





THE ESCAPE.

THE

WANDERING JEW.

By EUGENE SUE,

Author of "The Mysteries of Paris," etc., etc.

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

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EPILOGUE.

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- II. The Redemption.....

THE WANDERING JEW.

FIRST PART.—THE TRANSGRESSION.

PROLOGUE.

THE LAND'S END OF TWO WORLDS.

THE Arctic Ocean encircles with a belt of eternal ice the desert confines of Siberia and North America—the uttermost limits of the Old and New worlds, separated by the narrow channel, known as Behring's Straits.

The last days of September have arrived.

The equinox has brought with it darkness and Northern storms, and night will quickly close the short and dismal polar day. The sky of a dull and leaden blue is faintly lighted by a sun without warmth, whose white disk, scarcely seen above the horizon, pales before the dazzling brilliancy of the snow that covers, as far as the eyes can reach, the boundless steppes.

To the North, this desert is bounded by a ragged coast, bristling with huge black rocks.

At the base of this Titanic mass lies enchained the petrified ocean, whose spell-bound waves appear fixed as vast ranges of ice mountains, their blue peaks fading away in the far-off frost smoke, or snow vapor.

Between the twin-peaks of Cape East, the termination of Siberia, the sullen sea is seen to drive tall icebergs across a streak of dead green. There lies Behring's Straits.

Opposite, and towering over the channel, rise the granite masses of Cape Prince of Wales, the headland of North America.

These lonely latitudes do not belong to the habitable world; for the piercing cold shivers the stones, splits the trees, and causes the earth to burst asunder, which, throw-

ing forth showers of icy spangles, seems capable of enduring this solitude of frost and tempest, of famine and death.

And yet, strange to say, footprints may be traced on the snow, covering these headlands on either side of Behring's Straits.

On the American shore, the footprints are small and light, thus betraying the passage of a woman.

She has been hastening up the rocky peak, whence the drifts of Siberia are visible.

On the latter ground, footprints larger and deeper betoken the passing of a man. He also was on his way to the Straits.

It would seem that this man and woman had arrived here from opposite directions, in hope of catching a glimpse of one another across the arm of the sea dividing the two worlds—the Old and the New.

More strange still! the man and the woman have crossed the solitudes during a terrific storm! Black pines, the growth of centuries, pointing their bent heads in different parts of the solitude like crosses in a churchyard, have been uprooted, rent, and hurled aside by the blasts!

Yet the two travellers face this furious tempest, which has plucked up trees, and pounded the frozen masses into splinters, with the roar of thunder.

They face it, without for one single instant deviating from the straight line hitherto followed by them.

Who then are these two beings who advance thus calmly amidst the storms and convulsions of nature?

Is it by chance, or design, or destiny, that the seven nails in the sole of the man's shoe form a cross—thus :



Everywhere he leaves this impress behind him.

On the smooth and polished snow, these footmarks seem imprinted by a foot of brass on a marble floor.

Night without twilight has soon succeeded day—a night of foreboding gloom.

The brilliant reflection of the snow renders the white steppes still visible beneath the azure darkness of the sky; and the pale stars glimmer on the obscure and frozen dome.

Solemn silence reigns.

But, towards the Straits, a faint light appears.

At first, a gentle, bluish light, such as precedes moonrise; it increases in brightness, and assumes a ruddy hue.

Darkness thickens in every other direction; the white wilds of the desert are now scarcely visible under the black vault of the firmament.

Strange and confused noises are heard amidst this obscurity.

They sound like the flight of large night-birds—now flapping—now heavily skimming over the steppes—now descending.

But no cry is heard.

This silent terror heralds the approach of one of those imposing phenomena that awe alike the most ferocious and the most harmless of animated beings. An Aurora Borealis (magnificent sight!) common in the polar regions, suddenly beams forth.

A half circle of dazzling whiteness becomes visible in the horizon. Immense columns of light stream forth from this dazzling centre, rising to a great height, illuminating earth, sea, and sky. Then a brilliant reflection, like the blaze of a conflagration, steals over the snow of the desert, purples the summits of the mountains of ice, and imparts a dark red hue to the black rocks of both continents.

After attaining this magnificent brilliancy, the Northern Lights fade away gradually, and their vivid glow is lost in a luminous fog.

Just then, by a wondrous mirage, an effect very common in high latitudes, the American Coast, though separated from Siberia by a broad arm of the sea, loomed so close, that a bridge might seemingly be thrown from one world to the other.

Then human forms appeared in the transparent azure haze overspreading both forelands.

On the Siberian Cape, a man, on his knees, stretched his arms towards America, with an expression of inconceivable despair.

On the American promontory, a young and handsome woman replied to the man's despairing gesture by pointing to heaven.

For some seconds, these two tall figures stood out, pale and shadowy, in the farewell gleams of the Aurora.

But the fog thickens, and all is lost in darkness.

Whence came the two beings, who met thus amidst polar glaciers, at the extremities of the old and new worlds?

Who were the two creatures, brought near for a moment by a deceitful mirage, but who seemed eternally separated?

CHAPTER I.

MOROK.

THE month of October, 1831, draws to its close.

Though it is still day, a brass lamp, with four burners, illumines the cracked walls of a large loft, whose solitary window is closed against outer light. A ladder, with its top rungs coming up through an open trap, leads to it.

Here and there at random on the floor lie iron chains, spiked collars, saw-toothed snaffles, muzzles bristling with nails, and long iron rods set in wooden handles. In one corner stands a portable furnace, such as tinkers use to melt their spelter; charcoal and dry chips fill it, so that a spark would suffice to kindle this furnace in a minute.

Not far from this collection of ugly instruments, putting one in mind of a torturer's kit of tools, there are some articles of defence and offence of a bygone age. A coat of mail, with links so flexible, close, and light, that it resembles steel tissue, hangs from a box, beside iron cuishes and arm-pieces, in good condition, even to being properly fitted with straps. A mace, and two long three-cornered-headed pikes, with ash handles, strong, and light at the same time, spotted with lately-shed blood, complete the armory, modernized somewhat by the presence of two Tyrolese rifles, loaded and primed.

Along with this arsenal of murderous weapons and out-of-date instruments, is strangely mingled a collection of very different objects, being small glass-lidded boxes, full of rosaries, chaplets, medals, AGNUS DEI, holy-water bottles, framed pictures of saints, etc., not to forget a goodly number of those chapbooks, struck off in Friburg on coarse bluish paper, in which you can hear about miracles of our own time, or "Jesus Christ's Letter to a true believer," containing awful predictions, as for the years 1831 and '32, about impious revolutionary France.

One of those canvas daubs, with which strolling showmen adorn their booths, hangs from a rafter, no doubt to prevent its being spoilt by too long rolling up. It bore the following legend:

"THE DOWNRIGHT TRUE AND MOST MEMORABLE CONVERSION OF IGNATIUS MOROK, KNOWN AS THE PROPHET, HAPPENING IN FRIBURG, 1828TH YEAR OF GRACE."

This picture, of a size larger than natural, of gaudy color, and in bad taste, is divided into three parts, each presenting an important phase in the life of the convert, surnamed

“The Prophet.” In the first, behold a long-bearded man, the hair almost white, with unsmooth face, and clad in reindeer skin, like the Siberian savage. His black foreskin cap is topped with a raven’s head; his features express terror. Bent forward in his sledge, which half-a-dozen huge tawny dogs draw over the snow, he is fleeing from the pursuit of a pack of foxes, wolves, and big bears, whose gaping jaws, and formidable teeth, seem quite capable of devouring man, sledge, and dogs, a hundred times over. Beneath this section, reads :

“IN 1810, MOROK, THE IDOLATER, FLED FROM WILD BEASTS.”

In the second picture, Morok, decently clad in a catechumen’s white gown kneels, with clasped hands, to a man who wears a white neckcloth, and flowing black robe. In a corner, a tall angel, of repulsive aspect, holds a trumpet in one hand, and flourishes a flaming sword with the other, while the words which follow flow out of his mouth, in red letters on a black ground :

“MOROK, THE IDOLATER, FLED FROM WILD BEASTS; BUT WILD BEASTS WILL FLEE FROM IGNATIUS MOROK, CONVERTED AND BAPTIZED IN FRIBURG.”

Thus, in the last compartment, the new convert proudly, boastfully, and triumphantly parades himself in a flowing robe of blue; head up, left arm akimbo, right hand outstretched, he seems to scare the wits out of a multitude of lions, tigers, hyenas, and bears, who, with sheathed claws, and masked teeth, crouch at his feet, awestricken, and submissive.

Under this, is the concluding moral :

“IGNATIUS MOROK BEING CONVERTED, WILD BEASTS CROUCH BEFORE HIM.”

Not far from this canvas are several parcels of halfpenny books, likewise from the Friburg press, which relate by what an astounding miracle Morok, the Idolater, acquired a supernatural power almost divine, the moment he was converted—a power which the wildest animal could not resist, and which was testified to every day by the lion tamer’s performances, “given less to display his courage than to show his praise unto the Lord.”

Through the trap-door which opens into the loft, reek up puffs of a rank, sour, penetrating odor. From time to time are heard sonorous growls and deep breathings, followed by a dull sound, as of great bodies stretching themselves heavily along the floor.

A man is alone in this loft. It is Morok, the tamer of wild beasts, surnamed the Prodnet.

He is forty years old, of middle height, with lank limbs, and an exceedingly spare frame; he is wrapped in a long, blood-red pelisse, lined with black fur; his complexion, fair by nature, is bronzed by the wandering life he has led from childhood; his hair, of that dead yellow peculiar to certain races of the Polar countries, falls straight and stiff down his shoulders; and his thin, sharp, hooked nose, and prominent cheek-bones, surmount a long beard, bleached almost to whiteness. Peculiarly marking the physiognomy of this man is the wide-open eye, with its tawny pupil ever encircled by a rim of white. This fixed, extraordinary look, exercises a real fascination over animals—which, however, does not prevent the Prophet from also employing, to tame them, the terrible arsenal around him.

Seated at a table, he has just opened the false bottom of a box, filled with chaplets and other toys, for the use of the devout. Beneath this false bottom, secured by a secret lock, are several sealed envelopes, with no other address than a number, combined with a letter of the alphabet. The Prophet takes one of these packets, conceals it in the pocket of his pelisse, and, closing the secret fastening of the false bottom, replaces the box upon a shelf.

This scene occurs about four o'clock in the afternoon, in the White Falcon, the only hostelry in the little village of Mockern, situated near Leipsic, as you come from the north towards France.

After a few moments, the loft is shaken by a hoarse roaring from below.

“*Judas!* be quiet!” exclaims the Prophet, in a menacing tone, as he turns his head towards the trap-door.

Another deep growl is heard, formidable as distant thunder.

“Lie down, *Cain!*” cries Morok, starting from his seat.

A third roar, of inexpressible ferocity, bursts suddenly on the ear.

“*Death!* will you have done!” cries the Prophet, rushing towards the trap-door, and addressing a third invisible animal, which bears this ghastly name.

Notwithstanding the habitual authority of his voice—notwithstanding his reiterated threats—the brute-tamer cannot obtain silence: on the contrary, the barking of several dogs is soon added to the roaring of the wild beasts. Morok seizes a pike, and approaches the ladder; he is about to descend, when he sees some one issuing from the aperture.

The new-comer has a brown, sun-burnt face; he wears a gray hat, bell-crowned and broad-brimmed, with a short

jacket, and wide trousers of green cloth; his dusty leathern gaiters show that he has walked some distance; a game-bag's fastened by straps to his back.

"The devil take the brutes!" cried he, as he set foot on the floor; "one would think they'd forgotten me in three days. Judas thrust his paw through the bars of his cage, and Death danced like a fury. They don't know me any more, it seems?"

This was said in German. Morok answered in the same language, but with a slightly foreign accent.

"Good or bad news, Karl?" he inquired, with some uneasiness.

"Good news."

"You've met them!"

"Yesterday; two leagues from Wittenberg."

"Heaven be praised!" cried Morok, clasping his hands with intense satisfaction.

"Oh, of course, 'tis the direct road from Russia to France, 'twas a thousand to one that we should find them somewhere between Wittenberg and Leipsic."

"And the description?"

"Very close: two young girls in mourning; horse, white; the old man has long moustache, blue forage-cap, gray top-coat, and a Siberian dog at his heels."

"And where did you leave them?"

"A league hence. They will be here within the hour."

"And in this inn—since it is the only one in the village," said Morok, with a pensive air.

"And night drawing on," added Karl.

"Did you get the old man to talk?"

"Him!—you don't suppose it!"

"Why not?"

"Go, and try yourself."

"And for what reason?"

"Impossible."

"Impossible—why?"

"You shall know all about it. Yesterday, as if I had fallen in with them by chance, I followed them to the place where they stopped for the night. I spoke in German to the tall old man, accosting him, as is usual with wayfarers, '*Good-day, and a pleasant journey, comrade!*' But, for an answer, he looked askant at me, and pointed with the end of his stick to the other side of the road."

"He is a Frenchman, and, perhaps, does not understand German."

"He speaks it, at least as well as you; for at the inn I

heard him ask the host for whatever he and the young girls wanted."

"And did you not again attempt to engage him in conversation?"

"Once only; but I met with such a rough reception, that, for fear of making mischief, I did not try again. Besides, between ourselves, I can tell you this man has a devilish ugly look; believe me, in spite of his gray moustache, he looks so vigorous and resolute, though with no more flesh on him than a carcass, that I don't know whether he or my mate Giant Goliath, would have the best of it in a struggle. I know not your plans: only take care, master—take care!"

"My black panther of Java was also very vigorous and very vicious," said Morok, with a grim, disdainful smile.

"What, Death? Yes, in truth; and she is vigorous and vicious as ever. Only to you she is almost mild."

"And thus I will break in this tall old man, notwithstanding his strength and surliness."

"Humph! humph! be on your guard, master. You are clever, you are as brave as any one; but, believe me, you will never make a lamb out of the old wolf that will be here presently."

"Does not my lion, Cain—does not my tiger, Judas, crouch in terror before me?"

"Yes, I believe you there—because you have means——"

"Because I have *faith*: that is all—and it *is* all," said Morok, imperiously interrupting Karl, and accompanying these words with such a look, that the other hung his head and was silent.

"Why should not he whom the Lord upholds in his struggle with wild beasts, be also upheld in his struggle with men, when those men are perverse and impious?" added the Prophet, with a triumphant, inspired air.

Whether from belief in his master's conviction, or from inability to engage in a controversy with him on so delicate a subject, Karl answered the Prophet, humbly: "You are wiser than I am, master; what you do must be well done."

"Did you follow this old man and these two young girls all day long?" resumed the Prophet, after a moment's silence.

"Yes; but at a distance. As I know the country well, I sometimes cut across a valley, sometimes over a hill, keeping my eye upon the road, where they were always to be seen. The last time I saw them, I was hid behind the water-mill by the potteries. As they were on the highway for this place, and night was drawing on, I quickened my pace to get

here before them, and be the bearer of what you call good news."

"Very good—yes—very good: and you shall be rewarded; for if these people had escaped me——"

The Prophet started, and did not conclude the sentence. The expression of his face, and the tones of his voice, indicated the importance of the intelligence which had just been brought him.

"In truth," rejoined Karl, "it may be worth attending to; for that Russian courier, all plastered with lace, who came, without slacking bridle, from St. Petersburg to Leipsic, only to see you, rode so fast, perhaps, for the purpose——"

Morok abruptly interrupted Karl, and said:

"Who told you that the arrival of the courier had anything to do with these travellers? You are mistaken; you should only know what I choose to tell you."

"Well, master, forgive me, and let's say no more about it. So! I will get rid of my game-bag, and go help Goliath to feed the brutes, for their supper time draws near, if it is not already past. Does our big giant grow lazy, master?"

"Goliath is gone out; he must not know that you are returned; above all, the tall old man and the maidens must not see you here—it would make them suspect something."

"Where do you wish me to go, then?"

"Into the loft, at the end of the stable, and wait my orders; you may this night have to set out for Leipsic."

"As you please; I have some provisions left in my pouch, and can sup in the loft whilst I rest myself."

"Go."

"Master, remember what I told you. Beware of that old fellow with the gray moustache; I think he's devilish tough; I'm up to these things—he's an ugly customer—be on your guard!"

"Be quite easy! I am always on my guard," said Morok.

"Then good luck to you, master!"—and Karl, having reached the ladder, suddenly disappeared.

After making a friendly farewell gesture to his servant, the Prophet walked up and down for some time, with an air of deep meditation; then, approaching the box which contained the papers, he took out a pretty long letter, and read it over and over with profound attention. From time to time he rose and went to the closed window, which looked upon the inner court of the inn, and appeared to listen anxiously; for he waited with impatience the arrival of the three persons whose approach had just been announced to him.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRAVELLERS.

WHILE the above scene was passing in the **White Falcon** at Mockern, the three persons whose arrival Morok was so anxiously expecting, travelled on leisurely in the midst of smiling meadows, bounded on one side by a river, the current of which turned a mill; and on the other by the highway leading to the village, which was situated on an eminence, at about a league's distance.

The sky was beautifully serene; the bubbling of the river, beaten by the mill-wheel and sparkling with foam, alone broke upon the silence of an evening profoundly calm. Thick willows, bending over the river, covered it with their green transparent shadow; whilst, further on, the stream reflected so splendidly the blue heavens and the glowing tints of the west, that, but for the hills which rose between it and the sky, the gold and azure of the water would have mingled in one dazzling sheet with the gold and azure of the firmament. The tall reeds on the bank bent their black velvet heads beneath the light breath of the breeze that rises at the close of day—for the sun was gradually sinking behind a broad streak of purple clouds, fringed with fire. The tinkling bells of a flock of sheep sounded from afar in the clear and sonorous air.

Along a path trodden in the grass of the meadow, two girls, almost children—for they had but just completed their fifteenth year—were riding on a white horse of medium size, seated upon a large saddle with a back to it, which easily took them both in, for their figures were slight and delicate.

A man of tall stature, with a sun-burnt face, and long gray moustache, was leading the horse by the bridle, and ever and anon turned towards the girls, with an air of solicitude (at once respectful and paternal. He leaned upon a long staff; his still robust shoulders carried a soldier's knapsack; his dusty shoes, and step that began to drag a little, showed that he had walked a long way.

One of those dogs which the tribes of Northern Siberia harness to their sledges—a sturdy animal, nearly of the size, form, and hairy coat of the wolf—followed closely in the steps of the leader of this little caravan, never quitting, as it is commonly said, the heels of his master.

Nothing could be more charming than the group formed by the girls. One held with her left hand the flowing reins, and with her right encircled the waist of her sleeping sister,

whose head reposed on her shoulder. Each step of the horse gave a graceful swaying to these pliant forms, and swung their little feet, which rested on a wooden ledge in lieu of a stirrup.

These twin sisters, by a sweet maternal caprice, had been called Rose and Blanche; they were now orphans, as might be seen by their sad mourning vestments, already much worn. Extremely like in feature, and of the same size, it was necessary to be in the constant habit of seeing them, to distinguish one from the other. The portrait of her who slept not, might serve them for both of them; the only difference at the moment being, that Rose was awake and discharging for that day the duties of elder sister—duties thus divided between them, according to the fancy of their guide, who, being an old soldier of the empire, and a martinet, had judged fit thus to alternate obedience and command between the orphans.

Greuze would have been inspired by the sight of those sweet faces, coiled in close caps of black velvet, from beneath which strayed a profusion of thick ringlets of a light chestnut color, floating down their necks and shoulders, and setting, as in a frame, their round, firm, rosy, satin-like cheeks. A carnation, bathed in dew, is of no richer softness than their blooming lips; the wood violet's tender blue would appear dark beside the limpid azure of their large eyes, in which are depicted the sweetness of their characters, and the innocence of their age; a pure and white forehead, small nose, dimpled chin, complete these graceful countenances, which present a delightful blending of candor and gentleness.

You should have seen them too, when, on the threatening of rain or storm, the old soldier carefully wrapped them both in a large pelisse of reindeer fur, and pulled over their heads the ample hood of this impervious garment; then nothing could be more lovely than those fresh and smiling little faces, sheltered beneath the dark-colored cowl.

But now the evening was fine and calm; the heavy cloak hung in folds about the knees of the sisters, and the hood rested on the back of their saddle.

Rose, still encircling with her right arm the waist of her sleeping sister, contemplated her with an expression of ineffable tenderness, akin to maternal; for Rose was the eldest for the day, and an elder sister is almost a mother.

Not only did the orphans idolize each other; but, by a psychological phenomenon, frequent with twins, they were almost always simultaneously affected; the emotion of one

was reflected instantly in the countenance of the other; the same cause would make both of them start or blush, so closely did their young hearts beat in unison; all ingenuous joys, all bitter griefs were mutually felt, and shared in a moment between them.

In their infancy, simultaneously attacked by a severe illness, like two flowers on the same stem, they had drooped, grown pale, and languished together; but together also had they again found the pure, fresh hues of health.

Need it be said, that those mysterious, indissoluble links which united the twins, could not have been broken without striking a mortal blow at the existence of the poor children?

Thus the sweet birds called love-birds, only living in pairs, as if endowed with a common life, pine, despond, and die, when parted by a barbarous hand.

The guide of the orphans, a man of about fifty-five, distinguished by his military air and gait, preserved the immortal type of the warriors of the republic and the empire—some heroic of the people, who became, in one campaign, the first soldiers in the world—to prove what the people can do, have done, and will renew, when the rulers of their choice place in them confidence, strength, and their hope.

This soldier, guide of the sisters, and formerly a horse-grenadier of the Imperial Guard, had been nicknamed Dagobert. His grave, stern countenance was strongly marked; his long, gray, and thick moustache completely concealed his upper lip, and united with a large imperial, which almost covered his chin; his meagre cheeks, brick-colored, and tanned as parchment, were carefully shaven; thick eyebrows, still black, overhung and shaded his light blue eyes; gold ear-rings reached down to his white-edged military stock; his top-coat, of coarse gray cloth, was confined at the waist by a leathern belt; and a blue foraging cap, with a red tuft falling on his left shoulder, covered his bald head.

Once endowed with the strength of Hercules, and having still the heart of a lion—kind and patient, because he was courageous and strong—Dagobert, notwithstanding his rough exterior, evinced for his orphan charges an exquisite solicitude, a watchful kindness, and a tenderness almost maternal. Yes, motherly; for the heroism of affection dwells alike in the mother's heart and the soldier's.

Stoically calm, and repressing all emotion, the unchangeable coolness of Dagobert never failed him; and, though few were less given to drollery, he was now and then highly comic, by reason of the imperturbable gravity with which he did everything.

From time to time, as they journeyed on, Dagobert would turn to bestow a caress or friendly word on the good white horse upon which the orphans were mounted. Its furrowed sides and long teeth betrayed a venerable age. Two deep scars, one on the flank and the other on the chest, proved that his horse had been present in hot battles; nor was it without an act of pride that he sometimes shook his old military bridle, the brass stud of which was still adorned with an embossed eagle. His pace was regular, careful, and steady; his coat sleek, and his bulk moderate; the abundant foam, which covered his bit, bore witness to that health which horses acquire by the constant, but not excessive, labor of a long journey, performed by short stages. Although he had been more than six months on the road, this excellent animal carried the orphans, with a tolerably heavy pormanteau fastened to the saddle, as freely as on the day they started.

If we have spoken of the excessive length of the horse's teeth—the unquestionable evidence of great age—it is chiefly because he often displayed them, for the sole purpose of acting up to his name (he was called *Jovial*), by playing a mischievous trick, of which the dog was the victim.

This latter, who, doubtless for the sake of contrast, was called Spoil-sport (*Rabat-joie*), being always at his master's heels, found himself within the reach of Jovial, who from time to time nipped him delicately by the nape of the neck, lifted him from the ground, and carried him thus for a moment. The dog, protected by his thick coat, and no doubt long accustomed to the practical jokes of his companion, submitted to all this with stoical complacency; save that, when he thought the jest had lasted long enough, he would turn his head and growl. Jovial understood him at the first hint, and hastened to set him down again. At other times, just to avoid monotony, Jovial would gently bite the knapsack of the soldier, who seemed, as well as the dog, to be perfectly accustomed to his pleasantries.

These details will give a notion of the excellent understanding that existed between the twin sisters, the old soldier, the horse, and the dog.

The little caravan proceeded on its way, anxious to reach, before night, the village of Mockern, which was now visible on the summit of a hill. Ever and anon, Dagobert looked around him, and seemed to be gathering up old recollections; by degrees, his countenance became clouded, and when he was at a little distance from the mill, the noise of which had arrested his attention, he stopped, and drew his

long moustache several times between his finger and thumb, the only sign which revealed in him any strong and concentrated feeling.

Jovial, having stopped short behind his master, Blanche, awaked suddenly by the shock, raised her head; her first look sought her sister, on whom she smiled sweetly; then both exchanged glances of surprise, on seeing Dagobert motionless, with his hands clasped and resting on his long staff, apparently affected by some painful and deep emotion.

The orphans just chanced to be at the foot of a little mound, the summit of which was buried in the thick foliage of a huge oak, planted half way down the slope. Perceiving that Dagobert continued motionless and absorbed in thought, Rose leaned over her saddle, and, placing her little white hand on the shoulder of their guide, whose back was turned towards her, said to him, in a soft voice, "Whatever is the matter with you, Dagobert?"

The veteran turned; to the great astonishment of the sisters, they perceived a large tear, which traced its humid furrow down his tanned cheek, and lost itself in his thick moustache.

"You weeping—*you!*" cried Rose and Blanche together, deeply moved. "Tell us, we beseech, what is the matter?"

After a moment's hesitation, the soldier brushed his horny hand across his eyes, and said to the orphans in a faltering voice, whilst he pointed to the old oak beside them: "I shall make you sad, my poor children: and yet what I'm going to tell you has something sacred in it. Well, eighteen years ago, on the eve of the great battle of Leipsic, I carried your father to this very tree. He had two sabre-cuts on the head, a musket-ball in his shoulder; and it was here that he and I—who had got two thrusts of a lance for my share—were taken prisoners; and by whom, worse luck?—why, a renegade! By a Frenchman—an *emigrant* marquis, then colonel in the service of Russia—and who afterwards—but one day you shall know all."

The veteran paused; then, pointing with his staff to the village of Mockern, he added: "Yes, yes, I can recognize the spot. Yonder are the heights where your brave father—who commanded us and the Poles of the Guard—overthrew the Russian Cuirassiers, after having carried the battery. Ah, my children!" continued the soldier, with the utmost simplicity, "I wish you had seen your brave father, at the head of our brigade of horse, rushing on in a desperate charge in the thick of a shower of shells!—there was nothing like it—not a soul so grand as he!"

Whilst Dagobert thus expressed, in his own way, his regrets and recollections, the two orphans—by a spontaneous movement, glided gently from the horse, and holding each other by the hand, went together to kneel at the foot of the old oak. And there, closely pressed in each other's arms, they began to weep; whilst the soldier, standing behind them, with his hands crossed on his long staff, rested his bald front upon it.

"Come, come, you must not fret," said he softly, when, after a pause of a few minutes, he saw tears run down the blooming cheeks of Rose and Blanche, still on their knees. "Perhaps we may find General Simon in Paris," added he; "I will explain all that to you this evening at the inn. I purposely waited for this day, to tell you many things about your father; it was an idea of mine, because this day is a sort of anniversary."

"We weep because we think also of our mother," said Rose.

"Of our mother, whom we shall only see again in heaven," added Blanche.

The soldier raised the orphans, took each by the hand, and gazing from one to the other with ineffable affection, rendered still the more touching by the contrast of his rude features, "You must not give way thus, my children," said he; "it is true your mother was the best of women. When she lived in Poland, they called her the *Pearl of Warsaw*—it ought to have been the Pearl of the Whole World—for in the whole world you could not have found her match. No—no!"

The voice of Dagobert faltered; he paused, and drew his long gray moustache between finger and thumb, as was his habit. "Listen, my girls," he resumed, when he had mastered his emotion; "your mother could give you none but the best advice, eh?"

"Yes, Dagobert."

"Well, what instructions did she give you before she died? To think often of her, but without grieving?"

"It is true; she told us that our Father in heaven, always good to poor mothers whose children are left on earth, would permit her to hear us from above," said Blanche.

"And that her eyes would be ever fixed upon us," added Rose.

And the two, by a spontaneous impulse, replete with the most touching grace, joined hands, raised their innocent looks to heaven, and exclaimed, with that beautiful faith natural to their age: "Is it not so, mother?—thou seest us?—thou hearest us?"

"Since your mother sees and hears you," said Dagobert, much moved, "do not grieve her by fretting. She forbade you to do so."

"You are right, Dagobert. We will not cry any more."
—And the orphans dried their eyes.

Dagobert, in the opinion of the devout, would have passed for a very heathen. In Spain, he had found pleasure in cutting down those monks of all orders and colors, who, bearing crucifix in one hand, and poniard in the other, fought *not* for liberty—the Inquisition had strangled *her* centuries ago—but for their monstrous privileges. Yet, in forty years, Dagobert had witnessed so many sublime and awful scenes—he had been so many times face to face with death—that the instinct of *natural religion*, common to every simple, honest heart, had always remained uppermost in his soul. Therefore, though he did not share in the consoling faith of the two sisters, he would have held as criminal any attempt to weaken its influence.

Seeing them less downcast, he thus resumed: "That's right, my pretty ones: I prefer to hear you chat as you did this morning and yesterday—laughing at times, and answering me when I speak, instead of being so much engrossed with your own talk. Yes, yes, my little ladies! you seem to have had famous secrets together these last two days—so much the better, if it amuses you."

The sisters colored, and exchanged a subdued smile, which contrasted with the tears that yet filled their eyes, and Rose said to the soldier, with a little embarrassment. "No, I assure you, Dagobert, we talk of nothing in particular."

"Well, well, I don't wish to know it. Come, rest yourselves, a few moments more, and then we must start again; for it grows late, and we have to reach Mockern before night, so that we may be early on the road to-morrow."

"Have we still a long, long way to go?" asked Rose.

"What, to reach Paris? Yes, my children; some hundred days' march. We don't travel quick, but we get on; and we travel cheap, because we have a light purse. A closet for you, a straw mattress and a blanket at your door for me, with Spoil-sport on my feet, and a clean litter for old Jovial, these are our whole travelling expenses. I say nothing about food, because you two together don't eat more than a mouse, and I have learnt in Egypt and Spain to be hungry only when it suits."

"Not forgetting that, to save still more, you do all the cooking for us, and will not even let us assist."

"And to think, good Dagobert, that you wash almost

every evening at our resting-place. As if it were not for us to——”

“You!” said the soldier, interrupting Blanche, “I allow you to chap your pretty little hands in soap-suds! Pooh! don’t a soldier on a campaign always wash his own linen? Clumsy as you see me, I was the best washerwoman in my squadron—and what a hand at ironing! Not to make a brag of it.”

“Yes, yes—you can iron well—very well.”

“Only sometimes, there will be a little singe,” said Rose, smiling.

“Hah! when the iron is too hot. Zounds! I may bring it as near my cheek as I please; my skin is so tough that I don’t feel the heat,” said Dagobert, with imperturbable gravity.

“We are only jesting, good Dagobert.”

“Then, children, if you think that I know my trade as a washerwoman, let me continue to have your custom: it is cheaper; and, on a journey, poor people like us should save where we can, for we must, at all events, keep enough to reach Paris. Once there, our papers and the medal you wear will do the rest—I hope so, at least.”

“This medal is sacred to us; mother gave it to us on her death-bed.”

“Therefore, take great care that you do not lose it: see, from time to time, that you have it safe.”

“Here it is,” said Blanche, as she drew from her bosom a small bronze medal, which she wore suspended from her neck by a chain of the same material. The medal bore on its faces the following inscriptions:

VICTIM
of
L. C. D. J.
Pray for me!
—
PARIS,
February the 13th, 1682.

AT PARIS,
Rue Saint François, No. 3,
In a century and a half
you will be.
February the 13th, 1832.
—
PRAY FOR ME!

“What does it mean, Dagobert?” resumed Blanche, as she examined the mournful inscriptions. “Mother was not able to tell us.”

“We will discuss all that this evening, at the place where we sleep,” answered Dagobert. “It grows late: let us be moving. Put up the medal carefully, and away!—We have yet nearly an hour’s march to arrive at quarters. Come, my poor pets, once more look at the mound where your brave father fell—and then—to horse! to horse!”

The orphans gave a last pious glance at the spot which had recalled to their guide such painful recollections, and, with his aid, remounted Jovial.

This venerable animal had not for one moment dreamed of moving; but, with the consummate forethought of a veteran, he had made the best use of his time, by taking from that foreign soil a large contribution of green and tender grass, before the somewhat envious eyes of Spoil-sport, who had comfortably established himself in the meadow, with his snout protruding between his fore-paws. On the signal of departure, the dog resumed his post behind his master, and Dagobert, trying the ground with the end of his long staff, led the horse carefully along by the bridle, for the meadow was growing more and more marshy; indeed, after advancing a few steps, he was obliged to turn off to the left, in order to regain the high-road.

On reaching Mockern, Dagobert asked for the least expensive inn, and was told there was only one in the village—the White Falcon.

“Let us go then to the White Falcon,” observed the soldier.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARRIVAL.

ALREADY had Morok several times opened with impatience the window-shutters of the loft, to look out upon the inn-yard, watching for the arrival of the orphans and the soldier. Not seeing them, he began once more to walk slowly up and down, with his head bent forward, and his arms folded on his bosom, meditating on the best means to carry out the plan he had conceived. The ideas which possessed his mind, were, doubtless, of a painful character, for his countenance grew even more gloomy than usual.

Notwithstanding his ferocious appearance, he was by no means deficient in intelligence. The courage displayed in his taming exercises (which he gravely attributed to his recent conversion), a solemn and mystical style of speech, and a hypocritical affectation of austerity, had given him a species of influence over the people he visited in his travels. Long before his conversion, as may well be supposed, Morok had been familiar with the habits of wild beasts. In fact, born in the north of Siberia, he had been, from his boyhood, one of the boldest hunters of bears and reindeer; later, in

1810, he had abandoned this profession, to serve as guide to a Russian engineer, who was charged with an exploring expedition to the Polar regions. He afterwards followed him to St. Petersburg, and there, after some vicissitudes of fortune, Morok became one of the imperial couriers—those iron *automata*, that the least caprice of the despot hurls in a frail sledge through the immensity of the empire, from Persia to the Frozen Sea. For these men, who travel night and day, with the rapidity of lightning there are neither seasons nor obstacles, fatigues nor dangers; living projectiles, they must either be broken to pieces, or reach the intended mark. One may conceive the boldness, the vigor, and the resignation, of men accustomed to such a life.

It is useless to relate here, by what series of singular circumstances Morok was induced to exchange this rough pursuit for another profession, and at last to enter, as catechumen, a religious house at Friburg; after which, being duly and properly converted, he began his nomadic excursions, with his menagerie of unknown origin.

* * * * *

Morok continued to walk up and down the loft. Night had come. The three persons whose arrival he so impatiently expected had not yet made their appearance. His walk became more and more nervous and irregular.

On a sudden he stopped abruptly, leaned his head towards the window, and listened. His ear was quick as a savage's.

"They are here!" he exclaimed, and his fox-like eye shone with diabolic joy. He had caught the sound of footsteps—a man's and a horse's. Hastening to the window-shutter of the loft, he opened it cautiously, and saw the two young girls on horseback, and the old soldier who served them as a guide, enter the inn-yard together.

The night had set in, dark and cloudy; a high wind made the lights flicker in the lanterns which were used to receive the new guests. But the description given to Morok had been so exact, that it was impossible to mistake them. Sure of his prey, he closed the window.

Having remained in meditation for another quarter of an hour—for the purpose, no doubt, of thoroughly digesting his projects—he leaned over the aperture from which projected the ladder, and called, "Goliath!"

"Master!" replied a hoarse voice.

"Come up to me."

"Here I am—just come from the slaughter-house with the meat."

The steps of the ladder creaked as an enormous head appeared on a level with the floor. The new-comer, who was more than six feet high, and gifted with herculean proportions, had been well-named Goliath. He was hideous. His squinting eyes were deep set beneath a low and projecting forehead; his reddish hair and beard, thick and coarse as horse-hair, gave his features a stamp of bestial ferocity; between his broad jaws, armed with teeth which resembled fangs, he held by one corner a piece of raw beef weighing ten or twelve pounds, finding it, no doubt, easier to carry in that fashion, whilst he used his hands to ascend the ladder, which bent beneath his weight.

At length the whole of this tall and huge body issued from the aperture. Judging by his bull-neck, the astonishing breadth of his chest and shoulders, and the vast bulk of his arms and legs, this giant need not have feared to wrestle single-handed with a bear. He wore an old pair of blue trousers with red stripes, faced with tanned sheep's-skin, and a vest, or rather cuirass, of thick leather, which was here and there slashed by the sharp claws of the animals.

When he was fairly on the floor, Goliath unclasped his fangs, opened his mouth, and let fall the great piece of beef, licking his blood-stained lips with greediness. Like many other mountebanks, this species of monster had begun by eating raw meat at the fairs for the amusement of the public. Thence having gradually acquired a taste for this barbarous food, and uniting pleasure with profit, he engaged himself to perform the prelude to the exercises of Morok, by devouring, in the presence of the crowd, several pounds of raw flesh.

"My share and Death's are below stairs, and here are those of Cain and Judas," said Goliath, pointing to the chunk of beef. "Where is the cleaver, that I may cut it in two?—No preference here—beast or man—every gullet must have its own."

Then, rolling up one of the sleeves of his vest, he exhibited a fore-arm hairy as skin of a wolf, and knotted with veins as large as one's thumb.

"I say, master, where's the cleaver?" He again began, as he cast round his eyes in search of that instrument. But instead of replying to this inquiry, the Prophet put many questions to his disciple.

"Were you below when just now some new travellers arrived at the inn?"

"Yes, master; I was coming from the slaughter-house."

"Who are these travellers?"

"Two young lasses mounted on a white horse, and an old fellow with a big moustache. But the cleaver?—my beasts are hungry and so am I—the cleaver!"

"Do you know where they have lodged these travellers?"

"The host took them to the far end of the court-yard."

"The building which overlooks the fields?"

"Yes, master—but the cleaver——" A burst of frightful roaring shook the loft, and interrupted Goliath.

"Hark to them!" he exclaimed; "hunger has driven the beasts wild. If I could roar, I should do as they do. I have never seen Judas and Cain as they are to-night; they leap in their cages as if they'd knock all to pieces. As for Death, her eyes shine more than usual like candles—poor Death!"

"So these girls are lodged in the building at the end of the court-yard," resumed Morok, without attending to the observations of Goliath.

"Yes, yes—but in the devil's name, where is the cleaver? Since Karl went away I have to do all the work, and that makes our meals very late."

"Did the old man remain with the young girls?" asked Morok.

Goliath amazed that, notwithstanding his importunities, his master should still appear to neglect the animals' supper, regarded the Prophet with an increase of stupid astonishment.

"Answer, you brute!"

"If I am a brute, I have a brute's strength," said Goliath, in a surly tone, "and brute against brute, I have not always come the worst off."

"I ask if the old man remained with the girls," repeated Morok.

"Well, then—no!" returned the giant. "The old man, after leading his horse to the stable, asked for a tub and some water, took his stand under the porch—and there—by the light of a lantern—he is washing out clothes. A man with a gray moustache!—paddling in soap-suds like a washer-woman—it's as if I were to feed canaries!" added Goliath, shrugging his shoulders with disdain. "But now I've answered you, master, let me attend to the beasts' supper"—and, looking round for something, he added, "where is the cleaver?"

After a moment of thoughtful silence, the Prophet said to Goliath, "You will give no food to the beasts this evening."

At first the giant could not understand these words, the idea was so incomprehensible to him.

"What is your pleasure, master?" said he.

"I forbid you to give any food to the beasts this evening."

Goliath did not answer, but he opened wide his squinting eyes, folded his hands, and drew back a couple of steps.

"Well, dost hear me?" said Morok, with impatience. "Is it plain enough?"

"Not feed? when our meat is there, and supper is already three hours after time!" cried Goliath, with ever-increasing amazement.

"Obey, and hold your tongue."

"You must wish something bad to happen this evening. Hunger makes the beasts furious—and me also."

"So much the better!"

"It'll drive 'em mad."

"So much the better!"

"How, so much the better?—But——"

"It is enough!"

"But, devil take me, I am as hungry as the beasts!"

"Eat then—who prevents it? Your supper is ready, as you devour it raw."

"I never eat without my beasts, nor they without me."

"I tell you again, that, if you dare give any food to the beasts—I will turn you away."

Goliath uttered a low growl as hoarse as a bear's, and looked at the Prophet with a mixture of anger and stupefaction.

Morok, having given his orders, walked up and down the loft, appearing to reflect. Then, addressing himself to Goliath, who was still plunged in deep perplexity, he said to him:

"Do you remember the burgomaster's, where I went to get my passport signed?—to-day his wife bought some books and a chaplet."

"Yes," answered the giant shortly.

"Go and ask his servant if I may be sure to find the burgomaster early to-morrow morning."

"What for?"

"I may, perhaps, have something important to communicate; at all events, say that I beg him not to leave home without seeing me."

"Good! but may I not feed the beasts before I go to the burgomaster's?—only the panther, who is most hungry? Come, master; only poor Death? just a little morsel to satisfy her; Cain and I and Judas can wait."

"It is the panther, above all, that I forbid you to feed. Yes, her, above all the rest."

"By the horns of the devil!" cried Goliath, "what is the matter with you to-day? I can make nothing of it. It is a pity that Karl's not here; he, being cunning, would help me to understand why you prevent the beasts from eating when they are hungry."

"You have no need to understand it."

"Will not Karl soon come back?"

"He has already come back."

"Where is he, then?"

"Off again."

"What can be going on here? There is something in the wind. Karl goes, and returns, and goes again, and——"

"We are not talking of Karl, but of you; though hungry as a wolf you are cunning as a fox, and, when it suits you, as cunning as Karl." And, changing on the sudden his tone and manner, Morok slapped the giant cordially on the shoulder.

"What! am I cunning?"

"The proof is, that there are ten florins to earn to-night—and you will be keen enough to earn them, I am sure."

"Why, on those terms, yes—I am awake," said the giant, smiling with a stupid, self-satisfied air. "What must I do for ten florins?"

"You shall see."

"Is it hard work?"

"You shall see. Begin by going to the burgomaster's—but first light the fire in that stove." He pointed to it with his finger.

"Yes, master," said Goliath, somewhat consoled for the delay of his supper by the hope of gaining ten florins.

"Put that iron bar in the stove," added the Prophet, "to make it red-hot."

"Yes, master."

"You will leave it there; go to the burgomaster's, and return here to wait for me."

"Yes, master."

"You will keep the fire up in the stove."

"Yes, master."

Morok took a step away, but, recollecting himself, he resumed: "You say the old man is busy washing under the porch?"

"Yes, master."

"Forget nothing: the iron bar in the fire—the burgomaster—and return here to wait my orders." So saying, Morok descended by the trap-door and disappeared.

CHAPTER IV.

MOROK AND DAGOBERT.

GOLIATH had not been mistaken, for Dagobert was washing with that imperturbable gravity with which he did everything else.

When we remember the habits of a soldier-a-field, we need not be astonished at this apparent eccentricity. Dagobert only thought of sparing the scanty purse of the orphans, and of saving them all care and trouble; so every evening when they came to a halt he devoted himself to all sorts of feminine occupations. But he was not now serving his apprenticeship in these matters; many times, during his campaigns, he had industriously repaired the damage and disorder which a day of battle always brings to the garments of the soldier; for it is not enough to receive a sabre-cut—the soldier has also to mend his uniform; for the stroke which grazes the skin makes likewise a corresponding fissure in the cloth.

Therefore, in the evening or on the morrow of a hard-fought engagement, you will see the best soldiers (always distinguished by their fine military appearance) take from their cartridge-box or knapsack a housewife, furnished with needles, thread, scissors, buttons, and other such gear, and apply themselves to all kinds of mending and darning, with a zeal that the most industrious workwoman might envy.

We could not find a better opportunity to explain the name of Dagobert, given to Francis Baudoin (the guide of the orphans) at a time when he was considered one of the handsomest and bravest horse-grenadiers of the Imperial Guard.

They had been fighting hard all day, without any decisive advantage. In the evening, the company to which our hero belonged was sent as outliers to occupy the ruins of a deserted village. Videttes being posted, half the troopers remained in saddle, whilst the others, having picketed their horses, were able to take a little rest. Our hero had charged valiantly that day without receiving any wound—for he counted as a mere memento the deep scratch on his thigh, which a kaiserlitz had inflicted in awkwardly attempting an upward thrust with the bayonet.

"You donkey! my new breeches!" the grenadier had exclaimed, when he saw the wide yawning rent, which he instantly avenged by running the Austrian through with a thrust scientifically administered. For if he showed a stoical indifference on the subject of injury to his skin, it was not so with regard to the ripping up of his best parade uniform.

He undertook, therefore, the same evening, at the bivouac, to repair this accident. Selecting his best needle and thread from the stores of his housewife, and arming his finger with a thimble, he began to play the tailor by the light of the watch-fire, having first drawn off his cavalry-boots, and also (if it must be confessed) the injured garment itself, which he turned the wrong side out the better to conceal the stitches.

This partial undress was certainly a breach of discipline: but the captain, as he went his round, could not forbear laughing at the sight of the veteran soldier, who, gravely seated, in a squatting position, with his grenadier cap on, his regimental coat on his back, his boots by his side, and his galligaskins in his lap, was sewing with all the coolness of a tailor upon his own shop-board.

Suddenly, a musket-shot is heard, and the videttes fall back upon the detachment, calling to arms. "To horse!" cries the captain, in a voice of thunder.

In a moment, the troopers are in their saddles, the unfortunate clothes-mender having to lead the first rank: there is no time to turn the unlucky garment, so he slips it on, as well as he can, wrong side out, and leaps upon his horse, without even stopping to put on his boots.

A party of Cossacks, profiting by the cover of a neighboring wood, had attempted to surprise the detachment: the fight was bloody, and our hero foamed with rage, for he set much value on his equipments, and the day had been fatal to him. Thinking of his torn clothes and lost boots, he hacked away with more fury than ever; a bright moon illumined the scene of action, and his comrades were able to appreciate the brilliant valor of our grenadier, who killed two Cossacks, and took an officer prisoner, with his own hand.

After this skirmish, in which the detachment had maintained its position, the captain drew up his men to compliment them on their success, and ordered the clothes-mender to advance from the ranks, that he might thank him publicly for his gallant behavior. Our hero could have dispensed with this ovation, but he was not the less obliged to obey.

Judge of the surprise of both captain and troopers, when they saw this tall and stern-looking figure ride forward at a slow pace, with his naked feet in the stirrups, and naked legs pressing the sides of his charger.

The captain drew near in astonishment; but recalling the occupation of the soldier at the moment when the alarm was given, he understood the whole mystery. "Ha, my old comrade!" he exclaimed, "thou art like King Dagobert—wearing thy breeches inside out."

In spite of discipline, this joke of the captain's was received with peals of ill-repressed laughter. But our friend, sitting upright in his saddle, with his left thumb pressing the well-adjusted reins, and his sword-hilt carried close to his right thigh, made a half-wheel, and returned to his place in the ranks without changing countenance, after he had duly received the congratulations of his captain. From that day, Francis Beaudoin received and kept the nickname of Dagobert.

Now Dagobert was under the porch of the inn, occupied in washing, to the great amazement of sundry beer-drinkers, who observed him with curious eyes from the large common room in which they were assembled.

In truth, it was a curious spectacle. Dagobert had laid aside his gray top-coat, and rolled up the sleeves of his shirt; with a vigorous hand, and good supply of soap, he was rubbing away at a wet handkerchief, spread out on the board, the end of which rested in a tub full of water. Upon his right arm, tattooed with warlike emblems in red and blue colors, two scars, deep enough to admit the finger, were distinctly visible. No wonder then, that, while smoking their pipes, and emptying their pots of beer, the Germans should display some surprise at the singular occupation of this tall, moustached, bald-headed old man, with the forbidding countenance—for the features of Dagobert assumed a harsh and grim expression, when he was no longer in presence of the two girls.

The sustained attention, of which he saw himself the object, began to put him out of patience, for his employment appeared to him quite natural. At this moment, the Prophet entered the porch, and, perceiving the soldier, eyed him attentively for several seconds; then approaching, he said to him in French, in a rather sly tone: "It would seem, comrade, that you have not much confidence in the washerwomen of Mockern?"

Dagobert, without discontinuing his work, half turned

his head with a frown, looked askant at the Prophet, and made him no answer.

Astonished at this silence, Morok resumed: "If I do not deceive myself, you are French, my fine fellow. The words on your arm prove it, and your military air stamps you as an old soldier of the Empire. Therefore I find, that, for a hero, you have taken rather late to wear petticoats."

Dagobert remained mute, but he gnawed his moustache, and plied the soap, with which he was rubbing the linen, in a most hurried, not to say angry style; for the face and words of the beast-tamer displeased him more than he cared to show. Far from being discouraged, the Prophet continued: "I am sure, my fine fellow, that you are neither deaf nor dumb; why, then, will you not answer me?"

Losing all patience, Dagobert turned abruptly round, looked Morok full in the face, and said to him in a rough voice: "I don't know you: I don't wish to know you! Chain up your curb!" And he betook himself again to his washing.

"But we may make acquaintance. We can drink a glass of Rhine-wine together, and talk of our campaigns. I also have seen some service, I assure you; and that, perhaps, will induce you to be more civil."

The veins on the bald forehead of Dagobert swelled perceptibly; he saw in the look and accent of the man, who thus obstinately addressed him, something designedly provoking; still he contained himself.

"I ask you, why should you not drink a glass of wine with me—we could talk about France. I lived there a long time; it is a fine country; and when I meet Frenchmen abroad, I feel sociable—particularly when they know how to use the soap as well as you do. If I had a housewife I'd send her to your school."

The sarcastic meaning was no longer disguised; impudence and bravado were legible in the Prophet's looks. Thinking that, with such an adversary, the dispute might become serious, Dagobert, who wished to avoid a quarrel at any price, carried off his tub to the other end of the porch, hoping thus to put an end to the scene which was a sore trial of his temper. A flash of joy lighted up the tawny eyes of the brute-tamer. The white circle which surrounded the pupil seemed to dilate. He ran his crooked fingers two or three times through his yellow beard, in token of satisfaction; then he advanced slowly towards the soldier, accompanied by several idlers from the common-room.

Notwithstanding his coolness, Dagobert, amazed and incensed at the impudent pertinacity of the Prophet, was at first disposed to break the washing-board on his head but, remembering the orphans, he thought better of it.

Folding his arms upon his breast, Morok said to him, in a dry and insolent tone: "It is very certain you are not civil, my man of suds!" Then, turning to the spectators, he continued in German: "I tell this Frenchman, with his long moustache, that he is not civil. We shall see what answer he'll make. Perhaps it will be necessary to give him a lesson. Heaven preserve me from quarrels!" he added, with mock compunction; "but the Lord has enlightened me—I am his creature, and I ought to make his work respected."

The mystical effrontery of this peroration was quite to the taste of the idlers; the fame of the Prophet had reached Mockern, and, as a performance was expected on the morrow, this prelude much amused the company. On hearing the insults of his adversary, Dagobert could not help saying in the German language: "I know German. Speak in German—the rest will understand you."

New spectators now arrived, and joined the first comers; the adventure had become exciting, and a ring was formed around the two persons most concerned.

The Prophet resumed in German: "I said that you were not civil, and I now say you are grossly rude. What do you answer to that?"

"Nothing!" said Dagobert, coldly, as he proceeded to rinse out another piece of linen.

"Nothing!" returned Morok; "that is very little. I will be less brief, and tell you, that, when an honest man offers a glass of wine civilly to a stranger, that stranger has no right to answer with insolence, and deserves to be taught manners if he does so."

Great drops of sweat ran down Dagobert's forehead and cheeks; his large imperial was incessantly agitated by nervous trembling—but he restrained himself. Taking, by two of the corners, the handkerchief which he had just dipped in the water, he shook it, wrung it, and began to hum to himself the burden of the old camp ditty:

"Out of Tirlemont's flea-haunted den,
We ride forth next day of the sen,
With sabre in hand, ah!
Good-bye to Amanda," etc.

The silence to which Dagobert had condemned himself, almost choked him; this song afforded him some relief.

Morok, turning towards the spectators, said to them, with an air of hypocritical restraint: "We knew that the soldiers of Napoleon were pagans, who stabled their horses in churches, and offended the Lord a hundred times a day, and who, for their sins, were justly drowned in the Beresino, like so many Pharaohs; but we did not know that the Lord, to punish these miscreants, had deprived them of courage—their single gift. Here is a man, who has insulted, in me, a creature favored by divine grace, and who affects not to understand that I require an apology; or else——"

"What?" said Dagobert, without looking at the Prophet.

"Or you must give me satisfaction!—I have already told you that I have seen service. We shall easily find somewhere a couple of swords, and to-morrow morning, at peep of day, we can meet behind a wall, and show the color of our blood—that is, if you have any in your veins!"

This challenge began to frighten the spectators, who were not prepared for so tragical a conclusion.

"What, fight?—a very fine idea!" said one. "To get yourselves both locked up in prison: the laws against duelling are strict."

"Particularly with relation to strangers or nondescripts," added another. "If they were to find you with arms in your hands, the burgomaster would shut you up in jail, and keep you there two or three months before trial."

"Would you be so mean as to denounce us?" asked Morok.

"No, certainly not," cried several; "do as you like. We are only giving you a friendly piece of advice, by which you may profit, if you think fit."

"What care I for prison?" exclaimed the Prophet. "Only give me a couple of swords, and you shall see to-morrow morning if I heed what the burgomaster can do or say."

"What would you do with two swords?" asked Dagobert, quietly.

"When you have one in your grasp, and I one in mine, you'd see. The Lord commands us to have a care of his honor!"

Dagobert shrugged his shoulders, made a bundle of his linen in his handkerchief, dried his soap, and put it carefully into a little oil-silk bag—then, whistling his favorite air of Tirlemont, moved to depart.

The Prophet frowned; he began to fear that his challenge would not be accepted. He advanced a step or so to encounter Dagobert, placed himself before him, as if to inter-

cept his passage, and, folding his arms, and scanning him from head to foot with bitter insolence, said to him: "So! an old soldier of that arch-robber, Napoleon, is only fit for a washerwoman, and refuses to fight!"

"Yes, he refuses to fight," answered Dagobert, in a firm voice, but becoming fearfully pale. Never, perhaps, had the soldier given to his orphan charge such a proof of tenderness and devotion. For a man of his character to let himself be insulted with impunity, and refuse to fight—the sacrifice was immense!

"So you are a coward—you are afraid of me—and you confess it?"

At these words Dagobert made, as it were, a pull upon himself—as if a sudden thought had restrained him the moment he was about to rush on the Prophet. Indeed, he had remembered the two maidens, and the fatal hindrance which a duel, whatever might be the result, would occasion to their journey. But the impulse of anger, though rapid, had been so significant—the expression of the stern, pale face, bathed in sweat, was so daunting, that the Prophet and the spectators drew back a step.

Profound silence reigned for some seconds, and then, by a sudden reaction, Dagobert seemed to have gained the general interest. One of the company said to those near him: "This man is clearly not a coward."

"Oh, no! certainly not."

"It sometimes requires more courage to refuse a challenge than to accept one."

"After all, the Prophet was wrong to pick a quarrel about nothing—and with a stranger, too."

"Yes, for a stranger, if he fought and was taken up, would have a good long imprisonment."

"And then, you see," added another, "he travels with two young girls. In such a position, ought a man to fight about trifles? If he should be killed or put in prison, what would become of them, poor children?"

Dagobert turned towards the person who had pronounced these last words. He saw a stout fellow, with a frank and simple countenance; the soldier offered him his hand, and said with emotion:

"Thank you, sir."

The German shook cordially the hand which Dagobert had proffered, and, holding it still in his own, he added: "Do one thing, sir—share a bowl of punch with us. We will make that mischief-making Prophet acknowledge

that he has been too touchy, and he shall drink to your health."

Up to this moment the brute-tamer, enraged at the issue of this scene, for he had hoped that the soldier would accept his challenge, looked on with savage contempt at those who had thus sided against him. But now his features gradually relaxed; and, believing it useful to his projects to hide his disappointment, he walked up to the soldier, and said to him, with a tolerably good grace: "Well, I give way to these gentlemen. I own I was wrong. Your frigid air had wounded me, and I was not master of myself. I repeat, that I was wrong," he added, with suppressed vexation; "the Lord commands humility—and—I beg your pardon."

This proof of moderation and regret was highly appreciated and loudly applauded by the spectators. "He asks your pardon; you cannot expect more, my brave fellow?" said one of them, addressing Dagobert. "Come, let us all drink together; we make you this offer frankly—accept it in the same spirit."

"Yes, yes; accept it, we beg you, in the name of your pretty little girls," said the stout man, hoping to decide Dagobert by this argument.

"Many thanks, gentlemen," replied he, touched by the hearty advances of the Germans; "you are very worthy people. But, when one is treated, he must offer drink in return."

"Well, we will accept it—that's understood. Each his turn, and all fair. We will pay for the first bowl, you for the second."

"Poverty is no crime," answered Dagobert; "and I must tell you honestly that I cannot afford to pay for drink. We have still a long journey to go, and I must not incur any useless expenses."

The soldier spoke these words with such firm, but simple dignity, that the Germans did not venture to renew their offer, feeling that a man of Dagobert's character could not accept it without humiliation.

"Well, so much the worse," said the stout man. "I should have liked to clink glasses with you. Good-night, my brave trooper!—good-night—for it grows late, and mine host of the Falcon will soon turn us out of doors."

"Good-night, gentlemen," replied Dagobert, as he directed his steps towards the stable, to give his horse a second allowance of provender.

Morok approached him, and said in a voice even more

humble than before: "I have acknowledged my error, and asked your pardon. You have not answered me; do you still bear malice?"

"If ever I meet you," said the veteran, in a suppressed and hollow tone, "when my children have no longer need of me, I will just say two words to you, and they will not be long ones."

Then he turned his back abruptly on the Prophet, who walked slowly out of the yard.

The inn of the White Falcon formed a parallelogram. At one end rose the principal dwelling; at the other was a range of buildings which contained sundry chambers, let at a low price to the poorer sort of travellers; a vaulted passage opened a way through this latter into the country; finally, on either side of the court-yard were sheds and stables, with lofts and garrets erected over them.

Dagobert, entering one of these stables, took from off a chest the portion of oats destined for his horse, and, pouring it into a winnowing-basket, shook it as he approached Jovial.

To his great astonishment, his old travelling companion did not respond with a joyous neigh to the rustle of the oats rattling on the wicker-work. Alarmed, he called Jovial with a friendly voice; but the animal, instead of turning towards his master a look of intelligence, and impatiently striking the ground with his fore-feet, remained perfectly motionless.

More and more surprised, the soldier went up to him. By the dubious light of a stable-lantern, he saw the poor animal in an attitude which implied terror—his legs half bent, his head stretched forward, his ears down, his nostrils quivering; he had drawn tight his halter, as if he wished to break it, in order to get away from the partition that supported his rack and manger; abundant cold-sweat had speckled his hide with bluish stains, and his coat altogether looked dull and bristling, instead of standing out sleek and glossy from the dark background of the stable; lastly, from time to time, his body shook with convulsive starts.

"Why, old Jovial!" said the soldier, as he put down the basket, in order to soothe his horse with more freedom, "you are like thy master—afraid!—Yes," he added with bitterness, as he thought of the offence he had himself endured, "you are afraid—though no coward in general."

Notwithstanding the caresses and the voice of his master, the horse continued to give signs of terror; he pulled somewhat less violently at his halter, and approaching his nostrils

to the hand of Dagobert, sniffed audibly, as if he doubted it were he.

"You don't know me!" cried Dagobert. "Something extraordinary must be passing here."

The soldier looked around him with uneasiness. It was a large stable, faintly lighted by the lantern suspended from the roof, which was covered with innumerable cobwebs; at the further end, separated from Jovial by some stalls with bars between, were the three strong, black horses of the brute-tamer—as tranquil as Jovial was frightened.

Dagobert, struck with this singular contrast, of which he was soon to have the explanation, again caressed his horse; and the animal, gradually reassured by his master's presence, licked his hands, rubbed his head against him, uttered a low neigh, and gave him his usual tokens of affection.

"Come, come, this is how I like to see my old Jovial!" said Dagobert, as he took up the winnowing-basket, and poured its contents into the manger. "Now eat with a good appetite, for we have a long day's march to-morrow; and, above all, no more of these foolish fears about nothing! If thy comrade, Spoil-sport, was here, he would keep you in heart; but he is along with the children, and takes care of them in my absence. Come, eat! instead of staring at me in that way."

But the horse, having just touched the oats with his mouth, as if in obedience to his master, returned to them no more, and began to nibble at the sleeve of Dagobert's coat.

"Come, come, my poor Jovial! there is something the matter with you. You have generally such a good appetite, and now you leave your corn. 'Tis the first time this has happened since our departure," said the soldier, who was now growing seriously uneasy, for the issue of his journey greatly depended on the health and vigor of his horse.

Just then a frightful roaring, so near that it seemed to come from the stable in which they were, gave so violent a shock to Jovial, that with one effort he broke his halter, leaped over the bar that marked his place, and, rushing at the open door, escaped into the court-yard.

Dagobert had himself started at the suddenness of this wild and fearful sound, which at once explained to him the cause of his horse's terror. The adjoining stable was occupied by the itinerant menagerie of the brute-tamer, and was only separated by the partition which supported the mangers. The three horses of the Prophet, accustomed to these howlings, had remained perfectly quiet.

"Good!" said the soldier, recovering himself; "I understand it now. Jovial has heard another such roar before, and he can scent the animals of that insolent scoundrel. It is enough to frighten him," added he, as he carefully collected the oats from the manger; "once in another stable, and there must be others in this place, he will no longer leave his peck, and we shall be able to start early to-morrow morning."

The terrified horse, after running and galloping about the yard, returned at the voice of the soldier, who easily caught him by the broken halter; and a hostler, whom Dagobert asked if there was another vacant stable, having pointed out one that was only intended for a single animal, Jovial was comfortably installed there.

When delivered from his ferocious neighbors, the horse became tranquil as before, and even amused himself much at the expense of Dagobert's top-coat, which, thanks to his tricks, might have afforded immediate occupation for his master's needle, if the latter had not been fully engaged in admiring the eagerness with which Jovial despatched his provender. Completely reassured on his account, the soldier shut the door of the stable, and proceeded to get his supper as quickly as possible, in order to rejoin the orphans, whom he reproached himself with having left so long.

CHAPTER V.

ROSE AND BLANCHE.

THE orphans occupied a dilapidated chamber in one of the most remote wings of the inn, with a single window opening upon the country. A bed without curtains, a table, and two chairs, composed the more than modest furniture of this retreat, which was now lighted by a lamp. On the table, which stood near the window, was deposited the knapsack of the soldier.

The great Siberian dog, who was lying close to the door, had already twice uttered a deep growl, and turned his head towards the window—but without giving any further effect to this hostile manifestation.

The two sisters, half recumbent in their bed, were clad in long white wrappers, buttoned at the neck and wrists. They wore no caps, but their beautiful chestnut hair was

confined at the temples by a broad piece of tape, so that it might not get tangled during the night. These white garments, and the white fillet that like a halo encircled their brows, gave to their fresh and blooming faces a still more candid expression.

The orphans laughed and chatted, for, in spite of some early sorrows, they still retained the ingenuous gayety of their age. The remembrance of their mother would sometimes make them sad, but this sorrow had in it nothing bitter; it was rather a sweet melancholy, to be sought instead of shunned. For them, this adored mother was not dead—she was only absent.

Almost as ignorant as Dagobert, with regard to devotional exercises, for in the desert where they had lived there was neither church nor priest, their faith, as was already said, consisted in this—that God, just and good, had so much pity for the poor mothers whose children were left on earth, that he allowed them to look down upon them from highest heaven—to see them always, to hear them always, and sometimes to send fair guardian angels to protect them. Thanks to this guileless illusion, the orphans, persuaded that their mother incessantly watched over them, felt, that to do wrong would be to afflict her, and to forfeit the protection of the good angels.—This was the entire theology of Rose and Blanche—a creed sufficient for such pure and loving souls.

Now, on the evening in question, the two sisters chatted together whilst waiting for Dagobert. Their theme interested them much, for, since some days, they had a secret, a great secret, which often quickened the beatings of their innocent hearts, often agitated their budding bosoms, changed to bright scarlet the roses on their cheeks, and infused a restless and dreamy languor into the soft blue of their large eyes.

Rose, this evening, occupied the edge of the couch, with her rounded arms crossed behind her head, which was half turned towards her sister; Blanche, with her elbow resting on the bolster, looked at her smilingly, and said: “Do you think he will come again to-night?”

“Oh, yes! certainly. He promised us yesterday.”

“He is so good, he would not break his promise.”

“And so handsome, with his long fair curls.”

“And his name—what a charming name!—how well it suits his face.”

“And what a sweet smile and soft voice, when he says to

us, taking us by the hand: 'My children, bless God that He has given you one soul. What others seek elsewhere, you will find in yourselves.'

"'Since your two hearts,' he added, 'only make one.'"

"What pleasure to remember his words, sister!"

"We are so attentive! When I see you listening to him, it is as if I saw myself, my dear little mirror!" said Rose, laughing, and kissing her sister's forehead. "Well—when he speaks, your—or rather *our* eyes—are wide, wide open, our lips moving as if we repeated every word after him. It is no wonder we forget nothing that he says."

"And what he says is so grand, so noble, and generous."

"Then, my sister, as he goes on talking, what good thoughts rise within us! If we could but always keep them in mind."

"Do not be afraid! they will remain in our hearts, like little birds in their mother's nests."

"And how lucky it is, Rose, that he loves us both at the same time!"

"He could not do otherwise, since we have but one heart between us."

"How could he love Rose, without loving Blanche?"

"What would have become of the poor, neglected one?"

"And then again he would have found it so difficult to choose."

"We are so much like one another."

"So, to save himself that trouble," said Rose, laughing, "he has chosen us both."

"And is it not the best way? He is alone to love us; we are two together to think of him."

"Only he must not leave us till we reach Paris."

"And in Paris, too—we must see him there also."

"Oh, above all at Paris; it will be good to have him with us—and Dagobert, too—in that great city. Only think, Blanche, how beautiful it must be."

"Paris!—it must be like a city all of gold."

"A city, where every one must be happy, since it is so beautiful."

"But ought we, poor orphans, dare so much as to enter it? How people will look at us!"

"Yes—but every one there is happy, every one must be good also."

"They will love us."

"And, besides, we shall be with our friend with the fair hair and blue eyes."

"He has yet told us nothing of Paris."

"He has not thought of it; we must speak to him about it this very night."

"If he is in the mood for talking. Often, you know, he likes best to gaze on us in silence—his eyes on our eyes."

"Yes. In those moments, his look recalls to me the gaze of our dear mother."

"And, as she sees it all, how pleased she must be at what has happened to us!"

"Because, when we are so much beloved, we must, I hope, deserve it."

"See what a vain thing it is!" said Blanche, smoothing with her slender fingers the parting of the hair on her sister's forehead.

After a moment's reflection, Rose said to her: "Don't you think we should relate all this to Dagobert?"

"If you think so, let us do it."

"We tell him everything, as we told everything to mother. Why should we conceal this from him?"

"Especially as it is something which gives us so much pleasure."

"Do you not find that, since we have known our friend, our hearts beat quicker and stronger?"

"Yes, they seem to be more full."

"The reason why is plain enough; our friend fills up a good space in them."

"Well, we will do best to tell Dagobert what a lucky star ours is."

"You are right——" At this moment the dog gave another deep growl.

"Sister," said Rose, as she pressed closer to Blanche, "there is the dog growling again. What can be the matter with him?"

"Spoil-sport, do not growl! Come hither," said Blanche, striking with her little hand on the side of the bed.

The dog rose, again growled deeply, and came to lay his great, intelligent looking head on the counterpane, still obstinately casting a sidelong glance at the window; the sisters bent over him to pat his broad forehead, in the centre of which was a remarkable bump, the certain sign of extreme purity of race.

"What makes you growl so, Spoil-sport?" said Blanche, pulling him gently by the ears—"eh, my good dog?"

"Poor beast! he is always so uneasy when Dagobert is away."

"It is true; one would think he knows that he then has a double charge over us."

"Sister, it seems to me, Dagobert is late in coming to say good-night."

"No doubt he is attending to Jovial."

"That makes me think that we did not bid good-night to dear old Jovial."

"I am sorry for it."

"Poor beast! he seems so glad when he licks our hands. One would think that he thanked us for our visit."

"Luckily, Dagobert will have wished him good-night for us."

"Good Dagobert! he is always thinking of us. How he spoils us! We remain idle, and he has all the trouble."

"How can we prevent it?"

"What a pity that we are not rich, to give him a little rest."

"We rich! Alas, my sister! we shall never be anything but poor orphans."

"Oh, there's the medal!"

"Doubtless, there is some hope attached to it, else we should not have made this long journey."

"Dagobert has promised to tell us all, this evening."

She was prevented from continuing, for two of the window-panes flew to pieces with a loud crash.

The orphans, with a cry of terror, threw themselves into each other's arms, whilst the dog rushed towards the window, barking furiously.

Pale, trembling, motionless with affright, clasping each other in a close embrace, the two sisters held their breath; in their extreme fear, they durst not even cast their eyes in the direction of the window. The dog, with his forepaws resting on the sill, continued to bark with violence.

"Alas! what can it be?" murmured the orphans. "And Dagobert not here!"

"Hark!" cried Rose, suddenly seizing Blanche by the arm; "hark!—some one coming up the stairs!"

"Good heaven! it does not sound like the tread of Dagobert. Do you not hear what heavy footsteps?"

"Quick! come, Spoil-sport, and defend us!" cried the two sisters at once, in an agony of alarm.

The boards of the wooden staircase really creaked beneath the weight of unusually heavy footsteps, and a singular kind of rustling was heard along the thin partition that divided the chamber from the landing-place. Then a ponderous