whatever, we may kill innocent people must gradually be eradicated from the human race.

The school alone cannot of course do everything; it teaches youth but is unable to educate it. With which organs does the young tree absorb the more nourishment and life, with its branches and leaves from the free air, or with its roots from the ground, whence it springs? What the child acquires at school must be carefully digested, but the example and guidance of the parents are involuntarily absorbed into the flesh and blood. It remains then with the parents to lay in the child the foundation for a sound conception of the world.

I was once acquainted with the father of a family, who so strictly carried out the principle of presenting to his children a bright conception of the world, that he kept them away from all existing evil. That I do not consider necessary. It is not so much what they see as *how* they see it. Children seldom tremble in the presence of danger. One should call their attention to it, not in a startling manner, which only disheartens, but rather in a tone of calm self-reliance which rests on the consciousness of its own power. And after unfortunate accidents, where

man is powerless, one should never show despair or apathetic discouragement before children, but always the open countenance full of resignation and hope; everything will be well again! These are magic words for us as well. There is a constant interchange of light and shadow everywhere in life, and each misfortune brings us new expectation of good; he who lives in this hope already enjoys the interest of a capital not yet due.

The five-year-old daughter of the stone-cutter, when her only brother was buried, whom she loved so dearly that it was thought she could not live an hour without him, gazed down into the deep little grave surrounded by the mourning bystanders and said: "God keep thee, Hans, we will meet in heaven," and hastened away over the flowery meadow. Yes, thus should it be and thus should it continue among us men.

And that boy from Schirmtanner's house, who built a little hut, a mill, and a variety of things on the hillside, working at it one whole summer, when an avalanche destroyed his playthings, cried: "It's gone! It did not please God that I should build on the hill, now I will go and build my house down by the barn fence." He might just as well have clenched his fist and snarled: "Why did it not please God?" But it has been said to him: "God is far stronger and wiser; against Him thou canst do nothing, but He does not mean ill by thee." And sometime in later years of life, when the heart is broken and faith is dead, that which is best and most enduring in such a conception of life shall still remain by us,—resignation.

I have nothing against knowledge, but I like wisdom better. Wisdom does not come so much from the head as from the heart. Let childishness and confidence in the world be fostered as long as possible; childishness is fruitful soil for the beautiful, confidence in the world for the good. I do not mean that a generation of idealists should be developed, who cannot think and work practically. But they should have confidence in the world and in themselves, for that is the most fruitful ground for right thinking and practical deeds. A simpler and happier race must arise than could ever be imagined by the crabbed philosophers, who are so vain of their lofty reasoning and so hopeless in their human mission.

However, the heart of man is good; from generation to generation he approaches perfection. There are indeed periods which are not favourable to him; often the blossoms grow too luxuriant, the fruit becomes too large. In the midst of the most auspicious May, frosts, blights, insects, and plagues of all kinds arrive—-but gradually—gradually the day shall dawn of which all nations have dreamed and which all prophets have foretold.

WALDLILIE IN THE SNOW

WINTER, 1830.

We are relieved of a great anxiety. The storm has subsided. A light wind has arisen and gently released the trees from their burden. There have been a few mild days, during which the snow has settled and with snow-shoes we can now walk where we please.

But during this time a curious incident has taken place over in Karwässer. Berthold, whose family increases from year to year, while their supply of food grows less, has become a poacher. The Holdenschlag priest, although a weak-hearted hypocrite, pretends to understand life better than we, and says, poor people should not marry. According to conventional ideas and customs, Berthold and Aga are not married, but they have knelt before me in the woods ... and—now the whole family are starving. Am I responsible? Alas, the blessing which I gave them is of no avail! Oh, my God, Thine is the power; as in my youth I have already committed one crime, grant that *this* may not prove to be one as well.

So Berthold has become a poacher. The profits of wood-cutting do not reach far in a house full of children. I have sent him what I can in the way of food. Whenever he wishes a nourishing broth for his sick wife and a bit of meat for the children, he shoots the deer that come in his way. And as misfortune often changes one's character, Berthold, who as shepherd was such a good and happy lad, has, through poverty, spite, and love for his family, grown to be a lawbreaker.

I have already begged the forester, for God's sake, to look after the poor man a little, assuring the former that Berthold would certainly improve and that I would stand bail for him. But up to the present time there has been no change for the better; and that which has happened during these wild winter days has made him weep aloud, for he loves his Waldlilie above everything.

It is a dark winter evening. The windows are covered with moss; outside, the fresh flakes fall upon the old snow. Berthold is staying with the children and the sick Aga, until the eldest daughter, Lili, shall return with the milk, which she has gone to beg from a hermit near by in Hinterkar; for the goats in the house have been killed and eaten; and as soon as Lili arrives, it is Berthold's intention to go up into the forest with his gun. In such weather one need not seek far to find the deer.

But it grows dark and Lili has not yet returned. The fall of snow becomes heavier and denser; night approaches, and still no Lili. The children are already crying for the milk; the father is eager for the game; the mother raises herself in bed. "Lili!" she cries. "Child, where art thou straying in this pitch-dark forest? Come home!"

How can the weak voice of the invalid reach the ear of the wanderer

through the wild snow-storm?

The darker and stormier the night becomes, the stronger is Berthold's longing for the game and the deeper his anxiety for his Waldlilie. She is a delicate twelve-year-old girl; to be sure she knows the paths and the ravines, but the former are covered with snow, the latter concealed by the darkness.

Finally, the man leaves the house to seek for his child. For hours he wanders about calling through the storm-swept wilderness; the wind blows the snow into his eyes and mouth; he is obliged to use his entire strength to regain the hut.

And now two days pass; the storm abates and Berthold's hut is nearly snow-bound. They comfort themselves with the thought that Lili is surely with the hermit. This hope is destroyed on the third day, when, after a long struggle through the drifts, Berthold at last succeeds in reaching the hermitage.

Lili had indeed been there three days ago and had started in good time on her homeward way with her jug of milk.

"So my Waldlilie lies buried in the snow!" Berthold cries. He then goes to the other wood-cutters and begs, as no one has ever heard this man beg before, that they will come and help him seek for his dead child.

On the evening of the same day they find Waldlilie.

In a wooded ravine, in a dark tangled thicket of young firs and pines, through which no flake of snow can force itself and above which the mass of snow has piled and drifted, so that the young trees groan with the weight, upon the hard pine-needles on the ground, surrounded by a family group of six deer, sits the sweet, pale Waldlilie.

It was a most remarkable circumstance. The child had lost herself in the ravine on her way home, and, as she could no longer resist the drifting snow, she crept into the dry thicket to rest. But she was not long alone. Her eyes had scarcely begun to close, before a herd of deer, old and young, joined her; they sniffed about the girl and gazed at her with their mild eyes full of intelligence and sympathy, for of this human being they were not afraid. They remained with her, laid themselves upon the ground, nibbled the trees, licked one another, apparently undisturbed by her presence; the thicket was their winter home.

The next day the snow had enveloped them all. Waldlilie sat in the dim light and drank the milk which she was to have carried to her family, nestling against the good creatures to keep from freezing in the chilling air.

Thus the terrible hours passed by. And just as Waldlilie was about to lay herself down to die and in her simplicity was begging the deer to remain faithfully by her side in the last hour, they suddenly began sniffing in a most curious manner, raising their heads and pricking up their ears, then with wild leaps and startled cries they burst through the thicket, scattering in all directions.

The men forced their way through the snow and underbrush and with a

shout of joy discovered the child, while old Rüpel, who was also there, called out: "Did I not say, come here, come here, for we may find her with the deer!"

Thus it happened; and when Berthold heard how the creatures of the forest had saved his little daughter and had kept her from freezing, he cried out wildly: "I will never do it again as long as I live!" And his gun with which he had been shooting the game for many years he dashed in pieces against a stone.

I saw it myself, for the priest and I were in Karwässer, assisting in the search for the child.

This Waldlilie is very gentle and as white as snow, and her eyes are like those of the deer.

WINTER, 1830.

The reports about our master's son do not cease. If only the half were true which is told concerning him, then he is indeed a bad man. No sensible being would act thus.

I will make a note of it and write to his father soon. Hermann should visit our forest and see how poor people live.

Such a journey into the mountains is sometimes very beneficial.

THE WINTER SEASON.

Lazarus Schwarzhütter is often seen casting loving glances at Grassteiger's little daughter, and the girl is growing fond of the lad; so they coquette with one another although the priest has forbidden the young people to do this. Certainly it is his privilege to preach, but they continue in their gazing all the same and think they have the right, a right which Lazarus declares they will never relinquish.

"Very good," says the priest, "they shall be united even though they afterwards regret it."

CHRISTMAS, 1830.

On holy Christmas eve the people come hither from all directions. The sparks from the lighted torches glide over the crust like shooting stars.

Many of the woodsmen, in their anxiety to see the midnight celebration, have arrived much too early. As the church is not yet open and it is cold out-of-doors, they come to me in the schoolhouse. I strike a light and the room is soon filled with people. The women have tied white shawls, folded like sashes, about their chins and over their ears. They huddle around the stove, blowing their fingers to soothe the pain caused by chilblains.

The men stand closely wrapped in their fustian jackets. Without removing their hats they sit upon the tables or benches and observe with an air of important deliberation the school apparatus, which the children explain to their elders. Some of them walk up and down, knocking their frozen boots against each other at every step, with a clattering sound. Nearly all are smoking their pipes. The primeval forest may be exterminated, but the smoking of tobacco—never.

I hastily put on my coat, for it is my duty to be the first one in the church.

Suddenly there is a loud knocking at the door. An old wrinkled face crowned with snowy locks, covered by a white sheep's wool cap peers in, and I recognise the forest singer. He wears a long coat reaching below the knees and fastened with brass hooks. Over it hangs a knapsack and a flute, and the old man leans upon a shepherd's staff, holding in his hand his capacious brown hat. This is his house and his home and his whole world. A good hat, he thinks, is the best thing in life, and he adds, "the earth's hat is the sky."

"Why do you idle your time away?" cries Rüpel in a loud, exultant tone; "long have the stars been shining without. Praised be the Lord, for upon this day, wonderful news I bring you about that which in Bethlehem happened of late. Hear ye no music, no joyful sound? Look from the windows, haste, do not wait, bright rays of light the houses surround."

And the people hasten to the windows; but there is nothing to be seen except the dark forest and the starry heaven. Why should there be anything else?

The old man gazes smilingly about him, counting his listeners, then taking his place in the middle of the room, he knocks several times on the floor with his stick and thus begins to speak:

"Alone and heavy-eyed with sleep, out on the heath I stood and gazed about, while gathering in my sheep; and watched the flock, among which grazed a sacrificial lamb. Then heard I echoing in the heavens high, a sound, while tones of music stirred the air. I heard, but knew not why these strains, nor who such joy expressed. The whole flock leaped about and when it heard the wonder, with the rest, the lamb most sweetly bleated. Then saw I—it must a vision be, I thought—child angels fly about high in the air. Straight down to me one cherub came, whom I, in doubt, asked, 'What is happening to-day?' Then cried he, joyous, 'Gloria in Excelsis Deo!' by my fay, to say I understood, were sin. 'Come,

lad, thou must to German keep; an unlearned parish shepherd, I, nor aught of Latin know the sheep.' He answered, 'Quickly rise and hie to Bethlehem, and thou shalt find a new-born infant lying there among the cattle and their kind, a child most beautiful and fair. Not in a kingly palace high, but in an ox-stall mean and poor, in swaddling-clothes our Lord doth lie, whose help is in our need most sure.'"

This is the old singer's "message" which he proclaims in all the houses during the Christmas season.

We give him a small remuneration, whereupon he repeats a few more cheering words and hobbles out at the door again.

The people have become quite silent and reverent; and not until the church bells begin to ring, do they regain their merry mood and with awkward words and gestures leave the room.

I extinguish the candles, close the house and enter the church. This is the night, when from the Orient to the Occident is heard the ringing of bells, and a cry of joy re-echoes throughout the world, while lights are shining like a diamond girdle around the terrestrial globe. In our church, also, it is as bright as day, and only through the windows stares the black night. Each person has brought a bit of candle, or even a whole taper, for on Christmas eve everyone must be armed with his faith and his light. The people crowd about the little manger, which to-day has been erected in place of the confessional. A number of years ago I carved the numerous tiny figures out of linden- and oak-wood, and set them up as a representation of the birth of Christ. Here are the stall and the manger with the Child, Mary and Joseph, the ox and the ass, the shepherds with the lambs, the wise men with the camels; there are a few other droll figures and groups which are designed to express joy, goodness, and love for the Christ child according to the conception of the people, and in the background are the stars and the town of Bethlehem.

That which Rüpel understands putting into words, I will suggest by means of these images. And the people are really edified by this representation. But they take it, thank God, merely as a symbol, and they know that, save as a reminder, it is both meaningless and useless.

It would be otherwise with the image of a saint upon the altar; that would be before their eyes daily and on every occasion, until they came to look upon it as God Himself.

In the choir there was an unfortunate occurrence to-night. The priest had already begun the *Te Deum*, while I at the organ, in celebration of the joyous festival, turned on all six stops—when suddenly the bellows burst, the organ creaked and groaned, and ceased to give forth a single resounding tone. In my whole life I have never been in a more embarrassing situation. I was the schoolmaster, the

leader of the choir, and as such was expected to provide the music, for this is really the essential part of the celebration, and without it there can be no Christmas eve in the church. Just as all hearts were palpitating, all ears awaiting the melodious tones, the devil took it upon himself to render the bellows useless. I covered my face with my hands and felt like hiding my head in mortification. In vain my fingers wandered over the keys; the instrument was dumb and lifeless.

Paul Holzer, his wife, and Adelheid from the black hut, were sitting with me in the choir and, noticing my annoyance, they moved about in their seats, coughed, cleared their throats and with loud voices began to sing "We praise Thee, oh, God!"

That was like balm to my spirit.

The chant was soon over and the high mass was to follow, where music, choral music, was absolutely necessary.

Old Rüpel came stumbling up the stairs, saying: "Schoolmaster! if the organ be silent to-day, then why not on the fiddle play?"

"*Mein Gott*, Rüpel, it is in Holdenschlag being repaired!"

"And if then the fiddle be away, the hymns on the zither would I play."

For this suggestion I embraced the old man so violently that he was completely overwhelmed. I hastened to my room, fetched the zither, and during high mass, tones from a stringed instrument filled the church, the like of which were never before heard in this or in any other house of God. The people listened, and even the priest turned a little, casting a quiet glance up in my direction.

So the Christmas festival was celebrated during the long winter night in Winkelsteg. The music trembled and vibrated softly; it sang the cradle song for the newly born child Jesus and proclaimed peace to mankind. It called and awakened the sleeping child, warning it against the coming of the false Herod; and it trilled a *Wanderlied* for the flight into Egypt.

I played the music for the mass, played the songs which my mother and my foster-father, the good umbrella-maker, used to sing to me, and which in the Baron's house the daughter——

And at last I scarcely knew what, in my excited mood, I was playing for the Holy Child and for the parish on that Christmas eve.

The Winkelstegers will think me as insane as Rhyme-Rüpel.

After the midnight mass the priest asked me to invite the old, the deserted, the poorest and most unfortunate people of the parish to the parsonage.

Here it is even brighter than in the church! In the middle of the room stands a tree, gleaming in all its twigs and branches with points of light.

The old men and women gaze at it in amazement; giggle and rub their eyes, thinking it only a foolish dream. That real tapers should be growing on a tree from the forest, is something which in all their days they have never seen before.

”That wonder-bird, which appears every thousand years,” says the priest, ”has flown through the forest again, and planted a seed in the ground, whence this tree with its flaming blossoms has sprung. This is the third tree of life. The first was the tree of knowledge in paradise; the second, the tree of sacrifice on Golgotha; and this, the third, is the tree of human love, which has transformed the Golgotha of this earth into paradise once more. In the burning bush God once proclaimed the law, and He repeats it in *this* burning bush to-day: ’Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself!’”

The priest now distributes the food and clothing to those for whom it is intended, saying: ”Do not thank me; the *Christkind* brought it.”

”How wonderful!” the people exclaim. ”Now the Christ child even comes down to us in the woods! That is because we have a church and such a good priest!”

Rüpel, also one of the recipients, is more childish than all the rest. He runs around the tree as though searching for the Christ child among the branches. ”Ah!” he finally cries, ”e’en though the sun be wroth with me, I could not name, I do not know, a light upon the earth below, that shines so brightly as this tree. Be quiet, list, do you not hear the rustling branches, and on high, how like the birds the cherubs fly; they ’re building for the Christ child dear a nest, in which to celebrate the holy feast. And yonder, see that cherub white; no wings has he, he nearly fell. Child, do not wait, but hasten for thy feet to find some climbing-irons, for which I’ll pay, for see, I have received to-day, a jacket warm and thalers line each pocket. Angels haste to all the other trees within our wood and let your light so pure and good, upon their myriad branches fall.”

Old Rüpel does not eat a mouthful while the others are enjoying a warm soup provided by Grassteiger. And when straw is brought into the room and a resting-place prepared, that the people may not be obliged to return in the night to their distant huts, old Rüpel goes out under the open sky, and counts the stars, giving to each one a name. And the rising morning star he calls ”Father Paul.”

The priest has several times, applied to the owner of the forest, asking that the peasants here—who, with much exertion have made the poor soil productive—might without payment receive this land as their own property. But no decisive answer has come. It is said that the old Baron is travelling and the son is in the capital, and the world is so wide and the city so noisy that such a message from the forest could not be heard there.

So we Winkelstegers remain vassals.

JANUARY 14, 1831.

To-day I have received news of the death of my relative, Aunt Lies. She has made me her heir. Old acquaintances, who have not troubled themselves about me for twenty years, congratulate me upon my inheritance. But I have heard no further particulars. How much can the old lady have had? I know she was rich, but she wasted everything in games of chance.

And should it be only one groschen, or, indeed, nothing at all—by my soul, I am pleased that she thought of me. She always meant well by me. Now my last relative is dead.

EASTER, 1831.

In the Winkel forest the church festivals must take the place of that which in the outside world they call art.

As, according to my poor ability, I set up a manger for the Christmas celebration, so Ehrenwald and his sons have now made a sepulchre for Easter.

In the side aisles of the church stand, as entrance gates, four high wooden arches, covered with pictures from the story of the Passion. The innermost arches are narrower than the outer ones, and in a niche in the shadowy background is the grave of Jesus. Above it is the table for the sacred utensils, surrounded by a circle of bright-coloured lamps. On either side of the grave stand two Roman slaves as sentinels. During the celebration of the Resurrection, the dead Christ disappears, and within the circle of lamps rises the scarred body of the risen Saviour with the palm of victory in His hand.

There is a great charm in the whole celebration. It is preceded by the period of fasting which, day by day, increases in solemnity; for weeks there is no music, the pictures are veiled. Good Friday approaches. First the imposing Palm Sunday, then the mysterious Maundy Thursday, the gloomy, sad Good Friday, and the quiet Saturday. In this calm one feels a foreboding and longing and the word of the Prophet gently reminds us: His grave shall be glorious!

Once more the house of God is obscured like Golgotha in the darkness; then the red and green lamps gleam, and the festival tapers sparkle—and suddenly the joyful cry is heard: "He is risen!" Now the bells are rung, guns are fired and the air is filled with joyous melodies, the flaming red banners are waved, and the people go forth into the open air, their lanterns glowing in the twilight as they disappear in the woods.

In the cities the celebration is much greater and far more imposing. But where is the feeling, the true, hopeful joy in the Resurrection, which inspires the believing poor! Seeking for inward peace, the dwellers in the city turn away from the churchyard, murmuring: "In truth we *hear* the message."

SPRING, 1831.

I am already beginning to design houses which are to be built from the proceeds of my inheritance. In Winkelsteg I shall erect a large, beautiful mansion, larger than the parsonage. I have the plans all completed. But as long as I remain schoolmaster, I have no desire to live in it myself. Sometime I shall give a little room in this house to the invalid Reutmann from Karwasserschlag; and I shall ask the old, childless Frau Brünnhütter, and the sick Aga from Karwässer, and Markus Jager, who is blind, and Joseph Ehrenwald, who has been injured by a falling tree. And I shall welcome many others, until, by degrees, the great house is filled. There are a number of wretched creatures wandering about in the Winkel woods.

I shall place a doctor and medicine at the disposal of these people, that is, if the money goes far enough. Then I will invite in jesters and musicians who understand providing all kinds of entertainment. An almshouse is dreary enough, without sad and lonesome surroundings in addition; the merry world should look in at all the windows and say: "You still belong to me, and I will not let you go!"

I do not need to pay for the land now, as at present I am merely building my castle in the air. The inheritance has not yet arrived. But the report is that my aunt won large sums of money at play.

I shall give the pleasantest room in the new alms-house to old Rüpel. The poor man is really quite deserted. For his rhymes the people pay him now with scarcely a bit of bread. They have forgotten how, in former times, they have been edified by his cheering and uplifting songs on festive occasions, how they have laughed and wept, often saying to one another: "It is as though the Holy Ghost were speaking through him."

To be sure the old man has not much to offer now, and he has already become quite childish. He has bent a piece of wood, across which he has stretched straws for strings, and this is his harp. He rests it against his breast, and his fingers wander over the strings as he murmurs his songs.

He is a strange old figure, as he sits upon a stone in the dark forest, wrapped in his wide, faded cloak, with his long, luxuriant, snow-white beard and shimmering hair, which falls unkempt about his shoulders. He raises his tearful eyes toward the tree-tops and sings to the birds, from whom he once learned his songs.

The creatures of the forest do not fear him; a squirrel often hops down upon his shoulder from the branches and, standing on its hind-legs, whispers something into the old man's ear.

His words, like his songs, are becoming more and more incomprehensible. They are no longer in keeping with the people or with the circumstances. He sings foolish love songs and children's ditties, as though dreaming of his youth. When in summer the white-bearded man is sitting motionless upon some hill-top, he looks from the distance like a bunch of *Edelweiss*.

The beetles and ants run over his coat and scramble up his beard; the bees fly about his head as though seeking wild honey there.

The priest has confided something to me which seems to cause him anxiety.

He says it is possible that I may become a rich man, and as such I would probably go forth into the world, to fulfil all the wishes which I have formed and nourished in the wilderness. No one is entirely unselfish.

This communication has cost me a restless night. I have searched my heart and in truth I have found there one desire, which is far away from the Winkel forest. But it could not be fulfilled with money. She is married.

Why should I demur? My wish is fulfilled. She is happy.

MARCH 24, 1831.

To-day Sturmhanns from Wolfsgrubenhohe was found dead in Lautergräben. His beard was badly singed. The people say that a blue flame which issued from his mouth was the cause of his death. They explain it thus: Sturmhanns had been drinking a great quantity of gin, then, as he was lighting his pipe, his breath had taken fire instead of the tobacco, and thus the man's soul was burned out of him. There is probably some truth in the story.

APRIL 1, 1831.

To-day my inheritance has been officially forwarded to me. It consists of three groschen and a letter from my Aunt Lies, which is as follows:

"DEAR ANDREAS:

"I am old, sick, and helpless. Thou art in the mountains, God only knows where. During my illness I have been thinking over everything. I have undoubtedly done thee a wrong and I beg thy pardon. This money weighs upon my mind more than all else; it is thy christening-money, which thou wouldst have sent to thy father in heaven. I took it from thee, but now I beg thee to take it back and to forgive me; for I wish to die in peace. God bless thee, and I must say one more word: if thou art in the mountains, then do not come away from there. All is vanity. In prosperous days my friends remained true to me; now they leave me to die in poverty.

"Many thousand kisses for thee, my dear, my only kinsman. When God takes me to Himself in heaven, I will greet thy parents for thee.

"Until death "Thy loving aunt "ELISE."

THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI, 1831.

For three years we have been collecting money for a baldachin. But we Winkelstegers have not yet been able to buy one; we must make it ourselves.

Old Schwamelfuchs has made a portable canopy from green birch-boughs, that in celebrating this festival, we may carry the sacred relics out of the church in a fitting manner.

The procession in the bright sunshine is a festive one. And the people, finally freed from the hard winter, sing joyful hymns. We rest in the woods and the priest pronounces the benediction, sending the holy blessing to all parts of the world.

It is unusual that in the midst of the service a layman should raise his voice, but old Rüpel is an exception, and this is his Corpus Christi song:

"Let all the bells ring, let all the birds sing, the Lord cometh forth from His heavenly gates. In green woods He walks, and upon the fresh grass, where the young deer doth graze, sweet rest He awaits. His first mighty word He speaks, and when heard, all the flowers spring up from the earth where they lie. Again He doth speak with re-echoing sound, each seed in the valley is wakened thereby.

And when the third word He utters is heard, the thunder is silent, the lightning obeys; with the touch of His breath deadly hail doth He melt. To Thee, mighty Lord, be both honour and praise. And with Thy last word all nature is stirred; the mountains shall tremble, the rocks shall be hurled, the heavens shall crash and waken the dead, and fire shall descend to destroy all the world."

The strange old man understands reaching the heart with his words. Impressed and exalted we return to the church. And the green birch baldachin with its white poles shall stand over the altar until its thousand tender leaves are withered.

AUTUMN, 1831.

The answer in reference to the granting of land in our parish has finally arrived.

The Baron has given the priest to understand that such a conscientious pastor as he should not, in addition to his other anxieties, burden himself with worldly cares.

Further particulars we do not know.

A DYING SON OF THE FOREST

WINTER, 1831.

Who in former times would have thought that the hermit from the Felsenthal could have become what he now is? The inactivity after such a stirring life, the isolation from people might well have made him insane.

It has come about in a wonderful way. Only the great cares and petty troubles of a forest priest, only the monotonous, yet many-sided and significant life of a forest parish in its infancy and loneliness could have saved him.

He has now adapted himself to the place, is intimately acquainted with each one of his parish children, and leads them by his example.

A terrible epidemic is raging in the Winkel woods; our graveyard is becoming too small and we are unable to secure the services of the grave-diggers; the powerful men are themselves ill.

The priest is away from home night and day, sitting with the sick people in the most distant huts, caring for their bodies as well as for their souls, even

though the Baron has advised him not to trouble himself with worldly cares.

At last, as he is sleeping one night in his own warm bed, there comes a sudden knock on the window.

"It 's too bad, sir!" calls a voice from the darkness without. "There 's trouble over in Lautergräben. We don't know what to do. Will you help us? My brother Bartelmei is dying."

"Who is it out there?" asks the priest.

"I am Anna Maria Holzer; Bartelmei is going to leave us."

"I am coming," says the priest. "But wake up the schoolmaster that he may make ready the lanterns and the sacrament. He need not toll the bells, for everyone is asleep."

However, the woman begs me to ring the bells, so that others may pray for the dying man. And as the priest now comes out and walks away among the houses, preceded by the woman with her lantern and little bell, men, heavy with sleep, are kneeling before their doors praying.

It is a stormy winter night; the wind blows in gusts across the cliffs and whistles through the bare, frozen branches of the trees. A fine snow whirls about us, blocking the path and drifting into all the folds of our clothing.

The woman hastens on ahead, and the reflection from the red glass of the lantern dances up and down upon the snowy ground, while the little bell which she carries rings incessantly, although the tones are lost in the storm, and the people in the village have gone to their rest once more. I, too, after watching the pair for a while, return to my room.

But I will write down that which happened to the priest on this night; for the story which was told him was not under the seal of the confessional.

As our Father Paul stands by the bed of the sick man, the latter says: "Does the Priest remember still how he came into Karwässer? Does he remember? It 's long ago; we both have experienced much since then, and, by my faith, we have both grown grey!"

The priest warns the old charcoal-burner not to excite himself by exhausting conversation.

"And can he remember what I said to him then: that I had my own desires and that sometime a priest could do me a great service? That time has now come. I am lying on my death-bed. I have already arranged with Ehrenwald-Franz to make a coffin for me. My body will be properly cared for;—but my soul! Priest, God pardon me, but that is as black as the devil."

The priest seeks to soothe and comfort the man.

"Why do you do that?" asks Bartelmei, "I'm not at all discouraged. I 'm sure that everything will come out all right.—-Why is the Priest putting on his white robe? No, I don't want that; let us finish up the affair as quickly as possible.

When a man is nearing his end, he does n't want to do anything unnecessary. I beg you to sit down, sir.—I 'll say at once, that all is not well with my religious faith; to tell the truth, I believe in nothing any longer. God Himself is to blame for my having been brought so low. He denied me something, which, by my soul, in His almighty power He might have done so easily! I should like to tell you about it. When Marian Sepp, who in a way belonged to me, was dying, I said to her at her death-bed, 'Marian,' I said, 'if thou must die now, thou poor young thing, and I have to remain alone all my days, then God in heaven is doing a most cruel thing. But I should like to know, Marian, and I should like to know it before my death, how it is with eternity, which, they say everywhere, has no end, and in which the soul of man lives on forever. Nothing definite can be learned about it, and even though we may believe what other people say, it is not at all sure that they know anything about it either. And now, Marian,' said I, 'when thou hast to leave us and if thou shouldst enter the everlasting life as soon as we have buried thee, then do me the favour and, if thou canst, come back to me sometime, if only for a few moments, and tell me about it, that I may know what to believe; Marian promised, and if she could have come I know she would have done so. After she died, I could not sleep for many nights and I was always—always thinking, now, now the door will open and Marian will appear and say: 'Yes, Bartelmei, you may indeed believe it, it is all right, there is an eternity over yonder and you have an immortal soul!'

"What does the Priest think? did she come?—She did *not* come, she was dead and gone. And since then—I cannot help it—I believe in nothing any more."

He is silent and listens to the roaring of the winter storm. For a while the priest gazes into the flickering flames and finally says:

"Time and eternity, my dear Bartelmei, are not divided by a hedge, which we may cross at will. The entrance into eternity is death; in death we lay aside all that is temporal, for eternity is so long, that nothing temporal can exist there. Therefore thy importunate request to the dying girl was forgotten and all memory of this earthly life extinguished. Freed from the dust of this earth she went to God."

"Never mind, Priest," interrupts the sick man, "it does n't trouble me any more. Be that as it may, it will all be right. But there is another difficulty; I 'm not at peace with myself. I 've not been what I should have been; however, I should like to arrange my affairs properly, even as other people do. I 've not much more time, that I well know, and so I had you frightened out of your warm bed, and now, Priest, I earnestly beg you to intercede for me. Well—it has been a secret, but I will out with it: I have been a wicked poacher; I have stolen many deer from the master of the forest."

Here the charcoal-burner stops.

”Anything else?” asks the priest.

”What! Is n’t that enough!” cries the old man; ”truly, Priest, I know of nothing else. I was going to ask you to beg the Baron’s forgiveness. I should have done it myself, long ago, but I always kept thinking I would wait a little while; I might perhaps need something more from the forest, and to ask pardon twice, would be unpleasant. Better wait and do it all at once. But I have waited much too long; I can never do it now. The Baron is, who knows how far away. But no matter, the Priest will be so good and make everything all right, telling him in a Christian speech that I have indeed repented, but not until too late to alter matters.

”Now, this is the way it was: to be sure the charcoal business yields a bit of bread, but when on a feast day a man wants a bite of meat with it, then he has to go straight out into the woods with his gun. He can’t leave it alone, no matter how long he may resist the temptation, ’t is a great pity, but he can’t leave it alone. If the hunters had once arrested me, then this conversation would not have been necessary and I should not be obliged to ask such a painful favour of the Priest.—Ah! but I ’m tired now. I already feel the death pangs.”

They revive him with cold water. The priest takes his hand and promises him, in a few kind words, to obtain pardon from the Baron. He then pronounces absolution to the sick man.

”Thank you, thank you very much,” says Bartelmei with a weak voice; ”soon I shall be done for, and—Priest, now, by my soul, I should be glad myself, if it were true, that about eternity, and if, after my restless life and bitter death, I might quietly slip into heaven. ’T would be such a pleasant thing to do!”

Thus does the deep need and the longing for faith and hope express itself in the poor, sick man. Our priest now asks him if he wishes to receive the holy sacrament.

”It’s no use,” is the answer.

”But thou must, brother, thou must,” says Anna Maria; ”a priest who returns home with the sacrament untouched will be followed by devils as far as the church door!”

”Thou foolish woman, thou!” cries Bartelmei; ”now thou art telling child’s fables fit to make the priest laugh at thee. After all it ’s the same to me, and to keep the priest from being molested on his way home, I would gladly swallow the wafer, but I don’t care about it, and then, I have often heard it was a terrible sin to partake of the sacrament unworthily.”

Hereupon the priest fervently presses the hand of the sick man, saying: ”You must not be proud in your old age, Bartelmei, but this I say to you, you have the right idea. You are virtuous, you believe in God and in the immortality of the soul, whether you acknowledge it to yourself or not. Your heart is pure and the

happiness of heaven shall be yours!"

The old man now raises himself, stretches out his hands, and with moist eyes he smiles, saying: "At last I have heard the right words. Will the Priest be so good as to administer the sacrament to me? Then the King of Terrors may come—*Mein Gott*! What is that? Marian!" suddenly cries Bartelmei. He turns his eyes toward the light, and whispers: "Yes, girl, why art thou wandering about here in the dark night? Marian! Dost thou bring me the message?—the message?"

He raises himself still higher, always repeating the word: "Message!" until he finally sinks back upon his bed and falls asleep.

After a while he opens his eyes, and with a weak voice says: "Was I childish, sister? I had such a strange dream! My head is so hot! I know that I can't last long; I feel such a burning in my heart.—I must say, God bless you, all of you. Take care of thy children, sister, and see that they do not run into the woods with the gun.—I 've already paid Ehrenwald for the coffin.—And be sure and wash me thoroughly; as coal-black Russ-Bartelmei I should not like to enter heaven."

When the morning glow shimmered through the little window, the man was dead. They dressed him in his Sunday garments, and laid him in the coffin. His sister's children sprinkled him with water from the woods.

Yesterday we buried him.

CARNIVAL, 1832.

There is a great commotion. The people are turning Grassteiger's house upside down; then they race across the church square, perpetrating all sorts of mischief.

In the parsonage lies a peasant lad whose chin they have shattered.

It is Carnival Sunday. The people think no longer of the epidemic. They assemble in the tavern and drink brandy; they are hilarious, laugh, and tease one another. Their faces redden, and each one is ready to taunt and joke the others, but none are willing to be teased themselves. An untimely word, a sidelong glance, or a dispute about some pretty girl is enough to raise a quarrel. They strike at each other's cheeks with the palms of their hands—that does not suffice; they hit one another with their fists—nor does that satisfy them; they break the legs of chairs, and, swinging them with both arms in their fury, hurl them down upon the heads of their comrades. That is enough. One of them lies stretched upon the floor. The fight is over.

"Be careful, people," I say to those assembled at Grassteiger's; "if you are so hilarious on the days of rest, your work will yield no blessing, and bad times will come to Winkelsteg again."

Here a master workman from Schneethal speaks: "It 's just because we are such savage people that we remain nothing but poor devils! I verily believe it, and the schoolmaster is right; there should be no more fighting, and I tell you, landlord Grassteiger, if another quarrel takes place in your house, then I will come with a fence-bar and split open all your skulls!"

This spirit is in the people. But the fact that Lazarus never takes part in such broils is a comfort to me. They try hard to urge him on, but he makes his escape. Sometimes his blood rises, but he bravely calms himself. He is a man through and through. And Juliana is his guardian angel, faithfully helping him to control his fiery temper.

The forester has tried to persuade Lazarus to go out to the plains; when one has shown so much ability as this young man, he thinks something extraordinary might be made of him. But Lazarus will not leave the forest. He is becoming a good man, and better than that he could not do outside, though the emperor should place him upon his throne.

It is a favourable sign that he drinks no brandy. Brandy is like oil in the fire, and thus the unfortunate fights arise.

We heads of the parish never touch a drop of it. But, if we do not, there remains so much the more for the others.

The priest has many times sternly warned the people against this habit of drinking. Finally in his indignation he has with a loud voice denounced the brandy as a fountain of hell, a poison for body and soul, and the brandy-distiller as a poisoner.

Old Grassteiger looks at the priest askance and not long afterwards lets it be known that some fresh cider has arrived at the tavern.

But Kranabethannes does not allow the matter to drop so easily. With a much larger stick than he ordinarily carries, he appears before the door of the parsonage.

He raps, and even after the priest has twice distinctly called, "Come in," he raps still a third time. He is not hard of hearing, but he wishes to show that, although a "wood-devil," he knows how to behave in the proper manner with a gentleman, and even with his enemy, whom he to-day intends to annihilate.

Having finally entered the room, he remains standing close by the door, crushing his hat brim in his fist and murmuring through his rough, yellow beard: "I have a word to say to the priest."

The latter politely offers him a seat.

"I have a little affair," says the man, not stirring from the spot where he is standing; "I am the brandy-distiller from Miesenbach forest, a poor devil, who must earn my bread with the sweat of my brow. I am willing to work as long as God gives life to a poor old man like me, no matter how much the people may

oppress me and deprive me of my customers."

"Sit down," says the priest. "You are warm; have you been walking fast?"

"Not at all, but I have come a good distance, and on the way I thought to myself that there was no more justice in the world, or in any man—no matter how saintly he may look. What kind of a priest is he who deprives a poor father of a family in his parish of the last bit of bread? When honest work yields no profit, then one must steal and rob; and this, I suppose, is better than that a poor, worn-out man should taste a drop of brandy;—for it is the 'fountain of hell!'"

The man breathes hard; the priest is silent; he knows that he must allow the storm to pass if he wishes to sow in peaceful weather.

"And he who brews this 'fountain of hell' must indeed be the devil's friend. The people look at me as if I were such a one. They are right perhaps. But if I am bad, it is not I who made myself so. And he who has destroyed my business had better look out for me. Priest, I am not here for nothing!"

The brandy-distiller entirely forgets his customary suavity and assumes a threatening attitude.

"If you are the brandy-distiller from Miesenbach forest," says the priest composedly, "then I am glad to see you. As you so seldom come over to Winkelsteg, I have wanted to go to you. We must talk with one another. You are giving the Winkelstegers brandy no longer, and you are a man of honour, a great benefactor to the parish. I thank you, friend! And your forethought is very praiseworthy. It is true, is it not, that you are now going into the business of herbs and resin? I hope so, and I am entirely of your opinion, that you will earn more if you prepare medicines, oils, and costly balsams from them and then seek a market in the outside country. I will give you all the assistance in my power. Yes indeed, that is a good turn which you have made, and in a few years you will be a well-to-do man."

The brandy-distiller has no idea what is befalling him. He has made *no* turn, has never thought of producing oil and balsam; but it now seems so sensible and feasible that he does not contradict the priest, and with a smirk the prospective producer of oil bows his head.

"And should you temporarily need something for wife and child—*mein Gott*, at first one manages as best one can—then I should be pleased to assist with a trifle. I beg of you to regard me as entirely your friend!"

Hannes grunts some incomprehensible reply and, stumbling out of the house, throws his cudgel over the hedge.

LENT, 1832.

The church authorities are beginning to trouble us again. Our priest is not sufficiently orthodox; they wish to close his church.

The church which we have built with the sweat of our brows!

It is quiet enough there now; Father Paul conducts the service in the sick-rooms and in the cemetery. The people are coming to the parish church in coffins. The epidemic is now called "the death." The school has been closed for months.

The report is going about that the priest is to blame for the sickness, on account of having forbidden the brandy, for that is the surest means of preventing contagion.

Hannes is on the alert, and now his pride is aroused against the priest, whose cunning and gentleness so entirely vanquished him a few weeks ago.

It is an everlasting combat with fate and evil. He who perseveres in the struggle and satisfies his inner conviction, shall reach the goal.

MARCH 22, 1832.

Our priest died to-day.

THREE DAYS LATER.

No one has ever redeemed himself as this man has done—this strange man, who has ruled at the court of a prince, preached in India, and done penance in the cave of the Felsenthal.

He traversed all the crooked paths of priesthood until he discovered the true one: to be friend and helper to the poor in spirit.

He contracted his last illness while ministering to the sick. He had pronounced the betrothal blessing of Lazarus Schwarzhütter and Juliana Grassteiger. A slight indisposition called him from the festivities to his room, which he never left again. And as a good, faithful shepherd, he taught us in his last hours the most important of all things—how to die. Like a smiling child he fell asleep. Not one of us who saw it has any further fear of death; and we have vowed to ourselves to strictly fulfil our duty in accordance with his example.

I cannot believe it. Restlessly I gaze out of the window to see if he is not coming down the road in his brown cloak. He was already obliged to lean upon a staff;

he was bent with age and his hair was white.

Restlessly I walk by the parsonage; there is no more rapping on the window-panes, no friendly face smiles out at me. I pause a moment, and feel that I must call his name aloud. And I cannot believe that he is gone.

The priest from Holdenschlag was here for the funeral. He was greatly astonished at the general mourning that prevails in the Winkel forests.

Even the brandy-distiller Hannes came up to the grave and shovelled in a clod of earth. Only old Rüpel was nowhere to be seen. He was probably singing the funeral hymn in the peace of the primeval forest. In Winkelsteg the bells spoke most eloquently. And when at last these were also silent, the people quietly returned to their poor, scattered dwellings.

I alone remain and gaze down at the yellow pine coffin. Eighteen years ago I saw this man for the first time. He was standing by the grave in the Wolfsgrube, where the "eater of broken glass" had just been buried. He has been priest in Winkelsteg for twelve years. The people do not know or realise how much they are indebted to him. To-day I look down upon his coffin; yes, that is the end of the Einspanig's "answer."

While I am still reflecting thus, the old housekeeper from the Winkelwarden's, my former hostess, comes limping up to me. She also gazes into the grave, passes her hand over her face, nudges my arm and says: "God give him everlasting peace! He was a good man, although a story-teller. His thoughts flew like a bird over the wide world, which he said was nowhere fastened in with boards. And now—just look down there, Schoolmaster! Down there it is—-God give him everlasting peace—*down there it is fastened in with boards*."

Having pronounced these words she hastily hobbles away again on her crutches.

The old woman is right. However limitless may be the flight of the human spirit in space, man's final resting-place is within the boards of the coffin. Happy sleeper, to thee thy coffin is now boundless space, and but lately the infinite universe was too small for thee![#] Great poet, forgive, that I transform your cradle song into an epitaph.

[#] Schiller's *Cradle Song*.

EASTER, 1832.

The epidemic is over. There are many people going about with pale, haggard countenances.

Since we are not to commemorate the resurrection in the church, the parish is eager to celebrate the Easter festival in some other manner.

The Saturday preceding Easter is over; the cross on the church tower shimmers in the evening glow more brightly than usual. This night is to be transformed into day. A new life is beginning. The people emerge from their homes in gala attire, and the glare of innumerable bonfires is seen on the hills. Are any of the dwellers of the forest aware that at this season the old Germans also lighted festal fires to the Goddess of Spring?

Who could have conceived the idea? Up there on the height stands a solitary, ancient fir-tree, which has been wound to the top with dry branches, moss, and straw.

A short distance away the people have gathered around a little fire, where they are singing songs. The women are there with baskets, and the children are playing with gaily coloured eggs.

It is already late in the night; Lazarus is about to light the Easter torch, when old Rüpel glides through the dark forest and, tearing his rush cap from his head, cries: "May Jesus Christ be praised, Who on the cross was raised!"

We are all surprised to see the old man among us once more, and I urge him to sit down with us and drink a mug of cider.

"Thanks for the honour!" says Rüpel, taking his straw harp from under his coat; and gazing into the fire, he thus begins to speak: "I come from far Jerusalem. On Calvary stand the crosses three, but they are empty now, I see; and in a tomb, just newly made, Christ's body they have gently laid—His soul has entered into hell. Our ancient sires have waited long, amid the flames so fierce and strong, till singed is Abram's hoary hair. And here in this fiery flue is where Moses has sat for many years, his laws forgotten, through burning fears. Adam, the curious, and lovely Eve, who wore no clothes, by your good leave, to horrible torments were exposed. To these has Paradise long been closed. But through Christ's death, 't is opened now. The thief on the right told this to me; as for him on the left, I 'd not allow the truth of whatever his words might be."

"Oh, Rüpel!" the people cry, "if you have nothing else to say, your words are not inspired to-day." Undisturbed by this sneer the old man continues: "To view the sepulchre at early dawn, our well-beloved women forth have gone. A young man sitting by the door they find, and Magdalen, filled with wonder in her mind, while gently toying with her golden tresses, his name and age and country idly guesses. He spake: 'If you 'll allow, fair dames, I 'll say, the dear Lord Jesus rose at break of day.' Then would they, for the honour of their Lord, a *Trinkgeld* give him for this gladsome word. But he has hastened back to heaven's door; I 'd

follow him had I my strength of yore."

Again Rüpel is silent. But since no one has understood his reference to the *Trinkgeld*, he continues: "In the woods does Jesus walk to rest from sorrow and pain most deep. On the quiet heath a shepherd-lad is watching by his white sheep. He weeps as he watches, bitterly, and seeing his deep despair, 'My child, why weepest thou' Jesus asks, 'while the sun shines bright and fair?' Ah, yes, it shines upon the green sod that covers my father's grave, and yesterday did the Saviour die on the cross, and there 's none to save. For who will bid my father arise?' 'See the rocks tremble,' Jesus said; 'the Lord has ascended, my child, to wake to eternal life the dead.'"

The old man is silent and he gazes into the flames. His hair and beard are red, like the Alpine glow, in the reflection of the fire. And this light falls in bands through the trees upon the fresh graves in the neighbouring churchyard.

A deep silence rests upon the assembled people as if on this Easter eve they already awaited the resurrection of the dead. Suddenly the old man raises his head again and his fingers glide gently over his harp-strings of straw; something like mischief lurks in his face, and as if desiring to complete his speech, he says with almost a bold voice: "The simple shepherd shook his head, incredulous was he. The Lord stretched forth to him His hand, within which he could see the sacred scar—'t was just the size a groschen piece would be."

Persuasively enough the old man stretches out his empty hand and many a one lays a *scar* therein—a pfennig or a groschen piece.

He thanks the people politely for the little presents which they bestow upon him, and then disappears in the forest.

Grassteiger sends a messenger to seek for the poor singer, that he may invite him to his table for Easter. But Rüpel is not to be found.

So the night wears on; fortunately it is mild and warm, for no one, not even the convalescents, can be persuaded to return home.

The position of a constellation shows that it is midnight, the beginning of Easter day. A flame shoots up from the straw-bound tree and the towering Easter torch sends its light over the forest valley up to the starry heavens.

Now the men, women, and children shout for joy; but still farther than the sound can reach may be seen the glare of the pillar of fire, proclaiming the glorious day to the surrounding forest land.

And at the same time the women uncover their baskets, that the blessed breath of Easter may fan the gifts of God therein: bread, eggs, and meat. Thus our festival bread receives the consecration which Father Paul cannot administer to it on this day.

Not until nearly morning does the burning tree, with its soaring flame, which might have been seen in Miesenbachgraben, crumble and fall.

We now return to our huts from this celebration on Easter eve.

From this time on, Andreas, thou art not growing younger. Younger? Who has taught thee to prate thus foolishly? Count the silver threads in thy hair, count them if thou canst, thou old man!

I feel as though the priest had taken me with him.

MAY, 1832.

Strange reports are being again circulated about our young master. And this time they are officially confirmed. Hermann has taken possession of his father's estates and thus he has come to be our chief.

As a present he has given the Winkelstegers a respite of ten years for all outstanding liabilities for work and land. This is a good beginning. The Winkelstegers know no other way to express their thanks than by holding a twelve-hour service in the church to pray for the health of the young gentleman.

Hermann is said to be an invalid.

Yesterday Berthold came to see me. Since that time when he found his lost child with the creatures of the forest he poaches no longer, but works industriously at wood-cutting, while his children earn their bread by picking wild berries.

He brought me a bundle of dried leaves, which grow only over in the defile and possess a wonderful healing power, which has restored Aga's health, who for so many years has been an invalid. Lili had gathered and dried the leaves, and then it occurred to the family to send them to the young Herr von Schrankenheim; there was no doubt that by using the herbs he would regain his health. He requested me to forward the medicine, which I gladly agreed to do.

ALPINE GLOW

CORPUS CHRISTI, 1832.

And now the old forest singer also is silent. His life and death have been like a beautiful wild-rose in the wilderness.

It has given me much pleasure to write out his strange sayings, and I will here record his end.

Up on the Breitsteinalm Kropfjodel owns a herdsman's hut. And here during the summer live two of his irrepressible sons, who look after the cattle and, to pass away the time, perpetrate all sorts of mischief. Rüpel had been staying with the lads of late, and had entertained them greatly with his songs and his straw harp. The old man had now become entirely demented and, with his failing sight, was pitiable indeed.

This was just what amused the lads, who made him the butt of all their jests; and he did not dislike it, being glad to make himself serviceable in any way, realising that he was no longer of use to other people.

In the evening he always returned to the hut, where he was given food and allowed to sleep upon the hay-mow.

Early one morning old Rüpel was sitting before the door upon a stone, damp with dew, playing upon his straw harp, at the same time turning his weary eyes up toward the morning glow on the rocks. Suddenly a wild yell resounded in his ears. He started in terror, and saw the two boys standing beside him, laughing. The old man looked at them with a good-natured smile.

"Have you been threshing straw, Rüpel?" Veit asks, pointing to the strange harp-strings.

"And so early!" adds Klaus.

The old man turns, and holding his hand to his lips, he whispers confidentially: "Don't you know the proverb old? The morning's mouth is filled with gold."

"You don't mean it!" Klaus replies sneeringly. "Then its teeth will not last long!" The shepherd-lads shout with laughter at this foolish joke.

"Up there is gold, up there!" And the old man tremblingly points to the glowing cliffs.

"Yes, Rüpel, you are right!" Veit answers seriously; "that is really gold; why don't you climb up and scrape it off?"

Rüpel looks at them in surprise.

"You might get a whole basketful, and perhaps more!" Klaus urges; "then you would be able to build yourself a golden castle, and buy a golden table, and golden wine, a golden harp, and a golden wife!"

"A golden harp!" murmurs Rüpel, his eyes glittering. He passes his hand over his brow. He himself had first spoken of the golden morning, but only in the figurative sense of the proverb—and now, could it really be true?

"And this straw you can put in the manger for Grassteiger's donkey!" cries the impudent Veit.

This contempt for his harp causes a shadow to fall upon the countenance

of the old man.

"My harp, leave that alone, I say; do not make fun of it, I pray."

These words only irritated the youthful tormentors. "I 'll show you how to play upon this harp!" Veit answered, passing his hand over the strings, and breaking them in pieces with a rattling noise. The lads then darted away.

The old man sat a while motionless. He stared at the broken harp, wiped his eyes with both hands, and endeavoured to arouse himself from his dream; he could not believe that it was true. His only possession, his all, they had ruined—his harp.

Not until the sun was shining brightly on the rocks above did he raise his white head. He hung the bent branch with the broken straw over his shoulder, gazed up at the cliffs, all radiant with light, and with faltering steps tottered away toward the precipice, over which the water fell and rippled, looking in the sunshine like liquid gold.

On the evening of the same day the two shepherd-lads were once more merrily performing their household tasks before the hearth of their hut. They made themselves flour dumplings, which they called *foxes*, because they fried them until they were brown. The herd had been gathered in from the fields, and was now safe in the stalls.

The lads were always gay, but particularly so on holiday nights. When the old harpist was at home, they teased him; if he was not there, they teased each other. On this day Rüpel was still absent, so Klaus sprang like a monkey upon Veit's shoulders, rode upon his neck, his legs hanging down in front, and cried: "Donkey, who is riding?" and Veit retorted: "One donkey rides another."

Thus the lads amused themselves. Then they ate their dumplings, and with the soot from the pan painted mustaches on their faces. They already aspired to whiskers, and if they only could kiss some young girl, that, according to the proverb, would encourage the growth. Rüpel, they think, might spin silver strings for the harp from his long beard.

The old man had not yet arrived; could the joking in the morning have offended him?—The boys did not like to talk about it. They felt a slight remorse, and so, putting a piece of dumpling into a wooden bowl, they placed it upon Rüpel's bed in the hay-mow. In doing this, they were again seized with a mischievous idea; they barricaded the place with rakes and pitchforks. Now, when the old man returned, he would bump his nose and grumble until at last he came upon the dumpling, which would requite him for all the rest.

On this night the boys slept particularly well. And when they awoke the bright sunbeams were already peeping through the cracks in the wall.

But the old man's bed was still barricaded with rakes and pitchforks, and the food remained untouched.

Klaus went to the herd in the stall; Veit left the house. And what a glorious day it was! The fields and the woods were fresh, bright, and laden with dew, and the morning air had kissed the clouds from the sky. A bird was warbling gaily upon the gable of the hut, and the brook splashed merrily into the trough.

Veit went to the spring. The mountaineers like so well to bathe their hands and faces in the cold water, which causes all drowsiness to disappear and the eyes and heart to become bright—bright as the young day. Veit industriously combed his dishevelled locks with his fingers, and held both hands under the spout.—How comforting is the cool, trickling water, Veit!—But in the stream a blood-red thread was spinning itself, which swam and curled, forming little rings in the hollow of his hand. Frightened, the lad withdrew his hands and gazed into the water, until more threads and filaments appeared, twined and merged into one another, then separated and scattered.

Veit hastened into the stall: "Klaus, come quick; there is something strange in the water to-day!"

Klaus ran to the spot, looked, and said in an undertone: "'T is blood!"

"A chamois must have fallen into the stream above," added Veit.

"But Rüpel hasn't come home yet!" Klaus declared, and a little later he continued: "It will be easy enough to find out if it is chamois' blood."

Veit was as pale as death. "Klaus," he said, "come up the ravine with me!"

They walked along the little stream; the water had now become clear again.

Lower and lower the sunbeams penetrated among the silent rocks; higher and higher, and hurrying more with every step, the two lads climbed, forcing themselves through narrow, gloomy defiles, which had been torn asunder by the water in violent storms, or hollowed out in peaceful seasons. The lads spoke not a word to one another; they struggled through raspberry-bushes and underbrush, wet with dew; they clambered up the steep precipice; they heard a roaring sound, for they were approaching the spot where the water fell like a golden band over the sunny cliff.

"Here is something; look!" Klaus cried suddenly. They discovered two straws fastened together, and near them the bow made from the pine-bough. On the bushes of the cliff hung a number of torn and broken straws, and below, in the depths of the abyss—in the depths of the abyss lay the old man.

His head was crushed; in his left hand he rigidly held the branch of an Alpine rose-bush. Over his right hand the water was trickling.

So they found him. Who could tell how he came to his death? Perhaps he was searching up there for the gold of the Alpine glow, with which to make himself a new harp, and while doing this, the poor old man had plunged over the cliff into the defile below. While falling, he had evidently tried to hold himself by the rose-bush, and the branch, with its one brilliant blossom, had remained in

his hand.—Thus ended the life of the forest singer.

On this Corpus Christi festival we laid him in the ground. There were not many people present. But the birds in the tree-tops sang a melodious slumber song to their brother.

No one in the Winkel forests seemed so poor as this man, and yet no one was so rich. The all-powerful, mysterious, sacred gift of folk-song found its embodiment in this strange being.

Upon Father Paul's grave stands a cross, made from the wood of an ancient pine. Upon the singer's mound I plant a young, living tree.

JULY, 1832.

We are having trouble with Kropfjodel's two boys. They refuse to remain in the Alm hut, insisting that in the night they hear a ceaseless rapping and gnawing upon the hay-mow. Even though it is mid-summer, Kropfjodel is obliged to close the hut and drive down the herd. Veit will no longer wash himself at a spring. He sees in every brook drops of blood, which cling reproachfully to his hands—the same hands which destroyed the old man's harp.

AUTUMN, 1834.

The school has been closed for a few weeks. The children are assisting at the harvest; this has ripened late and must now be garnered before the frosts. The rocky heights are already covered with snow.

I should like once more to climb the Graue Zahn that I might look out over the world. I am living a very retired and solitary life. The old people have died; the younger ones I have educated, but not to be my companions. I am their instructor, but now they desert me, and when, old and grey, I shall sit upon my lonely bench, they will consider my solitude the natural lot of a schoolmaster.

The new priest is a young man, who is better suited to the people; he enters into the sports in the tavern and the bowling-alley. When ordering the new prayer-book from the capital, a short time ago, he also sent for some playing-cards.

Lazarus and his wife Juliana have become owners of the Grassteiger inn; they carry on the business, and sell tobacco and all kinds of trifles. They also keep cloths of foreign manufacture, for there are those in the parish who, no longer

content with fustian and ticking jackets, wish to have something especially fine to wear; just for the novelty of it, they say. But I notice this desire soon receives another name.

As in former times, bailiffs occasionally roam about in our woods looking for smugglers and deserters.

SUMMER, 1835.

I relate these things only to the patient leaves of my journal; they will remember the events longer than I, or than all Winkelsteg. I have come to look upon it as a duty to record our fortunes. Other generations will follow who should know our history.

We are sometimes visited by hail-storms and inundations which destroy the harvests, interrupting for years the struggling peasants in the development of their prosperity.

It has happened again this year. The people are now drying straw and bringing it to the mills—there are a half dozen of them in the valley—and this will be the bread for the winter.

In *my* life there are no storms and there is no sunshine. But at all events I intend to have my spring and my summer, for I have now added a contrivance to my clock. I have taken out the metal bells from the striking-apparatus and made instead, out of a spring and two bits of wood, something which every hour imitates the call of a quail. In this region the bird is rarely heard, but in my room it is now summer at all seasons. The children and I are enjoying it greatly.

Over in the Holdenschlag defile through which a road has been recently constructed, on the borderline of the Winkelsteg parish, the peasants have set up a *weather-cross*. It has triple cross-bars, with carvings representing the instruments of our Lord's martyrdom, and is reverently regarded as a protection against inclement weather. The aged Schwamelfuchs says, however, that it is more harmful than useful; it prevents the storms, which all have their origin on the Zahn, from proceeding farther, consequently they descend upon Winkelsteg.

As a result of this remark, the peasants have torn down the cross. To offset this

the Holdenschlagers have built a similar one near the same place, that the storms may be confined here and not reach their fields.

Now the Winkelstegers are doubly embarrassed, and I, their schoolmaster, with them.

Notwithstanding all my teaching, I have been unable to destroy the superstitions bred under these felt hats. Teaching school is a hard enough life, although I seem to spend much of my time in idleness. What a change from those first years when we founded the parish! There remains enough to be done, but the old priest is dead, and the new one ignores me.

I am not yet so advanced in years and I am still at work. I teach a few hours, rule the writing-books, cut the pens, split a little kindling-wood, and perform a number of small duties in the church; this fills neither my time nor my thoughts.

I spend many sleepless nights, and while lying idly in my bed, I am haunted by maddening memories—old times, delicate blooming faces and deathly pale ones. And then I hear a voice saying: "Thou hast mistaken thy way; thou mightest have lived in splendour and happiness." ... I spring from my couch, tear the violin from the wall and scrape the strings that the ghosts may disappear.

And the strings whisper comforting words, telling me that I may be content, I have had the happiness to work profitably for the common weal, to strive constantly for the perfection of my own character. I am surrounded by the glory of nature, and I have learned to know the minds of great men through my books, and I shall still achieve much, according to my strength, and then, content, close my eyes.

WALDLILIE IN THE LAKE

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION, 1835.

An unexpected event has recently occurred.

A few days ago I received a letter from my former pupil, our present master.

Hermann wrote that he had used the herbs, which I had sent him from the wood-cutter, and since then the condition of his health was somewhat improved. This had suggested to him the advisability of visiting the mountains, with which he was not yet acquainted, and of spending a few days here in the mild early autumn. His intention would be to travel alone, for people, especially those of the city, were unspeakably repulsive to him, that being probably a peculiarity of his nervous state, which he was unable to overcome. Weary of the world, he

wished to seek restoration in the wilderness and in the primeval freshness of the Alps. He still remembered me, his former tutor, as well as my services in the Winkel forests, and he begged me to be his guide in the mountains and on a certain day to meet him in the village of Grabenegg.

Grabenegg, a good day's journey from here, is not a village, but consists only of a few stone-cutters' huts which stand near the Ziller road and receive their name from the mountain defile which begins at this point.

On the day mentioned I arrived at the appointed place and there awaited the master of the forest, who also came as agreed, having driven over in a hired carriage. I then proceeded with him toward the high mountains. Hermann's appearance thoroughly alarmed me; I should not have recognised him, but he, on the contrary, at the first glance addressed me as Andreas. His greeting was polite, although the poor man showed plainly that he was surfeited with life.

The road extended as far as the rocky mountain-pass. Here Herr von Schrankenheim sent back the carriage and over the rough paths, trodden by the deer, we entered the wilderness, where, upon the heights, gleaming glaciers were lodged. My companion walked ahead, sometimes gloomily and defiantly, sometimes with the eagerness of the hunter on the track of the deer. I did not know where the man wished to go, or what he desired; he himself did not know. I was seized with anxiety lest we should not find shelter for the night, but on my communicating my fears to him, he burst into a laugh and strode onward.

Suddenly the idea occurred to me, what if I should be wandering with a lunatic! Had the Graue Zahn fallen at my feet, my heart could not have beaten more quickly than at this thought.

I begged and warned the Baron, but I was unable to stop him; he would pause only for a moment at the edge of the precipices, cast one glance into the abyss below and then hasten forward. His limbs trembled and great drops stood upon his forehead, as at last in the gathering twilight he fell exhausted beside a mountain spring.

In that hour I promised the dear God everything, everything if He would but lead us to a shelter. He heard my prayer. Not far from the spring, between the two walls of the defile, I discovered a hut, such as are erected by the chamois-hunters.

And under this roof, in the midst of the terrors of the wilderness, I made a fire and from moss and shrubs prepared a bed for the Baron.

We ate the food which we had brought with us and drank the water from the spring. When the meal was over, my companion leaned back against the mossy wall murmuring: "How refreshing! How refreshing!"

And after a while he looked at me and said: "Friend, I thank you for being with me. I am ill. But here I shall be healed. This is the water which the hunted

deer drinks, is it not? I have led a wild life—very wild! I have found that man is not a toy! And now at last I have fortunately escaped the doctors. I have no desire to lie in a metallic coffin; it savours of pomp, of gold and silk, of artificial tears—*pfui*!"

To my relief he soon fell asleep. I watched the whole night, endeavouring to devise a means of taking the poor, sick man to some human habitation. We were in a remote place and, to reach Winkelsteg, we should be obliged to cross the mountains.

The next morning, after I had made a new fire and the sun was already shining through the chinks in the wall, the man awoke, and looking about him in astonishment, said: "Good-morning, Andreas!"

He then began to prepare for the journey.

"I wish to climb the high mountain which they call the Graue Zahn," he said; "I should like once to look down upon this world from a high place. Can you not accompany me and arrange to take one or two men with us? Have no anxiety on my account. Yesterday was a bad day. I wandered, restless and forlorn and without aim, through the wilderness, endeavouring to escape from myself as I had escaped from men in the world without. I was overcome with all the pain of my misery. But this air is healing me—oh, this pure, blessed air!"

On leaving the hut, we were obliged to shade our eyes with our hands, the light was so dazzling. The branches of the pines were a golden red and in the shadow of the thicket trembled dew-drops, which already reflected the sunlight through the trees. The birds were holding a jubilee and squirrels were frisking about looking for their mates and their breakfast. The dry leaves of a young beech were gently swaying in the mild morning air.

Hermann smiled and we proceeded on our way. A thin mist shimmered through the branches, and a cool breeze fanned our cheeks. Suddenly a flood of light filled the forest, and each tree stretched out its arms—silently and reverently pointing to a wonderful picture.

A peaceful lake lies at our feet, stretching far into the distance, blue, green, black—who can tell the colour? On the banks of the eastern side, the dark mountain forest, softly veiled in bright sunbeams, slopes upward from the grey, pebbly beach. On the opposite shore towers a massive wall of rock, behind which are piled crag upon crag, precipice upon precipice up to the highest peaks and cones and spires which pierce the blue sky above. The mountains, ever varying in form, stretch away in a great half circle, glorious beyond all description. Here below are grassy slopes dotted with tufts of juniper-bushes, green as velvet. In the distance are waterfalls, milk-white and slender as a thread, their roaring heard by no human ear, for the sound is lost in space; beyond on the mountain sides are rocky wastes and dry river-beds, each little stone clearly outlined in the crystalline air;

farther on deep gorges, their dark recesses filled with snow; and above all tower the massive weather-beaten rocks, silent and sinister in their eternal repose.

An eagle soars into the blue ether: now like a black spot, now like a silvery leaf the bird circles about the rocky peaks. And on the distant heights, shining glaciers softly lean against the red gleaming sides of precipices, on which the chisel of Time is constantly cutting, engraving thereon the never-ending history and the inflexible laws of nature.

I see it still, see everything clear and distinct before my eyes,—the lake in the valley, above which towers the Graue Zahn.

I had already beheld similar scenes, nevertheless the glory of this one quite overcame me. But the Baron stood there like a statue. He gazed, absorbed in the endless picture; his trembling lips inhaled the air of the lake.

We then descended to the shady banks, where the water was splashing over the worn stones.

"This lake so smooth to-day, must be very wild at times," my companion remarked. "Just see how far up the precipice the stones have been washed smooth by the waves."

By these words I perceived that Hermann had an intelligent eye for nature. "Yes indeed, this lake can become a boisterous companion, although now it looks so mild and peaceful."

A remarkable incident then suddenly occurred. Below, where the bushes dipped into the lake, a human head emerged. The water dripped from the long, brown curls and blooming face. The neck and throat were somewhat sunburnt, but the softly moulded, undulating shoulders were like snow-white marble. A young, beautiful woman, a mermaid! *Mein Gott*, it was enough to make one a poet!

The Baron, being shorter-sighted than I, approached the apparition, and in the same moment the figure sank out of sight and the alders, swayed over the water as before.

Hermann gazed at me. I gazed into the lake, the surface of which moved in soft rings and bubbles and dark lines, here smooth as a mirror, yonder trembling and rippling. But the head of the maiden did not appear again. Several minutes elapsed while with a beating heart I looked for the bather, for who knew if she were able to swim, and the thought suddenly flashed through my mind: What if the girl out of modesty had sought a grave for herself beneath the waves!

After much anxiety and alarm I at last drew the unconscious child from the water. With our small experience, we finally restored her to life—to her life of seventeen years. And thereupon the shy creature, scarcely revived and having been clothed by our assistance, sprang to her feet and darted away through the forest, her fright giving her strength.

The Baron, holding his head with both hands, cried: "Andreas! my malady is returning; I have visions, I have seen a fairy!"

"That is no fairy," I answered; "it is the daughter of the wood-cutter who sent you the herbs."

It was Waldlilie.

A FEW DAYS LATER.

To-day the Baron rode away from Winkelsteg on Grassteiger's white horse.

Nothing came of the proposed ascent of the Zahn. After Waldlilie had escaped from us there by the lake, Hermann said to me: "My fate is sealed; I shall not climb the mountain. Take me to your Winkelsteg, Andreas."

And here he remained three days, inspecting our arrangements and drinking a great deal of our water. The people could hardly believe that he was the owner of the forest, and one old woman said that she expected the owner of the forest to wear a coat of gold, while this man's coat was only plain brown cloth. His face was an ashen grey, but under the pallor I discovered signs of vitality. I recently remarked that he was surfeited with life; now I believe he is hungry for life. He is in a very strange condition. Yesterday he sent for Berthold, that he might pay him for the herbs.

Old Rothbart died some time ago, so Berthold has now become forester and lives with his family in the Winkel-warden's house. In a few days the marriage ceremony of Berthold and Aga will be quietly celebrated in the church. The Baron has arranged it. This has made me very happy. Hermann has a thoroughly sound heart; a sick man could not act so promptly and with so much assurance. But he is a peculiar man notwithstanding. Before he left, he came to me in the schoolhouse and, drawing me down beside him on a bench, said: "Schoolmaster! She prized her maidenhood more than her life; could I have believed that such a woman existed on earth? The shameless coquettes who dwell in palaces, how recklessly have they played with me! You, Erdmann, have had the experience of looking up at the world from a lower station in life, have become acquainted with it and had your fill. I have viewed it from above, which is quite a different side, full of splendour and beauty, but as contemptible as the other. Nothing extraordinary has befallen me, Erdmann, I have merely lived and have been unhappy. I, too, belong to this forest—Andreas—I, too, belong here! But I must now return to my old father.... God forbid that I should take her with me! Happily she does not know the world. I leave her in your care, Schoolmaster. Should she feel the want of learning, then teach her; if not, then cherish and guard her as a wild-lily of the

woods. And keep my secret, Schoolmaster. When I have recovered, I will come again."

By these significant words, having shown that a great change had taken place in his feelings, he rode away towards Holdenschlag on Grassteiger's horse, a workman from this place accompanying him.

Others would have been ruined by the kind of life our young master has led; it has made him a peculiar man. His deep nature has indeed been shaken, but not destroyed.

On the day of his departure, three search-warrants arrived, saying that the young Herr von Schrankenheim, who had long been suffering from melancholia, had strayed away and disappeared. He had probably gone to the mountains, for he had dressed himself like a mountain traveller. And then the clothing, as well as every detail concerning my dear pupil Hermann, was as minutely described as that of an escaped convict. It is all right, he will return. He has merely visited his forest possessions. Must he then travel in the exact manner of the rich? May a Schrankenheim never step beyond his barriers?

Thank God, he is the master for Winkelsteg!

And how relieved I am, for now Berthold and his family are saved. They have weighed so heavily upon my conscience.

The obscure words of the Baron, which he said to me at parting, are partially explained. Waldlilie now comes to school and we practise reading, writing, and everything connected therewith as far as I understand these subjects myself. She is very industrious and apt, can think independently and is becoming lovelier every day.

Her name is more and more suited to her, for there is something lily-like about the girl; she is so slender, white, and gentle, and yet there are traces of the sun's kiss upon her round cheeks and fresh lips. There is also something still clinging to her which she caught from the deer on that long winter night, the graceful alertness and the eyes.

Oh, Andreas! Dost thou look at all thy pupils so closely?

But then she pleases everyone.

She is beloved by the poor, for she knows how to help them. She has comforted many a sad heart by her warm friendly words; she has cheered many a discouraged one by her tender singing. And it is beautiful how all the children in Winkelsteg know Waldlilie and cling to her. If the priest were only living, what great pleasure he would take in such a nature!

And the girl is courageous; regardless of wild animals and vicious people, she climbs the mountains to gather fruit and plants. But then it is written on her

forehead: "All evil is powerless before thee!"

She recently brought me a blue gentian with bright red stripes, such as grow only over in the glen.

"Have you been by the lake again, Lili?" I asked. Turning as red as the stripes on the flower, she hastened away.

Perhaps she never knew that I was one of the men who had surprised her at her bath in the lake, and had so alarmed her that she would have gone to her destruction had not one of us brought her to dry land.

The occurrence must be like a dream to her; let it never be mentioned again.

But of the fine young master of the forest, who has rescued her family from distress and poverty, she speaks with pleasure and enthusiasm.

SUMMER, 1837.

It is fulfilled at last. The signs of it have been in the air since one day in the spring, when Hermann, as though newly awakened to powerful manhood, arrived again in Winkelsteg and at once asked me concerning Waldlilie.

He no longer takes pleasure in the noisy, rioting circle called by many the *world*, although the term is entirely misapplied. Hermann has fortunately passed the dangerous crisis. He has now entered mature life, where one longs for the glories of nature and the inner worth of man. Waldlilie has become a wonderfully beautiful young woman, and the pains which I have taken in the development of her intellectual powers have been richly rewarded.

And thus it is fulfilled. A Schrankenheim has burst his barriers. Two days ago, on the festival of our Lord's Ascension, the master of the forest and Waldlilie were united in the church.

Over in the glen by the lake, Hermann wished to erect a summer villa, where he and his wife might spend a few weeks every year in the early autumn. But Waldlilie begged him to abandon the idea. She was very fond of that region, but she could not visit the lake.

They have left us and gone to the beautiful town of Salzburg.

WINTER, 1842.

The years pass by in monotony and solitude; why does no one call me the Einspanig?

The young wife afterwards changed her mind and the summer villa now stands in the glen by the lake. It is very lively there for a few weeks in the early autumn, and the happy home of our master's family is watched over by the grim mountains.

The forester, now a grandfather, lives with his wife the entire year in this house, and the brothers and sisters of Frau von Schrankenheim may hope for a better lot than was prophesied at their cradle.

The old Herr von Schrankenheim was blessed with two grandchildren before he died in Salzburg in the winter of 1840.

Winkelsteg has gained nothing by the house in the glen. A good road has been built to it, and it has now become the headquarters for superintending the forest. Strangers visit the place, and there the great hunting-parties are organised. In the glen, formerly so lonely and neglected, now stands the *manor-house*; but Winkelsteg remains the same poor parish for peasants and wood-cutters, and the condition of things here is not improving, and the schoolmaster—let us not think about that, Andreas.

I recently sewed a number of sheets of paper together for a writing-book, the cover of which I have made from white linden-wood. In this book I now lead a secret life, unknown to anyone.[#]

[#] This *writing-book* was not discovered among the records.—The Editor.

AUGUST 1, 1843.

To-night a little boy was born to Reitbauer in Karwässer. They brought him here to be baptised, but, as the priest had gone away for a few days and the child was feeble, I administered a private baptism. At the father's request I also stood godfather. The three beloved groschen inherited from my aunt and formerly my christening present, shall now go to the little Peter.

SUMMER, 1847.

When I came into these forests, I found the people scattered, starving, and uncounted. To-day I see before me a new generation.

A village surrounds the church. And about the village stand apple- and pear-trees bearing fruit; an endeavour has been made throughout Winkelsteg to cultivate the wild fruit-trees, and for the most part it has succeeded.

On Sundays people dressed in gala attire come from all directions, the men, wearing black leather knee-breeches, the women, padded velvet spencers and droll-looking wired caps, decorated with gilt and ribbons. Their clothing is no longer of home-made material. Formerly they wore the linen from their own flax, the wool from their sheep, the shoe leather from their cattle, the skins and furs from the game which they shot. To-day peddlers go about in the Winkel forests, exchanging garments and frippery for the valuable raw material.

The young people have wider views than the older ones, but they are far more pretentious; besides, they show too little respect for the past from which they themselves have sprung. But they still smoke tobacco and drink brandy, as their ancestors have done before them.

What can the old schoolmaster do alone? Ah, if my priest were only living!

The little Reiter-Peter, my godchild, is a sweet lad; but a great misfortune has overtaken him—by a fall from his bed he has lost his voice.

How gladly would I give him mine, for it is no longer of use to me! It has become quite hoarse, and no one listens to it now.

SPRING, 1848.

How this is going to affect me I do not know. Perhaps it would be best to take a few weeks' vacation and go away from here.

Outside in the cities the troops are playing havoc; they are breaking into palaces and barricading streets. For that reason she is coming. The general's wife, Hermann's beautiful sister, whom I have so foolishly adored, is coming.

In the house by the lake there is no more room, so she flees with her children to us. Thank God that our Winkelsteg is able to offer her a refuge in these times!

And I will not go away after all. I will remain and be strong and not betray myself. I will look straight into her eyes once before I die.

I feel that God means well by me. The light of her eyes will illumine the dark wooded hills, her breath will soften and consecrate the Alpine air. And even

though she goes away again, Winkelsteg, where she has dwelt, will be my home.

We have built a beautiful high arch of pine-boughs before the house and decorated the altar in the church with wreaths.

Everything is ready, but no one has thought to have the stones removed from the road. Such women have tenderer feet than those dwelling in the mountains.

For a day and two nights I have been digging the stones out of the road. The people may laugh, but I am only thankful that the moon was shining.

A FEW DAYS LATER.

Now they are here. She, the two children, and the servants. I need not have removed the stones, for they drove in carriages. Nearly all Winkelsteg was assembled on the square when they arrived. The priest made an address of welcome; I crept into the schoolhouse. But I was thoroughly alarmed, for they alighted directly in front of my window, and I thought they were about to enter.

I saw her very plainly; she has grown younger. She was hardly out of her carriage before she was chasing a butterfly. But that was her youngest daughter. She herself——

By my faith, I should not have recognised her.

Of all her old mirrors with golden frames, not one is so true or has so faithfully retained her glorious image to the present day as my heart has done.

Now the image has disappeared and my youth has vanished like a mist.

JUNE, 1848.

Yesterday I wandered the whole day among the mountains, and even ascended the Zahn. On the way I asked myself a dozen times: Why art thou climbing up here, thou old child? Upon the summit I shall find the answer, I thought. I saw the kingdom of the Alps. I gazed into the blue depths of the glen below where by the black sheet of water stands the manor-house. I strained my eyes toward the south, my eyes already weak, but—it was all in vain. As often as I have climbed up there, I have never, never yet beheld the sea.

They say it is visible on a clear winter day. Besides this sight, I have nothing

more to wish for now; but that one thing I still desire.

In descending I gathered a bunch of Alpine roses, *Edelweiss*, spikenard, arnica, and other flowers and plants and pinned them on the front of my hat, like a love-sick lad. For whom art thou taking home the nosegay? For wife and child? Ah, thou stupid old man!

But when I am away from her, as I was up there on the Alm, I see that she is still lovely. She will surely accept a bouquet of Alpine roses from me. I will be polite and not force it upon her. Had I but a single drop of old Rüpel's blood in my veins, I would recite a poem appropriate to the flowers! These were my thoughts; it is astonishing that I am still so daring!

When I reached Lauterhöhe, I seated myself under a tree to rest. My meditations were suddenly interrupted by something pulling at my hat; I turned to see what had disturbed me. A brown cow stood there chewing my mountain nosegay.

I started up, about to strike the stupid animal with my stick, when it occurred to me: Good creature, perhaps my flowers have given you more pleasure than they would afford her, so God bless them to you! She will drink your nourishing milk as a recompense.

As, late in the evening, I came down to the village, her windows were brightly lighted.

One of the lady's servants, Jacob, is a jack-at-all-trades. He is exceedingly clever, can play on musical instruments, do tailoring, make shoes and draw, and finally he has even made a drawing of me. I did not wish to sit for it, but he contrived, until at last, dressed in all my finery, I took my seat on the block of wood yonder. After having made the sketch, he then painted it in colours, the result being most remarkable. The red neckerchief was particularly well done.

He has given me the picture, which I look at in the privacy of my room; but the school children must not see it!

I think I will hide it.

I thought I should make the acquaintance of her children, but they speak a foreign tongue which I do not understand. The young gentleman is off with the horses and dogs; the girl would like to spend her time in the meadows with the flowers and beetles, but she is forbidden to do this. She is already too old to be allowed childish pleasures.

A day or two ago Hermann—God forgive me for still calling him by this name—came over from the glen to visit his sister. She excused herself on the plea of illness. Jacob told me that the two were not on very friendly terms, for she would recognise no sister-in-law who carried about with her the odour of pitch.

To-day the lady gave a dinner to which the priest and Grassteiger were invited. A slice from the roast and a glass of wine were sent to me. Fortunately a beggar was just passing the house, and the food was not wasted. So to-day two beggars have been fed.

At the dinner, Jacob said, they spoke of me. The lady then related to them how, as a poor student, I had once lived on charity for a time in her father's house, how I had then left the school and returned a vagabond, whereupon her father, out of pity, had sent me to the forest, where he had since supported me.

Now thou knowest all, Andreas Erdmann; but not a grey hair on that account, for it would only contaminate the white ones.

AUGUST, 1848.

They have gone away. Jacob has left here for me a pair of black trousers and a white glove.

JULY, 1852.

The title-deeds to the land have at last been conferred, and now most of the peasants in Winkelsteg are their own masters. They are to be heartily congratulated. But their eyesight seems to have become very dim, for none of them recognise me when I pass them on the road.

This summer I was once more on the mountain. I thought I could almost catch a glimpse of the sea towards the south. But it was only mist.

By this excursion, either from the dazzling light in the distance or the extreme change from heat to cold, I have again brought on the serious trouble with my eyes, which has lasted for many weeks and hindered me in my work.

I think the dumb Reiter-Peter should be taught a little music. He must have some way of expressing his feelings. It is hard to realise the suffering caused by keeping everything to one's self.

Peter is clever; he already plays on the zither and the violin. Later I must teach him the organ. The Winkelstegers will need music for their mass in the future as well as now. I shall not always be here.

Lazarus, or, as they now call him, the Winkel landlord, is kind to me and to everyone; all Winkelsteg have a friend in him. But his old trouble recurs now and then. If, for example, something excites him, he has a hard struggle to control himself. I have suggested that he should try picking up the beads from the rosary again; but perhaps that would no longer avail; then there is great danger that he will fall to drinking. He would be ruined if he had not such a good wife, and Juliana knows how to manage him; for her sake he will endure the keenest thirst.

The brandy-distiller Schorschl—Hannes is no longer living—occasionally breaks my windows. He considers me his greatest enemy, because I warn the children against brandy.

I mend the windows by pasting paper over them. But as long as I live I shall teach the young people to shun this evil.

1855.

Our priest has been changed for a very young one. The latter says that the curacy has been sadly neglected, but he will now endeavour to improve matters. He has ordered prayers, penances, and pilgrimages. His sermons are as cutting as lye; and there are so many sore hearts.

Since the new priest arrived I am quite superfluous in the school. He fills the hours with teaching religion.

The children are capable of more than they thought—they know the whole catechism by heart.

The emperor and the pope are said to have issued a special edict for the salvation of souls, and in Winkelsteg the devil has never been so much talked about as at present.

AUGUST 24, 1856.

To-day a public examination took place in the school. The dean from the capital was here. He seemed well satisfied with the religious teaching; as to the rest, he shook his head. On arriving, he greeted me politely; on leaving, he did not see me.

I often sit a long time up in the burial-ground under the old trees. This grove has been preserved from the great forest, and here the parish is being gathered, thus making another link in the chain of human history. I may sit here as long as I please, no one will call me. Would that the dead did not sleep so soundly!

I am an old spy. My eyes are weak and weary, yet I sometimes see what is taking place. Through the board fence I have just been observing Reiter-Peter seize the hand of Schirmtanner's daughter and refuse to let it go. By a thousand gestures he was telling her something; the blood mounted to his cheeks, but the girl continually said: "No, Peter, no!"

Then the lad suddenly took his violin and played for Rosa, something which I had never taught him. It was wonderful, and I did not suppose that he could play like that.

He continued until Rosa finally threw herself into his arms, crying: "Stop, it pains me so! Peter, I do like you!"

Young people are exceedingly demonstrative. If a lad has no voice with which to speak, he declares his love on the violin.

WINTER, 1857.

A diary is a faithful friend. No matter what one confides to it, it forgets nothing and discloses nothing. When I look through these records, I cannot realise that I have experienced and written all this. It is a strange history.

And who have I been! From the old man that I felt myself to be when I entered these forests, I became a younger one, from a young man I have grown to be a poor old creature, before whose half-blind eyes the notes dance up and down on the page, when I play the organ for mass in the church. The people have pushed me aside.

Mein Gott, others fare no better, and I desire nothing; I have done my part and am content.

1864.

For fifty years I have not been out of these forests.

The woodspeople come into existence, live and die and not once in their lives do they climb the mountain, from where one can behold the glorious picture and, on clear winter days, the sea.

The *sea*! How my heart swells at the thought! Yonder moves a boat, and within stands a youth beckoning—

Heinrich! What is it?

How foolish of me to have spent my whole life in the Winkel, when I should have been a sailor!

CHRISTMAS EVE, 1864.

The track is a short one, but the young people are sliding upon their sleds and boards over the frozen snow, from the Winkel-warden's house down to the churchyard wall. And how eager they are, as with glowing eyes and cheeks they shout at their sport!—I am waiting for Reiter-Peter; he is coming with his violin to try the new manger song with me. In the meantime I am looking at the happy children and writing.

The little ones wear fur caps, and they stumble and puff before they reach the top with their sleds—and they are down in ten seconds. Much exertion and a short pleasure! I only hope none of them will bump their heads against the wall!—Would that I might glide down to it on my sled—and never return!

Peter is coming. "Sleep sweetly, sleep in holy peace!" The song is so lovely, and to-morrow——

THE LAST PAGE

.... and to-morrow ....

With these words the story closes.

I had read two long rainy days. I had read the experiences of a strange life, covering a period from the last century up to the preceding Christmas festival.

.... and to-morrow ....

My head was heavy and hot. I gazed towards the door, fully expecting the man would enter and go on with his writing and tell us what happened the next morning, as well as what afterwards occurred. For this is no ending and no leave-taking; it is a hopeful look into the future, a long breath of relief, a morning star.

I felt almost convinced that the schoolmaster was still living. He was surely wandering somewhere in unknown parts, this poor man with his great, nameless longing, such as all feel more or less, the longing for the whole, the infinite, the true—incomprehensible though it be—wherein our striving, weary souls hope to find repose and deliverance.

A feeling possessed me that I must hasten forth and seek everywhere for the good, old, childlike man.—And what a terrible struggle and effort he had made! A vain endeavour after the pursuits of society, a painful crushing of his rising youthful passion, a despairing plunge into the entanglements of life, an adventurous journey over the world, a fearful awakening and disappointment, a flight into the barren wilderness, a quiet continuous toiling in humility and sacrifice, a great success, a deep contentment. Old age approaches, a young generation and new conditions no longer offer opportunity for work; a sad withdrawal into himself, desertion and loneliness, vague doubts and dreams and a quiet resignation and peace. In his old age, in his helplessness and simplicity he becomes a child; a smiling, happy, visionary child. But the longing and imagination of his youth still remain. And he has received a great reward, a compensation which reconciles us to his fate, and which the world can never give, for it only comes to one after the true fulfilment of life; it is the peace of the soul.

The quail's call on the clock sounded eight. I carefully locked the sheets of paper in the drawer and went down towards the tavern. It was already growing dark; a chilling melancholy brooded over everything, and through the fine dripping rain a sharp breeze was blowing.

Lazarus was standing before the door. He turned his face skyward, saying: "There is going to be a change." He was speaking to himself. He certainly had no idea that the young stranger now approaching him knew his whole history.

On this same evening the host was very sociable, but I was silent and soon retired to my schoolhouse to rest.

How changed was my view of everything here from that of two days before. I felt almost at home in this Alpine village where I, like the schoolmaster, had grown old.

And the man who had founded and developed the parish with his life's blood was now to be cast aside and forgotten?

No, there were traces of him everywhere. "Invisible he wanders around day and night in Winkelsteg, at every hour!"—the charcoal-burner had said.

The next morning was so dazzling that the light penetrated through my closed eyelids. On opening the window I saw that it was a bright, clear winter day.

I sprang to my feet. It had snowed, and the white covering lay over the whole valley and upon all the roofs and trees.

I was soon ready for my Alpine climb.

"To-day, *mein Herr*," said the hostess, "to-day it will indeed be fine on the mountain, if you do not lose your way in the snow. He who has patience may hope for everything in this world, even beautiful weather in Winkelsteg. But you must take someone with you." Then turning to her husband she said: "Dost thou not think that Reiter-Peter would like to earn a nice little fee for acting as guide?"

"Reiter-Peter," I said, "yes, he will suit me; for I do not care to talk on the way."

"Ah, you already know that Peter cannot talk; yes, he is quiet enough, when he has n't his violin with him."

Peter was the same dumb lad who two days before had met me by the church door after mass. So, provided with the necessary equipment, I climbed the mountain with the schoolmaster's godchild.

The snow was soft and glistened in the morning sunlight. Soon the prostrate plants and flowers were again standing erect, and the birds sang and hopped from branch to branch, shaking the flakes from the trees. The grass showed itself fresh and green through the rose-tinted whiteness of the ground, and the mountains stood out in bold relief against the sky. Summer and winter were blended in a most wonderful manner.

We walked by the burial-ground. Peter removed his hat, carrying it in his hand until we had passed the sacred spot. The old trees interwove their tops and branches over the few mounds, forming an arch like that of a Gothic temple. A veil of snow covered it, but beneath its shadow upon the graves flourished fresh grass and a tangle of moss, which climbed over and clung to the trunks, or lay in confusion upon the grey, bare, nameless wooden crosses.

I wished to see the resting-places of Father Paul and Rhyme-Rüpel. Peter looked at me inquiringly; the young man knew nothing of them.

A little later we came out upon a mountain ridge.

"Are we on the Lauterhöhe?" I asked my silent companion. He nodded assent. I thought of the cow that ate the Alpine nosegay, of the pine-trees in the background, and of old Schirmtanner, then I suddenly turned and asked Peter:

"You know little Rose Schirmtanner, do you not?"

He grew as red as the Alpine flower of the same name.

From this elevation quite a new region disclosed itself toward the north; valleys and wooded hills were clearly outlined before me; to the left rose the cliffs, forming a rough, broken wall far over the forest. In this direction I fancied were the regions of Lautergräben, Karwässer, Wolfsgrube, and the Felsenthal.

The path led down toward the valley; but we turned to the left and climbed through forests of fir-trees and underbrush, higher and higher until we reached the clearing, which extended upwards toward the towering masses of rock.

The snow here was somewhat harder and more crusty, but it did not especially interfere with our walking. A few huts stood on this spot, the smoke issuing from their chimneys, while in the stalls the tinkling of cow-bells was heard. The cattle must eat hay to-day, but after the snow has gone there will be warm pleasant weather again. I should like to know from which of these windows the master workman Paul was found suspended!

We proceeded on our way; I soon noticed that my companion was not familiar with the path.

Approaching the rocks, we climbed through the defile, as I remembered the schoolmaster had done, and at last we reached the summit.

The picture was beyond comparison. The schoolmaster has described it.

We walked along the ridge, rested a little to refresh ourselves with bread and meat and bind on our climbing-irons, then, slowly crossing the glacier, we advanced toward the cone.

The air was remarkably clear, still, and frosty; and so invigorating that I felt like shouting for the very joy of living. The nearer we approached the summit, the more we hastened our footsteps; Peter, too, became jubilant.

And now we were above, standing on the summit of the Zahn. It seemed to me as if I had already been a number of times on these heights. Surrounding us in an endless circle—as the schoolmaster has said—was the kingdom of the Alps.

Even beyond the great forests, in the sunlit south, towered, clear and distinct, the spires and peaks of another mountain range, and farther on, stretched straight before me a shimmering band—the sea!

I felt almost impelled to hasten down from rock to rock and on over hill and valley to seek the schoolmaster and say to him: "Come, look upon the sea!"

Deeply thrilled and absorbed, I gazed a long time. Then we descended a few steps under the jutting rocks where the man had sat and dreamed fifty years ago.

Here the sun was shining warmly and the snow had already melted from some of the stones. Seating ourselves upon one of them, we ate our dinner. Peter played in the snow with his stick, tracing letters; I thought perhaps he was trying

to express to me his thoughts and sensations. But he erased the characters and it proved to be only play.

My eyes wandered from one mountain to another, on to the most distant Italian heights; they gazed out over the sunny waters, they drank in the sea, where upon the waves I could catch the gleaming rays of the midday sun. A blue shadow suddenly passed before my eyes, which had become dazzled by the brilliant light.

All at once a cry resounded near me. The lad had sprung to his feet and was pointing with both hands toward the rough snow-covered ground.

Starting up in alarm, I first noticed where the snow had been displaced by the letters traced in it, and then to my horror I saw—the white covering having been partially removed—the head of a man which was thus exposed to view.

The lad, rigid with terror, stood motionless but for a few seconds, then, hastening to the spot, he worked with feverish haste to free the buried form from its snowy shroud. When the whole body was lying stretched before him, he covered his face with his hands and sank sobbing into my arms.

There lay an old man, wrapped in a brown cloak his features withered and sunburnt, his deep-set eyes closed, his scanty locks disordered and white as the snow.

My sensations at that hour were beyond description.

"Do you know him?" I asked the lad.

He sorrowfully nodded,

"Is it the schoolmaster?" I cried.

Peter bowed his head.

At last, when we had somewhat regained our composure, we began to examine the dead man more closely. He was carefully wrapped in the cloak, climbing-irons were bound to his feet and near by lay an alpenstock.

In the half-opened leather bag I discovered some dried bread-crumbs and a bit of paper rolled together. Seizing this I opened it, and found a few words, written with a pencil in crooked irregular lines and by a trembling uncertain hand.

The writing, which was legible, was as follows:

"Christmas day. At the setting of the sun I beheld the sea and lost my eyesight" —— ——

So he had reached his goal. As a blind man he had written the page, the last page of his story. Then laying himself down on the hard ground, he had awaited death in the freezing winter night.

We built a wall of stones about the dead man and covered it over as best we could. Then we descended to the meadows, taking the shorter path by the way of Miesenbach to Winkelsteg.

The next morning, at an early hour, a number of people began the ascent of the Graue Zahn, I accompanying them. Old Schirmtanner was also with us, and he had much to tell us about the schoolmaster, his story entirely corresponding with the records.

And so we bore the aged Andreas Erdmann, who in the dry cold Alpine air had become almost a mummy, down to the valley of the Winkel to the parish church, which had been built through his efforts; we carried him to the burial-ground which he himself had planned in the shadow of the forest.

The news that the old schoolmaster had been found had already spread through the Winkel woods, and everyone came to the funeral and praised the good, brave man. The Winkel landlord wept like a child. "He blessed my poor abandoned father upon his death-bed!" he cried. Schirmtanner was obliged to lead Peter away from the bier.

The forester from the manor-house was there. Close by the grave grew a wood-lily.

The brandy-distiller Schorschl, speaking to a few people who were standing by the entrance to the burial-ground, said that he had had nothing at all against the schoolmaster, but all the same the latter was an obstinate man. And there was one thing to be remembered, if the schoolmaster had only had a little flask of gin with him, he would not have been frozen.

In the evening by the light of torches the good old man was laid in the ground.

The old manuscript which had fallen into my hands in such a peculiar way, I begged from the parish of Winkelsteg, so that I might give it to the world as a legacy—as the witness of a poor, yet rich and fruitful and unselfish life lived in the solitude of the forest. With deep emotion have I added the last few pencilled words to "The Schoolmaster's Story." Ponder it, Reader, and a rare experience shall be thine. The first page is addressed by a child to Heaven; and from this same child, after the fulfilment of time, the last page is sent down from Heaven to the struggling ones of earth—a seal of the legacy—bearing this inscription:

RESIGNATION AND RENUNCIATION!

*** END OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE FOREST SCHOOLMASTER ***

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