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THE NEW LANDLORD.

THE NEW LANDLORD.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL HUNGARIAN

OF

MAURICE JÓKAI,

BY

ARTHUR J. PATTERSON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE NEW LANDLORD.

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO PRISONERS.

DURING all this time Elise slept the sleep of the just ; that pure sleep, which nought else disturbs save an ideal image, compound of ether and sunbeam, which floats before the dreamer's inward eye. The first sun-ray which struggled through her window-blind chased away the dream from her eyes.

It was still early dawn. All was still in the chateau. There they did not get up early. Elise rose, put on her dressing-gown, and before her gaolers got up seated herself at the picture which she had begun the day before, and of which she had been dreaming. It represented a low window with heavy iron grating, within

which was to be seen a pale young face, while outside there was a small bird singing, and a flowering creeper, whose tendrils grew in between the iron bars. These two attempted to cheer the captive youth.

Who could make any objection to such a picture? As for the features of the face within the grating, they were not to be identified, being only sketched in rough outline. First there were the singing bird and the creeper to be finished. In this work she was so wholly engrossed that she did not observe how time went till the little timepiece on the table struck nine. Still there was no sound in the next room. The "Miss" and Hermine were sleeping very late that morning. The head of the little bird was very successfully done. It could be seen with what melancholy he was singing, just as if he knew that it was for a prisoner.

Elise was very well satisfied with it; but it was now time to put it on one side, for presently would come the turnkey, the hard-hearted "Miss," and would say, "*Allez*, go on with your music trenchwork." It would be as well to see whether they were awake or not. It was her custom to practise a piece of childish mischief,

and to vex the "Miss," who liked to lie in bed till late of a morning, by rousing her with a noisy song. This is a piece of service for which no one who is sleeping comfortably is grateful ; and yet, when once aroused, it is difficult to find fault, for the disturber of one's rest is after all in the right,—the morning has indeed come.

"Here is the morning : *I wish you a good morning,*¹ Miss," said Elise, in a sportive manner, opening noisily the door into their room. What was her surprise to find it empty ! Both the beds were unused, being just as they were when turned down the evening before. Elise could not make out what had become of them. She looked around, and saw on Hermine's writing-table a sealed letter. Taking it up she found it addressed—"To my sister Elise." She opened it with a beating heart. It contained the following lines :—

"MY DEAR, GOOD SISTER,

Do not condemn me for the step which I have taken to-day. I cannot live without this man. Even if he were a murderer I should go with him. I know that it is madness ; but

¹ These English words are in the original.

I cannot be cured of it. My father drove him away, and did not know that he was driving me also forth into the world. I dare not write to my father; he would not read my letter; he would curse me. But he loves thee—thou art so good; and I have no one to defend me before him but thee alone. I do not even know what it is I can beg of thee; I am in such confusion. Thou wilt know it best. Stand between us and our father. Thy good heart will find out what to do, and how. God bless thee. I kiss thee a hundred times—a thousand times.

“HERMINE.

“P.S. The ‘Miss’ and the Director did not know anything about it. If possible, defend them before my father.—H.

“Weep.”

This last injunction was quite superfluous, for Elise, as soon as she had read the letter through, burst into such a fit of crying that her tears streamed down her red cheeks like two brooks. She wrung her hands, and walked up and down the room in despair. On a chair she found a pocket-handkerchief of her sister's.

This she took, and kissed it all over, and pressed it to her bosom. Then she began again to sob and to cry, and kissed the letter and the handkerchief, till the sound of her sobs attracted the attention of the servants, and the housemaid thought good to come and see if she was wanted.

At the sound of the opening of the door the girl's sorrow was changed into a passion of anger. She thought it was the "Miss" that was coming. With flashing eyes she rushed to the door, so that the housemaid started back as she caught sight of her.

"Where is the 'Miss'?" cried Elise, trembling in every limb.

The servant looked around in astonishment, and shrugged her shoulders.

Elise put her hand angrily upon her, and asked again—

"Where is the 'Miss'? When did she go away? Who let her out of the door? Who saw Hermine?"

The servant almost fell down in her alarm.

"I beg pardon; we have not seen anybody; nobody passed our way. But the back door was open; that the gardener told us."

Elise pressed her hands on her burning forehead, and seemed to recover her self-command.

"Stop," said she, calmly, to the servant, who was about to retire; "do not say anything to anybody out of the house; lock that back door, and bring me the key; and send hither the little Gyuszi."

The servant hastened away, and soon Gyuszi appeared in her place. By this time Elise's eyes were no longer full of tears; her cheeks were no longer flushed; her hair was brushed smooth, and she was walking up and down Hermine's room with her hands behind her back.

"What does the young lady command?" said the little fellow, with his hand raised in a military salute.

"Attend," said Elise in a commanding tone, as if she was his superior officer; "dost thou know how to use fire-arms?"

"I do, young lady; I have a gun. His lordship gave it me."

"Have you already shot it off?"

"Oh yes! I have killed ever so many sparrows with it."

"Very good; load thy gun and come back again."

After a few minutes the little fellow returned, with a broad grin on his face.

“Now attend to me. From this day forward thou wilt live in this room until my father comes home. At night thou wilt sleep in this bed.”

“Dear me! Why, that is where the ‘Miss’ sleeps.”

“Hush! Who asked about that? By day thou wilt stand sentry at my door, and wilt stop everybody who tries to come in. Knowest thou how?”

“Oh yes! thus—” and the little Hop-o’-my-thumb stepped forward, and, presenting his weapon with fixed bayonet, cried out—“Who art thou? Stop!”

“Very good; now let no one in, for this is a prison, and thou art the sentry. If any one attempts to force his way in, or does not attend to thy challenge, shoot him; dost thou understand?”

“Yes, I understand.”

“Then act accordingly.”

With these words Elise left her Lilliputian sentinel in the outer room, shut the door of her bedroom, and sat down to write a letter

to her father. How much delicacy and how much firmness were necessary to bind up so painful a wound, especially in the case of one who was not a perfect master of his temper ! With how much care must she avoid all affectation of superior wisdom, lest that should appear as a reflection upon her father ! He had always considered Hermine as the ornament of the house, as a sensible, modest girl, whose voice was seldom to be heard, who had never to be reminded what to do,—what not to do,—who was the theme of the praises of all their governesses, the favourite of their mother. And now that thoughtless, hare-brained Cinderella, who was always being scolded, who was always under correction, had to beg for grace for her paragon of a sister.

But it is easy for one who has a heart. Cool good sense may err at such a time, but the heart always finds out the right tone, always suggests what will and what will not be painful to another :

“Thou knowest how much our dear mother loved Hermine ; do not thou spurn her.”

This was her strongest argument ;—and was it not strong enough ?

“Who art thou? Stand!” sounded without; answered by—“I am bringing the coffee.”

“All right; pass.”

The housemaid came in with the breakfast. Elise beckoned to her to put it down, and then go. She then went on writing:

“Thou knowest how much thou too hast loved her; and surely thou wilt continue to love her.”

“Who art thou? Stand!” sounded again the challenge outside, but this time in angrier tones.

“*Jesu Maria!*” was the answer, uttered in a sort of sob. It was the voice of the “Miss.” Elise listened to hear what they would do outside.

“Back! I am a sentinel.”

“Now, my little Gyuszi, do not play jokes.”

“I am not ‘my little Gyuszi;’ I am a patrol—I am a picket; whosoever approaches is a dead man!”

“Oh! gracious heavens! Do not point that thing this way; it might go off of itself.”

“Then stop there by the door, and do not attempt to come nearer.”

“What an idea! To put a gun into a child’s hand.”

"That is the order of the day."

"Let me in to the young lady."

"There is no young lady here; she is a prisoner."

"But I may see her."

"What is the password? Say the password."

"Gyuszi, I shall box thy ears directly."

"'Miss,' do you not see that I am a soldier? I shoot, and stab."

At this point Elise opened the door. The "Miss" gained fresh courage from the sight of her pupil, and made a dash through the guard, which she fortunately succeeded in effecting without receiving any hurt, and arrived panting and exhausted in Elise's room.

Elise beckoned to her to sit down, and then handing her the letter which Hermine had written, bid her read it. During the perusal the "Miss's" face and brow flushed purple with rage and terror. The letter dropped from her trembling hands.

"This is dreadful—this is terrible!"

"And now read this other letter," said Elise, handing her the one she herself had been writing to her father.

“But I beg you, Elise, for Heaven’s sake, first to listen to me.”

“I will hear nothing, Miss.”

“But you must know all.”

“What are you thinking of? You wish to recount an ‘adventure’ to me, whom you have hitherto not allowed to read a novel,” said Elise indignantly; and the deep blush on the maiden’s face bore witness to the instinctive horror with which her virgin modesty repelled such an intrusion.

Miss Natalie felt herself beaten, and, with drooping head, read Elise’s letter to her father. What chiefly struck the “Miss” in its perusal was the great trouble the writer took to reconcile her father with the seducer. This did not please the “Miss” at all; she wanted them to prosecute the fellow, to slay him, to annihilate him.

“Why, that accursed seducer is the cause of the whole misfortune, and you deign to defend him!”

“I defend him because he is by this time Hermine’s husband.”

“But he has deceived us all; he has deceived Hermine herself; he is the cause of your

father's being angry with you ; and—and the accursed fellow has ruined me."

"That is a great misfortune, Miss ; but, as far as you are concerned, it would become still greater if my father does not become reconciled to them, because, in that case, he will turn his anger against you, who neglected the charge entrusted to you. Hermine writes at the end of her letter—Miss Natalie and the Director are the cause of nothing. From that I understand that you are the cause of something. She has left it to me to undertake your defence. I do not know what faults you have committed, nor do I know what I can allege in your defence ; but so much I do know, that the sooner my father pardons the chief delinquent, the sooner he will pardon his subordinates."

"You are a sensible girl," murmured the "Miss" submissively, and handed back Elise's letter.

"And now pardon me, Miss Natalie, if I respectfully beg you to keep out of my room for the future. Occupy any other part of the chateau you like, but avoid this, which has been assigned to me as my prison. I require

a trustworthy and unsuspected witness, who can assure my father on his return that I have observed the rules laid down for me. You cannot be that witness. You see, Miss, that I have chosen the guard before my door. Him my father will believe, because he is a child and simple. Now, good-bye."

After this dismissal the "Miss" still kept her seat on the sofa; but Elise rang the bell, summoned the housemaid, and then sealing the letter addressed to her father, gave it into her hand, saying—

"Let the groom saddle a horse at once, and take this letter into the town to Dr. Grisak, who will send it after my father. And thou, Louisa, be so good as to remove Miss Natalie's wardrobe and bed furniture into the lady-guest chamber. Do all she orders you. I shall dine alone in this room, until my father comes home. When Gyuszi leaves the outer room let him lock the door after him, and always carry the key with him. Good-bye, Miss Natalie."

The "Miss" was quite confounded at the young girl's behaviour; who, in the course of one hour, wept, fell into despair, became angry,

made jokes, and gave orders, and all in the proper time. Leaving the room, she gave the housemaid directions not to remove her things into the guest-chamber, but to take them over to the house of the Director, whose delight may be conceived, as he saw through the window Miss Natalie, with bag and baggage, coming from the chateau, and making straight for his door.

As for Elise, as soon as she found herself alone in her room, she sat down to her picture, dipped her brush in the darkest sepia she could mix, with which she painted over the spaces between the bars of the window, until not a trace of the prisoner's face was to be seen ; and nothing now remained but the little bird and the creeper. By this time she had learned how wrong it was to paint on paper a face which one had seen in one's dreams.

* * * * *

Dr. Grisak was sipping his morning tea in a most comfortable state of mind. It was early, only eleven o'clock, and he was still in dressing-gown and slippers. His assistants were, in the mean time, running about, which has come to be the chief part of an advocate's

work. The principal himself used only to grant audiences, with respect to which a notice was painted up on his door—"At home from 11 to 1."

The Herr Doctor had just begun his second cup of tea, when his servant brought in on a silver waiter the cards of two clients who wished to consult him.

"So early!" puffed out the Doctor, with lordly haughtiness, as he drew out of his waistcoat-pocket a splendid chronometer; "it is as yet only fifty-seven minutes past ten. Tell them to wait! Just let me see who they are."

The servant handed the waiter to him. Dr. Grisak took the cards, looked at them through his spectacles, and burst into a good-humoured laugh. Laughing, be it observed by the way, did not make him look handsomer, as he had lost a great many teeth.

"Now, that is good! Let them in at once. Tell them that I am at present in my dressing-gown, but for all that I will see *them*. Why, it will be a pleasant accompaniment to breakfast."

On Dr. Grisak's face the smile still lingered,

and his second cup of tea seemed to him to have a finer aroma than the first. A modest knock was heard at the door. "Come in." Who crept in so quietly? It was no other than Herr Maxenfutsch. His back was quite crooked with bowing, and he uttered his, "Your most humble servant," in such a feeble voice, as if he thought that otherwise he would not be believed.

"Ah! good morning; good morning, Herr Director. Pray take a seat. And the Miss? Where is she? Why, her card was brought in."

"Yes, I humbly implore your pardon, but she stopped in the ante-room when she heard that your lordship was in your dressing-gown. She would not for all the treasures of the world speak to a man who was still in his dressing-gown."

"Ah! that's it, is it? Well, of course she attends a great deal to propriety. She is right. Her *métier* is to know what is proper, and what isn't. Besides, it is all the same to us whether she is here or not. We can finish our business without her."

"What?—I beg pardon!" exclaimed Maxenfutsch in amazement."

"Oh! I already know all," said Dr. Grisak, settling himself comfortably in his seat, with his feet upon the *causeuse*; "I have been informed of your troubles. My friend Straff told me all, yesterday."

"Straff!" exclaimed Herr Vendelin, with an expression of bewilderment on his face.

"Oh!—ah! you don't know him by that name; well, that young man, I mean, who was stopping at the Ankerschmidt's as music-master."

"And is he your friend?"

"Now pray take note that, whenever I call anybody 'my friend,' it is because in my hurry another title does not occur to me."

"And where is that scoundrel now?" exclaimed Herr Vendelin, plucking up courage all at once. Perhaps he believed that it was still possible to catch him, take the young lady from him, carry her home, and all would be right again.

"I expect that by this time he is in Vienna. At any rate it would be no use pursuing him, as he was married to the young lady yesterday at noon. That I know for a certainty."

At this terrible news Vendelin dropped his arms like a shot fox.

"The wag came here to me," continued the Doctor, rolling a cigarette of fine Turkish tobacco; "he wanted me to undertake his suit against Ankerschmidt."

"What suit? A suit about wounding his honour?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the Doctor, as he lit his cigarette at a spirit-lamp; "as if he troubled his head about that. No, it was for his wife's fortune."

"Accursed fellow!" exclaimed Herr Vendelin, wiping the perspiration from his brow with his pocket-handkerchief.

"He offered me twenty thousand florins if I would undertake his suit, and win it from Ankerschmidt."

"What! Twenty thousand florins?"

"That is not much. The daughters inherit from their mother two hundred and fifty thousand florins apiece, so that it was worth the sacrifice."

"Accursed fellow!" exclaimed Maxenpfutsch again; "to steal so much money; two hundred and fifty thousand!—twenty thousand!"

Without thinking of it, he set down the last sum under the head of stealing.

“But I did not accept his offer.”

“You did not accept it!”

“What are you thinking of, sir!” said Dr. Grisak, with a dignified air; “I am Ankerschmidt’s advocate, and it would be a piece of unfaithfulness on my part if I had accepted a commission from my client’s opponent. Ah, sir! my honour could not endure such a stain.”

At this Herr Maxenpfutsch was extremely amazed.

“I told him decidedly that I did not want his twenty thousand florins,—that he might take it to some other lawyer; and he said that he would look for one at Vienna. But now let us talk about your affairs. This sly artful wag has cooked you an ugly dish of soup.”

“Do you know already?”

“Of course; how should I not? He told me all; how, in order to carry off the young lady, he made a fool of the ‘Miss’; all the favour shown him by the ‘Miss’ turned out to his advantage with the young lady. At last he requested you, in the character of groom’s

best man, to invite the 'Miss' to your house, inasmuch as he was forbidden the chateau. This was merely for the purpose of getting the 'Miss' out of the way, so that she should leave her pupils unguarded, and then, through the very door of which the 'Miss' herself had given the key to Fräulein Hermine, he carried her off."

"Accursed fellow!" murmured Maxenfutsch, again using his pocket-handkerchief to wipe off the perspiration.

"A devil of a fellow, certainly," laughed Doctor Grisak; "and with the horses belonging to the estate too, and in your own carriage. A stroke of genius! Decidedly a stroke of genius!"

Herr Vendelin did not find the joke so amusing, and the man of law perceived that he was harping on unpleasant strings.

"It is true that he has thus dipped you into very unpleasant ink."

"The Herr Doctor thinks so?"

"I don't think so; I know it. You will seem to Ankerschmidt as accomplices in the stratagem, and appearances certainly *are* against you."

“The Herr Doctor thinks so?”

“The one piece of luck you have is that Ankerschmidt has gone away for some time, without letting me know where he has gone. I have here a letter from Fräulein Elise, which no doubt gives him an account of what has taken place, but I do not know where to send it. It is a great piece of luck for you that he is not at home.”

“Then the Herr Doctor thinks that his lordship will not be angry with us later?”

“I did not say *that*; I only said that it is a piece of luck for you that he is not at home at present.”

“But if he continues angry, why do you call it lucky that he is not at home at present?”

“Why? Because, were he at home now, he would at once shoot both you and the ‘Miss’ too; as it is, you have time to get out of his way before he comes home.”

The tone in which these words were pronounced, the gesture of the hand, like the movement of a fish’s tail, which accompanied them, were sufficient to dissipate any vague hopes which Herr Vendelin might have

cherished. He had now no longer any doubt as to what he had to do.

“This is the Herr Doctor’s opinion?”

“I have not the least doubt about its being the best advice I can give you. From what I know of the Knight Ankerschmidt, I can safely say that he would wreak his vengeance on the first person that came in his way. Why, he would make cutlets of him!”

“Then I have lost my place on account of that accursed scamp!” exclaimed Herr Max-enpfutsch, in a sorrowful tone.

“You can bring an action for damages against him.”

“But will that do me any good?”

“I beg pardon; one should never ask about an action, or medicine, whether it will do any good or not. The patient’s business is to have confidence.”

“Then the Herr Doctor does not believe it possible for us to make our peace with his lordship?”

“Neither for you nor for Miss Natalie; that I can say positively.”

“The ‘Miss’ will be in despair when she knows that.”

“Of course: for her the most unpleasant part of the whole business is that she has five thousand florins in the Knight’s hands, which were left her under the condition that when she married it was to be paid down to her, but *if* she behaved herself unfaithfully toward the family, the sum would be forfeited.”

“I know that; she told me so already. The simple-minded creature! And now she too is rendered unfortunate on account of that accursed scamp!”

“And on your account, too; because, you know, *you* called her out of the house.”

“So I did.”

“In fact, Herr Director, you compromised the poor creature to no small extent. Just think, from evening till morning in your house!”

“Very true.”

“Was there anybody else present?”

“Nobody, because we expected the bridegroom and the priest to come every minute.”

“Well, you see, that is unfortunate—very unfortunate. Nobody will ever believe that it was Straff who deceived Miss Natalie, at the very time he was running off with *Fräulein* Hermine.”

“ Who then ? ”

“ They will say that you did.”

“ I ! The ‘ Miss ’ ! ” exclaimed Maxenpfutsch, jumping up from his seat.

“ I don’t believe that it was so,” said Dr. Grisak, laughing ; “ but everybody will say so, and if the ‘ Miss ’ chooses——”

“ If the ‘ Miss ’ chooses what ? ”

“ To demand satisfaction from you, she might do so with great success.”

Director Maxenpfutsch’s head began to turn giddy on finding himself threatened with actions and lawsuits on every side.

“ She also can fasten a lawsuit on me ? ”

“ Action for damages.”

“ How dreadful ! ”

Dr. Grisak, seeing that he had cooked his man until he was tender, now thought it time to strike his fork into him and begin to cut him up. So he rose from the *causeuse*, and, with a most condescending smile, walked up to the agitated fellow, and said—

“ My dear Maxenpfutsch, a good idea has occurred to me ; I think I can do something for you, but I must have time to develop it. Just leave me now to myself, and come

back punctually in two hours' time ; then we shall see what can be done for you."

"Oh ! thousand thanks, Herr Doctor ; you will not find me ungrateful."

With that the poor fellow rose, and, in his agitation, looked for some time for his hat, till at last he found it under the chair, where he had put it when he came in. He then took his leave with a profusion of bows, while the Doctor rang, ordered his coat, and then desired the "Miss" to be admitted. She and Maxenpfutsch passed each other in the doorway.

"Pray take a seat, Miss ; please to sit down," said Dr. Grisak, leading the virgin to the sofa. She wore a coffee-coloured veil over her face—(the green one Hermine had taken away)—nor would she raise it for a treasure.

"I am perfectly informed of your misfortune, Miss," said Dr. Grisak, standing before her. "The affair is very aggravating for you ; not merely because you have to leave Ankerschmidt's house, but also because your fair fame will be compromised in people's opinion, through your having spent so much time at

Maxenpfutsch's house ; but especially because in that case you may lose the five thousand florins we know of——I beg you not to interrupt me. I am a lawyer, and do not concern myself with matters of sentiment. So much I can say, that you, in your position, can hardly do anything else than commence an action for damages against Vendelin Maxenpfutsch, as the person who occasioned your loss."

"Would the Herr Doctor be so good as to undertake my case?"

"For your sake, Miss, very willingly."

"Herr Doctor, I place myself entirely in your hands, and will do everything you say," said Miss Natalie, rising from her seat with great gravity. "Why should we waste words on the subject? I will do what you tell me to do ; I will sign what you tell me to sign ; and if you get me the five thousand florins in question, I will give you a fee of five hundred florins."

This was a sensible speech, to which the Doctor instantly replied—

"You are quite right, Miss. Have confidence in me, and I guarantee you the five

thousand florins you are in danger of losing. Please to put your address on your card, and to remain at home. In half an hour I shall send you the documents you will have to sign, and then do me the honour to call again at two o'clock in the afternoon."

The Miss took her leave and departed. Dr. Grisak immediately set his clerks to get ready the documents wanted, amongst which the obligation to pay the fee of five hundred florins was not wanting. In two hours' time Herr Maxenpfutsch returned.

"I am very sorry for you," said Dr. Grisak; "but what we expected has taken place. Miss Natalie is going to commence an action against you on account of the five thousand florins she has lost through your conduct. Here is her hand authorising me to commence the suit in her behalf."

At this a great effort was perceptible on Herr Maxenpfutsch's face to see with his mouth, and to speak with his eyes, which was only partially successful.

"Herr Director," went on the lawyer, "I see but one way by which you can get out of the scrape; positively but one."

Herr Maxenpfutsch would not have minded if there were but half, so that there was as much.

“A way, too, by which, instead of losing five thousand florins, you will gain as much.”

This Herr Vendelin thought must be witchcraft. The Doctor stepped up to him, took him by the collar, and almost touching his forehead with his nose, said—

“There is no other way than that you should marry the ‘Miss’ yourself.”

Well it was that he had hold of Herr Vendelin’s collar, for the poor fellow nearly dropped as he heard the fatal words.

“Come now, my friend,” said Herr Grisak, with a sly wink, and putting his head on one side; “just consider; it makes ten thousand florins difference if you gain or lose five thousand. And then, it is invested in the public debt. I myself got the coupons paid the other day. At least five thousand florins.”

Herr Maxenpfutsch now found the proposal less terrible. Rightly considered, the “Miss” was, after all, of the proper age for his wife.

“But make up your mind at once, because the ‘Miss’ is in a hurry.”

“But I am not sure that she chooses to have me.”

“Trust that to me.”

“Well, then, there is my hand on it. Let me be the sacrifice,” said the hardly-used man, with an air of resignation.

“Just sit down to my desk; you must fill up the paper authorizing me to act on your behalf — so, very good — now on the other paper, across the stamp, please; I think five hundred florins will be enough for my fee.”

Herr Vendelin scratched the tip of his ear. According to this the legacy would be only four thousand five hundred florins. Still that would be better than paying an even larger sum. After the head of an axe one may throw the helve.

“All right! Now call again at six o’clock; by that time I shall be ready.”

Herr Maxenpfutsch left with his brain in a whirl.

At two o’clock Miss Natalie appeared, and was received by the Doctor with a very sour face.

“My dear, your affairs are in a very bad way ; I have spoken to Herr Maxenpfutsch, and he in the most positive way asserts that, when you gave Straff opportunity for running away with one of the young ladies under your charge, you by that act forfeited the five thousand florins, for which loss he is therefore not answerable. He is a terribly shrewd fellow—quite a lawyer. And, really, I am obliged to believe that he is in the right.”

Here the “Miss” begged for a glass of water, lest she should faint.

“But I still see one way of saving the money you are in danger of losing, and at the same time of re-establishing your fair fame. Now, pray, attend to me and do not faint, for this is a very serious matter. The only way you have before you is to become the wife of Herr Maxenpfutsch.”

“Ah, sir!” cried the lady, bashfully, drawing her veil still closer before her face.

“The misfortune has already happened ; here is the remedy. ‘Miss’ would incur the censure of slanderous tongues, and at the same time lose her money ; whereas, if you take the Director as your husband, you keep

your money, preserve your reputation, and get an honest man for your husband. And then, consider in what an excellent position he is."

"Ah, sir!—but—but—what does he say?"

"Only trust that to me, Miss Natalie; Maxenpfutsch is a generous, considerate man, and, if I appeal to his conscience, he will at once see that it is his bounden duty to retrieve her fortunes whom he has involuntarily injured. Miss, only trust the matter to me, —to your best friend; permit me to care for your fate."

The "Miss" fell on her kness, as she sobbed out—

"Oh, sir! you are the guardian angel of the innocent; take me under your protection."

The guardian angel raised the lady from the ground, and begged her to do him the honour of calling again at six o'clock; which, with violent sobs, she promised to do.

By that hour Dr. Grisak had obtained for his *protégés* the requisite dispensations; and had had the marriage contract drawn up. When they arrived at the appointed hour, he whispered confidentially to each of them

apart that all was arranged, and received glances expressive of their gratitude.

"Miss Natalie," said Herr Vendelin, who had assumed a white waistcoat and a white necktie for the occasion, "I was ever your most sincere admirer."

"Sir," answered the "Miss," "my respect for you is of long standing."

"Exactly so," put in Dr. Grisak; "we entirely understand one another; two noble hearts have found each other. Madame—Sir, here is the contract; everything is arranged; the clergyman is waiting for us."

"In such a hurry!" murmured Miss Natalie, and then proceeded with gloved hand to sign the document which ensured her happiness. Herr Maxenpfutsch did the same. Within the hour they were already man and wife, while Dr. Grisak danced for joy in his room. He had worked these people finely. Over and above the amusement of marrying the "Miss" to Maxenpfutsch, he had gained the solid advantage of fees of five hundred florins from both bridegroom and bride. These sums he was able to pay himself the day after the marriage, as he was the person who had to

carry out the bequests of the Knight's late wife. The sum in question had never come into Ankerschmidt's hands.

Only one thing seemed strange in the Doctor's conduct, and that was that he who thus in seven hours got together a thousand florins, as it were by way of amusement, should have spurned so indignantly Straff's offer of twenty thousand. If we, however, could see Ankerschmidt's wife's last will and testament, as well as Dr. Grisak, the mystery would be at once explained ; inasmuch as a clause in it expressly stated that if either of the daughters married without her father's consent, she would lose all claim to her share. Hence it came that his honour could not endure such a stain on it.

* * * * *

Men of experience assure us that Kufstein may be considered as the university among prisons of States. Arad, Komorn, Josephstadt, the *Neugebäude* at Pest, are merely public schools. Such as have finished their course in these minor establishments should consider their education as prisoners of State but half completed.

In this great university, Aladar Garan-völgyi was already passing the fifth year. His room was but four paces long and three broad, and was furnished without much splendour, with a bed, a chair, and a table. As for doors, however, he could not complain of a want of them, as he had three. That the middle door could be opened without touching either the outer or the inner will give some idea of the thickness of the walls.

One forenoon, at an unaccustomed hour, keys turned in the locks of those three doors, and there appeared before him one of those great gentlemen whom he did not know. It was the Knight Ankerschmidt.

The Knight had imagined that he should find a man of a pale, worn aspect, whose spirits were broken and mildewed by his close confinement, and who was already in an advanced stage of some eccentric monomania. How much was he surprised to see before him a youth of cheerful aspect, on whose ruddy countenance not a shade of sorrow was to be seen, with bright eyes and unwrinkled brow, and not a hair of his head grown grey before its time! As he entered,

the prisoner rose from the table by which he was sitting, and was the first to utter a greeting :

“ Good morning, sir.”

Ankerschmidt made a sign to the turnkey to leave them to themselves. As the latter withdrew, the Knight, who was in his uniform, asked in a stern, soldierly voice—

“ Are you Aladar Garanvölgyi ?”

“ So I am called, sir.”

“ How long have you been here ?”

“ I don't know ; I have no calendar.”

“ Have you no complaint to make against the administration of the prison ?”

“ None whatever ; I am perfectly satisfied.”

“ Are you allowed to leave this room ?”

“ Once a week for half an hour.”

“ Do not you find that too little ?”

“ I do not even make use of the permission.”

“ Why not ?”

“ I like to remain here.”

“ Does it not injure your health ?”

“ I am never ill.”

“ Have you no wishes ?”

“ None whatever.”

“ Do not you feel bored sometimes ?”

"No ; I am alone ; so that there is nobody to bore me."

"And with what do you occupy yourself the whole day ?"

"With my thoughts."

"Do not they give you books to read ?"

"I don't know ; I have never asked."

"Other prisoners are allowed to write down their thoughts, to draw little pictures, to carve things of wood. Have you never wished to divert yourself with such things ?"

"No ; because writing requires a pen, drawing a pencil, carving a knife, and all these things have to be asked for."

"Well, what then ?"

"And as I have no other company but myself, I should like to remain on good terms with the only person with whom I associate."

"According to this, you yourself aggravate your confinement."

"It is true, sir, that it is a serious matter to be condemned, but it would be still worse if I were to condemn myself."

"And have you no longings for the little comforts of life ?"

“No ; a man is then happiest when contented with least.”

“Do you not wish to see your relatives ?”

“On the contrary, I should be very sorry for them if they were to take the trouble of making such a long journey merely to utter a few commonplace phrases in a foreign language for half an hour under the surveillance of strangers. It were not worth the trouble.”

“Had you nobody whom you loved ?”

At this the prisoner began to laugh.

“Oh ! of course, sir, every young man has ; a woman, a greyhound, and such like.”

“And do you rank these all in the same category ?”

“I beg pardon ; I admit that I was wrong there ; but I will tell you why I did so. When I took leave for the last time of my uncle, who is a somewhat curious fellow, I begged him whenever he wrote to me to let my betrothed just write in his letter the little word ‘*adieu*.’ In the first letter he wrote, to be sure, there was the word, but written in very curious letters, which my uncle accounted for in a postscript to the effect that as my betrothed for certain reasons declined scribbling the

word, the humorous old man had put the pen between the claws of one of my greyhound's forepaws, and had made her write it. From this I understood that my betrothed does not particularly languish for me, in which the poor thing acted very sensibly, but that my greyhound is still faithful to me, for in every letter is her signature '*Cziczke*' written by her own hand."

Ankerschmidt observed that he himself laughed heartily at this amusing anecdote told by the prisoner. In fact it was the latter who began laughing, which Ankerschmidt only caught from him. When they had laughed a good while and left off, each saw in the other's eyes that there were tears there. So amusing was the story of the greyhound who used to write letters instead of the prisoner's betrothed. But Ankerschmidt again put on a severe aspect. It would not do for him to betray himself.

"Young man, I did not come here to make jokes, but to make myself acquainted with the condition of the prisoners and their behaviour. One thing I can tell you, and that is, that you are a very dangerous character."

“Why so, sir? What complaint is made against me?”

“Just that; none is made. In the book for remarks are set down the wishes, complaints, accusations of the other prisoners. Of you, there is not a letter. You never ask for anything; you never complain of anybody; you are polite, and reticent. These are very dangerous traits. If it depended upon me, you would never be let out of your dungeon.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“What for?”

“For your complimentary opinion of me.”

After this Ankerschmidt left the prisoner to himself. Aladar shrugged his shoulders, and began to whistle some of the airs of his own country, the *Alföld*.¹ This was his principal amusement. Fortunately he could carry that musical instrument, his voice, everywhere with him, and needed to make no request to obtain it. Ankerschmidt heard him through the doors, and was informed by the turnkey that “the good-humoured gentleman” knew how to whistle beautifully, and would sometimes whistle whole operas.

¹ “Lowland,” the great Hungarian plain.

The great bell of the fortress rang for noon. The sound reminded Aladar's excellent digestive organs that it was dinner-time. Prisoners are not spoiled by luxury ; they are not fed upon delicacies ; but they do get accustomed to be served punctually. As soon as the clock strikes, the key turns in the lock, the turnkey enters with a long loaf of bread, carrying in his hand a plate, which contains something which they call food. Whatever it might be, Aladar used to eat it all to the very last morsel. He was not allowed to have a knife in his hand, but the turnkey used to stand behind him, and cut up the meat. For this service Aladar used to thank him regularly, and hand him over as a gratuity the few *kreutzers* assigned to him as his daily allowance, which of course gave the honest fellow great pleasure.

But to-day they seemed to be exceptionally behind-hand in their arrangements. It was already one o'clock in the afternoon, as could be known by the beating of the drum in the courtyard, and still his dinner was not brought.

" Hum, no doubt that irascible officer has been telling them something outside, and now they are going to try if they can't spoil my

good humour by not giving me any dinner. Well, that is, after all, no such great matter."

With that he took up a piece of bread which remained over from yesterday, and ate it with great relish; he then took a long draught out of the pitcher of water, and then, as one who had dined, threw himself at length on his bed.

He had, however, scarcely begun his after-dinner siesta when the noise of the opening of the doors was heard, and then entered in a great hurry—not the turnkey, but the captain under whose inspection he was.

"Quick, quick! get up, sir!" said he, advancing to the bed and laying hold of one of Aladar's arms. The prisoner looked up at him, but did not move.

"Do not you hear me? Get up at once."

"Sir," said Aladar, with humorous pedantry, "I am forbidden to talk to *civilians*."

"Well, what of that?"

"You are at present in my eyes a civilian, as you have no sword by your side."

"That is true; I left it in the commandant's room and came here in a hurry."

"I am very sorry, but I must conform to the rules, and decline all further conversation."

The captain was obliged to tell the turnkey to run to the commandant's room and bring him his sword. As soon as that was buckled on, Aladar rose from his couch, and said—

“I await your commands.”

“Very good ; I command you at once to follow me to the commandant's,” said the officer, taking Aladar by the arm, and in his hurry pulling him after him ; “let us make haste ; they are waiting for us.”

Aladar shrugged his shoulders and said, “We have plenty of time.”

“Who knows ?” answered the officer, as he hastened the prisoner's steps ; and, when they reached the door of the commandant's room, made him go in first.

When Aladar entered, he saw a number of men in splendid uniforms, amongst whom he recognised Ankerschmidt and the commandant. The latter came forward, and took his right hand, saying, with soldierly frankness—

“Herr Garanvölgyi, from this day forward you will cease to be my guest ; the remaining portion of your confinement has been remitted ; from this hour you are a free man ; let us then take our farewell dinner together to-day. That

is the reason I have invited you, and am glad that you have accepted it."

Aladar drew a long breath; that he could not help. To be again free! To have recovered life, the world! The next moment he returned to his wonted humour.

"Herr Commandant, I am not worthy of this favour, for I have already dined."

"The thunderbolt! Do you consider the invitation to dinner as the principal matter? How about the recovery of your liberty?"

"But then they have taken such good care of me here."

"Certainly, sir," interrupted Ankerschmidt with a stern glance; "if it had depended upon me, you would not get away from here so soon. Every man ought to have as much punishment as will make him better. Those who find their chains light should have heavier laid on them. I would soon teach those men who play with their punishment, and on whom no trace of suffering is to be seen."

Aladar was quite convinced that this gallant officer must be some very determined opponent of his. It took the commandant some trouble to get them to sit side by side at table.

"Certainly, sir," began the veteran commandant, when they had finished their soup ; "you only owe your release to the fact that some secret advocate of yours left no means untried to effect it."

"Some secret advocate of mine?"

"That is to say, some lady who actually took the trouble to write it out with her own hand—nay, I dare swear that she herself drew it up. Among the documents sent me there was one in which it was impossible not to recognise a woman's handwriting, and a woman's method of reasoning."

Aladar began to think, who could it be but her? Perhaps after all the story about the dog's writing letters was a fable. Perhaps after all the lady was the more faithful of the two.

"You are curious, are you not, to see the writing? I can show it you, and you can convince yourself on the point," said the commandant, and had a heap of papers brought to him, into one of which he allowed Aladar to glance. The young man looked, and then shook his head. The handwriting was not hers of whom he had thought, and yet it was

a woman's hand ; and how natural were the words ; how persuasive her pleading ! Who could have written it ? ”

“ Eh ; it is not permitted for the person concerned to read these things ; they are State secrets ; ” exclaimed Ankerschmidt, roughly, as snatching the papers out of his hand he handed them back to the person who had brought them.

“ Certainly a very irritable fellow, ” thought Aladar to himself ; but by that time the letters of that handwriting had engraved themselves on his memory, so that years after he would be able to recognise it, should he ever meet with it again.

That very evening he left the fortress.

* * * * *

Ankerschmidt started homewards very well satisfied. As he had not communicated to anybody whither he was going, he was not in the least aware of the news which awaited him. So with light heart he paid a visit, to his lawyer, and very naturally relieved his feelings by at once communicating the news to the Doctor. The latter's nose grew visibly longer as he heard it.

"Now," thought he, "here is an end of my hopes with respect to the fair widow. Of course, now Aladar Garanvölgyi is set at liberty, the very first thing he will do is to claim from Madame Pajtay the fulfilment of her engagement, or the payment of the forfeit money. And for this pleasant piece of luck we have to thank this Ankerschmidt, who always wants to have a spoon in other people's soup. Confound such soldierly magnanimity and generosity, I say! But at any rate, if he brings me unpleasant news, I can repay him in like coin."

With that he continued, aloud—

"Your lordship did not please to get the letter which I sent after you to Vienna?"

"No, I have not got anything. In fact, I did not come back by Vienna, but by Fehervar. What news is there at home?"

"No good news, I'm afraid; but here is a letter for your lordship from Fräulein Elise, which will probably inform you of everything."

"From Elise! Perhaps the child has again been doing some unheard-of folly."

"No, it is not she who has been committing the folly,—but, deign to open the letter."

Ankerschmidt did so, and read it all through with visibly increasing emotion.

While he was doing so, the sensible idea occurred to Dr. Grisak, that what the old man had spoiled, the same should make good. Ankerschmidt had magnanimously set at liberty Corinna's betrothed, and had thus defeated the Doctor's scheme of marrying her himself. It would be merely poetical justice, if he should get in exchange for the bride he had lost the Knight's remaining daughter.

When Ankerschmidt had twice read through the letter, his arms dropped powerless by his side, as he murmured, in a voice almost inaudible—

“Hermine has fled.”

Dr. Grisak had expected the old soldier to start up in a rage, to knock table and chairs out of his way, and, cursing, swearing, and scolding, to order his carriage, that he might pursue them at once, and shoot down the fugitives wherever he might overtake them; and was consequently taken aback when he saw him, overcome with emotion, lay his head on his hand, repeating—

“Hermine has fled.”

Doctor Grisak was not prepared for this elegiac state of mind, and did not at once know how he should deal with it.

Ankerschmidt folded the letter up again, and put it in his pocket, as he asked, in a low voice—

“Tell me, Doctor, honestly, was I accustomed to deal harshly with my children? Was I strict with them? Had they cause to be afraid of me?”

“On the contrary, your lordship’s fault was that you were too indulgent toward them.”

“Could then a man, a soldier, behave roughly with girls,—with children? And Hermine especially! What had I ever done to offend her?”

“Your lordship had driven from the house the man whom she loved.”

“And how could I have known that she loved him? Had she ever told me so? Had she told anybody so? Was that a reason for running after him?—for deserting me?—for humiliating me? Could she not have said what her sister does in this letter, that I should not be angry with him—that he was

really an estimable man, and not such as I supposed him, a little over-zealous perhaps, but, for all that, honourable? Could not she have reconciled me to him, instead of leaving me, her father?"

"So Elise defends her sister, and the seducer. O-ho! that must be counteracted," thought the Doctor to himself, as he continued aloud—

"I am afraid that it is beyond a doubt that the plot was concocted behind your lordship's back by the very persons you put most confidence in, the Director and the *Gouvernante*."

"What! Maxenpfutsch and Miss Natalie? Very true; Elise makes excuses for them. What the deuce is the reason?"

"That they had an understanding with each other may be concluded from the fact that Maxenpfutsch has married Miss Natalie."

"Married her; really married her!" exclaimed Ankerschmidt, with astonishment; "well, that is his business, not mine."

"And then gone off immediately."

"He, too, has run away! He has carried off Miss Natalie? Confound it all; it seems that they take all the women of my house

away through the window, instead of through the door."

"I believe they had reasons for so doing."

"Reasons! What reasons? Surely they were not afraid of my preventing their marriage?"

"No, not that; but that you would hold them responsible for the flight of Fräulein Hermine."

"Of course I should have scolded them for it; but that was not a reason for running away. For a land-steward to leave his situation is really a strong measure."

"I believe that they secured themselves compensation."

"In what way?"

"They came to me after their marriage, and had the sum left to the governess paid out to them."

"You paid it without making any objections?"

"I was obliged to do so."

"You were quite right in so doing. But still that was altogether only five thousand florins. The Director got as much as that every year as his salary."

"A little further explanation is required of the matter, as I know certainly, Maxenpfutsch believes that he can put the five thousand out at such good interest as to make twenty thousand of it. Of course he deceives himself grossly."

"Why, what has he found out?"

"A fool to whom he can lend the money. Your lordship ought to know that your lordship's son-in-law—that he is so we cannot now help—whose real name is Straff——"

"Straff! Deuced queer name!"

"It certainly is."

"My daughter's——Well; but go on."

"Well, that gentleman came to me, and offered me twenty thousand florins if I would undertake a certain piece of business for him, but I refused to do so. I have since heard that Maxenpfutsch has offered to cover the preliminary expenses, if Herr Straff agreed to pay him twenty thousand florins as soon as he has gained the suit."

"Ah! yes, I understand; and what suit was that?"

"None else than a suit on the part of Herr Straff against your lordship, to compel you to

pay him his wife's share of her mother's property."

"Then Straff is a great fool, and Maxenfutsch is a still greater."

"That is my opinion too."

"Why, of course I shall give my daughter her inheritance without any lawsuit at all; he has no need to throw twenty thousand florins out of the window for that purpose."

"But does not your lordship know that the will gives you the right, in case either of your daughters marries against your will, to deprive her of her share?"

"Sir, what are you thinking of? You surely do not suppose that I should, under any circumstances, appropriate what belongs to either of my daughters!"

"But if such was the will of the testatrix?"

"But that was only intended to deter them from so acting. Now it has happened, we cannot help ourselves. I certainly shall not appropriate my daughter's property for myself."

"No, but for your other daughter."

"Elise would not accept it. No, sir; what belongs to the children, belongs to the children. I have a respectable pension, upon which I can

live, and let them be happy with their own money."

Doctor Grisak saw that he had a man before him who was bullet-proof. For such an one it was a light matter to be a soldier. Still, even Achilles was vulnerable in his heel, and was slain by an arrow from behind. So, too, Ankerschmidt was vulnerable somewhere, and where, the lawyer determined to find out.

"Then your lordship is disposed to make peace with the man who carried off your daughter?"

"What do you mean by 'make peace?'" exclaimed Ankerschmidt, angrily; "men in my position are accustomed to forgive, not to 'make peace.'"

"Then you deign to grant an amnesty to Herr Straff?"

"What Straff? I don't know him by that name; call him Bogumil. But why the deuce does he have so many names?"

"Oh! he has very good reasons for it."

"Would he be subjected to persecutions if he were known?"

"No, just the contrary."

"Just the contrary! I do not understand you."

"I mean, that his many names are rather the consequence of the confidence reposed in him."

"What! Do you mean to say that he is an important personage?"

"Oh, very important. The other day I learnt all about him from Herr Bräuhäusel."

"And was it satisfactory?" asked Ankerschmidt, eagerly expecting an answer.

Dr. Grisak hesitated, and then said, slowly—

"Well, you see, that depends upon how we take it."

"How we take it! But it is of very great importance to me to know how we take it. This, at any rate, Herr Doctor, you will allow, that it is my duty to know what sort of man he is who has carried off my daughter without my consent; because upon that depends how far he may deserve my future regard, and I may admit him to my house."

"On this point I cannot give you advice," said Doctor Grisak, and brought forward a couple of Turkish pipes, as if to serve as a barricade against any attack on him.

"You can't give any advice!" said Ankerschmidt, in a tone of irritation. "I suppose the fellow is, at any rate, not a criminal?"

"Oh no! If he were, I should be able to give you advice. *Au contraire*.—Won't you light a pipe?"

"No, I don't want one," growled the Knight angrily; but for all that, he took the pipe and used it for the purpose of marking the emphases of his words, by striking it upon the table. "Answer me plainly. Do you yourself respect this man?"

But Dr. Grisak had just thrust the mouth-piece of the *chibouque* into his mouth, and was engaging in lighting it, so he only moved his eyebrows and shook his head by way of reply.

"For Heaven's sake, let me have an answer!"

Dr. Grisak, if he did not choose that either the table or the pipe-stem should break, was obliged to utter a sound.

"Well, I don't say that I don't respect him."

"That is no answer."

"So much I can say, that he has an official position."

"What office does he hold?"

"I beg pardon, but I got my intelligence

from a peculiar source, and am not authorized to let it go further."

"Confusion!" exclaimed the Knight, in a fury, and bent the pipe-stem into the form of an arch; "what sort of official position is that which they are accustomed to keep secret?"

Dr. Grisak here let fall the lighted pipe-bowl on the floor, and was too much occupied in sweeping up the burning tobacco, lest it should set fire to the carpet, to be able to answer. The Knight went on—

"At any rate he is not a hangman?" At this tragic exclamation, the Doctor laughed—

"Oh no! not so bad as that."

"Sir," said Ankerschmidt, "I entreat you to tell me;—nay, I insist upon your telling me, this secret. I pledge you my word of honour that I will never communicate it to anybody, that I will never make use of it, but know it I must."

This "must" was spoken with so much emphasis, and the Knight clutched the pipe-stem in so expressive a manner, that the Doctor thought the time had at length come for administering the *coup de grâce*. So, leaning

towards the Knight's ear, and in a confidential whisper, he said—

“I am informed that Herr Straff is employed in the *cabinet noir*.”

On hearing these terrible words, Ankerschmidt sprang from his seat as if a bomb had exploded beneath him. He could not at once find words wherewith to relieve his feelings, and in his dumb rage and sorrow he bent the pipe-stem in his hands until it broke. Throwing the fragments on the table, he exclaimed—

“God have mercy on them ! I know enough, and do not wish to hear anything more of them.”

The Doctor observed with satisfaction that he had discovered the Knight's vulnerable point.

“Herr Doctor,” continued the latter, “do what the law commands. As for me, I pledge myself by the honour of my sword-tassel never to recognise that man as my son, nor his wife as my daughter ; I will make full use of all my rights ; I will not give them a farthing, not even to save them from death. Act as my lawyer in this sense, and never attempt

to persuade me to reconciliation. I put the whole matter in your hands. Never let them write to me, for I am slain—I am dead. Six orders on my breast cannot conceal this disgrace. Thank you, Herr Doctor, for your information.”

Ankerschmidt was in such a state of excitement that he put on his hat while still in the lawyer's room without observing it. Then in a hoarse voice he continued—

“Let nobody know of this affair. It is enough that we two know of it. Curse it! it is more than enough that I myself know of it. How shall I ever look in a glass again? The devil take you with your news. Thank you; many thanks.”

With that he left the room, slamming the door after him, but the next minute he returned.

“Doctor, it has occurred to me that I ought to change my name. What is the way to do it? Just see about it. I won't be Ankerschmidt any more, but *Kukoricza János*, or *Ludas Matyi*,¹ or whatever the dragon-serpent you like; but I must cast off my skin.”

¹ “Maize John” and “Goosey Matthias” are the heroes of Hungarian peasant stories.

The Doctor said that it was all right, but that at present he had better go home. Still Ankerschmidt did not drop the idea, and as one of the clerks in the outer room helped him on with his cloak, he asked him how they would translate the name Ankerschmidt into Hungarian. The young lawyer with professional readiness replied, "*Vasmacska-kovácsy.*"

Ankerschmidt regarded him sadly, and then, as he took his cane from him, murmured—

"Thou art a fool, my young friend ; but of that I am the cause."

The Knight's wrath grew more intense the nearer he approached home. On the way he began to question the coachman closely as to which of the coachmen was that scamp of a gallows-bird who had driven the fugitives off with his master's own horses, as he meant to shoot him through the head without delay. Of course no coachman in the world would be such a fool as to answer, at the prospect of such a gratification, "Why, it was me ;" but, if his conscience told him that he really was the culprit in question, he would immediately

swear by all the saints in the calendar that his two eyes might immediately drop out if he knew anything whatever about it; and then, when they stopped at the lonely way side inn to water the horses, he would go round to the back of the house, and at once cut off across country away into the wide world, leaving carriage, horses, master, without ever stopping to ask himself how they were to get on further.

And sure enough it happened just so with Ankerschmidt. His coachman, frightened to death, ran away when they stopped to water the horses, and his master, after waiting some time for his re-appearance, was obliged to go on with the innkeeper's driver, in his peasant costume, seated on the box by the side of the gaily-attired *jäger*; a circumstance which of course still further increased his anger.

As for the runaway coachman, he took a straight line across country, got home, and alarmed the servants with the news that the master was coming, a pistol in each hand, to shoot, cut, stab, and slay every one of them first the porter, because he did not keep better watch at the gate; then the farm-servants

because they were not about in the courtyard ; then the housemaid, because she did not look after the young lady ; then the cook, because he cooked their provisions for the way ; and lastly the house-dogs, because they did not bark. At this terrible report the household were thrown into as great confusion as if Batu Khan were coming with all his Tartars, and the Knight ran great risk of not finding a single servant at home. This would certainly have been the case, if Fräulein Elise had not luckily learnt the cause of the disturbance from the little Gyuszi. In spite of his character as armed sentinel, the little fellow was not ashamed to burst into tears, and tried to find a place of concealment for his weapon, as if he had heard somewhere that on such occasions, when a place is taken by assault, those who are found with arms in their hands are in the greatest danger. Elise hastened down to the servants, and attempted to reassure them. She exhorted them not to do anything absurd ; told them that her papa was a good man, who was not accustomed to hurt anybody, and that they could not have helped anything that had happened. She

promised, too, that she would go out to meet him, and not allow him to come into the house until he had pardoned them all. By these means she so far prevailed on the servants, that they determined to remain altogether in the hall. Still, at the motion of the cook, it was determined to keep the door at the end of the passage open, in order that as soon as they heard the first shot which would most probably hit the young lady, they might at once take to flight. Nothing, however, could induce the compromised coachman to stop. He made off at once.

These arrangements had scarcely been made when the sound of the carriage announced the approach of the dreaded master. Elizabeth, according to her promise, went alone into the porch to meet him, and attempted to assist him in getting out. He hastily repulsed her as he cried—

“Back! Who gave thee permission to leave the house? Why didst not thou remain in thy own room?”

“No; do not be angry,” expostulated the little girl, nestling up to him in spite of his pulses, and with child-like confidence trying

seize that hand which had the right of blessing and punishing as it pleased; "do not be so angry!"

But every unforgiving feeling still held sway in Ankerschmidt's soul.

"Thunderbolts!" exclaimed he, withdrawing his hand from his daughter's; "I am not come to bestow caresses, but to take vengeance. To-day, Mademoiselle, we are not going to trifle, but to hold a strict inquiry, to condemn and to punish. Do you understand me?"

Elise drew herself timidly back, and like a trembling roe that has to defend itself against a great angry lion, raised her large dark eyes timidly to her father's flushed face, and with a trembling voice naïvely said—

"I beg—pardon—Sir Commander-in-Chief—does it not please you—to know—where is—papa?"

This childish question was uttered with such touching naturalness, and conveyed the implied reproof with such a sportive delicacy, that Ankerschmidt could not do otherwise than embrace and kiss the child. He had no sooner done so, than he no longer felt himself in the proper mood for holding trials, pro-

nouncing sentences, and dealing out punishment. He could no longer rage and storm.

"Thou wast a good child," he whispered "and I love thee. See, I have carried thee which thou wrotest thither, where it was of use. That man is free."

"Free!"

"Thou rejoicest; dost thou not? See while I was going about to procure thee so much satisfaction, how much sorrow they contrived for me at home. Not thou; not thou I know thou art good. Nay, do not speak. Thou sawest how I was just now. Thou wouldst not like to see me so again, wouldst thou? Well, then, if thou wouldst not see or my face such a look, or hear in my voice such a tone, as would terrify thee, never allude to those two persons in my presence. I am an old soldier, and have often been engaged in very hot battles, but I never knew before what it was to be in a rage; but now I know what it is. So, not a word about them, for when I think of them I do not know what I am about."

By this time they had ascended the step leading into the hall. The servants seeing

the Knight, walking quietly, with his daughter on his arm, took courage, and hastened to open the doors before them. The most courageous amongst them, the housekeeper and the housemaid, even pressed forward, kissed their master's hand, and assured him that they were in no way the cause of anything.

Ankerschmidt cast a stern glance on the whole troop, and in a loud voice cried out—

“Good-for-nothing scamps, I tell you! Confound you, take care such things don't happen again.”

With that he went on with his daughter into his own room, where he allowed her to assist him in taking off his wraps. Meantime he related what he had done, and what a hard-hearted man he had set free.

“And now, my dear little girl, we stand thus: For the future I shall not keep anybody in the house to look after thee; nor shall I lock thee up, as I do not wish in my old age to become a turnkey; but I will tell thee of what thou must beware. One of my daughters has taken a husband out of the *cabinet noir*, and that is sufficiently sad for me; but it would be still sadder if any one could say that

my other daughter liberated a rich young man out of prison, in order that she might marry him. Thou understandest me, dost thou not?"

"I understand thee, and will never meet him."

"Thy word on it."

Elise gave her father her hand, and he pressed it as if it were that of some grave man; "and now thou mayst go whither thou wilt, on thy parole."

Elise, with a smile, kissed her father on both cheeks. He must never know how much pain the keeping of her promise would cost her.

"One thing more, my little daughter. The past is very bitter to me; I am angry even with the names which remind me of it, even with the looking-glass which shows me my face of yesterday; so, pray, accustom thyself to be called *Erzsike*¹ for the future. And now you must look after the housekeeping—for now you must be my housekeeper."

The girl tripped gaily away with a song on her lips. Just as she went out, her father

¹ "Little Bessy," the Hungarian diminutive of *Erzsebet*, "Elizabeth."

called "Erzsike." She put her little head in again.

"Very good," said Ankerschmidt, laughing ; "I only wanted to know if you understood me."

In a few minutes' time Erzsike's smiling countenance sweetened the tempers of all the servants of the household.

George, the valet, whose business it was to shave his master's chin, now appeared with the hot water. He soon, however, reappeared in the kitchen, with the jug quite full, and told how his master saluted him with "What do you want, *Gyurka*?"¹ "I've come to shave your lordship." "No more, as long as I live," answered his master.

"Master" was going to let his beard grow. A man hates the past, and hates even the mirror in which he sees his yesterday's face ; and of such things there are a great many in this "our" life.²

¹ This also is a Hungarian diminutive.

² This is an allusion which is perhaps only to be fully understood by a Hungarian. By "*our* life" the author refers to the misfortunes of his nation after the events of 1849.

CHAPTER II.

VARIOUS KINDS OF RECEPTIONS.

CORINNA heard from Dr. Grisak the ill-tidings of her betrothed's being set at liberty. This was a terrible blow. That she had not been able to prevent it was a great misfortune; now all that remained was to attempt to extract its sting. She believed that by this time Aladar was at home. She could not imagine that a man who had been set free would not travel faster than his liberator. If Ankerschmidt could have got to Pest, doubtless Aladar was already at his uncle's. Accordingly she sat down and wrote a letter, addressed to Aladar Garanvölgyi. In doing so she made use of printing letters in order to disguise her handwriting. The letter ran thus :

“MY DEAR FRIEND ALADAR,—Take care lest thou fall out of one prison into another. I do not advise thee to think of thy former betrothed, Corinna. She is not what thou imaginest her. She is a frivolous coquette, who only the other day boasted that she could, if she liked, drive her admirers five in hand. Thou wouldst live very unhappily with her, if thou wert to marry her. Nor must thou suppose her rich, for she is very much in debt. Believe me, an old comrade of thine, that thou wouldst do much better to tear up the marriage-contract and forget the flirt, than to exchange one chain for another. Believe me, my friend, an independent unfettered life is by far the best. Come up to Pest and see how well we can amuse ourselves. Do not marry. Who knows what successes thou mayst yet achieve?

“Thy really true friend,

“DON’T KNOW.”

This letter she put into an envelope, sealed it with a cameo, so that her seal might not be recognised. Then she directed it in printing letters, and intrusted it to her servant to take to the post and to *register* it.

Now only two weeks before this time a new regulation had come into force at the post-office, to the effect that all persons who wished to send a letter registered, had to write their own name and address on the back of the letter at the right-hand of the seal. If this was not done, the angry official threw the letter back, scolded the person who had brought it, and told him to take it home and supply the omission. For the State required to know who they were that sent letters by its own post-office, and, if mischievous letter-writers existed who wrote, instead of their real names, Cornelius Nepos or Barcochebas, why, the State could not help it. They were not obliged to make their statements upon oath.

In this case the lion of the post-office seized the letter thrust into his cage, weighed it, examined whether the postage-stamps were stuck on in the right places, and were those required for its weight and the distance it was to go. At last he growled out to the bearer,—

“Why is not the name written on it?”

“But there is a name written on it,” was the innocent reply.

“But the other name?”

“I beg pardon, but the letter is only sent to one person.”

“Thou ass! the sender’s name. Who sends it? It must be written here. Go back at once, and write it.”

The honest fellow, however, expostulated with “his lordship,” urged that he would have so far to go, and so many pair of stairs to climb. Would not he rather write it himself? it lay there so convenient before him; and he had the pen in his hand; until at last the lion’s strong heart was softened, and seizing the letter angrily, he asked,—

“Well, then, what’s the name?”

“The honourable”

“What? Am I to be writing titles for thee? The name! quick.”

“Garanvölgyi Corinna.”

“Aron Löwi Khorin?”

“No, no, it isn’t a Jew, it is a lady.”

“The d——l take thee; am I here to be spelling after thee? There’s the pen; write it thyself.”

With that the servant grasped the pen in his fist, and scrawled in large letters his mis-

tress' name on the back of her anonymous epistle. Then the official took it in, and gave him a receipt for it. So that Corinna might now rest assured that it would go direct to its destination, and that, when it came to hand, the person to whom it was addressed would first know who had written to him, before he knew what she had written.

Just at that time Mr. Kampos was informed by Herr Bräuhäusel by word of mouth, that all further proceedings against him had been stopped, and that he might now go home without molestation. If he had any observation to make, he added, he might now make it, and it would be entered in the protocol.

Mr. Kampos thanked him for his offer with respect to the protocol, but declined availing himself of it. His chief care now was to get home as soon as he could. So he went out to the market-place, where he found a man from his village who had just sold his geese, and bargained with him for a ride home in his waggon. Calling at the post-office on their way, he asked if there was not a letter for his master. Yes, there was. This he took home with him.

Old Garanvölgyi was sitting by the fire reading Tacitus when Mr. Kampos arrived. The honest fellow entered with the ostentatious bustle suitable to a patriotic sufferer, who for four weeks had endured examination, had slept on a hard bed in a gaol, and had eaten turnkey fare. This distinguished patriot could now tell his master in one breath more stories about his four weeks' confinement than Aladar during his whole life would ever narrate about his experiences in the fortress. Nevertheless, the old gentleman was very glad to see his faithful servant back again. Indeed, his absence had been a great inconvenience. At last Mr. Kampos interrupted himself in the flow of his narration by exclaiming,—

“Dear me! I have forgotten one thing. Here, I brought a letter from the post. It comes from the lady Corinna.”

“How do you know from whom it comes?”

“The name is written on the envelope; that is the new regulation.”

“A pretty regulation indeed! Let me see it.”

When the old gentleman looked at the letter, he shook his head.

“Why, this is directed to Aladar.”

“Let me see ; so it is. It must be a mistake. Her ladyship’s thoughts are always running on Mr. Aladar, and so her hand writes his name without thinking. But it must be meant for your lordship. It would never have been sent here, but straight to Kufstein.”

“Perhaps she sent it here for me to forward to him ?”

“That could hardly be. It is plain that it is meant for your lordship. You see it is addressed ‘with respectful compliments ;’ now if it were addressed to Mr. Aladar, it would be ‘with love.’ Am I not right ? And then here is written in large letters, ‘In haste !’ with three notes of admiration. Now nobody could write on a letter to Mr. Aladar ‘in haste,’ because they must know that he would not get it any sooner.

The last argument had more weight with Garanvölgyi than the rest. He thought it most likely that Corinna had some matter of moment to communicate to him, and in her hurry had written Aladar’s name by mistake. He therefore opened the letter. The

more he read of it, the greater was his astonishment. He looked again at the envelope, and then re-read the letter, but could not make it out at all.

“‘Out of one prison into another.’ What can that mean? Give up his betrothed! He may well do that, considering he has fourteen more years to wait for her. ‘One chain for another.’ And then, the anonymous signature, and the sender’s name outside. This is very absurd.”

The old gentleman shrugged his shoulders, and concluded that somebody or other had played a stupid joke, if one could only see the wit of it. With this idea in his mind he threw it away into the basket of firewood which stood by the side of the hearth. It would do to light the fire with next morning.

“And now, friend Kampos, go on with what Herr Bräuhäusel said. Won’t they give me back the casket? or at least the portrait? Then in its place he might put a looking-glass, and use it to shave before.”

“I did ask him for it, but he said that he could not give it up, as the documents had been sent to Vienna.”

"Don't say so ; perhaps to the London Exhibition."

"I beg pardon, but they attach great importance to them there ; and the upshot of it all will only be known later."

"Perhaps they will publish them as entertaining reading *für die reifere Jugend* !"

All this time Aladar's greyhound was lying on the bear-skin at old Garanvölgyi's feet, and with her finely-shaped head laid on her fore-paws she listened with English phlegm to the, to her, uninteresting conversation. A waggon now rattled into the courtyard. The greyhound suddenly raised her slender neck and began gently to wag her tail.

"Some acquaintance is coming ; Cziczke is the first to perceive it," said Mr. Kampos, calling Garanvölgyi's attention to the dog's behaviour.

"Cziczke is tired of stopping indoors, and thinks that the gamekeeper is come, and is going to take her out on the fallows."

Cziczke, however, sprang from her place, shook the collar on her neck, put up her head, pricked up her ears, and began to moan and whine in the tone adopted by noble

animals of her kind, to whom nature has denied articulate speech, when they would say that they are aware of something which others do not know. After thus whining for a minute or so, she jumped up on Mr. Garanvölgyi, pressing her two forepaws delicately against his side. Then with another whine she sprang upon Mr. Kampos ; but in his case she reached as far as his neck, and even licked his face. Then she ran to the door, and began to scratch at it with one of her paws, and, as she turned her head towards the gentlemen, it seemed as if she were trying to express laughter with a greyhound's face.

“About whom art thou so joyous, my servant ?” said Garanvölgyi, sadly ; “who then is so dear to thee ?”

But now steps were heard in the passage, and Cziczke began to bark with all her might. In vain did Kampos attempt to silence her ; she only made the more noise, when the door opened, and in stepped the guest—Aladar Garanvölgyi.

On such occasions it is the custom on the stage first of all to start backward, and then to ask, “Is it thee ? Is it really thee ? Do not

my eyes deceive me? Am I waking, or in a dream? Or am I the sport of tricky spirits?" They, however, did nothing of the kind, but as soon as they saw one another, they rushed into each other's arms and embraced, silent and in tears. Who at such a time could find words?

As for Mr. Kampos, he became simply crazy, and began to jump about, and dance, and laugh. As he could not reach Aladar face to face, he kissed his back, his shoulders, his head. Then he rushed out into the courtyard, to the stalls and the stables, telling man, woman, and child, lastly even the horses, "He is come! He is here! He has come home! Thou fool, hast thou seen him? Hast thou not seen him? He is in the house! So help me, he is!" In five minutes' time he had traversed the whole village, nor did he rest till coming back he encountered the wife of one of the farm servants, who even from a distance cried out, "Great sir! Sir Bailiff! Have you not yet heard? Young Mr. Aladar has come." So does a man's own property come back to him.

It was only after these repeated discharges of the electric battery of joy, that Mr. Kampos felt himself calm enough to appear again in

the house, where he found the two kinsmen sitting side by side and engaged in quiet conversation.

"I knew that Mr. Aladar was coming," said he with an air of triumph; "I told your lordship so. At least I intended to tell you, I felt it."

"Cziczke certainly felt it first, dear Kampos," said old Garanvölgyi, while Aladar stretched out his hand to the zealous fellow.

"Then your lordship won't allow that I felt it sooner than Cziczke," said Mr. Kampos, sadly, regarding with a jealous eye the greyhound, which was now contentedly resting her wise head on Aladar's knee; "and yet it is quite true that I did feel it first. Why, didn't I bring a letter for Mr. Aladar?"

"Ah! true; some well-wisher of thine has written to thee from Pest; just look for it, Kampos? It is there among the rubbish."

"Who could have written it?" asked Aladar.

"Just read it. The writer was evidently somebody who knew of thy release, before thou camest hither. Till now I could not understand it, but now I understand it thoroughly."

Aladar read the letter all through, and then

smoothed the dog's head. Cziczke did not write such letters.

"Well, what dost thou say to that?" asked the elder Garanvölgyi; "dost thou understand it?"

"Oh yes, very well; the lady is afraid of my marrying her."

And then they all laughed; all four of them, the greyhound included.

"Has my uncle here at home the marriage contract?" asked Aladar.

"Yes, it is here."

"Let us send it back to the poor thing; why should she disturb herself about it?"

"Very good, we will. I like that resolution of thine, and will take care to carry it out. It would have been a great trouble to me to have had to persuade thee to give up Corinna, but as thou dost so of thine own accord, all is well. It seldom happens that a lady depreciates herself to her betrothed. That in thy case it has happened is a piece of peculiar good luck. Two acts of grace in one day! To be let off two periods of imprisonment, one for twenty years, and another for thy lifetime!"

The first day was spent at Garanvölgyi's

house in the calm pleasures of reunion. The next day Aladar surprised his uncle by expressing a desire to call on the Knight Ankerschmidt.

“Thou canst do so ; he is an honest man.”

“Besides, he visited me at Kufstein, and I ought to return his call.”

“In that case go.”

Aladar was surprised at such pliability on the part of his uncle, who, however, gave him no further explanation.

Ankerschmidt already knew of Aladar's return, and expected him to pay the debt of politeness. Still he was somewhat surprised when the messenger came from the chateau at the other end of the village to ask if the Knight was at home for Mr. Aladar. It was as well, however, to have it over at once, and then have done with it. So Erzsike was consigned to her room, lest she might by accident encounter the young man. Nor was such a measure of precaution groundless, for since Aladar breathed the fresh air he was become even handsomer than he was in his dungeon. This Ankerschmidt was obliged to own to himself as they shook hands.

"Sir," said Aladar, "I am come to thank you for having come to see me in my solitude."

"There is nothing to thank me for," answered the Knight, in a rough voice, and beckoning to his guest to be seated; "I was merely led by curiosity, as I wished to see what that rash fellow was like who in the year '49 roused me out of bed at midnight, and almost took me prisoner in the middle of my regiment."

"What! Was that you?"

"Of course it was; if I had known you had only a handful of hussars with you I should have caught you; but rashness succeeds sometimes. From this incident you may see that we are old enemies."

"Who have a very long armistice."

"True; we are no longer allowed to fight; but we may growl at one another as much as we like."

"That only within the limits imposed by the authorities. Besides, we shall not have many opportunities of growling at one another, as I am going away in a day or two, and shall not for the future be long in one place."

"Young man, do not get yourself into another scrape; that would be a pity."

“Oh no,” answered Aladar, laughing; “do not suppose that when I said that I should not remain long in one place I meant that I should take to the *Bükk*¹ as a guerilla, or go about the country as an emissary. What I meant was, that I should look after some work by which I may get my bread.”

“What do you mean?”

“Why, my landed property is all confiscated; capital I never had; and it is not to my taste to establish myself as a Pole² in some gentleman’s house.”

“But your uncle is rich, and very fond of you, as I well know.”

“That is just the reason why I cannot remain in his house. What would you think, sir, if my relations were to say that I remained about my uncle, not out of love for him, but from hankering after his property?”

“Just my man,” thought Ankerschmidt to himself; “as proud as myself.”

“Besides, sir, they did not so educate us

¹ A hill covered with beech-forests in the county of Borsod.

² After the suppression of the insurrection of the Poles against the Emperor Nicholas, in 1831, a great number of them took refuge in Hungary.

that when we have nothing left us on the earth, we should go and hang ourselves ; we can live on the ice even. If we lost our official positions, very good ; instead of crying over them, we went home to plough and sow. If they took away our lands, we learned some profession ; one became a lawyer, another a miner, a third an engineer. I, for instance, have my diploma as a regular engineer, and understand my profession as few do. Here is the Company for the Regulation of the Theiss, where is a modest little situation for me, which I shall hasten to take possession of as soon as I can ; and one of the consequences of my doing so will be that I shall not stay long in any one place."

Ankerschmidt passed his hands through his grey hair once or twice. He really began to fear that not only the daughter, but the father also, would fall in love with this young man.

"But it is a situation which is beset with a great many unpleasantnesses."

"On the contrary, it is a very pleasant one ; a man is not tied down either to place or master."

The sweet feeling of independence sparkled in his eyes. This the Knight saw plainly enough, but continued, with a confidential smile—

“But, pray tell me, how will such a situation as will be continually calling you away please a young bride?”

It was now Aladar's turn to look grave.

“I have none.”

“Surely you are not going to become a Knight of Malta; a young man of thirty years old! Besides, it is no secret for me that you are betrothed to a very interesting, young, and beautiful lady, whom I have the honour to know personally.”

“That is all over,” said Aladar, lightly.

“Surely you have not broken off the engagement, have you?”

“I do not like to talk upon the subject.”

“But I do. You see I also am a young man who may marry—a widower; and it concerns me to know whether the heart of this or that young lady is open to an offer.”

Aladar received the joke with a smile.

“Sir, you said that we are old enemies; now I can give a proof that I am no enemy

of yours. Do not let either of us take my betrothed."

"Have you reasons for so speaking?"

"I have."

"In what way has she offended you?"

"Such a matter no man confesses who has the least grain of vanity in his composition."

"They have slandered her to you?"

"No; no one has."

"You have quarrelled with her?"

"We have not as yet seen one another."

"Then it was given by a letter?"

"Yes."

"Then, my young friend, that is not sufficient reason for breaking off. Written words often occasion misunderstandings. One ought not to spoil a whole life for the sake of a letter. Go and talk to her yourself. I do not presume to interfere in your private affairs. I have no right to do so. I only appeal to your sense of right. You Hungarians are celebrated for your attachment to your laws; and you know that they do not convict a forger without first confronting him with the forgery, and asking him, 'Is that your writing?' Much less can I believe it to be the practice in Old Hungary

to condemn one's betrothed without first hearing her."

"Silence is often the gravest accusation. Still you are right, sir; I ought to go to her; otherwise she will be the injured party, which I should not like her to be."

"Well, I am glad of that. You see, in our first encounter I have beaten you."

"You certainly do remain on the field. I capitulate, and herewith take my leave."

They then shook hands, and as they said "good-bye," neither of them added "until we next meet." Aladar thought to himself, as he walked away, "a disagreeable fellow that; he knows secrets of mine; I shall not come here again." Ankerschmidt at the same time thought, "Ah! he felt uncomfortable, he won't come here again." Nevertheless, this visit led to very fortunate consequences for Aladar, as the sequel will show. He went the next day to Pest, and inasmuch as there is but one forenoon in one day, he put off till the day after his visit to Corinna, so that he might make it at the fashionable hour for calling. The sight of him had a terrible effect upon her nerves.

“Ah! is that you? Pardon me, but I have such a palpitation of the heart all at once.”

Aladar had to hasten to her side and lead her to a chair. The lady was just on the point of fainting.

“This surprise! Ah! how nervous I am! Everything has an effect on me.”

Aladar politely begged her to give herself time to recover herself, and to take some *sal volatile* to strengthen her.

“Ah! You cannot imagine how much my nerves are weakened since I saw you last.”

“You have been very anxious about me?”

“Very,” sighed the lady, not perceiving the irony of his observation; “believe me that, whenever I sat down to write a letter to you, I was seized with such an oppression of the heart that I could not accomplish it. When I was obliged to think of the situation in which you were——” and here she contrived to shudder in a highly becoming manner, Rachel herself could not have done it better.

“It was not by any means so bad as they thought; you see that I have not even grown grey there.”

“Ah! but how many privations you had to

endure ! If I only think of it——, again that palpitation.”

“No privation at all ; for every two days a loaf of munition bread ; was not that enough for one man ?”

“I beg you not to jest like that, it is not pretty ;” and here the lady seemed to hover between laughter and tears.

“But I do not jest at all ; on the contrary, it is very lucky that they accustomed me to such good habits, which I shall now practise with advantage.”

“What do you mean ? I do beg you not to talk in that way, it agitates me very much.”

“But I really mean what I say. I must now, as it were, begin life over again, and at first I shall hardly be able to promise myself more than dry bread, for my estates are not given back to me.”

“But perhaps they will be ?”

“There is no perhaps about it, for I shall not ask for them ; and they do not send them unasked to a man in my situation.”

“But why don't you ask for them ?”

“Because I can do without them ; I have a situation from which I can live.”

“Where ? What ?”

“It is not exactly the post of guard on a railway, but it is not much more—that of an engineer on the Theiss Regulation.”

“But that will be very fatiguing.”

“Certainly ; for the most part I shall have to live in fishermen’s huts and plank cabins.”

“But why don’t you stay with your uncle ?”

“Because a man likes to be his own master ; besides which, should I at any time marry, I would rather take my wife into a cabin built of planks on the dam of the Theiss than into my uncle’s house.”

At this speech, if Corinna had had a heart, she would not have complained of a terrible palpitation, but would have said, “My friend, all I have is thine, and my own self, too, into the bargain ; stay where thou art, go no further, and we shall live happily for the future.” But then it must be admitted that a resort to palpitations and weakness of the nerves was a more profitable speculation.

Corinna expected Aladar every moment to refer to their former relations, which had been made matter of contract ; and for this extremity she kept a fainting-fit in readiness, so as to bring

her suitor's present attack to an end. But Aladar did not refer to it. He asked her if she went often to the theatre; what new operas especially pleased her; what new words her favourite parrot had learnt; did she ride; was the horse she used to have with a star on his forehead still alive; and such like trifles. Then, as she still complained of the palpitations of her heart, he rose from his seat, and kindly advised her not to let her nerves get such a mastery over her, but to take the first opportunity of going to Éms, or to Ostende, or some other watering-place. With this he kissed her hand and withdrew.

This was the last kiss Corinna's hand received from Aladar. Being now quite convinced that their love, *quâ* love, had come to an end, he thought that the sooner their contract was got rid of *in optimâ formâ*, the better. As he already knew that Dr. Grisak was Corinna's lawyer, he went straight to his office. There he was received with all that complaisance with which such men as the lawyer was are accustomed to treat one whom they fear, and do not love.

“ I shall trouble you but for a very short

time, sir," said Aladar; "I have a contract made with the widow, Madame Garanvölgyi, who is a client of yours."

"Yes, I am acquainted with the contract."

"So much the better; I shall not be obliged to explain the matter at length. Briefly, I am not at present in a condition to offer a lady who should become my wife a brilliant position in the world."

"Ah! he is come to claim the forfeit-money," thought the Doctor to himself, as he continued aloud, "Have you spoken with the lady?"

"Yes, I have met her, and have perceived she does not wish the engagement to stand."

"And you, sir?"

"Oh! I do not in the least find fault with her. There is very little of the poet in my composition; I am very tolerant as far as marriage-contracts are concerned; she has perfect right to break off the engagement, if she chooses."

"And what about the contracts?"

"Well, it was about them that I have come to you, as one cannot settle such things with a lady who has weak nerves. We will destroy the contracts."

“And what are your conditions?”

“My conditions. Why, simply that I give back to Madame Garanvölgyi the contract which she signed, and she gives me back the one I signed.”

“Then you do not wish to make any use of the rights given you by the contract.”

“You don’t suppose that I should oblige a lady to become my wife?”

“But, with regard to the property?”

“Ah! to get the money without the bride. No, sir, that is not the profession I have been brought up to.”

“Sir,” said Dr. Grisak, rising from his seat, and making his visitor a bow, “you have really a noble character.”

Aladar shrugged his shoulders.

“Because I don’t steal or rob, eh?”

“In this way we shall soon arrange matters. The contract in question is here with me. Have you brought the duplicate?”

“Here it is.”

“You will be so good as to write on it that you will never avail yourself of any of the rights which are given you.”

“I shall not write anything at all; but

if you give me my writing I shall burn it in the fire, you can do the same with the one I give up, and nothing but ashes will remain of the claims of either party."

"But why, sir, do you object to writing here?"

"Because I do not wish to give Madame Garanvölgyi any grounds for supposing that I have bestowed a single thought on her since we last parted. If you object to my proposal, of course I shall put the affair in the hands of my lawyer, and you can settle it between you."

But Dr. Grisak was not going to let the present opportunity pass unimproved, and agreed to make the exchange Aladar had proposed. The latter at once burnt the copy returned to him, while the lawyer locked up the one given to him in a safe place. Then returning to Aladar, he whispered, with a confidential wink :

"Sir, you have to-day behaved yourself very generously and nobly in a matter in which the law would undoubtedly have decided in your favour. Such conduct will not lose its due reward. Mark my words, that I, Doctor

Grisak, who wear spectacles, and whom Mr. Garanvölgyi, your uncle, made to sit down on the stool for milking the ewes, was the first to tell you that you will again be as rich as you were, and that, too, sooner than you expect ; and will have no cause to regret that you gave up what was another's."

At this speech Aladar laughed heartily ; and what especially struck him in it was, that the old gentleman had made the lawyer sit down on the milking-stool.

"Yes, sir, he did ; and told me to cure the sick sheep, as I was a doctor ; but, for all that, I am not angry with him, not the least in the world."

And in confirmation of these last words, he escorted Aladar as far as the staircase, who could not cease laughing at the idea of the Doctor on the milking-stool. The rest of his speech he had already forgotten.

CHAPTER III.

A CERTAIN UNFORTUNATE LADY.

"MY dear papa, it is, after all, irksome for me to be thus alone in the house."

Thus spake Ankerschmidt's daughter one day to her angry papa.

"Well, what art thou thinking of?"

"That I ought to have a woman near me, to assist me in superintending the house, and to talk with me about sensible subjects."

"Thou art right ; a sort of companion ?"

"Yes ; some quiet, sensible woman, who has already learnt wisdom."

"Well, I should like to meet with such a woman ; but where shall we find one ?"

"Oh, I will look out for her."

"Wilt thou ? Well, get one."

A few days later Erzsike continued the subject.

"My dear papa, I have found a person who will just suit us."

"Hast thou found her,—and where?"

"A friend of mine in Vienna has recommended me a very good lady."

"Good is she? I am surprised they don't keep her in Vienna."

"She is an unfortunate lady, who, poor thing, married against her father's will, and her father cast her off."

"That—I can believe."

"Her husband was a good-for-nothing fellow, who married her merely because he thought he should get a great deal of money with her."

"To be sure; that's always the way it happens. Is that anything new? How comes it that those ladies only find out the truth when it is too late?"

"Then her husband commenced a lawsuit against her father in order to get his wife's inheritance, but in court it came out that her father had the right to keep it back, and so he lost his suit."

"That I can believe too; other men have sense too, which those young cavaliers don't choose to believe. They fancy that an old

man's senses have all slipped down into his boots."

"Then this ugly, wicked man in the excess of his rage, began to treat his wife cruelly and to beat her."

"Well, well! that is no reason why thou shouldst burst out crying; at any rate, he did not beat thee."

"But only think of such villany; to beat a woman!"

"That is very true; but if thou wilt cry over every woman who is beaten, thou must get up earlier in the morning, otherwise thou wilt not have time for all."

"But still it was not enough for him to beat her; that she would have borne; but one evening he came home drunk."

"What, that too?"

"Yes, from the tavern, where he had gambled away his wife's last jewels. He asked her for the ring which her mother had left her, and when she would not give it him, he turned her out of doors into the street, and the poor thing spent the whole night on the doorstep."

"What a gallows-bird!"

“Wasn’t he? The poor creature had now nowhere to go. She was ashamed to go to those who knew her; she did not dare to return to her father; so she was obliged to go into service.”

“Such, seest thou, is the consequence of thoughtlessness.”

“My friend at Vienna recommends her to me as a companion, and says that she would be very grateful if she could get into a quiet house like ours.”

“Very likely; but is not this person of an unpleasant temper?”

“Oh no, the mildest person in the world; patience itself.”

“Dost thou dare to guarantee her in this point? How dost thou know that it is so?”

“I conclude that it must be so, when she could endure so much ill treatment without complaining.”

“Oh! but that’s quite another thing; she may have allowed her husband to beat her, and yet be a very harpy.”

“Oh no, it isn’t so, I am sure. Do consent that we receive her!”

“Well, well; I don’t care; but thou wilt

see, that even if thou dippest her in milk and butter, she will still run away to her husband."

"Then thou consentest. And I can write to Dr. Grisak to send her money for her journey, can't I?"

"Thou canst write."

"Thou dost not ask after her birth."

"What do I care about her birth, so that her parents were but respectable people?"

"Oh! highly deserving of respect. Her mother died a long time ago, but her father is a very good man."

"Thou thinkest him so, although he cast off his daughter?"

"But he may still be reconciled to her."

"If I were in his place, I should hardly believe it."

"At any rate, thou hast consented to our receiving her. Thanks, a thousand thanks!" and Erzsike kissed her father's hands so often that at last he was obliged to be convinced that this certain unfortunate lady deserved all the praise which his daughter bestowed on her.

A few days later Erzsike got a letter from Pest. After she had read it in her own room,

it was a long time before she dared to appear before her father, lest he should find out from the appearance of her eyes that she had been crying. Several times she set out for his room, but had to turn back again and have yet another cry out, which she could not restrain. When, however, she appeared before him, she so far succeeded in her acting, that he asked her why she was in such good spirits.

“Why, that certain unfortunate lady”

“Well, what has happened with that certain unfortunate lady?”

“Has already arrived at Pest.”

“Then we had better send the carriage to meet her.”

“The covered coach you mean, don’t you?”

“Why should we send the covered coach? She can come in the other.”

“But let her come in the covered coach?”

And Erzsike kept caressing her father’s face, on which his beard already formed a stubble of about an inch in length, till he was obliged to see that it would be quite contrary to politeness and received usage to have the newly arrived companion brought in anything else than the covered coach.

"Very well, be it so ; is anything more wanted ?"

"Yes, there is ; but do not frown so. My friend writes to say that the poor creature has not even proper clothes in which to appear before us."

"The deuce ! Then I must send her money, must I ?"

"No ; why, I thought that, as it is, we have so much clothing here which Hermine left ; I shall never wear them, and as they are they will spoil here."

"But, my dear child, thou dost not know this person's figure ; supposing her to be stout, how then ?"

"Oh ! that she isn't."

"How dost thou know ?"

"One who has suffered so much can never be stout ; she is certainly very thin."

"But then she may be short ; and you know that Hermine was tall."

"She will be able to remedy that ; that is woman's work, which thou dost not understand, dear papa."

"Well, I don't care, send her what thou wilt."

After this Erzsike said no more, but ran away, and packed up out of the things which Hermine had left behind everything which was wanted for a lady's dress, the entirety and connexion of which are secrets known only to the female breast. Then she gave the coachman some very detailed directions which took long to tell, and at the end gave him a glass of wine to fix them the better in his memory. For the rest of the day until late in the evening she was in unaccountably good spirits. Whenever she was not crying she was laughing.

* * * * *

Ankerschmidt was out the whole day shooting, as the season for woodcocks had just begun. Now, his gamekeeper had predicted that there would be a very good season for woodcocks, because the year had been wet. It was late in the evening when he returned from his pursuit of them; no fewer than five adorned the meshes of his bag. Erzsike had now to hear the particulars of the fall of each woodcock, to which she listened with as much interest as if nobody could understand more about it than she did.

"In fact I shot a sixth too, but the wag was only winged, and contrived to get away among the bushes, so that I could not find him, and I looked for him till the moon went down. Never mind, I shall find him to-morrow."

"Wilt thou go to-morrow?"

"Early in the morning, while thou art still asleep."

"But thou wilt come home to dinner?"

"I shall take my dinner in my wallet."

"And wilt thou again come home so late?"

"Somewhat later, as the moon goes down later."

"Oh! do not stop out so late."

"But, my dear bird, that is the best time to catch the woodcocks on the wing."

"Yes, but then the certain unfortunate lady will arrive."

"That 'certain unfortunate lady!' Deuce take it! I shall find that certain unfortunate lady here to-morrow, and the day after to-morrow too, and a month later; but the woodcocks will go away, for they are birds of passage. Besides, thou thyself art fond of woodcocks. When thou wast but a little child, as often as thou sawest my gun on

my shoulder thou saidst, ‘Now, papa, shoot some woodcocks.’”

“I’ll tell thee what. Those which thou meanest for me, leave till the evening, and when the turn comes to my share, leave them and come home.”

“Well, the arrival of a duchess was never expected with so much ceremony as thy certain unfortunate lady’s. Well, I’ll come home at nine o’clock.”

“Oh no, no; thou must come by seven.”

“By Saint Hubert! I won’t come before half-past eight.”

“Give up just one half hour?”

“But when I have given my word to Saint Hubert?”

“Who knows whether he heard it or not? And besides, thou canst make it up the day after to-morrow.”

“Well then, so let it be; to-morrow I shall come home at eight; but, if I am a few minutes late, do not give me a scolding for it. Deuce take it! how much I must undergo for the sake of an unfortunate lady whom I never set eyes on in my life.”

“Seest thou what a dear, good little papa thou art?”

Having thus earned the praises of his daughter, the Knight sought to obtain compensation by getting up the earlier the next morning. But Saint Hubert seemed to be angry with him for having allowed himself to give up the word he had pledged to him. During the whole forenoon he did not get more than two woodcocks, and one of these in his irritation he shot to pieces so much that it was not worth picking up from the ground. Then about five o'clock in the afternoon there came on such a tempest, as the most adventurous calendar-maker would not dare to set down so early in the spring. Nor would he have got home dry, if he had not fallen in with a waggon returning to the village. Not that he much cared about the matter; his bones were not made of sugar; he had often enough got wet through in his lifetime. The rain seemed only to wait for him to get into the house, and then began to pour as out of a bucket, accompanied with thunder and lightning.

Erzsike appeared before him with a face expressive of anxiety.

"Thou naughty girl," growled the Knight, angrily; "confess that thou hast conjured all this sorcery on my head; confess it, thou witch!"

"Oh no, no," stammered the girl, trembling; "why, she is on her way; what will happen to her in this dreadful storm?"

"She? Who is she?"

"The unfortunate lady."

"What, that 'certain unfortunate lady?'" Confound her! thou hast no care for thy father's getting as wet as a marmot, but only lest that 'certain unfortunate lady' should get ill with fright in the covered carriage."

And the angry sportsman flung himself into his own room in a great rage. This everybody will think reasonable who considers what a peculiar misfortune it is for a man to shoot only two woodcocks where the day before he had shot six, to knock one of the two to pieces, then to be driven home by the storm, and there to find his own child insensible to her father's misfortunes. So heartless is the world to the sufferings of sportsmen! He walked up and down in his room alone, venting his wrath on all the causes, direct or

indirect, of his troubles—on his gun, which shot so much together ; on the wind, which carried the birds away ; on Saint Hubert, who was showing his spite against him ; on the rain, which was not at all wanted ; and lastly, on that “certain unfortunate lady,” whom such an ill wind was now bringing to the house. A pretty welcome she would have!

The rain still continued to pour down steadily, when through the window he caught sight of the returning coach. “Well, here is the unfortunate lady ; but how about my unfortunate horses ? If they have only escaped all harm ! But no doubt that rascal of a coachman has driven them to death. If I ask him about it, he’ll be sure to say that he came at a walk, and, as it was, could hardly get them to go at all in this rain.” With that Ankerschmidt flung himself angrily on the sofa, and determined to be a stoic, and to disturb himself about nothing. What was the use ? The world would not get any better.

All at once he heard somebody opening the door quietly. Of course this will be Erzsike ; and so it was. She timidly put in her curly head through the half-opened door, and looked

at her father ; then in a childish, sorrowful voice she asked :

“ Art thou angry ? ”

“ Yes, I am angry,” answered the Knight, roughly.

“ Oh ! do not be angry,” said the child soothingly, and trying to caress him, sportively reaching after his hand.

“ Get away ! ” cried Ankerschmidt angrily, and snatched his hand hastily away ; whereupon the girl all at once sank down beside him, and hiding her face, began to sob with such violence that her father sprang up in alarm. “ Why, what is the matter ? why dost thou cry so ? Did ever anybody see such a delicate bit of porcelain ! If one only speaks in a loud tone, it breaks to pieces ? Why, have I hurt thee ? How have I hurt thee ? Do not cry any more. I am not angry any more. The foolish child sobs as if her heart would break. I have told you that I am not angry : I was not angry, only joking. Get up and sit by my side. Why must thou be so susceptible ? Cannot one joke with thee ? Now kiss me, and don’t cry any more.”

Erzsike so far obeyed her father as to throw

her arms round his neck and kiss him, but it was not so easy to stop crying. For that, time was wanted. At last, however, Ankerschmidt was able with sportive words to bring her back to her usual mood, and her smile breaking through her tears was like the rainbow in the clouds.

"Well, now tell me what it was thou wouldst say?"

"She is here already; she has arrived."

"The certain unfortunate lady? Thank heaven for that; now we have not to expect her, so thou hast no further trouble."

"Oh yes, there is," sighed the child; "the unfortunate lady is very ill."

"Well, put her to bed, and make herb-tea for her. No doubt she has caught cold on her journey."

"But thou art not angry, art thou?"

"Why should I be angry?"

"Wilt thou do what I beg of thee? Only one thing?"

"Well, what dost thou require of me?"

"The unfortunate lady would first of all like to see thee, before she is put to bed."

"She is curious, is she? It is a good

sign if her curiosity is greater than her headache. Had I not better put on another coat?"

"Oh no; this will do very well."

"Will it? Then she is not some precise, fine lady. Well, let me go and wish her good evening, if it will not disturb her."

"Not at all; come along."

"If it is necessary for her cure that she should see me, let us go."

With this Ankerschmidt exerted himself to rise from the sofa. Erzsike took his arm between her two hands and led him to that part of the house in which her room was. The first room they entered was where Hermine used to live. Her bed with white curtains had not been used since she left. To this bed Ankerschmidt was led by his younger daughter. Arrived there, she drew aside the curtain, and on the white pillows Ankerschmidt saw lying ill, unconscious, with sunken eyes, with waxen, yellow face, with parched, quivering lips, the "certain unfortunate lady"—his own daughter, the unhappy Hermine!

His voice was presently heard outside crying—

"Coachman, put those horses again to the coach, and drive as fast as possible back to the town for the doctor."

"With these tired horses?"

"Yes, with these tired horses."

"In this storm?"

"Yes, in this storm."

* * * * *

After this day the nights were very long in Ankerschmidt's house. It contained a sick person, who could not sleep at night. The Knight and his younger daughter sat by turns by the sick bed, often together, clasping each the other's hand, and thus watching till dawn.

The sick woman always dreamed of being a bride. She spoke in whispers of her adored betrothed, whom she loved, by whom she was idolized. She told them what should be her bridal-dress; how her bridal-wreath should be made of myrtles and white roses; of the bridal-guests who escort her to the altar; how the priest asks there, "Dost thou love her?" "I do." "Dost thou love him?" "I do." Then she told how pretty was her bridegroom's little cottage to which he took

his bride, surrounded by a little garden, with doves in the courtyard, the windows green with roses and creepers, while without the contented servants sing at their work. But she ever came back to him, himself, who was so worthy of her pride, so worthy of her love; now he was represented as happy, now as suffering; now triumphant, now persecuted. But she was ever with him, felt with him, lived with him. He could go nowhere where she did not see him, nor appear otherwise than as embraced by her love. Her world was made up of herself and him.

So she went on night after night. Now, the interpreters of dreams assert that, when a girl dreams that she is in her coffin, it is a sign that she will soon be a bride. What then do they say of one who dreams that she is a bride?

But when she awoke, she shuddered at the recollection of the visions of the night. With the terror of one who has seen ghosts she complained to her sister how terrible were her dreams; that she had again seen *him*, again loved *him*. For in her dreams she loved him whom waking she abhorred, of

whom she could not think without fear and loathing.

One thought especially tormented her. When she had been already broken, mentally and bodily, by that man's cruel treatment of her, he one day showed her a law-book, divided into sections, and pointing to one of them, said, "See there; shouldst thou take it into thy head to leave me and return to thy father, I shall compel thee by virtue of this law to return to thy master's threshold; for, if I do not will it, thou canst never leave me; if I say to the judge that I love thee, he will give thee back into my possession, for it is not enough for thee to say that thou hatest me."

This threat pursued her the whole day, as long as she was awake. She spoke of it often to her father and her sister, and would not believe them when they assured her that there was no such law in the world. She had seen it; she had read it; and she knew that there was no escape from it.

And then, when she must fall asleep, how she shrank from her coming dreams!

"Awake me often," she would say to her

sister; "do not allow me to sleep heavily; when thou seest that I am restless, speak to me, recall me to myself. If I talk in my sleep, shake me; do not allow me to dream. Oh, it is dreadful to be ever thus obliged to dream."

The physician, who came often from the town to see her, said that a nervous affection had taken strong hold upon her, and that nothing could do her good except some favourable change of her thoughts. He recommended them to get her legally separated from her husband, and then to try and divert her mind by company. Ankerschmidt himself had thought of the same thing, and determined to consult with Dr. Grisak about commencing the suit for separation.

One particularly fine spring day Hermine was so far recovered as to be allowed to walk for an hour in the afternoon on the fresh turf, leaning on Erzsike's arm.

"This warm sunshine, this green grass would cure me," said Hermine, "were it not for one thought."

"That will soon pass off."

"Hardly; and when it comes upon me

the grass becomes yellow in my eyes, and I shiver in the sunshine."

"See, the violets are beginning to come out," said Erzsike, trying to give a more cheerful direction to her sister's thought. With that she stooped and picked a few, and handed them to Hermine. "What a delightful scent they have!"

Hermine smelt at them, and then flung them from her in disgust.

"Pshaw! they have the same smell as the cigars which *he* used to smoke."

At this Erzsike was extremely surprised. No one had ever attributed such a thing to the dear violets before. However, she did not dare to pick any more. The two sisters sat down on a seat in the garden, and Hermine continued her complaints.

"In fact, it would be better for me not to get well. Now, I never have reproofs addressed to me, because I am ill; but, if there was nothing the matter with me, my father would soon remember how I have wronged him."

"He has long ago forgiven thee."

"I know that thou didst not rest till he had said to thee that he would not be angry

with me any more ; but he can no more forget it than I can forgive myself."

"See, even now he comes towards us, and he is smiling on thee."

And, indeed, the Knight was coming toward them along a winding path.

"So far from seeing that he is smiling, I see that he is angry."

"He merely looks like that because his face is turned towards the sun."

Really, however, Hermine was right ; Ankerschmidt's face was decidedly dark. Erzsike saw that too, but would not admit it.

"Come here, papa," she cried, with her clear cheerful voice ; "we are disputing about thee. Hermine says that thou art angry, and I that thou art smiling."

"Oh ! I am smiling, of course," said he, coming up to them, and putting on at once the semblance of good humour.

"But he has only just begun," whispered Hermine in Erzsike's ear. She had not yet dared to speak directly to her father since her return.

Ankerschmidt heard the whisper, and hastened to reassure her.

"Yes, I had a little bad humour, because I have just received bad news about a law-suit, which will compel me to leave you for a short time, and go up to Pest, and that put me in a bad humour."

"Thou seest that I was right," whispered Hermine again; "and the grass, too, is yellow when I see it so."

"Do not be melancholy, my daughter; while I am in Pest I will ask the doctor to stop here."

Hermine again whispered to Erzsike—

"Ask our father not to send the doctor here; I prefer being ill."

"Why, my child?" asked the Knight, anxiously, and began to smooth Hermine's brow; "why dost thou say so?"

She again whispered her answer to her sister:

"Because, as long as I am ill my father is not angry with me."

"My dear child," said he, taking his recovered child in his arms, "why shouldst thou be so afraid of thy father's anger? The anger of a father is honey and balsam compared to that of fate, and that thou hast already felt."

At these words Hermine gazed fixedly on her father's face, then seized his hand with her two hands, and hanging down her head, she said, in a faltering voice—

“True, true; yet how late do we learn that!”

“But, my children, I must go off at once, for the business is very pressing.”

“Oh! my dear little papa,” said Erzsike, “whither wilt thou start so late? We will not let thee go.”

“But I will not be detained; come what will, I must be in Pest to-morrow morning.”

“The road is bad at night.”

“What dost thou mean by bad? Does not the post travel all night? Nor will it be my first night-journey.”

“But why dost thou make so much haste?”

“Why?—why? What wouldst thou understand, if I were to tell thee? As they say in Latin, *periculum in mora*; and thou seest, here is the coach; go up to your room and take care of Hermine, so that she does not go out when the weather is bad.”

“But where is your overcoat, and other travelling things?”

"Nothing is wanted; all is ready," said Ankerschmidt; and cutting short the discussion, he kissed his daughters and sprang into the carriage, and was whirled away at a great rate by four young horses. Hermine stood on the steps of the porch, looking after him; nor did she move till nothing more was to be seen but a fading cloud of dust in the distance.

* * * * *

Just as he was, dusty from his journey, Ankerschmidt hastened to Dr. Grisak.

"Did you please to get my letter?" asked that *matador* of the law.

"That brought me hither."

"Did your lordship understand the contents?"

"Oh! perfectly; that fellow means to begin a suit to compel his wife to return home to him."

"The Civil Law Procedure and the Austrian Code——"

"I did not ask what they say;—what does this fellow want?"

"Shall I speak plainly?"

"Please do."

"Well, then, I must honestly confess that

in this move I see nothing more than an attempt on the part of Herr Straff to extort money from your lordship."

"I am very glad that you are of that opinion."

"Straff is a shabby fellow: there is no denying that; and your lordship is a very excellent man. Straff is just as much convinced of the truth of the first of these propositions as he is of the last, and bases his whole calculation upon them. Your lordship has no such testimony to command as would serve before a legal tribunal as sufficient grounds for separating a wife from her husband. Without that, as you know how highly moral are the sentiments of our government, a wife is not allowed to live apart from her husband. To authorize a separation it is necessary that both the parties should own before the court an irreconcilable aversion. As long, then, as Herr Straff says that he loves his wife, we shall not be able to proceed against him."

"We must, then, get him to say that he hates her."

"Just so; that is the usual thing."

“Very good ; what will be the price ?”

“That I cannot say beforehand, but I should think that we could get him to agree for ten thousand florins.”

“It is given ; take the matter in hand at once, Herr Doctor ; and, as soon as the matter is decided in our favour, you shall get ten thousand florins as your fee. And now give me paper and pen, and I will write you the cheques at once.”

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT THEY CALL THE SCREW OF ARCHIMEDES.

IMMEDIATELY after *this* proposal, which, as far as he was concerned, was very favourable, Dr. Grisak started by the first fast train for Vienna. When he arrived at Straff's quarters, he found another old acquaintance of his there, no other than Herr Maxenpfutsch. As soon as the Doctor entered the first room, he saw at a glance how matters stood. On all the articles of furniture, without any exception, official seals were attached; a sign that creditors had been there. Even before he opened the door, he heard the voices of two men engaged in a very noisy and apparently angry discussion, both of them speaking at once and as loud as they could. When he did open the door he saw the two acquaintances bawling at each other in such extreme proxi-

mity, as if each were resolved at all costs to make the other hear with his nose what he had to say to him.

“Ah! gentlemen, on what subject are you disputing with such learned zeal?” asked Dr. Grisak jocosely, at whose appearance the two disputants started back from each other. “What is the doubtful question? Cannot I assist you in solving it?”

While Maxenpfutsch, entirely thrown out of the groove by this unexpected appearance of the Doctor, seemed to be looking for words to express his righteous indignation, Straff shrugged his shoulders, thrust his hands into his trousers pockets, and answered gaily—

“Why, you see I and my respected friend here are giving one another mutual instruction with respect to the law of bills. I can’t get him to understand that, although he has been the first to take possession of these pieces of furniture, yet if, later, another creditor comes and affirms that this was my wife’s furniture, and that his bill is in my wife’s name, then he can take them. That is but natural, is it not?”

“But the devil take it!” roared Max-

enpfutsch, interrupting him ; "this is no joke. Only just please to look here, Herr Doctor ; here are his bills, for which I have given the man ten thousand florins."

"Come, come, only five thousand ; but they always write down double the amount."

"I don't say anything about that ; the bills speak plain enough. Ten bills, each for a thousand florins. What is the value of this old furniture to me ?"

"Well, that is just what I say."

"Then I am a ruined man !"

"Am I not one too ?"

"But I cannot understand this gentleman's good spirits. Here he has borrowed all my money of me ; he can't pay it back again, and still he laughs."

"Permit me to speak, gentlemen," here interposed Dr. Grisak ; "supposing that all is not yet lost. How much does Herr Straff owe Herr Maxenpfutsch ?"

"Believe me, Doctor, it was only five thousand florins."

"But how could you contrive to spend so much ?"

"Why, of course, on the lawsuit against

my father-in-law. And you have something to do with that too, Doctor; why did you not tell me, when you declined to undertake it, that you declined it because the will gave the old fool power of life and death?"

"But still you could not have spent it all on that."

"Oh! let that pass; you know very well that if a man only salutes a *doctor juris* in the street, that costs money. If anybody is bankrupt, he has only to say 'I had a lawsuit,' and he is whitewashed at once. Besides, I had to live in a manner suitable to my rank. What are a few thousand florins in Vienna for a man who has married his lordship's daughter? Could I help it that his lordship did not give anything with her?"

"And we played cards a little, didn't we?"

"Well, that too; I should like to see the man who doesn't play cards. It is very good of you, I am sure, that you don't object to me that I smoke cigars."

"But you shouldn't have smoked them at my expense," interrupted Herr Maxenpfutsch, who was the more enraged because his debtor at that very time was smoking *cabanos*.

"I pray you to be quiet a moment," said Doctor Grisak; "permit me to speak. Supposing this matter can be arranged in a friendly manner. I have no doubt that Herr Maxenpfutsch would be content with his five thousand florins and the legal interest thereon."

"What do you call legal interest?"

"Well, say, ten per cent."

"Very well; and what does Herr Doctor propose?"

"It all depends upon my respected friend Herr Straff. My dear sir, pray be so good as to attend to what I have to say. His lordship Herr Ankerschmidt has commissioned me to commence a suit for separation against you."

"That won't come to anything, because I want the lady home again."

"Want her home!" howled Maxenpfutsch in scornful rage; "why, you haven't a chair for her to sit down upon."

"There soon will be, when she comes."

"She won't come, sir," said Dr. Grisak maliciously. "In case that you do not put any obstacles in the way of the separation, Herr Ankerschmidt offers you a nice little round sum to induce you to agree."

"Hear! hear!" cried Maxenpfutsch excitedly, while Straff with perfect nonchalance inquired, "What is the nice 'ittle round sum?"

"It deserves to be called a sum without the prefix 'little,'" said Dr. Grisak, buttoning his coat and taking the cheque out of his breast-pocket; "here is the cheque you see it is for ten thousand florins."

"Hear! hear!" cried Maxenpfutsch again, urging on Straff; "ten thousand florins! take it,—take it at once!"

Straff with perfect sangfroid answered mockingly—

"Yes, I dare say; and then hand you over the whole ten thousand; thank you for the suggestion."

"No, no; I do not want more than my own five thousand; I do not even want any interest on them. Can I do more?"

"Go away, don't spoil my game," said Straff, shoving his creditor from him. Then folding his arms, he took up a position before Dr. Grisak, drew a long breath, and said—

"Herr Doctor, I have reckoned upon this offer; I knew very well that it must come;

but the matter is not yet matured. I am not the fool who for the sake of to-day's sparrow gives up to-morrow's bustard.¹ It is first of all necessary that the whole affair should become as unpleasant as possible for the Ankerschmidts; for I am sure that, if they offer me to-day ten thousand florins, they will in no long time offer me twenty thousand to get rid of me."

"But, sir!" cried out Grisak and Maxenpfutsch both at once.

"And now there is an end to our conference; you can have nothing more to say to me; I am a gambler. The whole sum I have gained I leave as a new stake on the roulette-table. Double or quits! I must have twenty thousand, or the lady at home. And now, do not dispute any more with me. All exhortation would be as much thrown away upon me as on a sick horse. *Faites votre jeu, messieurs!*"

"Only one word, I implore," said Herr Maxenpfutsch, putting his hands together.

¹ "Better a sparrow to-day than a bustard to-morrow," is the Hungarian equivalent of our "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

“Not a word ; the shop is shut up.”

“You are an insupportable fellow.”

“I know that ; I have reckoned upon it.”

Maxenpfutsch, in despair, rushed from the room, but at the bottom of the staircase he waited for Dr. Grisak to ask him if there was any hope that Ankerschmidt would make such a great sacrifice to that mad fellow for the sake of his two infamous fine eyes. Straff meanwhile kept the Doctor for one word more in private.

“Doctor, let us understand one another ; you are a sensible fellow ; so am I. We have now such an opportunity before us as would be stupidity to let go. Ankerschmidt no doubt promised you a fine fee in case you carried the suit for a separation to a successful issue. I do not talk into the blue air either ; I engage myself to pay you a remuneration at the rate of ten per cent. on what you get for me ; that will be, for twenty thousand florins, two thousand ; no mean sum for so short a novel.”

Dr. Grisak saw that he had to do with a practical man who understood his business, so he smiled at the offer made him, and as they shook hands at parting, said, “We shall see.”

At the bottom of the stairs Maxenpfutsch caught the descending Doctor, and with uncontrollable curiosity inquired of him what chance there was of the "voluntary loan"¹ being doubled. The lawyer slyly winked his eyes, and told him to trust to him, and all would come right soon.

"If you can only get me back my five thousand florins, dear Herr Doctor, I will give you the whole of the interest."

"Five hundred florins," said the Doctor to himself; "that is money too;" and registered the offer in his own mind.

That very day he returned to Pest, where he found Ankerschmidt waiting impatiently for him. The distinguished successor of Justinian reported how he had fared. He told him that Straff did not appear to be at all pressed for money, because Maxenpfutsch lent him as much as he wanted. Consequently Straff held a high tone, and would not agree under twenty thousand florins. At this An-

¹ Here Mr. Jokai refers to the so-called "voluntary loans" raised by the Austrian Government among its own subjects. They were in many cases voluntary only in name.

kerschmidt did not even wink. He simply asked for writing materials, and wrote another cheque for ten thousand florins.

"Now, Herr Doctor, please to give him what he wants."

Dr. Grisak was enchanted at the way things went, and took the second cheque with him to Vienna by the night train. Ankerschmidt told him not to be long, as he should wait at Pest for his return. The lawyer therefore sought out Straff without delay. But of course he did not tell him what really happened. On the contrary, he began with—

"Now, sir, I can tell you that I had hard work. The old fellow was quite furious—like a fox, as we say. He scolded me, and all but struck me."

Straff heard all this with the utmost calmness, leaning with his hands behind him on the back of a chair.

"I can tell you that I had great difficulty in talking him over," continued the lawyer, letting himself down into one of the chairs which had been seized on behalf of the creditors.

"Really?"

"But at last I got him to agree."

“Did you?”

“I told him how his daughter’s happiness was at stake ; I told him what a dreadful fellow you were, of what a revengeful temper ; in a word, I remorselessly depreciated your character.”

“Thank you.”

“Well, you certainly may thank me, for I thus induced the old fellow to sweat out another ten thousand. Here is the cheque.”

“Very good.”

“Well, what do you say to it?”

“Nothing.”

“Nothing?” asked Dr. Grisak, setting his hands on his knees and leaning forward, so as to be able to wonder at the man the better ; “you don’t say anything, when I have gained your game for you, and brought you back, doubled, the ten thousand florins offered last time?”

Straff stepped up to the lawyer, and in a confidential way put both his hands on the other’s shoulders, and said—

“I say, Doctor, that where there are twenty thousand florins, there are thirty thousand.”

“What?” exclaimed Grisak, starting from his chair.

"There are thirty thousand," repeated the adventurer, with the utmost calmness.

"Are you mad?"

"On the contrary, I am very much in my senses. What are you thinking of, Doctor? When a business is so decidedly *coulant*, who would close the account? Who would fasten up the sluices when the flood of gold is at its highest?"

"But, sir," cried Dr. Grisak, almost beside himself with rage, "I do not know what name to give to your proceeding."

"Don't you?" answered the adventurer, with a cynical sneer; "its name is the screw of Archimedes; it has no end. Don't you disturb yourself, my dear Doctor; I know the men I have to do with, and am playing a safe game. You at any rate have no cause to complain. To-day you would have got from me two thousand florins; after a few days you will get three thousand; that's all the difference."

"Well, you are a devil of a fellow, certainly. I should not dare to screw the strings up so tight. However, I'll try this once to induce Ankerschmidt to compliance; but should he answer that now he would not give anything

at all, that you might go after him to America, whither he was taking his daughter, or that, if the worst came to the worst, he would send his daughter back to you—why, then, don't you come and say that I am the cause."

"Oh, that old toothless lion won't do any one of those things; he will neither leave the country, nor separate from his daughter. He'll pay down the thirty thousand florins, and we shall be all right."

"All I have to say is, pray that this may not be the last time you see me."

"Till our next meeting," answered Straff, shaking hands with Grisak, whom he did not even accompany into the anteroom. He felt that he was master of the situation.

Dr. Grisak returned to Pest and found Ankerschmidt at his rooms. The lawyer began to abuse "that double-distilled pick-pocket."

"Don't talk about him," said Ankerschmidt; "tell me as shortly as you can to what conclusion you have come."

"As soon as that scoundrelly swindler saw that we were ready to give him the twenty thousand florins, he took heart, screwed up his

demands still higher, and now wants thirty thousand."

Ankerschmidt did not fly into a passion, he merely took out his pocket-book, saying—

"I knew it beforehand ; so I have provided two cheques each of ten thousand florins. Take them both, as I think it very probable that as soon as he has got thirty thousand florins he will want another ten thousand. It is as well to be prepared beforehand. Pray satisfy him completely."

Dr. Grisak saw that this old soldier, however sentimental he might be, was also practical. He quietly pocketed the two new cheques, and then, with all the gravity of a Quaker, whose simple word was equal to an oath, assured him that at such a price he might be sure of success.

"Well, please to make haste over it."

Dr. Grisak urged his client to go home now, and promised to telegraph the good news from Vienna to him. He so far prevailed upon the Knight, that he did follow his advice. The lawyer, meanwhile, again rushed up to Vienna. There his first care was to provide himself with assistance, and for this purpose he first picked

up Maxenpfutsch before going to Straff's. He did not unfold before the ex-director the real state of things, but got him to give an engagement in writing with respect to Straff's bill, while he, on his part, undertook to induce that worthy to arrange matters satisfactorily. Then, taking him by the arm, he went with him to Straff's quarters, where he opened the negotiation by saying—

“Well, you are a lucky fellow; you are the favourite of fortune; you may indeed boast that you were born in a caul; it is a pity that you don't speculate in the lottery, you would be sure to win one of the great prizes.”

When Straff saw the Doctor's beaming countenance, he himself could not refrain from a smile of self-satisfaction, as he answered—

“Oh! in these lotteries only fools win; I speculate in those lotteries in which luck is on the side of clever fellows; but what good news do you bring, Doctor?”

“But, should I not first ask how much you will let go of the thirty thousand florins?”

“Thirty!” Vendelin would exclaim, but the word stuck in his throat, so great was his astonishment.

"Not a fraction," answered Straff, firmly.

"Are you not joking?" asked the Doctor.

"Not in the least; I want the thirty thousand florins in full."

Herr Maxenpfutsch only now recovered from the confusion into which he had been thrown by the astounding disclosure so suddenly made to him; he rushed upon Straff and seized him, crying out—

"What are you thinking of, my friend? Why, the other day you only wanted twenty thousand. Don't hesitate, but take it at once—I tell you you must take it!"

"Don't you interfere with my affairs; I will have the whole, or nothing."

Doctor Grisak seemed to be in a very jocose humour that day, and said—

"Then, if I put down on this table twenty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine florins and two zwanzigers, you will not take it, because there is one zwanziger wanting?"

"Just so."

Hearing this, Herr Maxenpfutsch became quite desperate.

"But, sir, do not act so madly. Here it is,

here it is! I myself am ready to add the zwanziger that is wanting."

This extraordinary piece of generosity excited the Homeric laughter of the two others. Grisak's joke was now complete. Herr Vendelin tried in all seriousness to thrust into the hand, now of one, now of the other, the single zwanziger which constituted the only remaining obstacle to their coming to an agreement. When, however, the lawyer had amused himself sufficiently, he smiled graciously, and, addressing Straff, said—

"Well, sir, if you are so obstinate that you will not take thirty thousand florins, I show you that you are not to have thirty thousand, but forty thousand!" with which words he triumphantly drew out of his pocket-book the four cheques, and threw them on the table.

If anybody had taken notice of the effect the sight of them produced upon Herr Maxenp-futsch's face, he would have been very much amused. At first it assumed a round, forced smile; but in a few seconds it grew visibly longer, and acquired an angry, chagrined expression. It occurred to him that if Doctor Grisak knew what he did, why had he persuaded

him to be content with five thousand florins instead of ten thousand. We, on the other hand, might ask why the lawyer, when he saw that Straff was ready to content himself with thirty thousand florins, had produced the fourth cheque, which his client had only given him to be used in case of need. But when we remember that the percentage on forty thousand is greater than on thirty thousand, we see at once the motive which influenced him.

"And now you have nothing further to object, have you?" said Dr. Grisak, with an air of superiority, and addressing Straff.

"I am at your service ; give me your commands."

"First of all, let us draw up a document in which you acknowledge that you entertain toward your wife a feeling of irreconcilable hatred, that you do not choose to live with her, and that you consent to a separation."

"Draw it up as you like, Doctor, I'll sign it."

The lawyer sat down, and improvised the document. When ready, he asked—

"Do you approve of this?"

"I shall not even read it," answered Straff ;
"if you like it, so do I."

"But could you not furnish me with a few details, which would put you in a more odious light before the court, and fully justify your wife's dislike of you?"

"Oh! plenty. Just sit down and write. First of all, I admit that I was in the habit of beating her."

"With what, pray?"

"Sometimes I used to coil the chain of the clock-weights round my hand, and beat her with the lead."

"Come; that's rather strong."

"Next, that I locked her up from morning to evening, and kept her without anything to eat."

"That is also very good."

"Besides that, I took away by force her wedding-ring, and put it on the servant-girl's finger in her sight."

"Well, that is enough now."

"If you like I could dictate to you still stronger things."

"What you have already said is quite strong enough. The rest you may leave to me. I'll draw such a description of you that even you yourself will be horrified at it."

"That I very much doubt."

“For the present, this confession of yours, which I and Mazenpfutsch will now proceed to certify, will be enough.”

Straff had dictated all these infamous acts of his with as much calmness as if he were merely slandering a third person who was not present, and smoked a cigar while doing it. When the Doctor had taken it all down, he signed the document as witness. Then Herr Maxenpfutsch did the same. Then he vacated the seat for Herr Straff.

The latter worthy seated himself very languidly, then drew the chair nearer to the table, then read over the document in an undertone to himself, and shook his head in a manner expressive of approval. After that he took the pen into his hand, tried the point, held it up to the light to see if there was not some fluff on it; then he dipped it in the inkpot, and tried it on a scrap of paper to see how it would write. Then he sat to the paper, made a great flourish in the air as if writing the first letter. Then he stopped. Again he leaned down to write; again he stopped to think. At last he threw the pen down, and got up, saying—

"I won't sign it."

"What do you mean?" sounded from both sides of him.

"I won't sign it under sixty thousand florins," he answered, and with these words he seized the paper and tore it to pieces.

* * * * *

Ankerschmidt went home so light of heart, that, as the peasants say, "a bird might have been harnessed to his carriage." He felt quite certain that he had managed the business most successfully, and had freed himself from a most terrible nightmare. Ah! in that thought were involved wounded pride, humiliated honour, paternal affection, everything which he had felt and suffered in his grief, and shame, and rage. And he had got free from it all for merely forty thousand florins. Nor was that a high price for one who could afford it.

The whole household grew gayer on seeing the joyous countenance of their master. There was not a servant who was not influenced by it. But it had the most marvellous effect on the sick member of the family. Hermine in a few days recovered so fast as to surprise

everybody. She was the object of her father's most tender care. It was evident that his thoughts were always centred in her.

"Why, now we have no troubles," said he in the morning, when he visited his daughter in her room; "do not fear, my daughter, we have thrown off that which tormented us as an old garment, and it will never trouble us more. In a day or two we shall get such pleasant tidings that we shall keep the day as a feast. Then we shall dance; there will be music in the house; we will have the very best band of gipsies up here, and I shall entertain everybody, even those with whom I used to be angry. But on that day I shall not be angry with anybody. Faugh! there was but one, and of him we will not speak. Only thou must make haste and be well by that time, because then everybody must dance."

The old gentleman also communicated to his daughters the fact that he expected a telegram from Vienna, from Dr. Grisak, which would contain the delightful news. After he had said so much, it would have required a very strong patent fire-proof safe to keep from Erzsike the knowledge of the secret that

Hermine's husband would consent to separate legally from her in consideration of a sum of money. And when Erzsike knew as much as that, it would have argued great hard-heartedness on her part, if she had not let it out little by little to Hermine. Thus at last both the sisters knew as much about the secret as their father, and awaited the telegram with as much impatience as he did. All the less could they help themselves, as they had to wait in passive impatience, while the Knight rode out twice a day to get it the sooner from the mounted *estafette*. But in this matter it happened with Ankerschmidt as with a restless sportsman, who keeps leaving his post, and is not there just at the moment the game is going by. Somehow he contrived to miss the messenger on the road, and just when the impatiently expected telegram reached the chateau he was not at home.

He who has at any time received a telegram knows what a difference there is between it and an ordinary letter, as far as the excitement of the feelings is concerned. It is a mysterious message of such pressing importance that the lightning itself has been requested

to forward it!—a missive which has come through the air to announce great joy, or great sorrow, or great fear! Whose hand did not tremble as he opened the envelope of his first telegram? Who did not look into it with fear? But this telegraphic message was not one which one would open with fear. This was known beforehand to contain tidings of joy, which they had expected for days, which were to make glad the hearts of the whole family.

Ankerschmidt was not at home, and it was necessary to sign the receipt at once, for the bringer of the despatch had to show in how many minutes he had done the journey—how much zeal he had shown in the accomplishment of the task entrusted him. This was his field of competition. So, as her father was not at home, Hermine signed the receipt and took the telegram.

How her heart beat, how her face flushed, as she held it in her hand! This, then, was the letter which was to give her back the peace of her life,—in it was written that she might be some day again free! Who could find fault with a woman so sorely tried, if

she wished as soon as possible to read such news?

The two sisters held counsel over the despatch, as to whether it was permissible for them to open it or not. On the one hand the Austrian criminal code awarded a very severe punishment for the breaking open of other people's letters; but then, on the other hand, it was not probable that Ankerschmidt would bring them before a criminal court. Besides, the secret was no longer a secret; and if it concerned anybody, in the first place assuredly it concerned Hermine herself. Still, Erzsike made the "old conservative" remark, that although the secret it contained might be their property, they ought nevertheless to wait till papa, in a constitutional manner, served it out to them. To this Hermine replied that she should most certainly die of impatience before he came home. Against such form of terrorization Erzsike made a solemn protest, it is true, but for all that lent her work-scissors to accomplish the *coup d'état* of cutting open the envelope.

What a curious letter! It was all written with blue pencil, as if the writer was in too

much hurry to be continually dipping his pen into the ink. Hermine took it up with trembling hand, and looked into it. It did not take her long to read, as it only contained the following words:—

“Straff does not give way. He makes new demands. Confounded fellow! I don’t know what to do with him.

“DR. GRISAK.”

Erzsike sat opposite to her sister by the little round table, and saw how Hermine’s face grew in a moment deadly pale, just as if some dark chill hand had all at once wiped off all the colour of life from it. She snatched the despatch out of her hand and threw it away. But it was already too late. The poison had penetrated to her heart. She had only just time to catch her in her arms as she sank in a swoon.

Ankerschmidt had scarcely got down from horseback when they told him that his daughter was again ill, and that they had not as yet succeeded in restoring her to consciousness. At the post-office he had learned that a despatch had been sent out to him. He hastened

at once to his daughters' rooms. Before he opened the door he heard from within a feeble moaning from gasping lips. Erzsike heard her father's steps and came to meet him.

"What has happened?" asked he, with twitching lips.

Erzsike gave him the opened despatch, with the words, "She read this."

Ankerschmidt just glanced at its contents, then crumpling up the paper in his hand, sighed feebly—

"Then it has killed her."

* * * * *

When Straff contrived to get away from Grisak and Maxenpfutsch, after refusing to sign the paper the former had drawn up, he determined not to return home for two days. It was not until the third day at evening that he ventured to approach the house and to ask the porter how many times Dr. Grisak and Herr Maxenpfutsch had called. He was informed that the Herr Doctor had called eight times, and Herr Maxenpfutsch every half-hour, and even at midnight. On hearing how much he was in demand, Straff determined to spend another night from home.

The two last nights he had spent on the floor of a beer-house, as he had no money to pay for a room at an inn. All the funds he had at his disposal were not more than one new-fashioned bank-note of the value of a quarter of a florin, for which he could hardly get much more for supper than a couple of sausages along with the indispensable pot of beer. As he sauntered through the street, the adventurer could not help laughing to himself at his curious situation.

“Here am I, with nothing but a quarter of a florin in my pocket, and have to consider as to whether I shall order two couple of kreutzer sausages and a glass of beer and a *stinkadores*,¹ or one couple of sausages, two glasses of beer, and no *stinkadores*. And yet I have only to stretch out my hand and immediately forty thousand florins will be put into it, and I may seat myself in the best hotel and order such a supper that the fame of it would go abroad. Forty thousand florins is a nice sum of money; but if one has to give Grisak four thousand out of it, and

¹ Slang name for the cheapest Government cigars.

then five thousand five hundred to Maxenp-futsch, and fifteen hundred to smaller creditors, why, there won't remain thirty thousand for myself. Still it is a nice sum of money. One can live anywhere like a lord on such a sum. But supposing we wait and let the grass grow a little more. This screw of Archimedes is a very fine invention, especially when one is so much detested by anybody as I am by Ankerschmidt. And then, he is rich enough. He has a million left him, even after he has thrown away the sixty thousand florins. And he is very fond of his daughter. Besides, if a man has already come two-thirds of the way, it is more likely that he will come the remaining third than that he will go back. And if the worst comes to the worst, I have forty thousand florins ready for me. I have only to open my empty pocket-book and they will fly in. So that the only question is kreutzer sausage and sixty thousand florins, or only forty thousand and an excellent supper."

Now if this question was a difficult one to decide, it must be considered lucky that some one appeared to assist him in the decision, being

no other than our acquaintance Herr Maxenp-futsch.

"I have caught you at last," he exclaimed, in a tone, half of joy, half of rage, as he seized the loiterer by his collar; "I have looked for you everywhere, in every inn, in every coffee-house where you were accustomed to go. Where were you? Where did you hide yourself? Now at any rate you won't get away from me till you have come to terms with Dr. Grisak."

With that he thrust his hand under Straff's arm and grasped it firmly, as if to assure him that he could not escape from such a friendly clasp.

"But, sir," exclaimed Straff, "what do you mean by using violence toward me? You are not my guardian, with authority to take me where I don't choose to go."

"Come, come; no flaring up, if you please. You'll soon know in what relation I stand to you."

"Ah! as my creditor, I suppose; a very noble office certainly. Of that sort of wild beast I have no fear at all. Commence a lawsuit against me."

“Don’t you disturb yourself. I am not your creditor. Here in my pocket is the letter in which I send all the ten bills to Ankerschmidt. He’ll pay me the amount, and I shall give him advice how to proceed with you ; not to proceed against you for all at once, but for one at a time. You will not pay one of them, but allow yourself to be locked up. A creditor has a right to keep his debtor in prison a whole year at his own expense. Then, when you come out, he’ll arrest you again for the next, and so on. So you will be provided with food and lodgings for ten years, unless you get tired of it. So, you see, I have something to do with you after all, haven’t I ?”

As his friend Vendelin uttered these threats, the expression of his eyes was such that Straff believed him fully capable of carrying them into effect.

“And then, you know, there will be no need for Ankerschmidt to come to terms with you, because they don’t order a wife to join her husband in the debtors’ prison. Now, my dear fellow, you will come to Dr. Grisak, won’t you, eh ?”

"Well, I'll see."

"You had better see quick, then ; for I am the husband of Miss Natalie, and she will kill me if I do not bring the money home with me, or else take vengeance on you."

This was certainly a very strong motive for action. A man who at home is in such danger, is not likely to show much mercy in the street.

"Well, then, in the devil's name, let us go."

"At last. But don't suppose that I shall let you out of my sight."

"I don't mind ; let us go arm in arm ; where has Dr. Grisak put up ?"

"At the Golden Lamb."

"We can't go so far as that on foot ; we must take a hackney-coach."

"Very well, at any rate you will have less opportunity of escaping me."

"Have you money ?"

"Oh yes ! although, by the bye, you ought to pay for it."

"Really ?"

"Well, I don't mind halving it."

"Ha-ha-ha !—halving it !—ha-ha-ha ! I don't expect you will get the half of it out of me."

“Why, how much money have you?”

“A quarter of a florin.”

“What! no more? and you won’t take forty thousand florins! Well, you are a deuce of a fellow! To play the game to the very last kreutzer!”

“Here comes a hackney-coach. And now let me beg you not to be present while I am talking to Grisak, or else you will spoil my business with your stupid old-fashioned eagerness. When a man is making a bargain, he ought to appear as if he was not in particular want of what he demands. Now, you are capable of blurting out that I am at the very end of my purse, and then he would screw out of me part of the sum he has already offered.”

“Very well; I won’t go into the room with you. But I shall escort you to the door, and see you go in, as I believe you capable of anything.”

“Well, now offer me a cigar, for I have not got one.”

In a few minutes this Orestes and Pylades got out at the Golden Lamb. The porter informed Herr Vendelin, to his great delight, that

the Doctor was in. He added that he had just received a telegram.

Vendelin escorted Straff to the Doctor's room, and then went down and sat in the coach to wait for his friend.

Straff, when he entered, found Dr. Grisak with his back turned to the door, and looking out of the window. He seemed to be studying with much interest the lighting of the lamps in the street.

"Good evening to you, Doctor," was the greeting uttered by the new arrival.

Grisak glanced over his shoulder at him, and muttered—

"*Servus.*"

"Hum, he seems to take up a high position," thought Straff to himself, as he threw himself at his ease upon the sofa, and began the conversation with—

"Well, Doctor, how does the screw of Archimedes work? Is it forty thousand or sixty thousand, eh?"

At that the Doctor advanced from the corner in which he had been standing, and, with his eyes staring fixedly on the questioner, roared at him—

"Now you may go and thrash oats in Silesia. You have no need of your screw of Archimedes, nor of the forty thousand florins, nor of forty copper kreutzers. Your wife died last night."

So saying, he threw towards the adventurer a telegram containing the words, "Hermine died at two after midnight."

It immediately occurred to Straff that this was a masterstroke of the Doctor's, who had had himself telegraphed to according to his directions. Accordingly, with a smile he asked—

"Is not this a joke, Herr Doctor?"

But this was too much for the patience of our Trebonian, who exclaimed—

"Get out from here, you stupid, scoundrelly fool! Your confounded folly has stolen out of my pocket fourteen thousand five hundred florins, which were already there. You are an impudent, infamous gallows-bird!" and so on in the same style.

Herr Straff had heard similar compliments addressed to him elsewhere, but never in so compact a mass. At last rage, which makes men lions, raised Dr. Grisak's energy to such a

pitch, that, when he had exhausted all the phrases he had at his command, lest he should be obliged to go over them all again, he seized his friend by the neck and flung him out of the room.

After this somewhat unfriendly mode of expediting his egress, Herr Straff thrust the tips of his fingers into his waistcoat pockets, and without even setting straight his hat, which had nearly slipped over his eyes, with a smile said to himself—

“According to this I must abide by the kreutzer sausages, after all.”

Whistling, he descended the staircase, at the bottom of which he was espied by Herr Vendelin, who at once sprang out of the hackney-coach, and hastened to meet him with—

“Well, is it all right?”

As soon as Herr Straff set eyes on that face, distorted as it was by hope and doubt, he could not help bursting out into a loud laugh. Then putting his hands on the shoulders of the other, who regarded him with bewildered wonder, and laughing in his face, he said—

“Ha-ha-ha ! ha-ha-ha ! How amusing you are, my friend ! My wife died last night. Adieu, forty thousand florins ! Now you may drive me wherever you like.”

CHAPTER V.

THE MOUND WHICH BINDS US HERE.

AND even if the living should wish to leave this country, the dead would keep them here.

* * * * *

Ankerschmidt only then knew how much he loved his daughter when she was already in her coffin. It was easy to say, "I will drive thee away; I will deny thee; I will forget thee;" but when she lay there, white, speechless, dead—when the closed lips seemed to say, "Forget me, then," it was difficult so to act. The intellect might make it as clear as that twice two are four that she had erred, that she had done wrong, and had deserved her punishment; that, in fact, there was no other fitting end to her life; that it was well that she had been taken away from them. For all that, her memory would for ever lie

heavy on the heart ; and after years had passed away, dreams would still bring back the form of the lost one, and prove that it is not so easy to pass away as to die.

In vain the dreamer tells the vision to its face, "Thou no longer livest ; thou art dead ; I myself have seen thee buried." The vision pays no attention to that ; it returns again, acts as it was wont to do when alive, and interferes in the affairs of life.

When his daughter died, Ankerschmidt undertook a great charge, which occupied him day and night. He had clever doctors brought to embalm the body, architects to build the vault, and the funeral was not to take place till that was ready. He himself entered in a book the names of all those who came to see the dead body ; and made an album of the letters which he received in answer to the announcement he had sent out of his bereavement. Among them, the first was old Garanvölgyi's ; the second, Aladar's.

As soon as the architect had prepared the plan of the vault, Ankerschmidt himself began to look for a suitable site for it. The place he fixed on as the last resting-place was by

the side of a babbling brook, where the willow-trees love to whisper one to the other. Weeping willows, he thought, would grow very well there, and the brook would murmur its everlasting lullaby in the sleeper's ears.

The very day they began to dig the foundation of the vault the bailiff of the Garan-völgyis came to see Herr Ankerschmidt. The good fellow first of all said what he could to cheer up the mourner, and then turned to the matter on which his master had sent him.

"Please your lordship, I come with Mr. Aladar's compliments."

"Thank you."

"You please to know, perhaps, that Mr. Aladar is *indzseller*?"¹

"I do."

"He once made measurements all about the parish, merely out of amusement, so that he knows which house stands higher, which lower, all through the village."

"Does he?"

"Yes. It is strange that he knows that

¹ The Hungarian peasant's corruption of engineer: *zs* is sounded like the *j* in French.

the balcony of your lordship's chateau is just on the same level with the pavement of the old Squire's."

"Is it?"

"But I did not come here to gossip away your lordship's time on such a sad occasion, but because we have heard that it is your lordship's intention to have built for the worshipful lady Hermine a crypt on the bank of the brook. So Mr. Aladar sent me to dissuade your lordship from doing so, because when the Tisza overflows its banks, the water covers that place two fathoms deep, and would sweep away the valued ashes."

Ankerschmidt only now began to give attention to what was said to him.

"When the Tisza overflows its banks?"

"Yes; it is accustomed to overflow this part of the country every fifth or sixth year."

"But now we have new dams made."

"They are of no use; it isn't *we*¹ who have made them. But, at any rate, the

¹ He means that they were made, not by the Hungarian authorities, but by the agents of the Austrian Government.

ground-water renders the banks of the brook unfit for a burial-ground."

Ankerschmidt heard these observations with ill-humour; the leafy willows on the cool bank was such a favourite idea of his.

"So his worship makes the proposal, that, if your lordship wishes to build a vault, you should take the eastern half of the birch-mound, on whose western side is placed the family vault of the Garanvölgyis. The place is dry, not subject to inundations; and then, it is so pretty under the weeping birches there."

Ankerschmidt thanked him for the proposal and accepted it. One half of the mound was to belong to the old, the other to the new landlord. The same white-leaved trees which were already acquainted with the spirits of those who fell asleep of old, would whisper above his dead.

In a week's time the building had to be ready. Great is the hurry of the dead. At the end of a week the funeral took place. Pomp and sorrow were matched in it. Priests and singers came to it from a distant land. There were flowers from all parts of the earth,

gold and silk on the coffin, torches and swinging escutcheons. Only the tears were the produce of the country.

Ankerschmidt was a soldier, and soldiers are not allowed to weep before men. In his voice it was not allowed to be perceived that he was giving commands in a funeral procession. When it reached the vault—when they let down the coffin into the cavity—when the great stone lid was shut down over it—when the last “Amen” had sounded above it, then Ankerschmidt cast the first clod of earth to form the grave mound.

And this mound it is which does not allow us to go away. The clod which covers our dead binds us to this place. That clod consecrates the earth on which we trod, to become the country hallowed by our prostrations. That clod explains everything which before was not understood. From that day forward, wherever Ankerschmidt might be, in however distant a part of the world, a country, a neighbourhood, a hillock would draw him back to it—the mound which covered his daughter's grave.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COMMON TROUBLE.

THE surviving daughter inherited her sister's share—not only of their mother's property, but also of their father's love. He, after the funeral was over, detained Dr. Grisak at his house. The lawyer, if we mistake not, had shed the most sincere tears over the departed. The Knight wished to confer with him as to making Erzsike his son, so that if she married she should retain her own family name, and her children would take her name along with that of their father. They were two days occupied with this plan, but on the afternoon of the second day, just as they had finished their black coffee, they received a visit from Mr. Kampos.

The warm-hearted fellow's usually rosy face was now more heated than it was wont to be, and his hair in even more than its accustomed

disorder. He seemed to have come in a great hurry.

“God save you, my good friend ; what good have you brought us ?” said Ankerschmidt.

“How is the Mr. Inspector ?”¹ asked Dr. Grisak.

“Thank you ; I am but a bailiff,” answered Mr. Kampos, bowing to both of them, as he hurriedly drew out of the pocket of his coat a letter ; “I beg your lordship’s pardon, but we have got a letter from Mr. Aladar, which is of pressing importance, and he wrote to us to communicate the contents of the letter to your lordship, which we should have been sure to have done even if he had said nothing about it.”

“What may it be ?” asked Dr. Grisak, in his curiosity setting his spectacles on his nose.

“With permission I will read the whole letter. ‘My dear Unele,—The water of the

¹ To make the following conversation perfectly intelligible, it must be observed that our words “bailiff” and “land steward” have in Hungarian a great number of equivalents, which denote the several grades of a hierarchy of officials as precisely defined as that of the Civil Service of the State. “Inspector” is nearly the highest, as *Kulcsár* is the lowest in that graduated scale. Some of these technical terms I have attempted to translate ; in other cases I have left the original word.

Tisza rises rapidly. According to reports received from Tokay, we may expect the flood to rise higher. If it should rise two feet, it will flow over the dam just at the locks at Füzes ; that is, supposing the floodgate to stand so long, for the stakes there are very shaky as it is. It would be an incalculable loss to our neighbourhood, for above Great Cumania on the opposite side of the river strong embankments have been raised, so that the Tisza not being able to spread itself over the opposite bank, will inundate on our side places which have never been under water before, as to their astonishment they are experiencing in many parts. If the water breaks through the embankment here, it will not stop till it reaches your threshing-floor ; with a rise of another foot it will reach to the sheepfolds ; and with a rise of two feet it will be in the house. So it is as well to take precautions beforehand. Luckily, the farmyard is surrounded with a strong wall of earth and wood, and the stone fence in front of the house will stand the trial ; a heap of manure three feet high all round will keep out the water. These measures it is as well to see to at once, for our

embankments promise us but sorry protection. There will be enough time to barricade the gates with manure when you hear that the embankment has given way. I beg you to give the neighbouring gentleman notice of this, as his chateau stands six and a half feet lower than your dwelling, and he has therefore much more reason to see to his own protection.’”

After he had heard the letter read, Dr. Grisak merely remarked that it was impossible.

“But, I beg pardon, it is all written here,” said the bailiff, smoothing out the letter with the palm of his hand; “here it is.”

“I believe you that it is all set down there, but, for all that, it may be untrue.”

“What! Mr. Aladar say what is not true! Ah! I see that you do not please to know him.”¹

“I don’t say that he intentionally writes falsehoods, but he may be mistaken, like any other man. How far is the Tisza from hence?”

¹ The Hungarians have learned from their neighbours, the Austrian Germans, such exaggerated expressions of politeness, that one often hears, “Does it please you not to feel well this morning?”

"Six miles.¹ But what of that? The sea is hundreds of miles off, and yet Mr. Aladar can tell how high is the top of our church tower above the level of the sea. I beg pardon, but Mr. Aladar is a trained engineer. In the first month he was paid eighteen hundred florins by the Tisza Regulation Company. If he says that there will be a flood in our village, then there will be, for Mr. Aladar understands his business."

Dr. Grisak's ill-humour made him an engineer at once.

"I understand it too; I too know what taking a level is; we, too, in Bohemia have inundations."

At this Mr. Kampos' national pride felt grievously wounded.

"Inundations in Bohemia indeed!" he exclaimed scornfully; "what sort of inundations? A little brook swells after a thunderstorm and carries away the little bridges in its course, and the next day shrinks back to its proper channel. What is that, compared to an inundation in Hungary? That is a sea in which galleys can row about. First see

¹ Nearly thirty English.

one, and then please to talk about your Bohemian inundations."

"My dear Mr. Prefect, not for the world would I wish to dispute Hungary's claim to that glory, but only to say that the water of a river may rise six feet above the level of the country it passes through, and, if the dams are strong, no danger will arise from it."

"Yes, but that is the thing; the new works are not strong, the stakes even now shake."

Here Ankerschmidt broke in with a question directed to the lawyer :

"Why, those works were constructed by your *protégé*, weren't they?"

Dr. Grisak felt very uncomfortable at this remark, and acting on the legal maxim *si fecisti nega*, answered—

"Oh! they are sure to be good enough; you know, my dear Mr. Bailiff, that the engineering gentlemen are all like that. Every one of them depreciates the others' work. At least I never met with an engineer who did not pronounce his predecessor's work contemptible."

This Mr. Kampos could not stand. Deeply wounded, he folded up the letter and put it back into his pocket.

"I beg pardon, but I did not come to dispute with the Mr. Fiscalis ;¹ I only wanted to fulfil my duty in giving your lordship the information we have received. Whether your lordship takes any notice of it, or not, is your lordship's affair. We for our part have made our arrangements, and I must now go as fast as I can to the folds in the more distant parts of the estate to have the sheep driven in to the farmyard."

"Perhaps the danger is not so very pressing," suggested Ankerschmidt, to whom it seemed in the highest degree improbable that these beautiful green fields now variegated with flowers were to become in a day or two a lake.

Mr. Kampos shrugged his shoulders.

"Besides," began Dr. Grisak, by way of assuring the Knight, "such a chateau as this of your lordship's will not be injured even by an inundation. Of course the case is quite different with those old-fashioned residences which were built of sun-dried bricks, or even of mud mixed with chaff. These of course melt away one after another. But this has

¹ So the family lawyer of a landed proprietor is called.

been built by a Viennese architect, and will not rock for every trifle."

This was the *coup de grâce* for Mr. Kampos' patience.

"It is quite true, Mr. Fiscalis, that our house was built by a carpenter of the place, and has no fine ornaments on its outside; but I can tell you, for I was there, that it was built of such good bricks that they rang like porcelain; nor did they spare iron in building it, and they picked out for it the very best fir-woods. I saw, too, how the celebrated Viennese architect built this chateau; I saw what sort of bricks they burned for it, and how they filled up the middle of the pillars with rubbish; I saw, too, how little care they took to dig the foundation deep enough, although the soil is sandy; and I say, that on the day of the inundation I would not stop in it an hour—not if you were to give it me."

"But, Mr. Ispán!" exclaimed Dr. Grisak.

"I will go at once, for if I remain much longer, I shall be addressed as Kulcsár," said Mr. Kampos, rising, and once more begging pardon of the Knight, who thanked him for his friendly communication, and said that he

would go in person, and procure information for himself as to the magnitude of the danger.

As for the Doctor, he suddenly found it absolutely necessary for him to leave at once. He had a case coming on at Pest, which had been set down for to-morrow. Ankerschmidt did not detain him. Erzsike might remain his daughter yet a while. It was not so very pressing a business to make a son of her. The lawyer, however, hastened his departure with such feverish anxiety, that Ankerschmidt asked him jocosely if he expected the house to break over his head.

When the Doctor was gone, the Knight ordered his carriage, and had himself driven to the river, which took his four horses about five hours. As he turned off from the high road towards the dam, he saw from far hundreds and hundreds of men at work, coming and going, wheeling barrows before them, dragging along fascines. In many places they were driving in stakes with rammers, keeping time to their strokes with loud cries. In the adjoining meadows, light wagons were being filled with earth for the dam. As soon as the Knight's coach came up to the dam, it

was stopped by a man in a peasant's pelisse of sheepskin, who firmly but respectfully asked—

“What do you please to want here?”

Ankerschmidt showed no anger at the interpellation, but answered civilly—

“I want to look at the work.”

“May I be permitted to ask whence the gentleman comes—from this side of the Tisza, or the other?”

“From this side.”

“Then it is all right. Would you not tell me your respected name, if I ask civilly?”

“With all my heart. I am Ankerschmidt.”

“That is the gentleman who is the neighbour of Mr. Garanvölgyi. You can get down here and the coach can remain, as it is not allowed to go on the dam.”

“Whose order is that?”

“Young Mr. Garanvölgyi's; he is the engineer here, and his commands we have to obey. For the Tisza is now a very great lord, and if he is angry, it is not the general's commands he obeys, but the engineer's.”

Ankerschmidt found the reasoning of the man in the sheepskin quite correct, that when men have to contend with the elements, all

should obey the engineer; and when he got to the top of the dam, he was obliged to confess that the Tisza really was a very great lord. The yellow river, swollen and disturbed, rushed with the rapidity of an arrow between the dams which confined it on either side. The white poplars within these limits, whose tops alone were now visible above the water, showed how much it had risen within the last few days. On the great rushing stream not a single boat or other vessel was now to be seen. In ordinary times there were a number of mills moored here, hovering over the blue water like wild-geese in the sky. Along the towing-path, horses were wont to draw loaded barges, while down the current of the river glided quietly the rafts of the Wallachs from the county of Marmaros. Now and then the smoke of some small steamer would give a new character to the landscape, and nearer the bank fishermen in their boats dragged in their nets full of fish. Now all these had disappeared. The mills and boats were all dragged up in confusion on the bank. Not even the ferry-boat, which was accustomed to ply from one side to another, dared now

to try the force of the current. The rope on which it moved was drawn up tight and high above the level of the water, and served as a perch to innumerable crows, as if it had been stretched there merely for their convenience. Now and then, amid the waves which crowded one on the other, something dark might be perceived, and those on the bank speculated as to what it might be—a log of wood, or some piece of furniture, or a human corpse.

On the dam every one worked as though he were in a camp throwing up entrenchments against the enemy. The creaking of barrow wheels loaded with earth, and the heavy thumps of the beetles driving in the piles, overpowered the sound of human voices; nor did many feel much inclination for wasting their time in talk, while the Tisza was washing the last span of the embankment.

At the first glance, Ankerschmidt could see that the most urgent piece of work on hand was the closing up of a floodgate which did not seem to be sufficiently strong, by a second embankment raised behind it. This was already so far advanced that they were engaged in wattling its sides.

“Here comes Mr. Engineer himself,” said the man in the sheepskin, pointing to a form coming towards them. Ankerschmidt could hardly have recognised Aladar Garan-völgyi, if he had not received previous intimation, so much was he disguised by mud and dirt which had dried on him through several days and nights. His clothes were torn in lifting faggots; his hat was shapeless from rain, and his voice hoarse with shouting. Few women would be likely to fall in love with him if they now saw him, but one who already loved him would love him all the more.

“Good evening to your lordship,” said the young engineer, saluting Ankerschmidt; “you did not believe my letter—is it not so?—and are come to examine personally into the matter. Well, now just look around.”

“God save you,” said Ankerschmidt, pulling off his stagskin gloves, so as not to clasp the youth’s sore palm with a gloved hand; “it seems to me that I have seen enough. Does the Tisza still rise?”

“To-day it has only risen five inches; the embankment on the other side must have

given way somewhere, for yesterday it rose a foot at Tokay."

"Then it would be a relief for us if the water bursts the embankment on the opposite side?"

"Of course, because then it would get a free course on that side, just as it would be a great advantage to them if the Tisza overflows our side."

"According to that, on both sides they pray that the misfortune may befall the other?"

"We do more than pray."

"Try to strengthen our embankments?"

"That would be the best thing; but then it is much quicker and less costly to weaken the dam on the opposite side. Was not your lordship challenged by the guards I have posted?"

"Ah! then those were guards. It is true they inquired after my name, and whether I lived this side or that."

"And only let you pass when they knew who you were?"

"Everything here is just as in a camp."

"It is obliged to be so. We have to do not only with the elements, but also with men. Both on this side of the river, and on the

other, the whole year's gain, the homes, the properties of hundreds of thousands, are at stake. A long mound of earth is all that parts us from the danger. If the inundation breaks through this mound on one side, those on the other may sing *Te Deum*, for they are then saved ; but the devastation on the part of those who lose amounts to millions. Now, despair is a bad counsellor."

"Do you then expect that they will come over from the other side to break down our embankments?"

"That too can happen ; but there are guards set to prevent them, just as in time of war. At night, every hundred paces there burns a watchfire, and sentinels armed with guns patrol the dam, as far as my superintendence extends. But you may know that those attacks which can be beaten back with guns are not the most dangerous. Just now a rich man came to us, who secretly, confidentially, offered a large sum of money if the engineer would not take notice of any defect in the works which might come before him. If the flood breaks through, they would say it was a misfortune, and no one could show that the

engineer foresaw it. Who can search the reins and the heart? If we send away such tempters, then there come professional advisers who lead the inexperienced engineer astray, so that he strengthens just such parts as do not need it. I can't succeed in driving such men away. At other times they are excellent fellows, good comrades; but danger makes a man wicked and sly, if he has something to guard. Thank God I have nothing. If I had, perhaps I should not be better than the rest of them."

"But why do they not rather strengthen this sluice, instead of making a new embankment behind it?" inquired Ankerschmidt of Aladar.

"Many have asked me that already, and that, too, officially; now here on the bank lie the stakes which have been pulled out of it; they will explain the whole matter at once."

With these words Aladar led Ankerschmidt to some four or five stakes lying on the dam in charge of a man armed with a gun.

"Please to look here; these stakes have been washed out of the sluice by the flood. On each of them is marked the length it was ordered to be of, namely, four fathoms three

feet. Now, if we measure it, we find it is not more than three fathoms four feet. This shows that the stakes in the sluice were driven in to a depth five feet less than was set down on the plan. This the contractor saved. The present consequence of his economy is, that the water is undermining the embankment, so that all strengthening of it from above would be of no avail; consequently I am obliged to raise an embankment behind the whole of this piece of scamped work."

During this account, Ankerschmidt kept angrily pulling out his moustache, and several times murmured to himself, "This was done by the *protégé* of that confounded Grisak."

"Well, I thought myself that other brains were busy with it, besides those immediately concerned. I have had to withstand attempts made upon me by such men as have properly nothing to do with engineering. Amongst others a certain Herr Mikucsek came here more than once."

"Ah! I know him. What did he want?"

"Only that I should leave this work alone, and give my attention rather to other threatened points."

“And how did you get rid of him?”

“Very simply; I did not answer him a word, and acted just as if I did not hear what he said. I gave my orders; he gave his; and when he saw that everybody obeyed my commands, he got angry and went away.”

“Did he not promise to come again?”

“He threatened very much to do so.”

“Only let him come; I shall be here.”

“I am much obliged for the assistance, but I must inform your lordship that my quarters, in which I can receive you, consist of a bundle of fagots, out of which we extemporize a tent wherever the night may come upon us.”

“Splendid quarters! In a campaign a man would often pay gladly for such an hotel, could he but get it. At any rate I shall stay here; we have good cloaks, and shall pass the night without trouble;” and so saying, the old soldier followed the engineer with light steps to his fagot-hut, where they both sat down on a bundle of osier rods.

It was already evening. The flocks of wild geese were returning home from the fields to the reeds. From the distant villages the plaintive evening bells sounded to the Tisza,

and along the embankment horns made of the bark of the beech-tree gave notice from mile to mile that the work of the day was over. Those who had toiled from morning to evening might now go and rest. The work of the night began ; for even then the toilsome struggle must not pause. Hands refreshed by rest took up the spades and the picks which the others laid down, and the work on the dam went on, at first by moonlight, afterwards by torch-light.

“We should not have believed that we were going to occupy the same tent,” said Ankerschmidt, as he dropped the fat of the bacon stuck on a wooden spit upon bread browned before the crackling fire.

“We have a common enemy,” answered Aladar.

“And a common object to defend.”

“Not in every sense ; what I have to defend is my country, not my property.”

“That is meant to be a hit at me ; you mean to insinuate that I have only my property to defend, but not my country. Now see, young man, you are not right.”

“So much the better. Besides, as it is,

neither of us has much advantage over the other ; if the water rises as it has done, by to-morrow both our possessions will be in one place,—the bottom of the sea.”

“But this bottom of the sea will be in one place,—in our hearts,” answered Ankerschmidt, in such a tone as to convince Aladar that this was no phrase spoken to the winds.

Nor was it at all impossible that it was seriously meant. If Newton could prove that the attraction of the earth is the cause of specific gravity, why should not the soil of Hungary have such a special attraction as to cause the specific gravity of hearts ?

The two men agreed that they would watch out the night by turns. Aladar, as the one that was most tired, was to sleep first ; then, when the moon went down, Ankerschmidt was to awake him to watch till morning. Aladar received the proposal with thanks, rolled himself up in his mantle, lay on the bare ground with his head on a fagot, and had scarcely wished his companion good-night before he was asleep.

Ankerschmidt sat on another fagot, and fed the fire with sticks, so that there might

be a flame by which he might see the sleeper's face. The face of one asleep is a fine object of study. Every feature returns to its original expression. In sleep there is no hypocrisy. Now and then the wind caught the youth's mantle and blew it off his chest. Ankerschmidt every time carefully covered him up again, and stirred up the embers.

Towards midnight the crescent moon was sinking to rest; like a silver boat it seemed to hover over the broad stream, until across the waste of waves there appeared one long gleaming furrow of light. Ankerschmidt intended to let the wearied youth sleep until he awoke of himself, and to watch in his place. The silver boat already dipped in the water; now only half of it remained above the horizon like a burning promontory; this also sank lower and lower; at last only a spark was left, and then that too was lost in the waves.

At that very moment the sleeper rose to his feet, and wished Ankerschmidt good morning.

"Ah! you have awoke."

"The moon has just set," answered Aladar, pointing to the still gleaming sky, where a

glory marked the tomb in which the heavenly wanderer had just been buried.

"And did you perceive when the moon went down?" asked Ankerschmidt in astonishment.

"He would be a bad sleeper," answered Aladar, "who should not perceive in sleep the moment when he had to get up."

No sooner had the moon gone down than hundreds and hundreds of torches blazed along the dam. The work went on as if by day, the barrows creaked, and the long-drawn word of command giving the time to the stamping in of the earth deprived night of its silence.

"If one only closes one's eyes," said Ankerschmidt, lying down in the place vacated by Aladar, "one might imagine it was day, on account of the noise of the workmen. Could you sleep through all this shovelling and stamping?"

"Oh! very well; it sounds just as if one heard the heart of our great mother, the earth, beating."

"Nothing is wanting to make one think it day except the bell of noon calling the workmen to dinner."

“Really it seems to me as if I heard a bell in the distance.”

“That must be only a ringing in your ears. Who could make out the sound of a distant bell amid the creakings of so many wheelbarrows?”

Aladar, however, did not rest satisfied with this suggestion, but walked out of the glare of the fire, and seemed to regard intently something in the distance on the surface of the Tisza.

“It seems to me as if I saw some boat approaching.”

“You must have good eyes if you see anything; I only see the water.”

“There it is, just under the bank, where those pollard willows stand out of the water; it will reach them directly.”

“It may be the trunk of some tree.”

“But I see the trace of the oar in the water; it is some boat. The watchmen are doubtless asleep, as they have not as yet fired upon it.”

A few minutes after Ankerschmidt himself began to believe that a boat was coming towards them. With that each of them took

a gun and went on to the edge of the dam. The Tisza was rushing swiftly along, and the boat seemed to approach them as if under steam. In a short time they were able to see a man sitting in it, and guiding with two oars a canoe cut out of a single piece of wood.¹

"Ho-ho! Who art thou? Whither?" cried Aladar, raising his gun to take aim.

The man in the boat called back again—

"Let not the gentleman trouble himself as to who I am, but rather take thought for his own poor life while he has yet time; they have broken the dam up above at D——."

"They have broken it!" cried Aladar in a voice of rage and despair.

"So help me, they have! I saw, too, who did it; I know his name."

"Who was he?"

"That I don't say; were I to tell it the gentry would lock me up in prison. It will be a good thing for him to escape—ay, and to boast that he was there, where were so many others; but if I know who it was, death will come of it. Good morning, young sir."

¹ Called in Hungarian by the significant name *lélek-vesztő*, "the loser of life."

"Stop!" cried Aladar; "come in hither, and get out on to the bank, or I will shoot thee."

"Please to try," was the answer, as the man in the canoe lay down at the bottom of it, and allowed himself to be carried rapidly out of range. It would have been useless to have fired on him.

"Sir," said Aladar, taking Ankerschmidt's hand, "now I hear the bell plainly enough;—it is the alarm-bell. That man must have told us the truth. In which case you have not a moment to lose. If they have broken the dam at D——, the water will reach your chateau sooner than your good horses."

"And you?"

"I remain here, as I have something to do;—although nobody can do any good here: the water will soon surround us. The workmen will disperse as soon as they hear the news, and they will be in the right to do so. Every one of them has his family and his husbandry at home. Now make haste, sir, this is no time for consultation."

"And how will you escape later?"

"Oh, there are plenty of boats here; I shall

take one of them and steer straight a-head, wherever I may wish to go. Good-bye."

With that he grasped the Knight's hand, and throwing his gun over his shoulder, took his way with hasty steps in the direction from whence came the mysterious boatman. Ankerschmidt stood for a long time looking after him, till Aladar turned and with his hand beckoned him a farewell. Then Ankerschmidt thought of getting back to his carriage. As he roused his coachman, who was asleep, the people at work on the embankment had not yet heard anything of the alarming intelligence; the torches were still flaring, and the rammers thumping. Ankerschmidt hurriedly got his horses put into order, and himself took the reins in hand, to get along as quickly as possible out of the winding paths near the bank of the river. His mind was filled with thoughts of his only daughter, who was left alone in the house now threatened with destruction.

The meadow between the dam and the high road was marshy, and the wheels sank deep into the soft turf. The morning star had risen in the sky by the time that Ankerschmidt

had struggled on to the high road. Once there, he used the lash of his whip, and let his horses gallop towards home. When they came to a steep place, he allowed them to slacken their pace to a walk, while he himself took the opportunity of looking about him. He observed that no vehicle of any kind was coming after him. He began to believe that he was flying before a false alarm.

By the break of day he reached a brook, where he allowed the horses to go down into the stream, and while they were just taking a gulp of water, he himself went on the bridge to look around. All was still green. The meadows were variegated with yellow and lilac flowers. The corn-land was split up into squares of every shade of green. On the pastures were feeding herds of white oxen and black buffaloes. On the blades of grass the rays of the rising sun showered millions of diamonds, which formed a nimbus of glory around the Knight's long shadow. As he looked over such a happy prospect, how could he reconcile his mind to the belief that, in one day, nay, in half a day, all would pass away—would become nothing; that all which was

then poetry and happiness would in the space of a dream become mud and despair!

And yet so it was written. Ankerschmidt's team had hardly galloped along another quarter of an hour when they came to another bridge built over a brook. As the horses passed it at a walk, the coachman turned round and called his attention to the stream.

"Just look, your lordship; this brook is now running upward."

Ankerschmidt leaned over the side of the carriage and saw that the bed of the little brook was quite full of muddy water, which was flowing in a direction contrary to that usually taken by the stream. This made him more observant, and he perceived that the trenches by the road side were all full of water, which could not have been long there, as several kinds of flowers which do not grow in the water were to be seen in them; the smaller ones almost wholly submerged, the taller ones looking down with surprise at the element which was so soon to destroy them.

After another quarter of an hour these trenches were overflowing into the fields by the roadside, and the shallow water sparkled

here and there among the green young corn. As he went farther, he found that the water had broken into the road, and the plain began to gleam with the distant inundation.

“Let us get on—let us get on faster!” said Ankerschmidt, urging his coachman to greater speed, and saw, with continual anxiety, how there trooped long flights of wild ducks and other water-birds through the air, as if they were in a hurry to occupy the neighbourhood. But what caused him the greatest anxiety was that he met not a single soul on his way. No traveller, either in a waggon or on foot, was to be seen along the whole length of the road. It was just as if they had been all made prisoners.

In one place they came to a pool stretching right across the road. It was already so deep, that it rippled in the breeze, and seemed entirely to ignore the existence of the dyke on which the road ran.

“In with them!” cried Ankerschmidt; and the coachman drove the horses into the water, which reached to their bellies and poured into the body of the carriage. They had about two hundred paces to go before they got to

dry land again, but they succeeded in wading through the pool.

They now reached an elevated piece of the road above the level to which the water had as yet risen. A small wood flanked the road on both sides. It resounded with the songs of nightingales and the warblings of black-birds. The wool-like blossoms were falling from the poplar trees, and the flowers of the acacias loaded the warm air with their perfume. No human nerves could feel any presentiment of what awaited them on the other side of the wood.

As soon as they got out of the shaded portion of the road, they had to descend a declivity where an entirely new prospect lay before them. It was one grand panorama of ruin. Far and near, from hundreds and hundreds of places, the rays of the sun were reflected from the surface of pools of water, as if from the fragments of a broken mirror. The right side of the road looked like the shore of some lake, lashed by the waters of the inundation, which, at the distance of about a thousand paces from the wood, poured noisily across the dyke, forming an obstacle in their

way of about thirty fathoms long. Beyond this the road was crowded with a confused mass of light peasants' wagons, containing a number of men, women, and children, crying and wringing their hands in their helplessness and despair. Ankerschmidt now understood how it was that he had as yet encountered nobody on the way he had come. The inhabitants of the flooded villages had not been able to cross the obstacle in their way. The remains of a couple of broken wagons showed that there had not been wanting some daring enough to attempt the dangerous passage. The stream had, however, relentlessly swept them off their feet, and continued to break down still more of the road.

"Cannot one pass this?" asked Ankerschmidt of those on the other side.

"The gentleman may be glad he is there," answered one of them in a surly tone, for great danger does not make men more polite; "he may be thankful that he is so well off."

One man, however, who wore a coat, recognised Ankerschmidt, and began to speak more respectfully.

"Danger is behind us, sir; the water has

surrounded us ; we would escape, if there were but whither."

"What do you know of the village of B——?" inquired Ankerschmidt anxiously.

"We live near it; since dawn we have heard the alarm-bell, but the water came so suddenly that it was impossible to go that way."

"But I must go there directly," said Ankerschmidt with emphasis.

"It would be difficult to do so in a carriage; but if your lordship would take my advice you will turn back before the road breaks up behind you, and go to some station on the Tisza, whence you can return in a boat and tell them, please, that the danger here is very great, if so be as the wrath of God does not sweep us away before help comes."

Ankerschmidt saw that it was as well to follow this advice, and that, too, without loss of time; so, promising the anxious people to send them assistance, he ordered his coachman to turn back by the way they had come to the embankment by the river side; there, it was probable, the inundation would arrive last.

As he returned he observed that the stalks

of the tall king-spears, which as he came had towered over the water, were now choked in the mud. The puddles in the road now reached to the bottom of the carriage. The rich crops of barley showed scarcely their ears above water, and the meadows which less than half a day before were variegated with yellow and lilac flowers, now only served as a mirror to reflect the image of the sky. The white and black herds no longer fed in the pastures, but ran lowing toward the roads, along which an unbroken line of wagons bore in every direction the fugitives from the neighbouring villages. From their disordered flight it might be seen that no one knew from what quarter the danger was coming, or whither they were to escape from it. From all the villages near pealed the terrible sound of the alarm-bells. Over-head the flights of water-birds uttered their hoarse, discordant cries, while the air was filled with an indescribable, anxious sound, the confused crying for help of thousands of human beings.

Here and there on the roof of some white house, already surrounded by the inundation, sat women who with their handkerchief

beckoned into the distance, which gave them neither answer nor aid. Ankerschmidt thought that his only child sat like them in a window of his house surrounded by destruction, and like them, cried for the help that would not—could not come. And yet he had been warned of all this by that wise fellow, whom the fine gentlemen considered a fool because he had such an honest face, and he had disregarded his warning. Instead of instantly taking what measures he could to put his house into a state of defence, he had left it to procure information as to what he ought to have believed at once. And then that hard-headed fellow, the bailiff, had said too that the chateau was badly built, and, if an inundation came, God be merciful and gracious to those within it! And by this time his punishment for not having believed him then was that he believed all when he could no longer help himself.

By the time Ankerschmidt got to the sluice, there was nobody there but Aladar and his assistants, and the crews of the boats which had been kept in readiness; the rest had escaped in every direction. Aladar was just

then very busy, and hardly recognised the Knight on his return. He was engaged in fastening up those stakes which had been washed out of the sluice. When he did recognise Ankerschmidt, he said—

“Pardon me, sir; I shall be at your service directly; I am only putting in safety these documents, which I cannot take with me, and have then to give directions to these men as to whither they are to go, so as to afford assistance to those most in want of it.”

In a short time the boats were manned and dispersed in every direction, proceeding according to Aladar’s directions across the plain, partly blue, partly green, to the church towers of the most sorely threatened villages. Meanwhile Ankerschmidt walked impatiently up and down on the dam, and kept pulling out his long moustaches as if they were the cause of all the trouble. At last Aladar turned towards him:

“Now, sir, I am at your disposal. You have not been able to get home in your carriage. Is it not so? The inundation had got to the other side of the poplar-grove before you, hadn’t it?”

“Yes, I turned back from that place ; we had to swim a little in doing so.”

“Now it will be as well to send the carriage to Szolnok ; it will be able to get as far as that along the dam ; there will be no use for it here for some time.”

“But I want to go home. What is happening at home—at home ?”

“I know that ; of course we shall go together ; I myself have to make haste to my poor uncle. My business here is suspended for some three weeks or so ; during that time we cannot do better than go about fishing up those who are drowning in the water.”

“But you have sent away all the boats.”

“Yes ; those are ordered to the nearest villages, to which they can go all the way by water ; but, if we wish to struggle as far as home, we shall have to content ourselves with this little kneading-trough ; it will be just enough for us two, and it has the good quality that, if we find dry land on our way, we can carry it on our shoulders till we come to water again.”

It was a curious kind of vessel, a canoe scooped out of a single piece of wood, and

provided with a boat-hook and a paddle ; and to judge by its appearance it deserved its popular appellation, "the loser of life." Ankerschmidt shook his head as he looked at it.

"Now, I believe," said Aladar, "that both of us wish to get as soon as possible to the place where they are for whose lives we are anxious—your daughter and my uncle. Now, if we want to go in a straight line to our goal, and not to wait until the inundation becomes a complete one, as it will be by to-morrow, we must be ready sometimes to carry our boat, sometimes to let it carry us. Now, sir, if you are disposed to trust me with your life—the steam is up, the bell has rung for the third time—please to walk on board."

"*Mordkerl*," murmured the old soldier under his moustache ; then sending on his coachman with the horses to Szolnok, he took the helping-hand of the young man, whose imperturbable phlegm no struggle, not even with the anger of the elements, could disturb.

The long, narrow bark was completely filled by the two men. Aladar took the pole in his hand and pushed off, merely requesting his travelling companion to sit still in the prow.

Ankerschmidt found that the canoe was a very excellent vessel in hands which understood how to manage it. With the ease of a bird it glided along over the surface of the water, not always keeping to the road, but cutting across the meadows, over which the young engineer knew his way marvellously. It seemed to Ankerschmidt as if the space between the very same houses and farms which he had seen when in his carriage was now much less than before. Here and there Aladar had to put down the pole and use the paddle.

“The water rises more quickly than I had expected, and the current is all the way against us.”

“Perhaps you are tired ; let me change with you ?”

“That was not what I meant to say, only that the farther we get from the Tisza the deeper is the flood ; it has got before us from a distance, and, the farther off the point it comes from, the older the date of the danger.”

Ankerschmidt looked sadly into the water. Beneath its surface, over which glided the canoe, he could see the ears of the beautiful crops submerged ; there the corn-flower was still blue, and the wild poppy was still red ;

but amongst the corn and the flowers sported numbers of the little fishes of the Tisza. Meanwhile the alarm-bell sounded from every village. The church-towers seemed to swim in the waters of the flood just as when the *délibáb*¹ displays its glittering expanse of mimic waters; only now the waters were a reality. Here and there on a half-engulfed tree unwonted inhabitants—instead of sparrows and starlings, marmots and rats—were occupying the branches, which they had reached by swimming. In every direction might be seen the heads of the little swimmers, seeking some place of refuge from the deluge. One of these drowned-out marmots made straight for Aladar's canoe, and, as soon as he came within reach of the paddle, began to swim alongside of them, holding his little nose high out of the water, putting back his short round ears, and steering himself with his long tail, while he looked up beseechingly at Aladar with his bright intelligent eyes.²

¹ "Noonday phantom," i.e. the *Fata morgana*, a phenomenon not seldom seen on the Hungarian plain.

² This is not the Alpine marmot, but a much smaller species (*Arctomys citillus*), in size and colour resembling a squirrel.

"This innocent looks upon us as his preservers," said Aladar with a smile ; and checking the progress of the canoe for a moment, he put out the end of the paddle to the little refugee, who at once got upon it, climbed carefully, but hurriedly, along the shaft, till he reached the side of the boat, when he spread out his four feet and lay down on his stomach, quite worn out.

"Even the wild animals have confidence in him," thought Ankerschmidt to himself.

The little beast itself lay there dripping and panting with its intelligent eyes fixed continually on Aladar, as much as to say : "Thou art not the person to eat me."

"This honest fellow thinks that this is a passenger steamer," said the engineer, taking out his pocket handkerchief and wrapping the little animal up in it, so that he should not shiver so much, a kindness accepted gratefully. Later, the little thing put out his head and looked curiously about him, and when he saw that he was in a place of safety his first thought was to begin making his toilet. With his tiny paws he washed his odd ears and whiskered face a hundred times. Next he

worked up with his teeth the fur on his back and flanks which had got matted together. Then he drew his long tail before him, and began to comb it from end to end.

"My friend seems to feel himself quite at home here," said Aladar, as he put the paddle on the other side of the canoe, so as not to frighten the timid creature. Soon after he had completed his toilet, he again raised his head, and began to sniff and look about, as if seeking something, and made a curious sort of whine, which sounded as if he had brought a fiddle with him and was beginning to scrape it.

"It seems that my friend is not so much thirsty as hungry," said Aladar, taking from his pocket some bread, the remains of his last night's supper, of which he crumbled a little and put it before the animal, who accepted the invitation, and having finished his meal crept back again under the shelter of the handkerchief.

Ankerschmidt thought to himself how lucky they are who on their way fall in with those who take pity on them.

"When do you expect that we shall get

home?" asked he, his mind recurring to his own anxious thoughts.

"It is now getting on towards midday; the poplar grove is about half way, and we are now near it; if we have got there in four hours, we shall do the other half in three, as the other side of the breach in the dyke the current will no longer be against us, but, on the contrary, in our favour."

"What can have happened with those people who were there waiting for help?"

"Undoubtedly they are there still, for in this part of the neighbourhood there is no such thing as a boat. However, for the matter of that, we shall be going their way."

"But with this little canoe we cannot rescue so many hundred persons."

"With this canoe, no; but perhaps with a good idea we can; such as occur to one when very much wanted."

So speaking, he paddled forward like one who is out for his amusement, and considers the danger a joke. In half an hour's time they reached the grove of poplars whence Ankerschmidt had turned back. It now stood like a desert island out of the midst of the

waters. Its outermost trees had their roots already covered by the inundation. As soon as they got round this clump of trees, there sounded in their ears a dull, confused noise,—a mixture of all sorts of human voices, like the sound of some distant well-attended market, only it was much more sorrowful. As they got clear of the wood, a new scene of ruin presented itself before them. The dam on which the road ran was now attacked by the waters on both sides; the waves dashed up against it with ever increasing violence, and threatened to sweep the obstacle quite away. Scarcely six hundred fathoms of dry land yet remained, and from thence it was not possible to go either backward or forward. Upon this narrow, crumbling mound were congregated hundreds of wagons full of wailing women, crying children, and men displaying handkerchiefs attached to long poles. Every throat there called for help. The water was rising visibly. If they could not escape from their perilous position before night, the morning would find there neither human beings, nor waggons, nor dam. At such a time, when they wanted at least a large boat, the appear-

ance of the little canoe seemed like a piece of irony on the part of fortune.

When Aladar had got sufficiently near to these unfortunate people for them to hear what he said, he called out to them—

“Ho-ho! Is there here a sensible man? If there is, let him stand forth that I may talk with him, and let the rest hold their tongues.”

On this they kept silence, and a grey-headed man came forward, took off his hat, and undertook that he was a sensible man.

“What you have to do is not to make a noise, but to help yourselves; what is that clump of poplars for? there you must take refuge, all of you.”

“There, sir!” said the old man, scratching his head; “but we can’t swim, and if we could, we wouldn’t leave all these women to be drowned.”

“Well, who said that you should leave them? They also must go. Of course I can’t carry over a thousand persons in this canoe, because that would last three days, and the water would not wait for that. But, if I go backwards and forwards ten times, I can take

over ten sturdy lads, who can at once cut down a few trees, bind them into a raft, and then on this raft take over the whole company of you into the wood, and there the water won't wash any of you away before they come for you."

This scheme of deliverance was exceedingly pleasing to the terror-stricken crowd, and fifty at once stepped forward as ready to be carried over.

"Only in turn. First of all his lordship will get out; because there is not room here for three, and the paddle I don't let go out of my hand, as it isn't everybody who can manage this canoe; and if it is upset, we shall all be lost. So, sir, with your permission, I will put you out at the wood."

"I shall be of no use there," answered Ankerschmidt; "it seems to me that it would be better for me to get out here among the people; at any rate there would then be some one to maintain order."

"That will be better still," said Aladar; and without wasting more words, with a stroke or two of the paddle he brought the bark to land, and let Ankerschmidt step out.

“My kinsmen, I hereby signify that whatever his lordship commands, you are to obey him. We are in a state of siege; many hundreds of lives are in danger. Whoever is disobedient, I shall immediately shoot him through the head, without ceremony.”

This threat was not without effect; those who were crowding toward the canoe retreated, and Ankerschmidt could quietly pick out the sturdiest young man, whom Aladar was to take over the first to the wood. It took five minutes to go and come. On his return, Aladar asked the Knight how the people had behaved themselves in his absence.

“As sensible people ought to.”

“I am glad to hear it. It does not become Hungarians to make a noise in the time of danger.”

“But when our families are so afraid of such a great water!” expostulated the grey-headed peasant.

“What do you call a great water? Is not the sea a much greater? And then, when that is in a rage! Why, when a ship goes on fire under English sailors in the middle of the sea, a thousand miles from land, what do

they do? Well, I'll tell you when I come back. My younger brother, sit quietly there in the prow, and do not be afraid as long as you can see me."

In five minutes the canoe was back again, and Aladar continued his discourse while the third young man was taking his place.

"Why, first of all the English put out of the burning ship the women and the children; then the men who are passengers; next the provisions; after, the letters and the valuables of the ship; and only then does the crew itself leave the vessel, the last to do so being the captain himself."

"Very good, sir," said the old man, "I'll be the ship's captain in this great water."

With every voyage of the canoe, ever more and more axes sounded in the wood; the tall poplar trees tottered to the ground, and by the time the tenth young man was carried across, so many trees had been cut down, that there were enough wherewith to patch together two rafts. This Aladar showed them how to do, as these people, who had never seen such a body of water, were very awkward in such matters. He then showed them how to make

a rudder and an oar, to guide it with, and how to launch it into the water on wooden rollers ; and lastly, taking with him two of the lads, he fastened his canoe to the raft, and steered them across to the fragment of the dam. Never was the approach to shore of any vessel greeted with louder shouts of joy than now welcomed this rude construction. So many hundred souls but just now apparently doomed to destruction, saw in it the promise of prolonged life, and their eyes moistened at the sight of it.

“ And now, kinsmen,” said Aladar, as he reached the bank, “ only keep order and no misfortune will happen. First of all, you must take over the women and the children, who are most afraid and increase the confusion ; next a band of stout young men, who will make another larger raft ; last of all, the old men who have most sense. You must not take over more than thirty persons at one time. When all are in safety, you can carry over the animals. You have only to fasten them to the raft. They will swim over of themselves, if they have only something to lean on. At the same time, you can take over the

wagons, having first taken them to pieces. Nothing need be lost. The helmsman must take care always to keep the left corner of the raft turned to the stream. By moonlight you will be able to finish it all. But, old man, why are you still crying?"

The old man, who had constituted himself chief of the whole party, now wiped with the loose sleeve of his shirt his eyes, red with weeping, and shaking his head, said—

"It is true, sir, that thus our lives will be preserved; but when I look around and see this beautiful plain, and think that only yesterday it was all green, as the blessing of God, and that now it is all under water, it is impossible that tears should not fall from my eyes."

"Dear me, old man, the flood never reaches the poor Slovacks up there in Arva, where they eat continually the oaten-bread of poverty. Now, you here on this plain have had a good time of it for fifty years, and, if once a misfortune comes upon you, why, the next year makes it up again; that is why the Hungarian never has to go begging about among his neighbours. I also have a large estate which has been covered by the waters, not merely

for a day, but since eight years, and will never be left by them ; but I don't whimper about it, but go and look out for some work. God has made sufficient for every man to live on ; no one need die of hunger in Hungary, if only he don't spare his two hands."

The old man thought for a moment, and then, exclaiming "Very true," he continued :

"Well, we won't cry any more ; but if it is allowed for us to inquire after your respectable name, tell us?—that we may let our friends know who it was that helped us out of our present difficulty, and that our grandchildren may make mention of your name, whenever they read, cut out on the chief rafters of the new houses, 'built *anno Domini* so much after the great flood.'"

As this question was asked, Aladar and Ankerschmidt had both taken their places in the canoe. The former pressed his companion's foot, as a sign that he should hold his peace, and then himself turned round and answered—

"My name is Jonathan Weltumsegler."

The old man shook his head, as he remarked,

"That certainly isn't true, meaning no offence."

Meanwhile, Aladar had pressed the blade of his paddle in the water, and passed away into the deluged plain, amid the good wishes and acclamations of the people on the dam.

"You really carry your modesty too far," said the Knight to him, as soon as they had got out of earshot; "why did you not reveal your real name to those good people, who really asked after it out of a feeling of gratitude?"

"It was not out of modesty that I acted as I did, but because those good people's tongues wag, and so not only their grandchildren would come to know my name, but the authorities of the district too."

"Ah! I see. You think that the authorities would come to know of your praiseworthy action, and you are afraid that you would get some distinction awarded and be mentioned with praise in the official gazette. Now I understand."

"Oh! by no means. What I think is, that when the water subsides they will find a number of trees cut down in a wood belonging to the Crown, and would call me up to give account of them, and quote such paragraphs against me that I shouldn't be able to say a word for myself. Now, as I was once

an important prisoner of State, I should not like to be degraded to becoming the inmate of an ordinary house of correction."

Against this, Ankerschmidt could find nothing to say.

"Now let us make haste homeward ; we have spent two hours, which we must make up in the night."

"You are tired, perhaps."

"I do not feel any fatigue at all."

"I would gladly change with you."

"Sword and oar I never give out of my hand ; besides, it will be easier work for us now we have got into the current."

"The village tower is not yet to be seen?"

"No ; but I know my way well enough for all that ; I could find it in a dark night ; how much better by bright moonlight ?"

The canoe in fact did advance more rapidly than before noon. It floated no longer over a transparent stream with green corn and wild flowers at the bottom, but over turbid, muddy water coming direct from the Tisza, its surface loaded with rushes and the hay swept down from the meadows by the river side. The inundation had swept away the inhabitants of

some park or chase, and they now swam so close in front of the boat that Aladar had to wait for the long procession to pass. There were stately stags with branching antlers, roe deer with finely-shaped heads, which in spite of their wonted timidity now did not shrink from the proximity of man. In the midst of this herd there swam an agile wolf.

“If these animals will only take refuge among the poplars, my men will have game for supper this evening, and three weeks hence a criminal process will be brought against them for poaching.”

The sun had already sunk low in the sky when Aladar observed the tower of the village on the horizon. But it was still a long way off. The optics of the plain are deceitful. So Aladar advised Ankerschmidt not to keep looking behind him, as it would be three hours before he could see his chateau, during which time it would be much better to lie down at length in the boat, and try to get a little sleep, which he must want very much after his sleepless night. Ankerschmidt accepted the advice given him to lie down, but maintained stoutly that he should not sleep for all that. No

sooner, however, had he lain down his head than sleep at once overcame him. And if he ever at any time had cause to be thankful to Aladar Garanvölgyi, it was then for this advice of his to sleep through those hours, during which he drew near the place of his abode.

He was thus spared the pain of beholding draw nearer and nearer the vision of his ruined chateau, which lay in the moonlight like a ghost on the water. Aladar saw from a long way off that the roof was bent downward. Every stroke of the paddle, which brought him nearer to the building, gave him a clearer view of the ruin. He could now see the empty windows, the breaches in the cracking walls, and the sunken wings; and he was glad that Ankerschmidt was not awake to see it ever more and more distinctly as he did.

The hour was already late, and a great silence brooded over the whole landscape,—that sort of silence which fills the souls of those that watch with weird thoughts, the silence of desolation. The devastating element had occupied the whole of the plain. Near the horizon two moons were to be seen approaching one another, one in the sky, the other in the water. Under

such a melancholy light the chateau of Ankerschmidt drew near like a phantom in some oppressive vision of the night. Aladar could now see plainly all the details of the ruin—the windows fallen out of their frames, the bared rafters of the overturned roof, the gaping crack in the great party-wall, the chimney left standing in lonely desolation, and one or two naked arches, all sharply defined against the clear sky of the evening. As his boat hastened past the arch over the chief entrance, he could see right through the gutted building, as through a telescope, that behind it stood the old house. That had not fallen to pieces.

Aladar now plied the paddle with increased energy, never taking his eyes off the face of his travelling companion. It was his intention not to awake him until they were safely past the ruin and had reached his uncle's house. He had doubtless acted on the timely warning sent to him. There they would learn the fate of those who were in the chateau. But perchance closed eyes also see something, and those who sleep feel when the great care, which filled their minds waking, draws nigh. Thus Ankerschmidt, stretched at length in the

bottom of the boat, saw those heaps of fallen stones, and those broken rafters, and that cold, black flood streaming through the house ; only he saw still more,—upon those stones the bleeding corpse of his child, and her long black hair floating on those waters. Heavy beads of sweat glistened on his brows, his breath came and went irregularly, and his lips in vain struggled to send forth an audible cry.

Aladar paddled on with anxious haste, and had almost got clear of the ruined chateau, when another boat, which, owing to the windings of the path, he had not seen before, burst suddenly upon him. In the moonlight Aladar as quickly recognised Kampos in the other boat, as he the engineer ; but before the latter could give the bailiff a sign to keep quiet, he had given expression to his delight with a shout that would have awakened any sleeper.

“Ho-ho ! your young worship !” cried he, waving his hat on the top of his boat-pole.

“Hush ! for Heaven’s sake don’t make a noise,” growled Aladar, as he worked on to get into the village street.

But it wasa lready too late. Ankerschmidt had at once sprung up and opened his eyes.

The first object on which they lighted was his ruined house. Perchance, the very same image which had haunted his dreams now stood in actual reality before his waking eyes. For a moment he gazed fixedly, and with countenance pale as death, on the image of desolation ; then springing up, he threw his arms out wildly, and in the voice of madness exclaimed, "My daughter!" If Aladar had not caught him in time he would have fallen into the water. "My daughter!" he cried again, quite beside himself.

"She is at our house ;—there has no harm befallen her!" cried Mr. Kampos, as loud as he could ; for he now perceived of what a piece of stupidity he had been guilty, and tried with all the skill he had to punt his boat up to Aladar's canoe as fast as possible, in which attempt he disregarded all risks of upsetting.

No sooner had Ankerschmidt heard the bailiff's words than he burst out laughing wildly, as if he were mad.

"Really? Is it true? Have you saved her? Has no harm befallen her?"

To all these exclamations Mr. Kampos gave affirmative answers, backing them up

with the most solemn asseverations, being as profuse with his "so help me"s as if he were charged with highway robbery.

"Not the least harm, your lordship. Although this evil danger stole on us very slyly, and in the night, still no misfortune happened. As soon as they began to ring the alarm-bell, the old gentleman was at once on his feet. He came to me, and asked what was the matter. I told him that the scouts on the look-out had come galloping in to say that the water was already within the bounds.¹ Of course it was then time to stop up the only gate we had left open. As soon as that was done, the wrath of God came with a loud noise up the bottom of the lower street, just in the direction of your lordship's chateau. The houses all down the street were already fenced in with dams, but the street itself was all at once under water, which kept on rising until by this evening it was up to the level of the bottom of the windows. Since then it has not risen any higher. Our dams are all surrounded like a fortress. As soon as the water became

¹ That is, of the land belonging to the village.

deep enough for us to go about in a boat, the old gentleman said, 'Now, Kampos, how are the Ankerschmidts getting on? because they did not take the warning.'"

"Yes, yes, talk about that," said the Knight eagerly, for he was only interested about his daughter.

"Well, I said they were certainly swimming. So then we had to let down the boat which Mr. Aladar had sent us beforehand. 'I myself will steer,' said the old gentleman, who then for the first time broke his resolution not to go out of his house, which he had kept for eight years. I myself, and a man to row, with a long rope and a ladder, started for the chateau. There, to be sure, was a very bad state of things. I told your lordship that the Viennese builder deserved to have his head broken. As soon as the cellars filled with water, every arch went awry, and such rifts were made in the walls that one could see through them. The servants began to cry and shout from the windows, and none of them thought about devising some plan of escape. As we learned later, only the young lady had sufficient presence of mind to think, and had

ordered them to bring down a large piano case from the loft, from which a boat might be made, but nobody would go up to the loft, as they were afraid of the staircase coming down with them. The old gentleman seeing the state of things, himself placed the ladder against the balcony, and himself went up by it into the crumbling house, and bringing together the whole lot of disordered, frightened servants, ordered them to keep in their senses, which was difficult enough for them; but still they obeyed him. Then he put out his hand to the young lady, and assisted her into the boat; after her the women-servants and the little Gyszi. Then he left me there with the men-servants, while he steered the boat back home. There he left the young lady and the women-servants, and came back again for the troop. Cook, scullion, huntsman, and such like bread-wasters, were piled on the boat; but this time the old gentleman remained behind with two grooms. These he told to stand under the door-posts, if they were afraid of the house tumbling down. When the third time I came back with the boat, he said, 'Now,

Kampos, this house won't stand long ; and when it falls to pieces they'll rob it ; so we must take everything here which is locked up, and transport it to the old house ; the water won't take that away.' With that he sealed them all up with his signet, and we took them over to the old house, and there they are on the loft, where your lordship will find them all. When we had finished with that job, we took the horses out of the stables, tied them behind the boat, and made them swim to our house. There a bridge had been made of the roof of a stall, from which they jumped into the courtyard over the embankment, and it was very pretty to see them."

While Mr. Kampos endeavoured to give a short sketch of the events of the day, the two boats arrived in front of Garanvölgyi's courtyard, which lay in the midst of the inundation like an island in the sea. Now was seen the use of the old walls, which withstood the force of the waters like a rock, and rose three feet above them. The roof of which Mr. Kampos had made mention now served as a drawbridge to admit Aladar and Ankerschmidt.

CHAPTER VII.

THOSE WHO HAD NOT MET.

THE arrival of the boats was not received with any such *éclat* as would have been the case on the stage, combined with a general falling of everybody on everybody else's neck. One of the principal reasons of this was, that there was so much to be done in the courtyard, that even at midnight everybody was kept up. The immense space, eighteen acres in extent, which contained within it the farm-yard, threshing-floors, and park, was now filled with oxen, horses, and sheep, which had been driven in from the outlying portions of the estate. Of the numerous farm-servants, one part were engaged in keeping order among the cattle, the rest in strengthening the weaker portions of the dam with fagots and earth. Thus very few noticed the arrival of the guests besides

the *ispán*,¹ upon whom Mr. Kampos laid a strict injunction to fasten the boat to the padlock, to lock it up, and put the key in his pocket.

“At last we are at home! And now your lordship will permit me to be so bold as to lead you to the young lady; I see that a light is still burning in her room; as for his young worship, he will find his way himself to the old gentleman.”

Ankerschmidt shook hands with Aladar as they parted in the passage, one to the right-hand, the other to the left. Let us accompany Aladar.

The old gentleman was still up when his nephew entered, and came to meet him gladly.

“God has brought thee; how didst thou come hither?”

“In a canoe; I brought Ankerschmidt with me.”

“Thou hast done well; his daughter is crying herself to death about her father; her I myself brought hither. Thou art tired, art thou not?”

“I do not know anything about that, but

¹ A sort of under bailiff.

rather thirsty. Since dawn I have not found water, although I came on it."

"Then thou art hungry, too; supper is ready."

"Why have they waited so long with it?"

"We were waiting for Kampos, who was making a round in the boat to see if there was any danger in the village."

"We met him, and came back together. He roused Ankerschmidt from sleep, in which, luckily, we were able to get round his chateau without his seeing its destruction."

"The supper is ready; but thou go and change thy dress, for there is a young lady in the house. Here is the key of thy room."

"I shall be ready in a minute," said Aladar, taking the key; and embracing his uncle, he withdrew. He acted as one who knew that he was at home. While making his choice among the clothes he had left in his uncle's house, he thought to himself that after all the world was very admirably arranged, that, when they had broken a fellow to pieces, flung him on the ground, crumpled him up, thrown him on one side, and at last thrust him out again, the first adversary of his that he meets

with he takes into his boat, sweats with him from morning to evening, so as to bring him home safe to dry land, and then, when at last tired, hungry, thirsty, he would like to stretch himself on the first bed of straw he could meet with, he has to put on a dress-coat in order that he may ask his adversary's daughter, *Wie befinden Sie sich, mein Fräulein?* He did not wish any harm to the young lady, but he would have been very glad to hear that she had sent to say that she could not come to supper because she had a *migraine*, or had already gone to bed. This expectation was doomed to be disappointed, for he soon after heard his uncle's voice urging him to make haste, for the supper was on the table and the guests had been called. "Very well, let us stand this trial, too," thought he to himself. As for the old gentleman, he shook Aladar's shoulder, and growled to him—

"Imagine that thou goest now to that gay party where thou dancedst all night until the morning after the day of Branyiszkó."¹

¹ The forcing of the Pass of Branyiszkó by the vanguard of Görgei's army, under the command of Guyon, was one of the most brilliant exploits of the war of 1848-49.

“One could do such things then,” sighed Aladar, as they hastened toward the dining-room.

To get there they had to pass through a passage which was connected with both wings of the house. It so happened that they met the Knight and his daughter face to face just before the door of the room. In such a narrow space people cannot be so ceremonious in their behaviour towards one another; nor could any one have very clear ideas about right and left; while the nature of things compelled them to make haste over their introductions, as they could not keep blocking up the doorway. Ankerschmidt took his daughter with one hand, the other he gave to Garanvölgyi, whose hand he grasped heartily.

“Sir, you know what I have to thank you for.”

“For nothing more than what you would have done for me in a like case.”

“I have to thank you for my child,” said Ankerschmidt; and as he did so he was obliged to make room for his daughter, who for the first time in their lives met Aladar.

The open-hearted child instantly gave her hand to him, as she faltered out—

“While I have to thank you for my father.”

If the youth had not learned anything from the quiver of that hand, the wondrous charm of that voice, the very witchery of those eyes, he had not deserved to have had such a book of fairy secrets left by forgetfulness open for one instant before him. The next moment the girl perceived that she had allowed herself to be carried away by her feelings. She timidly withdrew her hand, and did not dare to look again on that face whose picture had so long been imprinted on her heart. Luckily the noise of the supper, and Mr. Kampos' hospitable humour, gave a new turn to everyone's thoughts, and the company's good spirits rising with the wine they drank, they all became talkative, more so than usual.

“Only one thing I regret, and that is, that young Mr. Aladar was not at home in the hour of danger,” said Mr. Kampos.

“Why so, old man?”

“Because you would then have been able to have rescued the young lady. Now that

would have been just as it should be ; just like what I have read in novels. Whereas we old people”

Aladar seeing that the bailiff was getting on delicate ground, interrupted him by saying—

“ Oh ! for the matter of that, I also achieved great things on the way, which will be written of in a novel some day ; I also saved a life which was in imminent peril.”

Ankerschmidt thought to himself, “ This young man likes at home to talk of his achievements, and the number of persons he rescued ; well, let him ; if he likes to do so, why shouldn't he ? ”

“ Where ? Whom ? ” asked Mr. Kampos, eagerly, who had a very great desire to hear once, from Aladar's own mouth, an authentic account of one of his heroic adventures.

“ Why, the other side of the clump of poplars,—a marmot ! ” said Aladar, with a smile.

“ Ah ! oh ! ” were the exclamations of disappointment uttered by all around. Ankerschmidt himself found this too much, and hastened to set the truth before the others.

“Our young friend does not tell you that this side of the clump of poplars he rescued about a thousand people by a good idea and a little exertion.”

“Ah! I implore you humbly, please tell us how that was;” said Mr. Kampos, eagerly.

“Certainly not,” thought Ankerschmidt to himself, “here, in the presence of my daughter, to make her more in love with him than she is already! Let us rather talk about the marmot.” With that he asked aloud, “By the bye, what has become of our little marmot? I had quite forgotten him in the excitement.”

“He is now sleeping there in the pocket of my cloak,” answered Aladar. “Go, Mr. Kampos, and bring him hither!”

“What! I? A marmot?” exclaimed the bailiff, jumping up from his chair; “if your worship were to tell me to bring you a lion or a bison bull, I would bring it; but a marmot! faugh! it would make me ill to touch one; there is no such disgusting animal under the sun.”

“Oh! don’t say that,” put in Erzsike; “I think it is very pretty.”

"Now, you see," said Aladar, "the young lady would like to look at it."

After this Mr. Kampos did not dare to assert that it was ugly, but then, he objected that it was given to biting. Why then had it not bitten Aladar? That was a different thing; Aladar was neutral, but him the animal would know, for he had proclaimed a reward for the extermination of the marmot race. A wolf had already bitten him; that he made light of; but from the bite of a marmot he should die.

"Well then, I will go for it myself," said Aladar, and rose from his chair, to which he soon after returned.

"A-ha!" exclaimed Mr. Kampos, not seeing the horrid vermin in his hand; "it is no longer there; it has got away, and is now boring a hole under the house; there they will increase and multiply, and undermine the whole chateau."

"Here he is, in the sleeve of my coat," said Aladar, as he brought out the little animal, which had suddenly taken up its quarters there, and placed it on the palm of his hand; "look how he is astonished at the candle."

“What a pretty little creature!” said Erzsike, taking a childish pleasure in the funny animal; “what fine black eyes he has!”

Aladar put it nearer to her, and she began to stroke it with her soft little hand; but Mr. Kampos warningly exclaimed—

“Do not put your hand near it, young lady; some misfortune will happen. D  ar me! if it were to come as near me, I should shiver all over with fever.”

Erzsike, too, felt a sort of magnetic fever run through her—from the proximity, however, of something else than the marmot. The confiding animal crept slowly from Aladar’s hand on to that other which was caressing him, and thence on to the floating muslin, up which he climbed till he reached the ivory shoulder, where he sat himself down composedly. Mr. Kampos became quite pale at the sight, while Erzsike gazed with delight at the amusing creature; so too did Aladar, but perhaps not at the marmot, while Ankerschmidt regretted that he had ever introduced the subject.

“Does he eat bread?” inquired Erzsike, breaking off a piece for him.

“Oh, certainly,” asserted the bailiff: “the whole family have their share of our bread; they do not even wait for us to bake it and offer it them, but eat of it before we do ourselves.”

The little bread-waster seized eagerly the bit given to him, and getting on to the back of the chair and curling up his rough tail after the manner of a squirrel, began to eat it out of his forepaws in so comical a manner that even the older people began to laugh.

“You will give me this little fugitive, will you not?” asked Erzsike of Aladar.

“With pleasure,” was the answer.

“But your ladyship must have a very strong cage made for him, for he will gnaw even through oak itself.”

“Ah! who would keep a guest in a cage? With me he would be allowed to go about at liberty.”

But here Ankerschmidt put in—

“My little daughter, thou shouldst bear in mind that we ourselves are at present guests, and that our home is under water.”

“Oh no, sir,” said old Garanvölgyi, correcting him; “my guest is at home, in my house

I wish you to consider yourselves at home here until you have rebuilt your chateau. There is quite room enough here, and, as it is, I am quite alone."

As he said this he cast a look of delicate reproof upon Aladar, and a general silence ensued. In such moments it is apt to be the case that all, who thus simultaneously hold their tongues, are thinking about one subject. Ankerschmidt was the first to speak.

"I thank you very much for your kind offer, and it would be indeed difficult for me to find a reason for declining it. As it is, Erzsike calls you 'uncle.'"

"Oh! you know well that our acquaintance is of very old date. I have been for a long time obliged to the young lady. She protected me even before she knew whether I was worthy of being protected or not."

"What was that?" asked Aladar, looking towards Erzsike.

"Oh! nothing; merely a joke," stammered the child, blushing.

"But a serious business for me," said Garan-völgyi.

"What sir," said the old soldier, putting

his hand over his glass, so as to prevent Mr. Kampos filling it on the sly; "do you mean to say that you still remember that piece of nonsense?"

"Oh, certainly; I have even now by me the letter, which at first I wouldn't read, and about which, in the next place, my respected neighbour wanted to cut off my head, and which at last I put into my pocket-book and always carry about me."

With that, in order that he might convince everybody of the truth of his assertions, he produced his old-fashioned leather pocket-book, and opened its fourth recess, where were kept his oldest relics, such as a few bank-notes with Hungarian inscriptions, *anno* good old past times, a portrait very much frayed, a piece of silk torn out of some banner, and such like. Thence he took out a small carefully preserved letter, which the child had secretly written to put him on his guard against a traitor. This letter he handed over to Aladar, the rest knew its contents. But one thing they did not know, and that was that Aladar would recognise in the letter the same handwriting which he had before seen in the petition which re-

covered him his liberty. As he glanced at the letter he felt every drop of blood boil in his veins. He did not read the contents, or if he did, did not think of them. The characters only brought before his eyes those lines which pleaded with childish artlessness for a prisoner, doomed to perish, abandoned by every one, even by himself. This then was the hand, this the heart, which only knew how to act and to feel, but did not allow themselves to be discovered. Not those who smiled from a distance were his real deliverers, but she who closed her window when she saw him coming.

“Well, art thou not going to give me back my letter, or wouldst thou learn it by heart?” said old Garanvölgyi to his absent nephew.

“I was thinking that this handwriting resembles——somebody else’s handwriting.”

As he said this, it was impossible for Aladar not to observe the perplexity with which Ankerschmidt and his daughter looked at one another. The girl drooped her eyes in confusion, while her father hardly knew how to preserve an appearance of calmness.

“Ah! my nephew, many write similar

hands, but few with like hearts," said Garanvölgyi, putting the letter back into its place. Then attributing Ankerschmidt's restlessness to his desire for repose after the fatigues of the day, he gave the signal for rising, when every one wished the rest good-night, and in a few minutes they were all in their rooms.

Aladar's night's rest had been badly provided for by the exhibition of the letter. He may be said to have rather dreamed through the night than to have slept through it. Who knows but that there is something in the superstition, entertained by young girls, that, if they dream of their lovers and awake, they have only to turn their pillows and the lovers must dream of them? And the fairy of dreams is a very witching fairy, and has powerful spells at her command.

Garanvölgyi was surprised, when he got up early the next morning, and was walking down the passage as softly as he could so as not to disturb any of the sleepers, to see Aladar, fully dressed, coming out of his room.

"Hast thou got up already?"

"Yes, I wish to be off betimes."

"To be off! Whither?—and how?"

"In the canoe in which I came, and wherever I may be of use."

"But why art thou in such a hurry?"

"Let us go into your room, uncle, and I will tell you."

The old gentleman went back to his room with Aladar, and then asked—

"Well, what drives thee away?"

"My dear uncle, last night, when you showed me that letter, I recognised the same handwriting there as in the anonymous petition which successfully pleaded for my liberation from prison."

This announcement surprised Garanvölgyi himself very much.

"According to that, this girl must have written that too?"

"Exactly so, and I now know more than I had any need to know."

"And therefore thou wishest to leave the house?"

"What else can I do? For the first time in my life I meet with a woman who has a heart. If she were an old lady I should be delighted, because I could address her as 'my dear

mother,' and beg her to call me her son. But a beautiful, sensible, and amiable child and I—why should we meet?"

"I do not see anything dangerous in it. If you love one another, take her; they will give her thee."

"My good uncle, I am a poor fellow, and earn my bread by hard work. These people are rich. If I now remain here, where they have no choice as to whether they will receive me or no,—since the inundation has driven them to us, and they have no means of getting rid of me, if they wished it,—and I take advantage of this their present helplessness, should I not be fairly classed in the same category with the Carib islanders, who eat those who are shipwrecked on their coasts?"

"Thou art right; take thy departure."

With these words the old gentleman pressed his nephew's hand. Then he took him by the arm, and went out into the courtyard to make further arrangements. According to the accounts given by the servants, the wind during the night had greatly injured the embankment. Aladar immediately improvised a sort of breakwater, by having some large corn-chests

filled with stones and placed in front of the threatened point of the embankment. By the time this work was finished, breakfast was ready, and there Aladar had to meet the Ankerschmidts again. As now he could not run away, he, by way of saying good-bye, observed to Ankerschmidt that he would again seat himself in his boat, and if possible row up to Tisza-Dob, where was the source of all the ruin.

“What good could you do there now?” asked the Knight, by way of opposing the plan.

“None at all ; but I should be able to make observations, and learn something from it.”

“I, for my part, reckoned upon you to make an excursion in the boat this morning.”

This was an invitation to remain *in optima forma*, and could not be declined.

“There is no hurry about my journey ; I have no objection to our going out in the boat ; the weather is fine.”

The old gentleman wished to take a gun with him, as they would have a good opportunity for shooting something ; but Erzsike dissuaded him. Why should he do so ? he

would be sure to shoot himself, or "somebody."

Aladar steered the boat to the site of the ruined chateau, which had by this time crumbled down in a marvellous manner. Here Ankerschmidt began to curse and swear in all sorts of languages, every time asking pardon of his companion for his improper expression. Aladar, however, encouraged him to go on,—that relieves a man's mind; that is the reason why the Hungarian's temper is so manageable; he fumes away his anger so that it does not last long.

"Well, here there is an end of us," said the old soldier at last; "let us go out into the meadow,—I mean to say, into the sea."

With that he tied a knot in his pocket-handkerchief, which gave Aladar an opportunity of observing that the three other corners were in like manner tied in knots. He could not resist the temptation of asking him what it meant.

"This knot which I have just now tied? This is to remind me that the very next time I meet my friend Grisak I shall fall upon him, and inquire of him who was the honest fellow

he employed to build my house : the second knot has reference to *amice* Mikucsek, to remind me to ask him what he wanted on the dam these nights past : the third I tied for the benefit of Herr Bräuhäusel. A fine row I shall make about that floodgate, which was made under his especial patronage."

He said nothing about the fourth.

"And the fourth?"

"Oh! that I just knotted without thinking ; that does not mean anything."

Before noon they were able to paddle over a fine extent of country. In one place a stone landmark appeared amid the water. Ankerschmidt observed that there began his property. In another place an elevated piece of ground rose like an island high and dry above the surface of the inundation. Here Aladar disembarked. The mound was sown with barley, which had already put forth its abundant ears. The whole might be about fifty paces in circuit. With that both of them began to dispute whose it was. Ankerschmidt asserted that it belonged to Garanvölgyi ; Aladar that it belonged to Ankerschmidt.

"To whomsoever it may belong, let us take

home a specimen of it, to show that we have found something green, like Noah's dove."

So saying, Ankerschmidt gathered a handful of barley, while Aladar plucked nine stalks of the corn, and twined them round his hat.

"This is indeed a sea," said the Knight, looking around over the expanse of water. "We can both of us now say that our properties are in one and the same place, for mine is just as much at the bottom of the sea as yours."

"Every comparison halts."

"Mine does not. I cannot get at my land; you cannot get at yours; when I get to mine, you will get to yours."

"What do you mean by that?"

"That I know for a certainty that you will get your confiscated estates given back to you."

A thought flashed across Aladar's mind.

"If you know that, sir, you will also know to whom I shall be indebted for this unhopèd-for favour; I beg you to pass on to him this hearty shake of the hand."

Ankerschmidt became aware that he had let out to Aladar more than he intended, and hastened to protest against the inference which he saw that the other had drawn.

“My young friend, I declare to you that you will have nobody to thank for this favour but him from whom it comes. Take this lesson in good part from me as an old soldier, and do not look for secret patrons, who have no existence.”

Aladar thanked him for the lesson. He already knew enough. The intelligence inspired him with new ideas. It was not so much the pleasure of recovering his property, for Aladar, like every other real gentleman, knew well that an estate is merely a source of obligations, and that he who in our days is the proprietor of a large landed property in Hungary has innumerable duties to perform, compared with whose position the most burdensome occupation is a very sinecure. But what made him happy was the thought nobody could any more call that selfishness which he knew to be love. It also afforded him satisfaction to have had a glance into the character of a family with whom he had not before been acquainted. A child, from no interested motives, but moved by pure sympathy,—by that natural instinct which prompts the good to incline towards those who were suffering, attempts to

warn an old man against a danger, at that time only too prevalent. This old man had a beloved relative, who languished in a State prison, whom everybody had forgotten, for whom the old man himself could do nothing, as any movement of his would only have been injurious to the captive. The stranger's child wrote a petition for him in secret, and her father was so far from being angry with her for doing so, that he took the matter up himself. He visited the prisoner in his dungeon, and there behaved rudely to him, lest he should suspect who had brought him the olive-branch of liberation. He then shut up his daughter at home, lest they should fall in love with one another ; and some one might say that he therefore presented himself before the throne and appealed to his grey deserts to procure the restoration of the confiscated property of one condemned in order that he might get it for his daughter. For this reason he repelled the visitor after their first meeting, and took care not to come into contact with him. Nor would they have ever come together, if this inundation had not swept them together on a little island.

As they returned homeward, Aladar did not find the surface of the water so dirty as before. What is all that is lost on earth in comparison to that which the heart has gained ?

Getting home about noon, they were first of all received by Mr. Kampos, who greeted them with the good news that the water had sunk two inches while they had been out. Aladar, however, did not seem overjoyed at the intelligence, and even began to quarrel with the bailiff for rejoicing at it, as it only proved that the embankments must have given way somewhere else, and that another district had been flooded.

Erzsike came out to meet her father, to whom Aladar was showing his horses, which had been rescued yesterday from the stables of the chateau. Then, putting her arm in her father's, they went into the house. In her straw hat were stuck a few wild rose-buds which she had plucked from the garden-hedge. Garanvölgyi at once observed that Aladar was in better humour than in the morning. Instead of coming to his uncle's room and telling him where he had been, and what he

had seen, he stopped outside in the passage, just as if there was neither inundation nor danger, chattering away with Ankerschmidt's daughter, without any horror of the appetites of the Carib islanders who eat shipwrecked mariners. In the dining-room, on the table, there were placed beside each other Aladar's hat, with the ears of barley, and Erzsike's, with the rose-buds. Garanvölgyi counted the ears of barley and found they were nine, and then the rose-buds, and found they were seven. Not long afterwards Erzsike went away to join her father, and only then did Aladar look for his uncle. When soon after they were all four gathered together again by the sound of the dinner-bell, Garanvölgyi again counted the ears of barley, and there were but eight; then the rose-buds, and there were but six. "They have already begun to steal from one another," thought the old gentleman to himself, and would boldly have asserted that the missing ear of barley was somewhere in Erzsike's prayer-book, the missing rose-bud in Aladar's pocket-book.

When the young man was left alone with his uncle, he communicated to him what he

had heard from Ankerschmidt about the recovery of his property.

“I pity thee, my poor lad,” said the old man in a tone of sorrow ; “how happily wast thou already contented with the thought ‘I had, I have not.’ ‘More has been already lost under Buda.’ There are many such proverbs in the Hungarian language. I know that the thought ‘What if it should at any time be mine again !’ has disturbed thy rest but very slightly. Thou hast earned thy bread and been contented with it ; thou hast found thyself at home in thy new life, and accustomed thyself to think that what thou hast not got is unnecessary. And now thou all at once receivest a piece of America. My bailiff was there several times on thy former property, and told me what he found there. During eight years there were four farmers there, and all the four made it their business to ruin the property. Three of them ran away without having paid their rent to the State. It was sufficient that the items figured in the budget. The first farmer made away with all thy fine Mürzthaler cows, thy merino sheep, thy thoroughbred horses. The second one laid waste the woods planted

with so much care, and all the timber which adorned thy park. Nothing was left for the last one but to sell the jalousies off the house. He was a man who knew how to get on, for he even turned the glass of thy hot-houses to account. When Kampos was last there, there was not even the stubble left on the land ; and the farmer was just then engaged in selling the manure to the neighbouring peasants. Inside the house, there was not a chair to sit down on ; all the more was every corner full of mouse-holes. In the windows, the rats had made their holes four storeys high, and the rain was coming through the ceiling of thy State-room. Now thou wilt get this 'prairie,' which, when thou wast deprived of it, was worth, with the stock, implements, buildings, &c., three hundred thousand florins ; it is now worth two. Thou hast on it twenty thousand florins of debts ; on this nobody has paid any interest for eight years. The first thing thou wilt have to do is to find some benevolent banker, who will make up his mind to honour thy bills to the amount of about ten thousand florins for the Christian consideration of thirty-three per cent. Then thou canst cudgel thy

brains as to what thou shalt do first—whether thou wilt buy draught cattle, or patch up thy house, or pay the interest on thy debts, lest they call in the principal. So once more, my dear nephew, receive my most sincere condolences.”

“That is not the principal point,” answered Aladar, shrugging his shoulders.

Of course that was not the principal point, but that, if one must toil and struggle, one should have *where* and *for whom*. The old gentleman knew that very well. He read what was passing in Aladar’s heart as if it were an open book.

The young man remained there that day ; in fact, it was already too late to go anywhere. The next day he found so much to do in the village, where some of the houses were here and there giving way to the inundation, that he did not get home before noon. The afternoon was spent in more delicate engineering, tracing out the approaches of two hearts to one another,—a work which now only wanted the approbation of higher quarters. Of course he thought no more of going away. He would have been but too glad for somebody to have

detained him ; but, instead of doing so, his uncle was always worrying him with sarcastic questions as to when he meant to start and study the ravages caused by the inundation ; was he waiting for them to get into a more interesting stage ? The only encouragement he got to stay was the remark which Erzsike let fall, to the effect that it would be very dangerous to make such a journey in such a little canoe.

On the third day, however, Aladar himself saw, that, as he had said that he would go, he could not now stop at home, without damaging very considerably his character for keeping his word. So that evening he announced to his uncle, but in such a manner that the others might hear him, that he should start the next morning, only taking one man with him to row. Garanvölgyi answered that it was all right, and that he would order the cake for his journey to be baked. In the morning Aladar got up early, and bustled noisily about, getting together his plans and instruments, and dusting his travelling-cloak with great ostentation, upon which the old gentleman came out of his room, and jocosely addressed him—

"So thou art about to start ; well, the cake is ready for thee."

"Thank you. I am only just going to take leave of the Ankerschmidts."

"Quite right, and then thou canst say good-bye to me."

Aladar probably mistook the door, for he committed the great fault of entering the daughter's room instead of the father's, which was by no means proper, according to the custom of the world. He was sure that Erzsike had long ago finished her toilet. When he entered, she could not so compose her countenance as not to show that she was expecting him.

"You are now starting," said she, giving her right hand to him.

"I have been here a long time."

"But you are at home."

"Oh no ! this house is my uncle's, and he almost drives me away. He does not like idle people."

"But now this house is not wholly your uncle's ; it is also ours, is it not ?"

"Certainly."

"Then I would ask of you a favour ; but do not consider me very bold for so doing."

“Lay your commands on me.”

“But if I could command it, I should not ask it as a favour; I am very stern towards those whom I can command, which would not do for you at all. I only beg, I only petition, like a peasant that has some complaint to make; you only listen, and deign to take it into consideration.”

“It is already undersigned *in bianco*. What is it?”

Erzsike now let go Aladar's hand, and drew herself back timidly, as if she made a point of preventing her request from having the appearance of being complied with under compulsion.

“I wanted to ask you—to stay here yet another day.”

Aladar did not require much persuading to make him grant this request.

“As I said, it was already invisibly undersigned.”

“Ah!” cried the young girl, her eyes sparkling with joy at this good beginning; “now I am sorry that I did not ask—a week.”

“Very good,” said Aladar, “then I will stay a week.”

"If I had known that you were in such a magnanimous humour, I should have begun by asking you to stop here for a month."

By this time Aladar felt that the decisive moment was come, and, no longer feigning indifference by imposing restraint on his voice, he exclaimed, with warmth—

"I will remain here a month—two—a whole year!"

She interrupted him at this point, stepping up to him with eyes filling with tears, and seizing his hand in both of hers, said—

"Stop here for ever."

"For ever, then," answered Aladar, and pressed her tenderly to his bosom. The girl still held Aladar's right hand in hers, when he embraced her. Suddenly she disengaged herself from his arms, and before he could have any suspicion of her intention, she half stooped down to her lover's hand, half raised it to her lips, and, as she kissed it, murmured, "My lord." What could Aladar do after this but kiss the dear child's hand—both her hands—a hundred times, one after the other? And yet he could not make it up that he had allowed a woman to kiss the hand of him

who loved her and idolized her endlessly, boundlessly.

"Come, come," said Erzsike, putting her arm in Aladar's, and took him into her father's room. Ankerschmidt, who, if he had not heard words, had, at any rate, heard voices through the door, was not surprised, when his daughter entered on Aladar's arm.

"See, father," said she, "I have asked him, and he will take me."

"I thought so," said the old man, stretching out his hand to Aladar, and, as he took it, drew him towards him, kissed him on both cheeks, saying, "My dear son."

Aladar said nothing, for he was not the man to utter his thoughts aloud, but he thought to himself that that man had great right to call him his son, who, after his first life had come to an end, had given him a new one.

And this second life was beginning well. The political horizon was dark; public life was melancholy. In such a time, in such a country, happiness was only to be found in that magic circle where some sweet womanly spirit may create a little world in this great one, and make one forget in what an unhappy

planet we live. There is, after all, a great deal that is beautiful in life, about which they do not as yet write leading articles.

Aladar quite forgot himself in Ankerschmidt's room. No wonder. There was so much that was new, so much that was marvellous, in the new world now opened before him. Was it possible that such tiny, little hands should exist in the world? And could they possess such magic power as to be able to rescue from the iron grip of fate one doomed to moulder away in a dungeon? Was it possible that eyes should be so clear as to reveal through them every thought of the soul? that one single angel should bring down all heaven along with her from the sky? And when he looked on those lips, eloquent even when mute, and remembered that a kiss from their fairy tissue had touched his toil-browned hand, he formed a strong resolve in his mind to devote long years to clear off that great debt.

At last old Garanvölgyi thought it was rather too bad of his nephew to be such a monstrous while taking leave of the Ankerschmidts, for by this time some hours had

passed since he left him. So he resolved to go himself to the quarters occupied by his guests. When he entered Ankerschmidt's room, he smiled as he saw Aladar sitting by Erzsike's side. The Knight was jocosely explaining to them how much marriage resembled imprisonment in a fortress. To be sure, he did not believe what he was saying ; but then, no more did anybody else there. Garanvölgyi made as if he did not know how matters stood, and said to Aladar—

“Thy boat is all ready.”

“Now I am not going anywhere,” said the young man, presenting his blushing bride to his uncle.

“Ah ! well, I have had your boat brought up into the passage,” said the old man, with good-humoured raillery.

Ankerschmidt burst out laughing.

“The boat in the passage !”

“Oh ! I knew that this would be the end of it. ’Twill be a marriage of which we may say that not only the heaven, but the water willed it also. For the future, my lord nephew's conceit will be taken down by the thought that he could not get himself a wife

except on a desert island, where there was no marriageable man besides himself."

"*Au contraire*," objected Ankerschmidt, laughing; "it will be my lady daughter who will have to reflect that she could not get herself a husband, without ransoming with her hand a prisoner for life, as I have read somewhere or other in some French novel."

The happiness of the pair of lovers thus exposed to this cross-fire, did not seem at all affected by the railleries of which they were the objects. The scene was here disturbed by the arrival of Mr. Kampos, who, not finding his masters in their rooms, and hearing that they were with the Ankerschmidts, burst into the room with the news that the water had gone down a foot since morning.

"By this time," said Aladar, who at the sound of the bailiff's approach had hastened to meet him, "I don't mind if it subsides altogether."

"He doesn't mind!" exclaimed Mr. Kampos in astonishment, which, however, came at once to an end, as Erzsike good-humouredly laughing came forward, put her hand on her lover's shoulder, and leaned her face on his

arm. All at once a perception of the real state of things flashed on the honest fellow's brain. "Ah! that was why your worship was angry with me the day before yesterday, when I said that the water was sinking. Well, this"

More he did not say, but, as beseemed an energetic patriot, sought to express his opinions by deeds rather than words, by attempting to kiss the hand of his young master's bride. This attempt of his was frustrated by Erzsike putting both her hands under Aladar's, while she gave Mr. Kampos a serious lecture on the subject, telling him that it was only very, very great people who allowed very, very subordinate inferiors to kiss their hands.

Mr. Kampos' news, however, so far gave a new direction to the thoughts of the company, that every one of them wished to go out into the open air to see the subsiding of the deluge. It still surrounded them like a sea, but it did not surge and swell. It was now smooth as a mirror.

"Let us go out in the boat," said Garánvölgyi, "this water is ours."

The proposal met with universal approval.

Aladar's canoe was lowered into the water. He seated himself in it, having lifted Erzsike, like a light nosegay, into the seat opposite him. Mr. Kampos and the two old gentlemen took their places in the boat, which the bailiff gave his word of honour not to overturn.

"Which way shall we go?" asked Aladar.

"Towards the old house," answered Garán-völgyi.

That day Aladar guided his light craft very badly, and paddled very slowly, which, considering the two eyes before him, into which he was always gazing, was not to be wondered at.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OLD HOUSE.

THE old chateau was still standing. It is true that time had dealt somewhat hardly with the roof, but its foundations were unshaken. Yet they had already said of it, that it was honey-combed with rat-holes; its bricks were crumbling away, and its rafters worm-eaten; that a good storm was all that was wanted to reduce it to a shapeless mound, and number it among the things of the past. And lo! the new building was the first to fall to pieces, while the old house still defied the elements, bearing witness to the fact that the men of earlier days did not build merely to please the eye.

Garanvölgyi opened the rusty locks and admitted his guests to the terrace of the chateau, from which even then the water of

the inundation was flowing off, leaving behind it a thin film of slime.

"My dear sir," said Garanvölgyi, as he reached the memorable apartment in which Herr Bräuhäusel found Aladar's portrait, "years ago you wanted to buy this house of mine, as being in your way; I then said it had no price. I have become more compliant, and will name the price. It shall be in the words of the popular song, 'A house full of cakes and a pretty girl.'"

"It is paid," said Ankerschmidt; and the two old gentlemen sealed the bargain with a long shake of the hands.

"You will have some little need of this house at present, because, until your chateau is rebuilt, you may be pressed for room, from this place you can at any time keep an eye on the builders."

"I don't think of doing that; to speak openly, I have no intention of building another residence in the place of the one which has crumbled away. This inundation made me poorer than I was by a hundred thousand florins. Till now I was not only a farmer, but also a capitalist; one portio

my property consisted of State paper ; this I am now compelled to throw on the market, and to begin my farming, like my neighbours, at the plough-tail. Now that you have made me a present of this chateau, I shall repair it, put a new roof on it, new floors into it, make the windows a little higher, furnish it anew, and live here with my dear son."

"O-ho ! Sir Knight," exclaimed Garanvölgyi ; "it now comes out that you want to get the house and keep the price. I gave the house for the 'pretty girl,' so that my lord son and my lady daughter-in-law will live with me."

"Ah ! sir, you wish then to separate me from my daughter, when I have nobody else besides her."

"Have I then anybody besides Aladar ?"

"But you have already tried to do without him ; he was for a long time away from you."

"All the more reason that he should be with me now."

"But, you see," said Ankerschmidt, "you are a good farmer, whereas I know nothing about farming ; I shall want somebody to look after my farm."

"I would rather give you Kampos."

But here Mr. Kampos protested that he would not leave his worship, not if they were to drive him away with blows—not to go to the Emperor of all the Russias.

“But we shall live near one another,” continued the Knight, addressing the old Squire; “you can come over every minute to see us.”

“You forget that I am kept back by my vow not to go out of my house, until there is a change of system in Hungary.”

“But that vow is already broken: why, here you are.”

“That is true; I vowed not to walk from home, not to go in a carriage, not to ride, but never said anything about going from home in a boat. Now, by the day after to-morrow this water will be all gone, and I shall be again shut up in my solitude. From all this you will see that I have the best right to demand that the young couple should live with me.”

Still Ankerschmidt did not give up the game.

“Sir *táblabiró*, you are a constitutionalist, and know what that means, *nil de nobis sine nobis*. We are deciding without consulting the parties concerned; is that proper?”

“ You are right ; so let them give their opinions.”

“ But supposing that they don’t agree ; if one votes one way, and the other the other, what then ? ”

“ Then *accessorium sequitur suum principale* ; the husband is the head, as says the Scripture ; the wife leaves her father and follows her husband.”

“ Oh no ! *votum Minervæ* is a lady’s vote, and that decides.”

In the course of this important dispute, the two old gentlemen had gone on from chamber to chamber, without observing that the parties most concerned had remained behind in the memorable room. There, on the writing-table, stood the casket which the authorities had sent back at the conclusion of their inquiries. Erzsike at once recognised it, and called Aladar’s attention to it.

“ See, here is the casket on account of which this chateau was searched by the officials, and which was taken possession of by those wise gentlemen.”

“ It seems that they did not get much by it, as they have given it back again.”

"They did not find anything in it besides a packet of love-letters written to you."

"Ah!"

"I was so curious as to read one of them. You are not angry, are you?"

"They were not worth it," was Aladar's answer, as he did not suppose anything but some of Madame Pajtay's trifling nonsense.

"Why, they were written with a great deal of feeling. Who wrote them loved you much, very much."

"But that was perhaps a long time ago."

"Nay, even now loves you very much."

"That is easy to say."

"Do not be sceptical. Who wrote those letters, is one still dearer to you than I am."

Aladar calmly put his hand upon his heart, as he answered, "Thereof my soul knows nothing." He still thought that a lady was in question.

"But still, if after reading these letters, you should be assured that the writer of them was worthy of your affection, would you then desert me?"

Could Aladar answer such a question otherwise than by pressing to his heart the

questioner's hand, and swearing upon it as on a relic, that for her he would leave everything and anything, even if his life were bound up with it?

Just then the old gentlemen returned. Erzsike, with a gay laugh, called out to Garanvölgyi—

“Dear uncle, come here, and be witness to what Aladar has promised me this very moment.”

“Well, what is it?”

“That he will abandon for my sake the person who wrote the love-letters contained in this casket.”

Garanvölgyi, taken by surprise, turned to Aladar, and said—

“And didst thou promise that?”

Aladar was about to answer, but Garanvölgyi could not wait for him to do so, but slapping him on the shoulder, said—

“Well, then, my nephew, take care of that rib of thine, for in her we have all found our master.”

With that, he took from his watch-chain the key of the casket, opened, and gave the letters contained in it to Aladar, saying—

“These I wrote to you.”

Aladar would make the objection that these were not love-letters, but, as soon as he had half read through the first of them, he could not do so. Those lines were the outpourings of a sad, loving heart. This could not be gainsaid. Erzsike, in the first moment of her triumph, laughed saucily; but, seeing that Aladar's eyes filled with tears, all at once broke out into violent sobs, as she threw herself upon Garanvölgyi, begging his pardon a hundred, nay, a thousand times, for each of her innumerable offences against him. After silently reading the first letter, Aladar pressed his uncle's hand, who put an end to the touching scene, by saying—

“What a fool a man is, nephew, when he is alone, isn't he?”

CHAPTER IX.

A CURIOUS CASE.

AFTER this, weeks passed away : the water shrunk slowly back into its bed. First, it became a general deposit of mud and slime. Then little pools with fish in them were left standing here and there, which would not be completely dried up before the third summer. All around was one picture of ruin and destruction, on which men gazed with silent disgust, after they had become tired of sighing and lamenting over it. For a long time it was very difficult to go from one village to another, as the roads were all destroyed, and the water had carried away all the bridges. Consequently, Ankerschmidt did not make great haste in serving Herr Bräuhäusel with "black broth."

“ If it had not been for this inundation, we should never have come together.”

He now concerned himself about nothing but his daughter's happiness. The very first Sunday the names of the young couple were given out, and the old people's joy was to live again in their children. So Ankerschmidt gradually untied the knots in his handkerchief which had reference to Grisak, to Bräuhäusel, and to Mikusek. Only the fourth remained, which referred to Aladar; and this there was no reason to keep tied any longer. They knew all.

Not long after, he got a letter from Dr. Grisak. This deserving man detailed, with much pomp and circumstance, what a strict inquiry was being made in proper quarters as to whose fault or crime it was that caused this great loss, amounting to many millions, and how exemplarily the culprit would be punished. However, from the inquiries, as far as they had been prosecuted, it appeared that the cause of all had been “ a little misunderstanding ” on the part of Herr Mikusek, who had misunderstood the instructions given him; and then, his directions were also misunderstood.

The whole affair was a mistake, which would appear all the more clearly, since Herr Mikucsek had, in the meantime, strayed into Gallicia; and in order to examine him it would be necessary to petition the ministry through the different lieutenancies; and at the end, if he were found in fault, what would they gain? The man had nothing in the world but his body, his soul, and his umbrella. As for the country, it would soon recover this blow, as others, &c. &c.

Ankerschmidt said that it was very true, and that it was a pity to waste paper on the point whence came the misfortune. It was sufficient that it had come. But, meanwhile, something happened of which Dr. Grisak knew nothing.

Herr Mikucsek really did take a ticket to go by the mail-coach to Lemberg. But, as the coach was slowly ascending the slope near Forro, in the night, a shot came through the window. It was fired from such a short distance that the whole of the glass was dimmed by the smoke, and the ball made a small hole in it as if it had been paper. Four were sitting inside, among whom the shot picked out

Mikucsek, who was killed on the spot. The murderer, who must have been standing on the step of the coach-door when he fired the shot, disappeared so suddenly, that they were unable to come upon any trace of him. Consequently, the criminal court at Kassa had both the driver and the conductor arrested as suspected of the crime.

After this, a peasant from Sz—— appeared before the court, and told them not to persecute the innocent, for that he was the murderer. He then told them how he had committed the murder out of revenge ; how he had made preparations for it ; described circumstantially how it happened ; how he lay in wait for the coach in the night ; how he got up on the step of the door ; where he threw away the pistol ; how he crept away along the ditch by the roadside. It was impossible to desire a fuller confession. Any judge would have pronounced the sentence of death upon him on hearing it.

Nevertheless, at that very time, on the very same day, another peasant from Sz—— appeared before the court at Miskolcz, and gave a similar account of himself, and in the same words, affirming that *he* was the murderer.

The name of one of them was Peter Bard ; of the other, Paul Bard ; they were brothers.

But now, which of them was the actual murderer ?

The court confronted the two ; but both of them adhered to their former statements. If they asked either of them why the other accused himself of a crime which he had not committed, he answered that his brother wished to save his life. It was beyond a doubt that one of them was the actual murderer, but it was just as much so that the other was not. One of them must be condemned, and the other acquitted ; but it was impossible to make out which deserved which treatment.

When the two brothers were confronted with one another, each of them implored the other to renounce his purpose of taking upon himself a crime which he had not committed. Then they began to dispute, to cross-examine one another as to how was this, how happened that ? but all that came out of such cross-examinations was, that each one of them could detail all the circumstances as well as the other.

At last Peter Bard, to convince the judges,

told them that he had two *incriminating* witnesses ; they were the Knight Ankerschmidt and Mr. Aladar Garanvölgyi. The court summoned them ; neither of them having any idea as to what evidence he could possibly give bearing on the case. When they were confronted with the prisoners, Peter Bard asked them—

“Do not the gentlemen remember that when they were watching that night on the dam of the Tisza, a man in a boat came before them, with whom they exchanged words?”

“That man was I, myself,” put in Paul Bard.

“Wast thou?” said Peter, shaking his head.

“Wilt thou be him also? If then thou wast there, just tell us what the man in the boat said to the gentlemen?”

“Why, I brought them the news that the dam at D—— was broken ; and I said that somebody would die.”

“Then thou must have been listening somewhere, for I was the boatman.”

“Say rather that thou wast listening, and I was in the boat.”

“But, gentlemen,” exclaimed Peter, in a tone of despair, “I swear that I was in the boat.”

“ I also swear that I was.”

Neither Ankerschmidt nor Aladar could give fuller information on the subject. It was dark when they talked with the man ; they could not see his face ; as for the words spoken, both the brothers could repeat them with about the same amount of accuracy.

The court was obliged to remand them back to their cells. As they led them away in different directions, Peter Bard raised his manacled hand, and, with his finger, made a reproachful gesture at his brother, saying, in a tone of bitterness—

“ Elder brother, elder brother, thou hast only made up thy mind to deliver thyself to death for my sake ; but thou wilt see that there will nothing come of it.”

That evening, Peter Bard asked for writing materials. He said that he had important disclosures to make to the court. They were given him. In the morning he was found hung from the latch of the door by his neck-handkerchief. On the table was the following letter :

“ Your Lordships,—They say that witness at the point of death is as strong as if it were

upon oath. Now, I am at the point of death, and do hereby renew and confirm my confession that I was the murderer, and that my brother is innocent.

“PETER BARD.”

The court had nothing to do but to accept the accomplished fact. It decided that the dead brother was guilty, and acquitted the living. Paul, however, when he heard of his younger brother's death, said, with tears in his eyes, that for all that he was not the murderer. But they strictly forbade him to utter such follies, threatening him with two months confinement ; if he did not wish to be locked up, he must admit his own innocence.

They used for some time after that to assert that the Peter, who put an end to himself in prison, was the same person who, under the name of Miska Szemes, had played so many tricks. This they concluded, because from the time of Peter's death, nothing was ever heard more about Miska Szemes.

Who knows whether they were right or not ? Of such stories there are always enough.

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CHAPTER X.

A LITTLE JOKE IN THE CABINET NOIR.

MADAME PAJTAY at this time lived in Vienna. Directly after Aladar was set at liberty, she quitted Pest, in order that she might free herself from all annoyance. In Vienna she very soon learned two truths. The first was, that to speculate in the money market only did for such as understood the business, and that *dilettanti* got on very badly there. When she left Hungary she turned all her immoveable property into cash, and with heedless confidence promised herself that she should have nothing more to do with that poor country, and that for the future she should live as a capitalist.

Now the period which followed her change of quarters was one peculiarly well adapted for

enticing such persons as believed that they had money into a school where they were soon taught that in fact they had none. After a year spent in going over from the *bulls* to the *bears*, always at the wrong moment, she found that she could only rescue the wreck of her fortune from that deceitful sea.

The second truth which she learned was, that although it might be quite possible, and sometimes even highly profitable, for politicians of a certain age to break definitively with their previous careers,¹ yet for a lady on the wrong side of thirty it is a very hazardous experiment to disavow all her previous acquaintance, as the formation of a new party is a work of considerable difficulty.

After such experiences of Vienna she saw that there remained nothing better for her to do than "to consecrate the brief moments of our existence to our adored country." So one fine day "this warm-hearted and patriotic lady," (as the reporters of ladies' newspapers were accustomed to entitle her in their ac-

¹ This refers to Bach and others, who, after taking part in the Revolution of 1848, at Vienna, afterwards became Ministers, &c. under the absolute Government.

counts of balls,) determined to spend the bathing-season at Balaton-Füred. It was a very good excuse for renewing her connexion with the "adored country." One has an illness which no watering-place in the world can cure, save that of Balaton-Füred. Thus one is not obliged to play the part of a returning penitent; one has only come back for mineral water.

Afterwards, while one passes through the curative process of the Annaballs,¹ one's former admirers reappear, are again brought to one's feet, and at the end of the season beseech one not to go back again to Vienna. It would be but feminine virtue to be moved by the supplication of so many hearts. Meanwhile some flirtation or other may become so serious, that one may make "love" the "sacrifice" of remaining in that insupportable country.

So far good; all that remained was to inform those concerned of her intentions, so that they should be at Füred when she arrived. This did not cost her more than a little note to each of them, in which she expressed her wish to meet him. To write

¹ So called because given on, and shortly after, St. Anne's day, the 26th of July.

on such a subject is ordinarily troublesome to men, to ladies a very enjoyment. Corinna wrote every day from morning to night, and only thus got through her correspondence. When she had written the following epistles, she felt satisfied with herself. The first was to the village squire :

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—In obedience to the advice of my doctors I am going to spend the season at Balaton-Füred. I prefer this watering-place to the foreign ones, as it is cheaper, and I am very careful as to what I do with my money. There one can go about in what toilet one likes. The uncereemonious Hungarian temper does not take notice of such things ; not as in Ischl, where one is forced to compete with duchesses. If I should meet you there, it would greatly contribute to my enjoyment. You know how I am bored by the artificial high flights of the young men of the present day. I should shudder, were I to meet there that unhappy versifier, who under the name of Szellemfí used to sing my praises in the ladies’ newspapers. How much we have laughed together over the poor fellow’s verses !

That I could do in your company ; but, alone, I should fly from them. So, if possible, be there to defend me.

“ CORINNA.”

The second was addressed to the versifier in question :

“ MY DEAR SZELLEMFI,—My doctors assert that I have a weakness of the chest, which only the air of the Balaton can cure. They are partly right ; I have a weakness—of the heart ; and that only the air of my passionately adored country can heal. I have known neither rest nor pleasure since the machinations of certain individuals, and adverse fate, compelled me to leave my native country, and I have now no further desire than that my dust should one day rest in its soil. It would be a great comfort to me, if I were to find you there. This I the more desire, as Grisak will be there too, as I certainly know—a man whom I hate no less than you do. Your chivalrous spirit would defend me against his intrusions. You can count on my gratitude. I have often thought

of you, often dreamt of you ; perhaps it will not be always a dream.

“ CORINNA.”

Number three was written in German, and to Dr. Grisak :

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,—By the advice of my doctors I am going to Balaton-Füred. It is not far from Pest. If you can find time, visit me there. I have to talk to you about certain affairs of mine, which I should like you to take in hand for me ; and then, if you by chance have some lawsuit on hand, I in turn will undertake to be your advocate. You already know that I have long ago broken off with Aladar Garanvölgyi ; I now let you know that I have shown my country squire the door. If you can, do come, so that I may have somebody with whom I can converse, for during the last year I have almost entirely forgotten Hungarian.

“ CORINNA.”

In the fourth place she wrote to the Knight Ankerschmidt, as follows :—

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—Out of the depths of my heart I have shared the sorrow which it has pleased Heaven to mete out to your family. Allow the tears of an old and sincere friend to mingle with yours. Indeed, who can better sympathise with him who has lost the dearest member of his family, than her who has herself lost all and renounced all? But there is a certain melancholy satisfaction which the unfortunate can mutually afford one another. If you wish to revenge yourself on the man who inflicted so deep a wound on your affection, I can tell you where he is to be found. If you should wish to meet me, I shall be in the course of this month at Balaton-Füred, whither my doctors send me. I have much to tell you, from which you will see that you have a friend in the distance who every day thinks of you.

“PAJTAY CORINNA.”

The fifth and last was addressed to Aladar. Lest we should be surprised at her writing to him, it is necessary to mention that Madame Pajtay had heard from Grisak that Aladar had got back his property. Her letter was as follows :—

“DEAR ALADAR,—There are misunderstandings in life which only death clears up. My life is one of those riddles, and, that you have never cared to solve it, will be my death. Outward appearances have ere this dug the graves of many, who have gone down into them without ever having been understood. You are a man, and of a quick temper; I am a woman, and weak; it is therefore more suitable for me to humble myself before you, and after that last scene which parted us, to beg for pardon. If you but knew how this heart has in secret suffered for you, how this soul has cared for you, what these hands have done for you! But no, you will never know it. I shall be this summer at Balaton-Füred. If you should appear there but for a minute, you might once more see a woman who has come hither—nearer to you—to die, and be forgotten; and whose only wish is that some day you may stand before her deserted grave, and there murmur, ‘I forgive her in the dust.’

“CORINNA.”

All she had now to do was to take care that every letter was put into its proper envelope,

lest she should fare like many persons in plays on the stage, who put their letters into the wrong envelopes. It would be a pretty thing if everybody was to get the letter addressed to some other. Consequently she was particularly careful in putting them in. Some of them she even took out of their envelopes twice, so as to be quite sure that they were put in right. Then she sealed them up at once, and to make all sure took a hackney-coach to the post-office, and put them into the box herself. Then satisfied that her letters were on the right road, she returned home with her mind at ease.

But the *cabinet noir* was yet behind. Five letters slipping into the box all at once, directed in the same handwriting, and addressed too to such a suspicious group—a condemned and pardoned rebel; a former imperial officer of high rank, now a landed proprietor in Hungary; a lawyer; a journalist, and a discontented country squire—was enough to excite anybody's attention. What made them more suspicious was, that they were all dated from Vienna and directed to Hungary. The interests of the State required that the contents

of such suspicious epistles should be known, as they would doubtless lead to the discovery of some conspiracy.

By this time we know what sort of an institution is the *cabinet noir*. Herr Straff, after the speculation of his marriage had come to an end, had again got back. It is no use arguing; a man must live. Such is the maxim of the present day. One earns his bread this way, another that; the only thing that is disgraceful is to die of hunger. Then if a man earns his bread by sweeping the streets, he dirties his clothes, and is consequently a low sort of fellow; while, if he only dirties his character, he can still be a "cavalier" and a "gentleman." So our old acquaintance Herr Straff sat before the five letters. His practised eye recognised at once the writer of them. There was a time when letters in that handwriting used to come to him, and the writer of them had need of his secret services, and paid him for them.

Now, as his business was to examine into and make himself acquainted with people's affairs, let those closed lips open and speak. The perusal of those letters afforded him much

amusement, and he laughed over them to himself. It was his custom to laugh only when he was alone, and then only with closed lips, through his nose. "The poor fools! How they let themselves be led by the nose by her! How she serves up to each of them what suits him, saying to each of them, 'Here is nothing, hold it fast!'¹ Or perhaps she would like to catch one of them for good and all. That, too, is possible."

Last of all, the letter addressed to Ankerschmidt came between his claws. The previous ones had merely afforded a malignant enjoyment in the knowledge of such secrets as might be dangerous to those concerned, and to less interested lookers-on. This last letter, on the contrary, filled him with rage.

"Madame would have me persecuted, would she? She considers me the cheapest article to be thrown to that old child to serve as his plaything, does she? Ho! ho! my lady, you have chosen out of the *menagerie* a monkey that bites. He can give you a few scratches on the way. So you would betray me, would you? You wish to compete with me in

¹ This is a Hungarian proverbial saying.

treachery, do you? Ha! ha! ha! We see which of us understands that business best."

And Straff continued to snigger to him till the bread-seal was sufficiently hard to them up again. He had thought of a good joke. When he put the letters into their covers again, he put the letter intended for the country squire, which depreciated the value of Szellemfi, into the envelope directed to the latter. The letter meant for him, and requesting his chivalrous defence against the intrusion of Grisak, he sealed up in the envelope directed to the Doctor. The letter was written in the German language, and concealing her ignorance of her mother-tongue so that she wished to have a companion who was able to talk German, he put into the envelope directed to the savage Squaw. Lastly, he changed Aladar's and Ankerschmidt's letters. Ankerschmidt might then read how the faithless betrothed of the girl who was engaged to his daughter tried to entice him back to her, while Aladar would be amused at the pains his former betrothed was taking to become his mother-in-law.

A fortnight after she had posted those letters, Madame Pajtay deemed it time for her to set out for Balaton-Füred. By that time her admirers were doubtless every day watching the arrival of the post, and keeping in readiness the vocal quartett of the theatre, to give her a serenade on the evening of her arrival. When she started, however, she made the unpleasant experience that, of all things, the most ungallant in its behaviour towards ladies is the weather. For that reason alone this country would be insupportable. No sooner does it rain than there is mud. Now, in Vienna one never sees mud; they immediately clear it away. Whereas here, from the time one takes one's seat in the coach, one sees nothing but rain-besprinkled windows, and through the glass the muddy road, and drenched peasants in their mantles of felt, and peasant women, destitute of crinoline, turning their upper petticoats over their heads.

But what gave her most trouble was the thought that in such a rain her admirers, even if they were waiting her arrival in the coffee-house, could not form a crowd around

her on the promenade; that by the time the stage-coach arrived it would be late, and nobody in the bath-court except the men who bottle and cork the mineral water.

It turned out just as she expected. The noise of the arrival of the stage-coach with bells to the horses' necks hardly drew anybody to the door of the coffee-house, and they were deterred by the blessing from above from venturing beyond the shelter of the eaves. So the stage-coach, without exciting further notice, drove round into the courtyard of the great Horvath House, where Madame Pajtay had engaged the handsomest and most comfortable, consequently the dearest, quarters to be got in all Füred.

Scarcely had she got into her rooms, when her first thought was to look through the list of arrivals. To run through so many hundred names was no small trouble, and yet in the long catalogue she only found one of those whom she sought. It was Szellemfi the rhymers. Where could the rest of them be? No doubt they had written to say that they were on their way. Corinna could not pass the night in such uncertainty. That very

evening she sent to the postmaster to ask him to give her any letters that might have arrived for her.

The postmaster at Füred is a very good fellow. He was dancing in the large room of the inn when they came and pulled him by the coat, and bade him come at once to render assistance to some one who would die before morning, if she did not get immediately the letters which had come for her. He instantly appreciated the importance of the danger, deserted his partner in the middle of the dance, and, going to his office, at once found and delivered the letters addressed to Madame Pajtay; they were five in number. He then went back to the ball-room.

Corinna took up the letters with beating heart. All the five, it seems, had made haste to answer her. But why had the manufacturer of verses written, as he had also come in person? Probably his letter had arrived earlier. Which of the five should she open first? She gave the precedence to the one bearing Ankerschmidt's handwriting. Of all of them, the Knight was the best match. As she opened it, she was very much surprised

at seeing her own letter fall out. What ! Has he sent back a letter he has received ? That is the height of rudeness. What does he write besides ?

“RESPECTED LADY,—The next time that you write to two persons at once, take care not to make a mistake in putting them into the envelopes.

“ANKERSCHMIDT.”

There was nothing more. Corinna hastily pulled her own letter out of the envelope, on which Ankerschmidt's name was plainly to be seen, and tremblingly glanced at it. It was the letter she had addressed to Aladar.

In haste she tore open Aladar's letter. There she found the letter she had sent to Ankerschmidt, but Aladar had been so good as to add no word of comment.

These two letters then had got into the wrong envelopes. And yet, how could that have happened ? It was incomprehensible ; when she had twice looked to see if they were right. No ; the fact was, these men lived in the same village, and no doubt they were so ungallant as to show one another

the letters which they had received, and then imagined this joke by way of hurting her feelings. It was doubtless Aladar's idea, as he had a bad heart and a satirical disposition. He was capable of such a thing.

Consoling herself with these reflections, she opened the letter addressed in the handwriting of the country squire. But, as if a snake had dropped into her lap, there fell out the letter she had written in German to Dr. Grisak. The Squire's answer was massacring. He wrote in German ¹ —

“So, gracious lady : know no more Hungarian? Has forgotten all—forgotten mother-tongue—fatherland? *ergo*, should forget me too.”

There was more besides, which, however, would not be in place in these pages.

Corinna was ready to faint. When she opened the fourth letter, her hand trembled so much that she almost dropped it. One thing was certain : that was, that Dr. Grisak had not got the letter addressed to him. And, suppose he had got that written to the young gentleman of fashion where he was referred to !

¹ In the original atrociously ungrammatical, broken German.

When opened, the letter proved her fears well founded. Grisak sent back the letter he had received, which was written to Szellemfi. Dr. Grisak answered besides at length—at length, and cuttingly. A whole sheet, folded in half, was filled with his answer, which showed, accurately and setting down dates, when, how many times, and for how long each time, he had visited her ladyship, charging for each visit ten florins as “consultation with her lawyer,” and begging her to forward the amount of the sum total, as otherwise he would be obliged to bring a suit against her for the money.

Only this was wanting—that a fair lady should have to pay for her *tête-à-têtes* with her adorer, at the rate of ten florins a-piece, as legal consultations! Now we, who know the circumstances, may feel pretty sure that she will not pay it.

No doubt could now subsist in her mind that the fifth letter had also been changed. And yet Szellemfi had come! Perhaps, after all, the tribe of authors was not so very implacable; that it was only a slander which called them in Latin “*genus irritabile vatum*.”

It was furthermore possible that he looked on the whole business as a joke. He had a certain turn for humour.

The letter when opened certainly was different from the four preceding ones, for in it was sent a terribly ugly pasquil. Now of a pasquil, it is enough to say that it is a pasquil. More words about it would be superfluous. It was now quite clear why her last admirer had come. Since his arrival no doubt the satirical verses had passed from hand to hand, and were read on the promenade, in the baths, in the coffee-house, in the summer-theatre, in the shooting-gallery, and in the whole neighbourhood. Everybody in the place knew by this time of the joke, down to the waiters and the bath-servants. To-morrow on the promenade everybody would ask, which is the lady to whom such an amusing misfortune occurred?

For the first time in her life Corinna felt that she had a heart. Her vanity had suffered such a humiliation that she could no longer take refuge under its cold protection. Without, the clouds broke, and a beautiful clear night succeeded the showery day. On the star-lit

lake of Balaton a gay company set out on a boating excursion by the light of flaring torches. In the midst of the lake they began to sing one of those popular melodies, which are produced together with the song, as scents with flowers. And she remembered how one year she herself had made one of such a boating-party, after a stormy day, in the company of that youth who then loved her so fondly, and whom in his hour of ill-fortune she so coldly betrayed. Even now she fancied that she heard his voice in the distant quartett; even now she imagined him sitting by her side, and, as he steered the boat, taking such delicate care that the chill evening breeze should not do her any harm. And now he was the only one who sent back her letter without any answer. All the rest had to some extent or other attempted to revenge themselves on her for her discovered treachery. He alone made no answer. How happy could she now be by his side, if she had known how to suffer, wait, and love! And how unhappy, now that she had no one on whom it was pleasant for her to think—no one who thought of her with love!

For an hour she thus continued to muse, gazing on the dark mirror of the Balaton, on which the torch-lit boat, like a fiery serpent, floated on with its vocal crew. As she gazed, she thought how pleasant it would be to lie at the bottom of the heaven-reflecting lake, or to be one of those wandering lights which on dark nights may be seen hurrying over the water before the wind. This was the only hour of her life in which she discoursed with her own heart.

The bark turned back ; the sounds of song drew nearer and nearer. Corinna closed the jalousies looking out upon the lake ; and as she shut out the tempting picture into the dark night, the discourse of her heart was heard no more. The candle-light recalled the coldness of her spirit. She reflected that she might live long, and that by practising a little usury she might protract her existence in a respectable manner in spite of the smallness of her means.

She called her servant, and gave her orders to take every place in the stage-coach returning to Pest, as she intended to travel back again in the morning. In the meantime

she determined not to go to bed ; so, to help her to while away the tedious hours, she opened a newspaper, which had been sent with her letters. It was the Journal of Fashions in which Szellemfi used to write, of which he was accustomed to send her a copy by way of a compliment. She glanced at the miscellaneous intelligence. The very first notice which attracted her attention ran as follows :

“ We are informed that one of our most respected fellow-countrymen, Aladar Garanvölgyi, has lately been betrothed to Erzsike, the beautiful and accomplished daughter of the Knight Ankerschmidt. Blessings and congratulations from all parts of the country accompany this truly ‘*belle alliance*.’ ”

This was the last blow for her heart of stone. She thought no more about romantic suicide. It occurred to her that there was still one man in the world who would be glad to have the opportunity afforded him of renewing his former addresses—a man, faithful as a dog, clever as a fox ; no sentimentalist, but of practical ability, who very well understood the business of lending money on usury, of selling up defaulting debtors, of making

inquiries as to how much this or that man would be able to pay. He was, moreover, a handsome man, on whose arm she might be proud to be seen leaning in the street. In one word, the very husband she wanted, and one who would be at her feet at the least sign from her.

This last man of men was—Herr Straff. Let us congratulate her.

At four o'clock in the morning, while everybody was still asleep in the delightful watering place, the stage-coach galloped through the linden-trees, the bells of its five horses sounding gaily in the fresh air. Within sat a pale lady, who the evening before had arrived as an invalid, and this morning already—returned perfectly cured.

There are such lucky unfortunate ones, whose hearts are not accustomed to feel pain long.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN THE BEAR COMES OUT OF HIS CAVE.

THE bear is a great philosopher. As long as the days of his life are bright and cheerful, he enjoys himself, and as soon as they become cold and stormy and overcast, he does not seek a foreign clime, like the storks, nor take to robbing in the woods, like the wolf, nor become a servant, like the dog. He withdraws himself to a quiet, retired retreat, which he has marked out beforehand ; there curls himself up, and with the greatest calmness waits to see which will be soonest tired of the game of passive resistance, he or the winter.

Ordinarily the winter's patience is exhausted first ; for it passes away of itself after a certain time, while no one ever found a bear frozen in the snow. It is true that some winters are very long ; but that does not put the bear out.

He knows very well that the longest winter will come to an end at last, and, if the wind blows very keenly into his cave, he does not address deprecatory pamphlets to it, but stops up the entrance with his back, and then he can only freeze in one place.

But there is one day in the winter which is called Candlemas Day. How the bear knows when that day comes round is one of those mysteries in natural history which scientific men have not as yet cleared up. It is sufficient for us to know that on Candlemas Day the bear leaves his hole, and comes out to look about him. He looks to see what sort of weather it is.

If he sees that it is a beautiful sunshiny day, the snow melting, the heaven azure, and the foolish birds piping congratulatory hymns to an imagined spring,—(as they mistake for leaves the mistletoe on the trees, whereas in fact birdlime will be made of it, on which they, poor fools! will be caught)—if mild, soft breezes are blowing, then the bear goes back to his lair, lays him down on the other side, puts his nose between his paws, and sleeps for forty days more; for he knows that

all that fine weather is merely the coquetry of the winter, like the liberal programme of an absolutist ministry.

If, on the contrary, the bear sees on Candlemas Day that it is very ugly, stormy weather, that the wind drives along the flakes of snow, the tops of the trees creak and sigh, and on the withered branches the black troop of crows croak, as though they would say, "Tremble ye, for there will never be any more summer ; the winter hath promised us that it will endure for ever ; we have taken the winds into our pay, and they will now blow as we list ; the sun has grown old, has no more strength, and has quite forgotten you ; it were a pity to wait for him ;"—if the ice-drops still hang from the pine-tree boughs, and the voice of the wolf be heard howling in the depths of the forest, then the bear shakes his pelisse, rubs his eyes, and with determined good humour trots off into the wood. For the bear knows very well, that the winter is now spending the last of its rage. Let it blow, let it snow, let it bluster ; the more violent is its wrath, the sooner it will be over. And the bear is always right.

Whence the bear derives this philosophic and contemplative turn of mind we are unable to say ; that, however, the fact, as we have stated, has been long ago set down in Hungarian notes on the weather, is quite certain.

* * * * * *

Adam Garanvölgyi still did not pass the threshold of his door. If he had hitherto been able to live the life of a hermit, he could easily continue to do so now that he had continually about him such faces as he loved to look upon. It is true that he could seldom see Aladar, for the laborious young man did not allow the fact of his having again become a landed proprietor to interfere with his office and his profession. But Erzsike was all the more with him, and the old gentleman was every day more and more convinced that Aladar had every reason to be very happy. As for Ankerschmidt, he spent more of his time at the old Squire's than at home. The old soldier had acquired a taste for politics, as is the case with everyone who lives ten years in our country. In politics he was one of those who are generally

called *sanguinicus*, who look at things from too close a point of view, who attach great importance to every trifle, and believe everything that they read in the newspapers. Garanvölgyi merely smiled at the old recruit. "It is all mere Candlemas sunshine."

Ankerschmidt eagerly seized upon everything which might betoken an approaching change of "our lot." For so it is. The stranger, who has been settled ten years among us, by that time talks of "our lot." Nor is this the result of sorcery, or forbidden arts, but a very natural consequence. One, who has brought hither a noble heart and a chivalrous spirit, is attracted by the character similar to his own which he finds in his new fellow-countrymen. Common troubles, common suffering, bring them together, and at last the common hope of a common future completes the conquest. And we generally find that such new patriots are the most ardent. In the next generation that is sure to be the case. Ankerschmidt talked about the public interests of Hungary like any Hungarian *táblabíró*. In fact, he represented the extreme left.

Garanvölgyi, meanwhile, did not stir from his den. It was still winter; the bear had no reason to rouse himself from sleep. But at last there came a stormy, snowy, tempestuous period. The mist of irresolution hung on all men's minds. All hopes were frozen. The rime had blasted the tender leaves put forth by the credulous. Through the grey fog was heard the croaking of the ravens: "'Twere a pity to wait, and 'twere a pity to wish for it."

At such a time came Ankerschmidt in an unwonted ill-humour to the old gentleman. He brought with him the ill-tidings printed in the newspaper.

"Every stone which served as a foundation for patriotic hopes had been already shaken and moved out of its place; only one had stood unshaken,—religious freedom;¹ and now these dreadful innovators are laying their hands on this last stone to move it out of its place. And the time is very favourable for their plan, for it is very cold and very dark."

¹ He means the autonomy of the Protestant Churches, viz. their independence of all State interference, which was menaced by the Imperial Patent of 1859.

At this news, Garanvölgyi's usually unconcerned face kindled, as he said—

“This then is the time when the bear comes out of his lair. Get ready my carriage; to-morrow we shall go to Miskolcz, to the convent.”¹

The old Squire again appeared with his grey beard in places where a stout unwavering heart was at that time of great value. The storm raged and blustered for some time longer, but in the end the bear was right.

Later came the elections for the Diet,² which had been convoked. No one in the district was a more ardent and excited canvasser than Ankerschmidt. Erzsike did nothing all day but make 1848 cockades, which her father distributed to everybody he met. He himself carried one on his hat, and another on his coat, and almost devoured those persons who dared to express any doubt about Garanvölgyi's being elected.

¹ By the “*convent*” is meant the synod of the Protestant Church. The Protestants in Hungary are divided into four districts, called “circles,” of one of which Miskolcz is the principal town. The ordinary convent of each circle sits apart.

² The Diet of 1861.

Aladar tried to quiet him, and told him not to give himself so much trouble ; as it was, Mr. Adam would be elected by everybody except a few drunken fellows, whose votes the opposite candidate had bought with wine, and these would be but as one to a hundred ; that this was a constitutional struggle, and he should let another come forward, if so minded.

“But it must not be allowed that one out of a hundred should separate from us,” insisted Ankerschmidt ; “it must not be allowed for one single voice to mar the unanimous acclamation. I bear no one any malice, but whoever does not agree had better be off, for I’ll eat him.”

And the gallant officer did indeed so persecute Garanvölgyi’s opponents, that by the day of the election not a vestige of them was left. On a great many his words had an effect ; three notorious disputers he challenged to a duel, which dispersed them in thirty-three different directions. At last he carried matters so far, that the candidate of the other party came forward in the club, and before the whole world begged pardon for having pre-

sumed to stand in opposition to Garanvölgyi. Thus Ankerschmidt gained his point. At the election only one name was heard, and as the Knight led the cavalcade of electors beneath the windows of the elected, he could say—

“We greet thee, grey hero of our country!”

* * * * *

This is a very curious story; and yet we cannot say of it, “It happened a long time ago, perhaps it is not true.”

THE END.



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