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SIBYLLA.

Adapted from the German.

BY

CORNELIA McFADDEN

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Tenderly Inscribed
TO
The memory
OF
A beautiful, little life
C. McF.

NEW YORK, 1888.

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CHAPTER.

SIBYLLA.

I.

"Know that the love of thyself doth hurt thee more than any thing in the world.... Forsake thyself, resign thyself, and thou shalt enjoy much inward peace!"—THOMAS À KEMPIS.

"But I must have him!"

"All right. For my part I shall take care not to run after the bones of a mole!"

These last words were spoken by a tall stripling student, about seventeen years old. His natural and elegant mien evidently did not belong to the precincts of a village schoolmaster—his thoughts still less so. Just now he lay indolently reclining on a bank of verdure, and, after looking around on all sides, stealthily drew from his pocket a book, which bore the label of a free library in an adjacent town.

"Arnold! Arnold! I've got him!" exclaimed the voice which had first spoken, after a brief pause. It belonged to a sixteen-years-old companion who held up to view, triumphantly, a mole, while he repeated with a countenance aglow with enthusiasm: "I've got him!"

"Then you've got a great thing," retorted Arnold, sneeringly; "meanwhile he also has captured his princess," pointing significantly to the book in his hand.

"He had almost escaped me," continued the first speaker; "but I caught him just in the nick of time. See, a splendid mole!"

"A splendid book," snarled Arnold. "This is the third time I have brought it here."

"Won't you see how I dissect the fellow? He is a famous example——"

"Yes; full-blooded, noble English blood! *Pfui!*" he interrupted as he turned to his comrade, who was beginning to cut the creature into sections. "*Pfui!* you slaughterer! When you shall have dissected him, you will discover the miracle of having no heart in your own body."

"But Arnold," Wulf maintained, "I must know how he looks inside."

Arnold shrugged his shoulders contemptuously, when footsteps were heard. The book was suddenly plunged into his pocket, and the reader became apparently absorbed in the contemplation of the mole.

An older man approached the young students. It was Herr Ericksen, the village teacher, at whose house both lads lived. In an earnest tone he said to Arnold: "Have you finished your task?"

The youth replied hesitatingly, "Not altogether," and comprehending a significant glance from the inquirer, he turned away.

The teacher stood still some minutes, gazing at Wulf in his zealous occupation. An expression of pain passed over his kindly face. Then laying his hand on the boy's shoulder, he said: "Leave your mole, Wulf; come, I wish to talk to you."

Wulf was startled by his uncle's unusual gravity.

"What has happened?" he exclaimed.

"Nothing has happened, my child," replied the master; "but what I have to tell you is a difficult duty for me. You know how much I love you; you understood that; as a child you clung to me when I visited your father's house, while your brothers cared little for me, but tumbled about in the boats on the water. You know, too, Wulf, how you always wanted to discover what was inside of every thing, mussel and snail, animal and flower. Other people deplored this love of investigation, and declared it was a pleasure for you to destroy, but your old uncle recognized the thirst for knowledge. Who was the happier, you or I, when your father consented, eventually, for you to come home with me to study, and when you gave fine promise of becoming a physician in time?"

"Yes, uncle, and——"

"But see, my boy," continued the old man; "this may not be, after all."

"Why not?" asked Wulf, warmly.

"Listen quietly to me," said the uncle persuasively; "I will tell you all. Later, when your brothers died I feared the result, but when, before a year had elapsed, your father perished, I felt assured that your mother would call you home. I have remonstrated with her, and argued that you are not fitted for a sailor's life, and that your heart is in your books; but she can not comprehend why an only son should not follow in his father's footsteps without going contrary to the duty he owes his mother. She is an excellent, sensible woman; but such a departure as you propose is wholly incomprehensible to her."

Wulf turned deathly pale and was silent. After a pause he said with emotion:

"Uncle, do you think she is right?"

"Well, from her stand-point," was the reply; "but I am an old school-master, and every one must judge for himself."

"O, uncle, I do not think it is my duty to go there. Shall I, must I go?"

"Yes, you must go; your mother desires it."

"I love my mother dearly, but I think she should give me liberty to choose my calling. Why should that business be continued? If we are not so well off in worldly matters, we certainly have enough to live on."

"But not enough for you to study. A medical course is expensive."

"O," cried Wulf, "I will take care of myself at the university; and can't the servant at home manage every thing there? He is a far more useful man than I am."

"He is old. How many years can he be depended upon?"

"Until I become a doctor and earn money enough for all."

The two continued their conversation a long while. At last the elder so far succeeded in his argument, that the younger recognized his duty to obey his mother, although the conclusion was reached through burning tears, and Wulf could not change the "*I must*" honestly into "I wish."

He gave no further thought to the mole, but went to his room and sat there for a time as one stunned. He could eat no supper. The old school-master's heart was also depressed beyond measure.

Naturally enough, Arnold had learned what had befallen his companion. If it had chanced to be his fate to turn his back upon books and study he would have rejoiced; but the prospect of descending to a low sailor's life—such a change could only be contemplated with pity.

Arnold Von Kahring was the son of a distinguished baron, who resided at Berlin. He was also an only son. But it is to be regretted that in no way did he fulfill his parent's expectations. He was naturally phlegmatic, and haughty from a sense of pride which his mother had early instilled and nourished on account of his position and birth. The baron himself had very little concern about his son.

Arnold had been sent to school; but, in the opinion of his parents, blame of every kind could only be attached to his instructors; hence the schools were frequently changed. All said he had good ability, but he was too indolent to exercise it.

But while he acquired his Latin imperfectly, he was an apt scholar in the temptations of city life, and bad companions were not wanting. This was made apparent to his father and mother upon the occasion of their "young hopeful" being brought home wounded in "an affair of honor."

"Sent to some celebrated educational institute," was the comment of the Kahring's circle of friends, while in reality he was in the country with a good man, who was directed to teach him obedience and the art of labor. In this wise the two youths had come to Herr Ericksen, a man of high intellectual force and culture, such as one is apt to find among village pedagogues, and a man admirably adapted in every way to train and guide growing lads.

In this quiet home Arnold painfully missed the pleasures of Berlin, and often related wonderful things concerning this distant paradise to Wulf, who had never seen a large city. Wulf had sometimes dreamed over these glowing descriptions of joys and pleasures; but he was too happy in his books, animals, and experiments to permit these distant attractions to gain possession of him by useless longings. Besides, what really seemed most desirable in city life to Wulf had no charm for Arnold; and yet he felt that life would have its true beginning for him in the struggles of a metropolis.

And now every thing had become so changed!

Arnold pitied Wulf with all his heart, but Wulf did not care for his compassion. Once having made the decision, he declined to be commiserated, and preferred not to talk on the subject.

"I shall see you in Berlin yet," said Arnold, "with a roll under your arm and a surgical case in your pocket, walking solemnly to a hospital in order to cut up dead men; while I, in the uniform of an ensign, shall be tortured to death by living beings around me."

On the following day Wulf begged his uncle to fix the hour of his departure. "Since I go unwillingly," he said, "who knows whether I shall have the courage to go at all a week hence?"

Herr Ericksen appreciated the lad's conflicting resolution and desire.

"Let it be in the morning, then."

"Good! in the morning," responded Wulf, "early; as soon as it is light, then."

When the old school-master returned home that evening after a short walk, a peculiar odor greeted him.

Wulf stood with glowing face by the little kitchen hearth, which flashed and bubbled and flamed, while fragments of boxes, bottles, and flasks were strewn around.

"Wulf! what in the world are you doing?"

"Away with the stuff!" he exclaimed. "I can not bear to see it any longer."

"What! your books, your collections, your manuscripts?"

"Uncle, I burn my ship behind me."

"Poor child!" and pressing him to his heart, tears stood in old Ericksen's eyes, as he added soothingly: "The Fifth Commandment is often-times very difficult to obey; but it is God's law, and it shall surely be well with thee, for the promise is given, 'Thy days shall be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.'"

The next morning a young man walked away with decisive step, a bundle on his back, his face turned to the north. The birds sang cheerily, but he heard them not. He walked rapidly, as though he would fly from the past, and even from himself.

II.

"Remember that in all things lamenting becomes fools, and action wise folk."—SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

On the evening of this same day the sea lay solemn and calm before the young traveler. Dark clouds hovered over its unstirred depths, which trembled only on the surface, like the first awakening of a slumbering child. Wulf stood with folded arms gazing out upon the vast expanse. The water seemed to loom before him like a brazen wall, which threatened to inclose him irrevocably—the grand, free element suggesting only to his perturbed mind the image of eternal imprisonment.

He was not far distant from his home, and yet he hesitated to take the final footsteps thither. How different his previous returns had been! Then his happy heart had flown in advance of his feet, and he was either at the well-known threshold at a bound, or gliding lightly there to surprise suddenly the inmates, in his boyish merriment.

To day he stood still for a long while. At length, when night began to approach, he summoned all his courage, drew a deep sigh, took a step forward, and was once more in the old home, to begin a new life. The door stood open. Wulf entered the familiar room. An elderly, bustling, healthy woman, in the quaint costume of the country, suddenly arose to meet him. It was Frau Ericksen, Wulf's mother; but she did not recognize her son in the darkening twilight.

"Good evening, mother," said Wulf, extending his hand.

She knew the voice at once. "My son! we were not expecting you to-day."

"But I am here," was the response.

Surprised by his tone, Frau Ericksen lighted a lamp and held it before his face. But it reflected no happy expression. Somewhat alarmed, she stepped backward and asked:

"Wulf, are you ill?"

"No, mother, I am not ill. I have come home because you wished it, but it was a reluctant acquiescence on my part."

The mother was silent. Wulf continued:

"I shall work here and learn the business. Uncle sends you greeting."

"You speak and act like a dead man," said his mother; "but this will pass off, and you will soon be happy."

"Happy!" cried Wulf; "no, mother I shall not be happy. I shall do all that you desire, but happiness can never be enforced."

Frau Ericksen left the room. "He will get over it; he will get accustomed to it in time," she repeated to herself.

Meanwhile Wulf greeted his only sister Karen, a stout, active girl of eighteen summers, whose brother was somewhat of a stranger to her on account of his prolonged absences from home.

Soon after, mother, sister, and brother sat down to supper—three estimable, well-disposed persons, but fundamentally different both in character and temperament—and now united in their labor, thoughts, and life!

The next morning Wulf donned a sailor's suit and began his work. There was very little conversation in the home-circle. The mother and Karen were naturally quiet, and Wulf was not disposed to talk. Concerning that which occupied his mind and heart he neither dared nor desired to speak, since he had decided to learn what duty demanded.

Wulf was a robust fellow, with plenty of bone and muscle, but the work he had now undertaken was so different from his former mode of life, and demanded so much physical exertion, that it made him very tired. Nevertheless he could overcome that sensation; and now, if it were only possible to conquer his desires, and overcome his thoughts! So long as he was obliged to work vigorously in the open air, it was all very well. But now Winter approached, and brought with it many idle, gloomy hours. How could he pass away the time? "Tinkering" around did not satisfy Wulf. He felt that he must do something else if he would master his tormenting aspirations and discontented heart.

If he must be a seaman he would, at least, not confine his knowledge to the narrow limits of a common ship. He would learn. But where? How? From books? He had none. From people? No one lived here who could instruct him. Yes; there was one man in the neighborhood who possessed a large fund of information, and who had often invited him to his home.

This was Captain Nielsen, who, after long service, had settled down here for rest in that beautiful residence yonder, with its pretty green blinds. He lived quietly, but was seen every Sunday at church with his only daughter, a girl of fourteen.

Marvelous tales were related of Captain Nielsen by the villagers; how he had married a Spanish countess or Grecian princess, and lived with her in the distant South; how wife and children had died, and only this little daughter had been spared to him; how he had brought her to his northern home, that the fragile plant might gain strength; and it did seem as though the fresh sea-air had improved the child, for instead of being, now, slender and delicate, Ingeborg was a picture of perfect health.

This little strange maiden lived a solitary life. Her father had been her only teacher in worldly matters, and had filled her head with stories of his travels and the wonderful experiences through which he had passed.

Ingeborg's religious instructor was the old pastor of the adjacent village church. She accepted all his teachings, but was often unable to digest it or put it in practice in her secluded life. Besides, as she did not enjoy the companionship of other children, she grew up to be somewhat visionary in character. One could not help observing that Ingeborg was like a flower which had sprung up in a barren soil.

These were the inmates of the dwelling where Wulf began to visit frequently.

Captain Nielsen was very kind to the ambitious youth, and assisted him to the extent of his ability. The aspirations of his deepest soul Wulf did not reveal, for the reason that the old captain firmly believed boys were born in order to become worthy seamen. But Wulf gladly accepted the books Nielsen offered him, assured that he should thereby improve himself in nautical, mathematical, and astronomical science.

Yes, books, books! They look so harmless in themselves; and yet how much trouble some of them have brought into the world! Wulf soon learned other things from them than mere ship knowledge. They aroused in him a thirst to learn more and to search farther; and when for hours he lived in them selfishly, as in another world, and then returned to every-day work-life, as though he were a stranger to it and books alone his existence, he would shut them resolutely, and hasten to the beach to work, leaving their enjoyment to the hours when he was shut indoors on account of storm and rain.

During such times, when the sea raged heaven-high—heaving hills becoming valleys, valleys themselves swelling up to towering mountains again—Wulf felt that in the tumult of the elements without, the battle raged less fiercely in his own breast.

It is true his mother discerned that something was wrong; but in her long life she had learned to labor and to wait, and she hoped that in time her son would become accustomed to the new, or really the old, situation.

Frau Ericksen was a woman of few words. It would have been far better in this case if the mother had talked freely with her son. As it was, silence estranged two hearts which were bound together by the strongest interests.

Since Wulf did not complain outwardly, his mother apparently went on her way as though every thing was right. Wulf, therefore, believed that she understood none of the impulses which stirred him, and thus it happened that time only estranged the more a mother and son who were living together, and yet were far apart.

Perhaps the sister might have been a reconciling medium if she had not had so many other things to think about and to do. A son of the most prominent seaman in the village distinguished her above all the other young women, and this was very gratifying to Karen. Naturally, therefore, she did not trouble herself much about her brother.

But there was one child who perceived most clearly Wulf's discontent and unhappiness. Ingeborg Nielsen had often observed Wulf's eyes sparkle in conversation with her father, especially when the subject was one of higher intellectual culture. Long ago she had discovered that Wulf's employment was beneath him, and she could not divine why he continued it. But Wulf rarely spoke to her or noticed her.

Thus a year passed away, and Winter again fell on the lonely beach. It could be no superficial effort which animated Wulf now, for he had grown much stronger. The poor boy had a trying youth—a joyless, ineffectual struggle with the present. His mother, deceived by his apparent resignation, believed him to be growing more and more reconciled to his enforced calling.

But how was it with Wulf? He toiled faithfully all day, and read his books at night; for he was able to put to a practical use the information gained in this way, and surely no well-wisher could grudge the boy this.

Indeed, it had become pretty well known among the villagers that he was able to relieve sick people as well as animals. It had happened in this wise: Captain Nielsen's dog had broken a leg, and was whining pitifully one day as Wulf entered. Forgetting every thing but the creature's suffering, and having had a similar experience at his uncle's, it was not long before the dog was properly cared for and the leg bandaged—an act for which the animal evinced his gratitude by

licking his deliverer's hand, as he was soon able to spring up and frisk around. This was not the end of the affair. Other unfortunate animals in the neighborhood were brought to Wulf for treatment, and the success which followed in their relief and cure gladdened his heart. Then poor people began to seek his advice, and although at first he was inclined to turn them away, he could not withhold a kind word and simple directions here and there. What did a youth like Wulf understand about medical science? Very little, it is true; and yet common sense taught him that a fever patient ought not to be housed in a bake-oven; that broken limbs were not mended by dark incantations, and that rheumatism was not the result of sprains. He therefore gained the confidence of the poor and sick by successful treatment of simple ailments, and much of his time became occupied in this way.

How interesting to him was this broken bone or that premonitory symptom of disease! If all these experiences had been allowed to continue much longer, he might have been created a miracle-doctor.

But just at this juncture his mother never failed to upbraid him, and to ask with significant gesture: "Wulf, have you done this? Have you taken care of that?" referring to neglected home duties, and this always restored him to a sense of prosaic reality.

Once more on the dangerous way! O, had he at last, after the lapse of a year, with all his struggles made no progress, but found himself still on the old ground! And not even there; for to-day he did not have the resolution to burn his implements in order to begin a new life; to-day he was not able to sacrifice so much for his mother as when he had parted from his uncle. This question continually presented itself: "What hinders me from being happy?"

And the answer was no longer, "A struggle against the will," but, "The willfulness of my mother."

He gnashed his teeth, and mechanically resumed his work. It was, however, impossible to throw off his dejection; but he did not serve in the capacity of a doctor any longer. Was it on account of an inward storm or an outward prevention?

Wulf was ill, very ill. He did not recognize the faithful motherly and sisterly devotion and love at his bedside. He did not hear the solicitous conferences between physicians who had been summoned from a distance. He was unconscious of his delirious ravings, and little guessed that his mother, for the first time, had become convinced that her son's heart was bent upon a medical profession, not as a mere passing whim, but in the intensity of his whole being. Wulf lay in a fever. There were anxious days when it seemed that the merest grain of sand might turn the balance for life or death. In those days the mother's heart was torn for her beloved, her only son, and she resolved that he should meet with no hindrances in the carrying out of his desires, if only his life should be spared to her.

Old Uncle Ericksen had also sat by his darling's bedside, although unrecognized by him. Perhaps his earnest appeals aided to confirm the mother's conclusion.

One morning Wulf awoke, and looked around him. He lay in bed, but knew not why. Accidentally his glance fell upon his hand. Was that small, white, emaciated hand his own? No, surely not, for his was hard and strong. While these reflections were passing through his mind, the bed-curtain was drawn aside and his mother was before him. Only a few words were exchanged between them, but if Wulf could have heard the prayer she uttered, when she knew her son had been delivered from death, he would have realized how much she loved him, and there would have been no barrier again between them forever.

Wulf recovered, but gained strength slowly. It had been Winter when his illness began, but it was Spring when he became able to walk out with feeble steps. All around new life was springing from every germ. At length, he had gained sufficient strength to resume his work.

His mother was silent.

Had she forgotten her vow?

III.

"It may be a duty lowly
  That is unto thee assigned;
But toil, though poor, is holy,
  If wrought with an earnest mind!"

The locality where we tarried last lay solitary and apart from all communication with the outer world. A stranger rarely visited this beach, and if a tourist chanced to be led hither, he made his way out of it as expeditiously as possible. It was, therefore, quite an event to the simple villagers when a family arrived from Berlin for the Summer.

One Baron Von Kahring had rented a vacant cottage for the season. The baroness, with her two daughters, had already taken possession, in order that the elder daughter, who had recently been subjected to a painful surgical operation, might recover her strength in the bracing sea-air. She was not visible to outsiders, but a pavilion had been erected before the cottage, where she reclined during the day. Therefore the younger daughter was so much the more an object of interest to the village folks. The father and a brother were accustomed to spend several days at a time here, going back and forth to the city.

Wulf had not yet seen the new-comers, but upon hearing the name Kahring, he at once said to himself: "Can this be the family whose son was at my uncle's?"

He was still unaware of the fact, when one day, as he was making some repairs to his boat, he observed Arnold passing by.

There had been a very friendly, if not a very ardent relation between the two, and now Arnold's appearance revived the recollections of happier times. He sprang up, reached out his hand and exclaimed cordially: "Arnold, you here?"

The baron's son looked up in surprise, not recognizing the sunburnt sailor. At length he said: "Ah, I see. Do you live here?"

At a glance Wulf perceived that his former comrade's greeting was not very encouraging, and the half-contemptuous expression with which he contemplated Wulf's appearance and employment disclosed an immediate key to his demeanor; and Arnold, who had been very glad at one time to avail himself of Wulf's assistance in his studies, was not so eager to communicate with him in a humble position.

Wulf desired to help him out of the dilemma, so he hammered away at his work while Arnold stood near.

"Are you obliged to do much of that kind of work?" the latter finally inquired, as Wulf began to fasten boards smeared with tar on the boat.

"As often as it is necessary," replied the worker, rather curtly.

"And are you not miserable in such employment?"

"Not at all."

A pause ensued, after which Arnold remarked:

"Well, I must go home. We shall often see each other, as we expect to remain here for some time. Good-bye."

"Good-bye!"

Wulf worked energetically until his former companion was out of sight. Then he threw down his tools, and stood gloomily with folded arms. Why had he grown so pale? Had he unwisely over-exerted himself after his recent illness? No; to-day, for the first time, he keenly realized how his calling was regarded by one with whom he had formerly felt to be on terms of equality. Never before had it occurred to him that there was a dividing wall between men of the world and himself, and that he was regarded by them as belonging to a lower class. Here in this humble

village he was superior, and if he had been heart and soul a sailor, he would neither have understood Arnold's contempt, nor, indeed, observed it.

But he felt it as painfully as if burning wax had fallen on his heart; and even if there had been any thing to mitigate this suffering, he was all the more disgusted with a calling which was uncongenial to him.

Nevertheless he held his head so much the higher. If Arnold had feared any undue familiarity from his former schoolmate, he deceived himself. It was not Wulf that sought Arnold—quite the contrary.

The days which this city-bred youth was obliged to pass here were so long and monotonous that he soon waived all distinction of rank, and endeavored to gain the young seaman's companionship.

But the latter had little spare time, and did not encourage these advances, which opposition only urged Arnold in his approaches.

Lady Von Kahring observed this, and took occasion to caution her son against low associations. She, herself, treated Wulf, when she met him with her son, with the condescending favor she showed to her servants. It was not even agreeable to remember that Arnold had been in daily companionship with a young fisherman at school, and that the latter had been set up as an example for her son to emulate. She therefore ignored this fact, in order to make Wulf realize his true position.

But "the young fisherman" was so reserved, that neither her rigid formality nor the young baron's behavior seemed to make any impression upon him.

Eugenie, the younger daughter of the Kahring family, sought Ingeborg's acquaintance. The captain's daughter met her in a sweet, friendly way, and soon the two young girls were often seen on the beach together, searching for sea-weed and shells, or climbing the surrounding cliffs, and yet they had very little in common.

It is true Ingeborg listened attentively when Eugenie talked of the splendid sights, the beautiful dresses, the theaters, the children's balls, and her delight in the prospect of being introduced into society the coming Winter. But all these great things belonged to a world of which Ingeborg had little knowledge, and for which there was still less attraction. How any one could spend day after day in such frivolous occupation was incomprehensible to her, and "gallants" or "beaux" were foreign words. Her father, her pastor, Wulf—were they "gentlemen?" Eugenie chatted of this and that, and was indignant when Ingeborg interposed a "Pshaw! that isn't true;" or, "Ugh! how ugly that is!" or the earnest inquiry whether city people knew God's commandments.

"Silly one! It isn't polite for you to interrupt me with such expressions," Eugenie would interject, as she continued her rhapsodical descriptions without further observing her companion's astonishment.

Arnold accompanied the girls gladly, partly through *ennui*, partly through interest in Ingeborg. What better could he do, unaccustomed to being alone, than to play the part of a gallant? He had learned to row a little, and often a boat carrying the three, passed Wulf at his work, but he cast neither a sympathetic nor a contemptuous glance toward it.

It was a bright, hot Summer's day. The sea lay calm and heavy as molten lead. It was oppressively warm in the low-roofed cottage. Arnold proposed to take his sister and Ingeborg out on the water. They consented, and strolled to the beach.

"Listen!" said Arnold; "we shall try something new to-day. It is tiresome to row in this heat. We will put up the sails."

"But there is no wind," remonstrated Ingeborg.

"No matter; we can take this little sail-boat and row at first, you helping me steer. See? A fresh breeze will soon come when we get out to sea."

And the breeze came. Suddenly, as if a myriad of sparkling gold-pieces had been flung over the water, the sunbeams trembled here and there upon its bosom.

"Hello, Wulf!" cried Arnold to the young fisherman at his work in the distance; "shall we have any wind to-day?"

"More than we want," was the prompt reply.

"Arnold, I don't think mamma would like to have us go out in a sail-boat; there might be danger," said Eugenie.

"Ah yes, when I did not understand how to manage one; but now it is absurd to speak of danger. Still, in order that mamma may not be uneasy, we shall push out from here; then no one will see us," was the confident reply.

Ingeborg was silent. She had been out so often this way that she gave it no thought. Eugenie was delighted with the novel pleasure, and Arnold was so thoroughly imbued with the assurance of his own skill and experience that the possibility of danger never entered his mind.

Not far distant from the beach were seated Baron and Lady Von Kahring, under the canopy of a tent, where their invalid daughter, Theodora, reclined on an easy couch. Her gaze was directed out to sea as if her recovery were dependent upon it. Lady Von Kahring was writing, and her husband was reading a newspaper.

"This paper is four days old," he remarked petulantly; "one is a veritable exile in this isolated spot."

"But we can not go east yet," replied Lady Von Kahring. "Besides, you are always traveling back and forth to Berlin."

"Dear father, I am so thankful to be here. We could not have found such a quiet place anywhere else in the world."

There was a deep silence. The baron continued to read, and his wife resumed her writing. The wind came up, and drove a cloud here and there over the sea. Suddenly Theodora raised herself on the couch and appeared to follow a distant object with spell-bound attention. Turning to her father, she said: "Please hand me the spy-glass." He passed it to her without looking up. Theodora adjusted it to her eyes; her face grew deathly pale, while the scar upon one of her cheeks became livid scarlet, an evidence of deep excitement.

"Mother," she said quietly, "do not be alarmed, but yonder in that boat are Arnold, Eugenie, and Ingeborg. The wind is up, and Arnold does not know how to manage the sails—they go out farther and farther. O, if a boat could only be sent quickly after them!"

Baron Von Kahring sprang up. The sailboat was near enough to give evidence of bad management. It plunged so low into the depths that even an inexperienced eye must know it was in danger of going down.

The mother cried out in terror, while the father called loudly for Arnold to return immediately. Theodora wrung her hands in anguish, seeing that the only means of rescue was not available. She made desperate efforts to rise, when suddenly a little boat was seen to push out from the shore. One of the men in it was rowing, while the other stood up and cried in tones of thunder: "Arnold, bind the sail fast." That this cry had been heard was evident, as the sail was being worked, without, however, the desired effect. At the same time a sail was quickly unfurled in the rescuing boat which the wind filled, and the second sailor seizing an oar, the boat flew over the water on eagle's wings.

But too late! A shrill cry of horror rang out from the lookers-on. Arnold's boat had made a plunge down—down, as if to take leave forever, and was not seen again. It had sunken, and the three bright, young people it had contained were consigned to a watery grave!

Lady Von Kahring swooned. Theodora gave her immediate attention, while the baron hastened to the beach, where a number of men were assembled, among them Captain Nielsen, Ingeborg's father. He did not utter a word. He heard the expressions, "Too late!" "Brave boy!" but his whole being seemed concentrated in his eyes transfixed upon the water.

Finally he exclaimed with deep emotion, "He has them—all three!" and now it was plainly seen that Wulf's boat (for he was the "brave boy") contained several persons, and was turned homeward.

"Meet him," continued the captain; where upon four or five boats flew from willing hands upon the sea, his own being foremost. Now they reached Wulf, who, with beaming face, stood up in his boat, waved his hat joyfully, and cried out:

"All safe and well!"

"Brave boy, you swim like a fish!"

A few minutes later all were on *terra firma*. Ingeborg appeared to be the most exhausted, and her father carried her home in his arms.

Eugenie was more affected by fright, while Arnold looked deeply mortified and crest-fallen.

"I reached them just at the right moment; the boat sank only a few feet away. Three dives and they were all safe," said Wulf modestly.

When Frau Ericksen heard of the fortunate rescue her heart was glad. Ah yes; here was something which only a sailor could do. Would this adventure perhaps make her son more reconciled to his calling? No; it produced an entirely different result.

After necessary attention had been given to the shipwrecked, naturally the interest of all centered in Wulf. Captain Nielsen pressed him silently to his heart and kissed him, but in his speechless love lay a gratitude deeper than a thousand words could have expressed.

The Kahrings, too, were unable to thank him enough, and they were sincere. But Wulf was too great a sailor to comprehend wholly this excessive flow of gratitude. He felt that he had only fulfilled duty, and that he had done nothing extraordinary; but from this time he liked the Kahrings better, their tact and kindness now making him feel quite on equality with them. They cordially invited him ta their home circle. Theodora particularly desired to see and grasp the hand of her brother's and sister's deliverer; and Wulf, after some inward struggle, decided to accept the invitation.

He was received with exceeding kindness, and treated with undisguised cordiality; and finding the young man agreeable, they really enjoyed his visits, partly through *ennui*, and partly through obligation.

Wulf's pride dissolved more and more under the warm rays of this hospitable amiability, and he soon began to be quite at his ease among them.

Lady Von Kahring was the first to suggest to him that he was too gifted for his surroundings and position, at the same time urging him to strive after higher attainments, and go to Berlin for future improvement.

The word was spoken. It tore away the veil from the gloom in which Wulf had been living. If the fact of his ability had not been perfectly clear to him before, this conversation would have certainly confirmed it.

It is difficult to get a glimpse into the heart where tumultuous waves often roll higher than out upon the sea. Frau Ericksen, Captain Nielsen, everybody here had the firm conviction that it would be almost criminal for Wulf to become a "doctor." He, himself, had endeavored to banish the ambition from his mind; and now he had been led by circumstances into the circle of a family which, however, superficial its aims, still found opportunity for higher interests, and which moved amid very different forms and scenes from those to which he had been accustomed. Once he might have been content to live here without further aspirations; now it was evident that his ignorance had deceived him. This only increased his unhappiness. It is true he had, thus far, adhered to his resolution to labor diligently without complaint to his mother. He had consequently become more self-reliant, for absolute resignation demands thorough self-reliance; but now this life, with its mental inertia, he realized, must end. The bolt had been withdrawn from the chamber of his soul; light had entered; the darkness was recognized to be indeed darkness, and he craved the light.

One day, after a brief absence from home, Arnold returned with the rank of an ensign. The long-dreaded examination had been happily passed, and he was now an officer—a distinction which caused the young man to appear outwardly as though he had really acquired some new attainment.

Wulf was well aware that in point of actual knowledge he was vastly Arnold's superior; and yet what was he?

The Kahrings now regarded the simple artisan as an agreeable companion for the gay young officer in this seclusion, where nothing better could be found for his diversion.

"Old fellow, what ails you anyhow?" Arnold asked frankly, one day, his dejected-looking acquaintance.

"What ails me? Why, every thing that I haven't got."

Arnold looked up inquiringly. He had an affected loftiness of speech, coupled with an indifference of manner toward every body; but the unlucky boat-ride had inspired him with not only a kind of affection for Wulf, but an instinctive respect, and he now approached him somewhat cautiously until he knew what was his mood.

"Now tell me," he ventured, after a slight pause, "what do you really wish for?"

"I wish for what I shall do, what I shall do! Go away from this place. There is something within me that will not let me rest. I can not overcome it. I was not made to drag out my life on this sea-coast."

"Ah! the old aspirations revived," said Arnold with a laugh. "You desire to be a great man, eh? Instead of wasting away your life alone here, you would make a worse shipwreck of it elsewhere? Your taste isn't bad!"

"What am I to do?"

"Come with us to Berlin. That's where one discovers for the first time what life really is."

"I desire to learn——"

"Certainly, without that, you can do nothing, especially if you would make money."

"It is not my ambition to be rich," retorted Wulf, proudly. "I desire to study, because I long to improve myself; and learning to know the great men whose minds enlighten the world, I would be like them."

"You are too sanguine," replied Arnold. "That naturally proceeds from your isolation here. Yes, yes: only learn to know men; the sacred halo, which appears in the distance to be sunbeams, becomes gold-pieces when you approach it. I tell you, to be rich is the true wisdom of life. But come along with me now. Mamma wishes me to invite you to spend the evening with us. It is disagreeable out of doors. A thunder-storm is coming on; we must go in, where we can have a further talk over our plans."

Wulf felt the warm blood mantle his bronzed cheeks. It was clear to him what he must do. Two pictures were present to his mind. He saw his old mother observing him with anxious eye, and he knew that every body around her expected him to continue his father's business. On the other hand, and most attractive, appeared the circle of distinguished people awaiting his coming.

Although the Kahrings occupied a fisherman's cottage, they had surrounded themselves with enough city comforts to indicate their social position. Wulf saw, in vision, the bright lamp, the elegant tea-service, the dignified, gracious hostess, the merry Eugenie; and, quicker than cloud follows cloud in the sky, the first picture vanished before the splendor of the second.

"Thank you, I will come. Good-bye until we meet," said Wulf.

Arnold looked after the tall figure. "An eccentric fellow!" he said to himself; "still longing after school-benches. I am glad to be free again, and out of a prison which only bothers my head. But

what prospect have I now? Nothing beyond." And the young ensign sauntered off, smoking a cigar.

Wulf hurried to his mother's humble abode. She was standing by the little window, looking out sharply for her tardy son. As she opened the door for him she asked reproachfully: "What detained you so long? See the storm coming. Hurry off to the boats that lie in the water."

More speedy work was seldom done. The boats were soon brought to a safe place, and the young sailor, bathed in perspiration, re-entered the room where his mother now came forward to meet him with more affectionate solicitude.

"Now, my son, eat your supper."

How comfortable the place looked! Yonder in a corner was the old canopy-bed, with its quaint designs; here was the stove whose polished stone hearth depicted the history of paradise and the fall of man, more forcibly than authentically. Around the two sides of the room was a brown bench, which served the purpose of a chest as well, and concealed all manner of things from view. There, upon the table, a pewter oil-lamp lighted up the spotless cloth upon which was spread the evening meal, to which Frau Ericksen again invited her son with significant gestures.

Wulf waved his hand. "No, mother, I am invited to tea with the Kahrings, and I must make haste or I shall be too late."

"Wulf," remonstrated his mother, "there is a terrible storm at hand. Your dear father always remained at home with us during such times, and read us a prayer."

"You can do that, mother, dear."

There was no reply. Wulf dressed hurriedly and hastened off with "Good-night; the storm may not be so bad, but do not sit up for me."

What did he really lose by this action? He knew thoroughly well that the evening at home would be precisely like hundreds and hundreds that had preceded it. His mother would sit by the spinning-wheel without saying a word; Karen would also sit there, and work just as silently; Peter, the man-servant, would, if possible, be still more quiet when he came in to mend his nets and listen to the storm.

Later on, his mother would read the evening lesson; after which they would all exchange one tedium for another by going to bed.

How often he had sat there in utter self-denial; had read his books longing for explanations to many questions! He had, it is true, never attempted the frivolous indiscretion of any interchange of thought. What understanding could his mother have of the things that interested him? Was not her mental horizon limited, very limited? She had been the wife of a brave fisherman, and

had shown great intelligence in practical things. She knew her Bible and hymn-book thoroughly; every thing aside from this was beyond her sphere. Little as these old, diligent hands were acquainted with the pen, still less had the head any conception of the thoughts that animated her son.

And Karen? She was just as pretty, good, and industrious a girl as could be found anywhere. Her work was cheerfully done. She was obedient to her mother, went to Church regularly, laughed with her companions, and looked upon a certain tall young "Martin" with undisguised pleasure. Surely, enough for her! Neither mother nor sister had any conception of Wulf's feelings—it was impossible; and he made no effort to explain the position. What could they be to him? These were his thoughts.

As stars in a dark night glittered the windows of the little cottage where the Kahrings resided, when Wulf approached it.

He was warmly received.

The baroness greeted him with: "We wait tea for you; the children would not sit down without you."

Looking upon the stately lady who proffered her hand with these kindly words, Wulf unwittingly contrasted his stout little mother's appearance with hers. How it suffered by comparison! And now, while without it was dark and stormy, within and around him every thing was as bright and charming as wealth and cultured taste could furnish. Instead of the howling storm was the cozy hum of the tea-kettle; and while its music continued, Eugenie's voice rang out in unison with the guest's, at the same time she played the accompaniments of his quaint songs upon the piano. Who could be insensible to these external comforts, pleasant formalities, and kindly words? Certainly not the young man whose life had always been so barren of them.

"From my son I learn that we are to have the pleasure of seeing you in Berlin this Winter," said Lady Von Kahring, during a pause in the music.

"Thank you; I sincerely hope so, Madame," half stammered Wulf; "but it is not positively certain as yet. So far as I am concerned, I trust it may be so."

"O, nonsense! only come soon," interjected Arnold; "you learn nothing here."

"My son is right. In a large city one has so many ways and means for self-improvement," added Lady Von Kahring.

"May I knock at your door when I arrive there a stranger?" asked Wulf modestly.

"One naturally does what one can to assist struggling young people," was the affable reply.

It was noteworthy how skillfully this lady could answer direct questions in the third person.

"I can rent a room for you," said Arnold.

"And your bass voice will be an addition to our musical association,'" added Eugenie.

The old baron, who never talked much, arose at this juncture to open a window; but the storm prevented him. "What beastly weather we have here!" he muttered. "Rain every day—a wretched way of living."

He was right, Wulf thought. It was also a pitiful way of living, and he wondered how he had endured it so long.

After taking leave of this delightful circle, Wulf did not go directly home. His blood was violently stirred; he felt that he must walk and face the wind for a while. In his meanderings he approached the little church-yard. There was his father's grave. Beside the tombstone his mother had placed a similar one, with her name carved upon it, leaving room for the date of her death. She expected to pass away and leave no other record. But should he bury himself, figuratively, in this secluded spot at the early age of nineteen? He turned away with a shudder, and there determined to embrace the profession which had been his ideal since childhood, and to inform his mother of this decision on the following day; for she would surely be asleep when he returned at this late hour.

But the mother had not slept. Many anxious thoughts had been interwoven with her wool at the spindle, and although her lips had remained silent, her heart had not been calm.

It was just as true as ever that she would have preferred to see Wulf succeed his father in business; but she was neither so narrow as to resist a legitimate struggle, nor so weak as to wish to keep Wulf wholly to herself. It was only against the breach of an old custom she contended. For an only son to act contrary to long established usage was to her preposterous and unintelligible. On this account she had removed him from school, in order to make him a sailor. She had nurtured this error a long time; and who knows whether she ever would have discerned it if his serious illness had not intervened? But she had deferred the time for action until Autumn, then further postponed it from time to time; and it was simply this that robbed good Frau Ericksen of her sleep.

Meanwhile Wulf had changed. It seemed to his mother that it was not only a desire for learning which animated him, but an ambition to become famous; a longing for external things, which, to her mind, were not worth the trouble; a continual ideality, a looking upon people of fine manners through gold spectacles, accepting them as noble and good and beautiful in the abstract. Yes; this she was sure was the cause of his discontent; and that he looked down upon his mother and sister burned her heart as a natural consequence. And, then, must he go so

unarmed into the world—into a great city of which she knew nothing except by hearsay, but which at best seemed to her a very Babel? Should he win or lose most there? Finally she said: "Yes; he will gain wisdom even through harm. Now I can not and will not restrain him any longer. He shall see for himself that '*all is not gold that glitters*.' But my boy is good," she added consolingly; "and if he goes away, he will come back to me again."

IV.

"Better to have a quiet grief than a hurrying delight;
Better the twilight of the dawn than the noonday burning light.
Better a death when work is done than earth's most favored birth;
Better a child in God's great house than the king of all the
earth."—GEORGE MACDONALD.

It is more desolate than ever on the beach now, for Wulf is away at a gymnasium preparing for his final examination. That unfortunate sail had resulted seriously to Ingeborg.

The spirit indeed was strong, but the flesh was not able to keep pace with it. A few hours after that occurrence Ingeborg was prostrated by hemorrhage. It had not returned as her father feared, but the young girl was very much enfeebled and convalesced slowly. When Captain Nielsen anxiously consulted the physician as to the probability of her entire recovery, the latter shook his head dubiously. Ingeborg looked so wan and pale; but a pleasant smile lighted up her face and a spiritual beauty rested upon it, which nothing could deprive of its influence.

Every body treated her as though she were a princess; even the rough fishermen's voices softened when they addressed Ingeborg. She had closely allied herself to "mother Esther;" as she loved best to call Frau Ericksen. There could scarcely have been a greater contrast than between these two women—the one nearing life's end, the other just entering upon it; the one practical, matter-of-fact, clear, decisive, the other thoughtful, dreamy, feeble, seeing no danger in the future; the one active, industrious, talking through deeds, the other folding her slender hands and musing silently over the play of the billows. But the two had one trait in common. Both talked little; and yet words were not wanting between them. Ingeborg had discovered that "mother Esther" was in possession of a priceless treasure. Since her illness the peace of God had rested upon Ingeborg with an infinite calm, and she knew that whatever happened to her would be for the best. And while her father had instilled the germ of piety into his child's soul, "mother Esther" had been the agency to awaken it to life.

Another woman's presence had also exerted a strong influence upon Ingeborg's character. The Kahrings had returned again to the beach this season, and their elder daughter had become visible. In former years no one had been at liberty to approach her in the tent where she reclined. Now when she was occasionally seen, it was apparent why the family had sought this secluded spot. The white bandage which partially covered Theodora Von Kahring's face did not wholly conceal the deep, red scar upon one of her cheeks.

Ingeborg had not become very intimate with the Kahrings. In fact, she was not especially attracted toward any of them; but when she met Theodora with her noble, sincere, lady-like presence, she seemed to the simple maiden like a higher being—one she might model after, not only in mere imitation, but one whom she could emulate wholly.

The first meeting between the two had been in a poor fisherman's hut, where a sick child lay. Ingeborg was seated by the little one's bed when Theodora's tall figure entered the low room. One glance assured her that the child was dying, and to Ingeborg the hour passed in that chamber of death was a sacred one never to be forgotten.

With womanly instinct Theodora did all that was necessary. Her eyes seemed to take in at a glance every thing, which her heart at the same time did not fail to appease. Her calmness, her gentleness, her kindness, were to Ingeborg traits worthy of adoration, and in the confusion and excitement of those around her she looked up to Theodora as though she were a divinity. Perhaps, too, unconsciously, she felt that here was a nature in harmony with her own, a true womanly heart which was its complement. Theodora and Ingeborg became friends. Under such an influence the child Ingeborg matured to young womanhood. She would also sit on the beach and listen for hours to the singing and sighing of the waves. How simple and yet how fascinating were their melodies to her!

She did not care much for Arnold, although he was always attracted to the delicate girl, whose secret influence over him he could not explain, and really did not attempt. Ingeborg was not beautiful. Heavy black tresses encircled a small, plain face; but her deep blue eyes had the brightness of stars—no, the mystery of an abyss wherein the whole heavens seemed reflected. There are eyes into which one may gaze and forget all earthly woe! But they are rare. Ingeborg, the counterpart of the young ensign is the only person whom this clever man of the world does not know how to approach without a feeling of constraint.

Listen to one of his attempts:

"Ingeborg, how can you bear to sit here by the water so long?"

"I like it."

"But all alone, not a living soul near; you must be awfully lonely."

Ingeborg looks up in astonishment:

"The water is not lonely. See how it stirs, and listen how joyful now, and then how sad it sounds! I could not endure a garden or a tree so long; but here there is constant motion and life."

"You think so," replied Arnold cynically, "because you have never known any thing better. You believe there is nothing so beautiful, because you have seen nothing else."

Ingeborg opens her great eyes wider than ever, and merely looks at him; at length she says softly: "The sky is even more beautiful."

The conversation ceases for a while. Arnold could have been ready enough with his astronomical knowledge, and have talked fluently about the fixed stars and the planets; but he fears to go beyond the capacity of his fair listener.

Suddenly he ventures:

"Have you never had any desire to see what lies on the other side of the water?"

Ingeborg assented.

"O, I should like so much to see the high mountains and the great cities! I should like so much to enter the grand churches, whose windows are painted pictures, and whose spires reach heaven-high, and look like great, white lilies!"

"You should?" pursued Arnold. "And shall you not, then?"

"I can not travel now; I am too tired."

"Then you intend to remain here, never seeing new and beautiful things?"

"No; I shall not always remain here," replied Ingeborg confidently. "I shall travel, and see the splendid things my father has seen."

"Child! when shall you go, and where?"

"When, I do not know; but where, I do know—in heaven."

Arnold gave a half-embarrassed, half-assenting laugh, and remonstrated.

"But who knows whether there is a heaven? Who assures you that you will go there? Who says it is beautiful and worth thinking about so much? No one has seen it yet. How is it up there? For you talk as though you had already visited it."

Ingeborg's eyes waxed still larger. Gazing earnestly at the skeptical speaker, she folded her little hands, and repeated in solemn tones: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for those that love him."

Taken by surprise at the young girl's manner, Arnold was silent. At length he continued:

"But, Ingeborg, you talk as though God were a real person, whom one could love."

His sweet companion making no response, he quickly added:

"Do you think Wulf believes as you do?"

Ingeborg nodded her head confidently.

"Well, all I have to say is, that I am surprised he has never mentioned the subject to me. For my part, I believe very differently."

Ingeborg was still silent. Indeed, she had scarcely heard the last remark, and in the entire conversation this one expression only had impressed her: "Do you think that Wulf believes as you do?"

Arnold feels terribly uncomfortable; for Ingeborg's words always appeal to his better nature. But now he tries to shake off their disturbing influence, in order that his own wishes may not be hindered. "Yet this little pious one is interesting, here in this horrible loneliness," he said to himself.

But is not the baron's son lonely, even at Berlin? He is now twenty-two; but he has frittered away the past few years so fast as to be already blast. He has drunken from the intoxicating cup of pleasure, flirtation, and wine, and he is surfeited without having fully drained it. Every pleasure with which he is familiar appears insipid. He is an old-young man, whose deepest heart-emotions are silenced by ridicule or indolence wherever they venture to assert themselves; and yet he frequently joins the captain's simple daughter, who thinks it very ridiculous that he should complain to her, and continually express his disgust of the society in which he mingles; that he should tell her how every body wears a mask in order to deceive, and no one has the courage to appear true and honest. Her replies puzzle—no, they exasperate him. This foolish child thinks he should be sincere and noble. How is this possible? Then she says he ought to work; she is grieved because she accomplishes so little, and regards it a pleasure to be employed. Arnold loses his temper with her sweet, opinionated complacency; and then he remembers how silly he is to talk to her upon such subjects so far beyond her reach, and he calms himself with: "She knows nothing about life's difficulties; how can she be expected to solve them?" And yet an inward monitor softly whispers that the wisest can give him no better counsel than this: "Be true to yourself; give up pleasures which are really none; WORK."

Autumn has come again, and Wulf has returned. He has passed the final examination, made a short visit to his uncle's, and will now prepare to go to the university. Like a new student, he was so overflowing with hope and happiness in these days that his uncle felt impelled to call out after him: "Lad, lad; don't throw down the trees in your chase!" To his mother he seemed too

proud; and yet what mother does not secretly rejoice in her child's happiness, even if she does repeat warningly:

"Wulf, Wulf! Our Heavenly Father takes care that the trees don't grow to heaven."

"They will, though!" he replies cheerily.

Wulf is thoroughly changed. He embraces his mother and sister with a new love, although the former has her own misgivings over the thought that a man's own will is his heaven.

He will not remain at home with her; she knows this now. He longs to be away, and is far from being contented here. He is also very little interested in Ingeborg; but he is dear to her, and she imagines he is more regardful of her comfort than any one else; but he lives in the future, and this delicate girl plays no *rôle* in his hopes and dreams.

The evening before his departure, Frau Ericksen drew her son aside to consult him with regard to their personal interests. She had divided what she owned between her two children. Karen should have the little cottage, and Wulf the money, which, if used economically, would be sufficient for his years at the university.

"You know," she continued, "Martin and Karen love each other. I have no objection to Martin. He is a deserving young man; but his father thinks our little house too small, and yet he is better satisfied than if Karen were entirely portionless. Therefore Martin is to go away for a couple of years to see the world, and when he returns the wedding will take place. Meanwhile, if I should be called away, and this should never take place, remember Karen has only you. She looks small, but she is a brave girl."

Wulf pressed his mother's hand to emphasize his entire satisfaction in all her arrangements. Then he bade good-bye to the neighbors, and to Captain Nielsen and his daughter. The old sea captain had lamented that Wulf had not become a ship-master, and that he had decided to study a profession before going abroad; but now he was reconciled for him to study medicine.

"Come back soon a celebrated doctor, and cure my daughter," was his parting injunction.

"Yes, Ingeborg, I will come back and make you well," replied Wulf, heartily.

The young girl smiled assentingly. She believed Wulf capable of doing every thing.

The separation was a greater trial to Frau Ericksen than she had anticipated. Heretofore, her son had not been far away; now he was going a great distance. After all, he is her heart's darling, and her home is desolate without him. She has, however, not burdened him with admonitions. She realizes how different every thing will be in the new world which he is about to enter. Of what avail would her exhortations be? But on the day before, she had knelt beside her son and

earnestly petitioned: "Forsake not thy God and Savior. So act that you shall never be ashamed in his presence."

And now he is gone for long years. Shall mother and son ever be reunited? And how?

The old routine of daily life is renewed. Karen attends to the household duties, while Ingeborg may be seen slipping into "mother Esther's" own little room. She has in this way seen Wulf once more unobserved by him, and now she turns to his mother.

Frau Ericksen has not yet recovered her usual elasticity. She is laying away some of her son's belongings, and she lingers over them longer, perhaps, than necessary. Just as Ingeborg approaches she is holding up an old waistcoat, and hot tears are falling upon it. Life for her will always lie in the past with regard to her son. When he returns, he will no longer be a sailor-boy. She goes out to hide her tears from Ingeborg.

But to Wulf the coach travels all too slowly. Ah! if he were only at the end. On the railroad he will be carried so swiftly.

Travel on! I may not see
Whither this journey's end shall be.

V.

"I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,
And falls on the other."—SHAKESPEARE.

When Wulf was a little child he had once seen, on an arch, a representation of the king's entry into Berlin. There stood the throngs of people—a multitude crowded together. At that time this thought had entered the sprightly boy's mind: How many things one might find among so many people, and that if he were only at Berlin there would be no end of pocket-knives, lead-pencils, and other desirable objects lying in the streets. To his youthful imagination that great city was always crowded full of people, just as it appeared in the picture. Naturally this idea had become somewhat changed with the passing years; but to-day, when he entered the metropolis, there was still a certain irrepressible feeling that he should find a great deal in it.

He was standing by a window of the room which Arnold had secured for him, looking down upon a beautiful, wide thoroughfare. Many people passed to and fro—not quite so many,

however, as the arch had represented. The room was high, so different from the one at home, and even very different from the one he had recently occupied at the gymnasium. Wulf carried his head aloft, for now he was a medical student. A goal had been reached. He stood at the gate of his city of happiness.

There is surely something wrong with a youth who does not struggle after high aims, which he believes will eventually lead to great results. Wulf did not desire to become an ordinary physician. He wished to study in order that he might fathom the depths of every disease. He was possessed with the thought which presents itself to every strong, healthy nature; namely, that disease was an unnatural foreign element. He would therefore give it neither place nor authority, and when the intruder, with its distorted visage, invaded his neighborhood, he would bravely wage war against it for life or death. In imagination he saw himself a conqueror of death, to whose grim influence only the aged and life-weary should be a prey. He saw happy faces everywhere, which he had been the first to create; and with such visions before him his heart beat higher.

But one can not fly to the top of a mountain. No; step after step must be taken; and O, how long and tiresome often is the way! Yet at present he sat at the feet of the professors, and among the students there was none more diligent than he. During the past years the world, with its temptations, had stepped into the background, and his naturally youthful, buoyant character was again in the ascendency. With eager, inquiring mind, and burning, zealous soul, he listened now to all suggestions from within. There had been periods when ideas did not harmonize consistently; but now much that had been obscure presented itself perfectly clearly. Added to this was the new academic life. Although Wulf was acquainted with none of the students, and formed no intimacies, the multitude of impressions with which the gay, bustling city abounded overwhelmed him at every step. All this occupied his mind so intently during the first days and weeks, that he went around like one in a dream, out of which he only awakened in the evenings, when the heart asserted its claims, and sang to him a song without words, of friends and home.

Three weeks were thus passed, and Wulf had not yet visited the Kahrings.

Why?

He did not know why himself. There was a knock at his door, and Arnold entered.

Wulf was very glad to see a familiar face. He had hoped to find Arnold at the railroad station, with directions for the stranger; but no one was there, and he was obliged to give a cab-man the number of the house where his friend had rented a room for him. Surely there he should find the young ensign, but neither on the street nor in his apartment had a friendly face been glimpsed; a fact which conflicted with his ideas of true hospitality.

And now Arnold entered, as pleasant and unconcerned as possible. No apology, not the slightest intimation of any discourtesy on his part. This chafed Wulf, and he was somewhat reserved.

"Well, how are you?" exclaimed Arnold, immediately stepping to the window, and, without waiting for a reply, adding: "Wonderful view here; day and night always something going on! This is one of the streets where a person can thoroughly exist. Now, how are you?"

"Thank you, very well," replied Wulf, rather frigidly. "At first so many strange sights and scenes made me a trifle homesick. I have not made a single acquaintance, and the thought has occurred to me that if I were to plunge into the water over there and be seen no more forever, not a single human being would miss me or trouble himself about it."

"Well, you paid your rent in advance, and I guess your landlord would enter an energetic protest against such a violent disappearance; but the fact of no one troubling himself about his neighbor is city-like, and may be said, by the way, of the best people here."

After a pause Arnold continued: "But you have seen something meanwhile the—Kroll, museum, Lachse's saloon, the recent parade. Isn't it all superb, magnificent?"

Wulf replied that thus far he had been wholly occupied in his class preparations, buying textbooks, etc.

"But, man, how can you vegetate like that in Berlin?" pursued Arnold; and chatting glibly about things in general, he concluded by inviting the stranger to visit him at home. When he took leave, there was in his hand-shaking such a cold, heartless participation, that Wulf felt it keenly, and went to his studies somewhat wounded and dejected. And yet a few days later we find him at the door of the Kahrings' elegant mansion. His breath is short, his heart beats loudly over the excitement and dread of the first call; but a certain pleasure thrills him as he is conducted through splendid apartments, and presented to the gracious lady of the house. The spacious, beautiful rooms, the elegant appointments, the stately servants, who, apparently, know far better than he how to deport themselves—and now Lady Von Kahring enters in silk and satin, looking more majestic amid these surroundings than even she did in the cottage by the sea, but just as kindly, just as friendly and affable as she had been there. She referred to her pleasure at learning of Wulf's studies, and expressed the hope of seeing him very often during the Winter. These were the only personal allusions she made; after which the conversation drifted along to various commonplace remarks, among them a polite inquiry for Herr Ericksen, his uncle—and she withdrew without presenting her husband or children to the bewildered young student.

Unsophisticated one! how can you expect in a formal call to get a glimpse of the home-circle, or even to see all the members of the family?

And yet this was really what Wulf had desired. He longed for some place where he might feel at home.

He was not lonely during the busy hours of the day; but when evening came, there were moments when he yearned even for the simple whirr of his mother's spinning-wheel. He had experienced no such feelings at the gymnasium. There his surroundings had been so home-like at his instructor's house as to produce a deep impression upon his character. And now he had flattered himself that he should be privileged to seek Lady Von Kahring's counsel in the arrangement of all his affairs; but he was annoyed to find himself perfectly at a loss for words in her presence. This exceedingly polite and benign lady had not evinced the slightest interest in his private matters, appearing to be occupied in a sphere too lofty for such trifles.

But her son was often to be found with Wulf, and seemed to enjoy his society, although he regarded his opinions and observations as childish, and laughed at them. He had been so much in the world that he was satiated with all it offered, and while he greedily coveted and was always ready to share its so called pleasures, he heartlessly ridiculed and sneered at them an hour afterward. He had many acquaintances, but no real friends, nor aspirations; but the *naïveté* of this ingenu was a certain, fresh excitement. Hence the association.

"Why can't you come to see us this evening?" he asked. "Mamma begs the honor; or are you engaged?"

Wulf laughed.

"No; if you wish it, I will come."

He who knew no one in Berlin—he "engaged!"

"Well, don't be too late. Soon after eight o'clock will answer. You will only find a few friends there."

At the appointed hour we see Wulf in the Kahrings' brilliantly lighted apartments. Happily he has passed the purgatorial ordeal of the servants, but he gives a final reassuring glance at his toilet. Yes; it is *en regle*, even to the cravat and gloves. The *portières* are drawn aside, and Wulf's first glance seeks and rests upon Lady Von Kahring, who seems in earnest conversation with an elderly gentlemen. Perhaps she has not observed the young stranger's entrance, as he stands hesitating lest he should interrupt her *tête-à-tête* in the least degree. She continues her discussion, until her companion directs her attention in a friendly way to the new-comer. Approaching Wulf with the most amiable warmth, she exclaims: "How kind you are to come upon so late an invitation! The servant forgot to deliver it, and we feared we should suffer from his negligence. Now, please find the young people in the next room, with Arnold." And with a pleasant gesture she invites him to enter.

The truth of the matter was, several of the invited guests had sent regrets, and as there promised to be more ladies than gentlemen present, the baron's wife at the last moment thought of Wulf as a make-shift.

"Who is this young man? Have I seen him before?" inquired Lady Von Kahring's companion.

"O," she replied, apologetically, "if I had imagined you were especially interested in him I should have taken pleasure in presenting him to you. He is a stranger we learned to know at the sea-shore. At present he is here studying medicine, and he is a kind of *protégé* of Arnold's."

"One can readily discern that he has not been long in Berlin," was the unamiable response.

"He needs training, sir," remarked Arnold, derisively, passing at that moment.

Wulf was, as it were, in a new world. Welcomed by the baron's daughter and son, he was presented to so many persons that finally he had not the remotest idea who one of them was. But what of that? There was all around a magical atmosphere of light, splendor, beauty, kindness, and refinement. Such a throng of agreeable figures in white, glittering attire, with which the young officers' uniforms picturesquely contrasted, he had never before witnessed. It was like a dream of the Arabian Nights.

And Wulf was wonderfully complimented. In the conventional monotony of "society," stale associations become so palling that every new-comer is hailed with pleasure.

"Who is that handsome young man? Where does he come from?" were the inquiries made.

"He is a stranger, very gifted, and of good family. Young Kahring, who always has good taste, even if it be sometimes bizarre, introduced him. There must be something back of it, if Lady Von Kahring chaperons him; she does nothing without a motive. Perhaps he is very rich."

These were the passing comments upon Wulf, of which he had no suspicion. He was polite in conversation, had felt the need of companionship, and all these bright, charming people gratified him. That the beautiful assemblage was often hollow and insincere he never dreamed. He accepted as genuine coin what was simply empty compliment. For this reason he was intoxicated by every one's extreme friendliness, and believed honestly that so many delightful people had never been brought together before.

Lady Von Kahring was a model hostess. Her whole consideration was the comfort and enjoyment of her guests. She did not manifest this desire too anxiously, but most graciously. While sitting here, absorbed in conversation with some neglected old lady, her vigilant eye did not fail to observe a young man standing alone yonder, and a significant glance quickly brought a servant with refreshment to his side. While filling with readiness a gap at the whist-table, she was perfectly able at the same time to hold the young people in proper check.

"Arnold, be so good as to open the piano. Eugenie, please accompany Herr Ericksen as nicely as possible. O, Herr Ericksen we shall all be so much indebted to you, if you will kindly favor us with a song—one of the folk-songs with which you charmed us at the sea-side;" and turning to her whist companions she says softly: "You can not imagine what a beautiful voice this young gentleman has—a splendid bass, somewhat untrained; but the folk-songs are even more fascinating when sung in this popular way."

Wulf sang. He gave great pleasure to the company. The young ladies hung upon his lips; the privy counselor's wife secretly envied Lady Von Kahring this fortunate acquisition; the very economical Lady Von Steiniger hastily calculated in her own mind how she should be able to secure this young man for her salon, in order to save something in the way of material attractions by the musical entertainment he would afford her guests.

When Wulf had finished, several desired to make his acquaintance. His head whirled with high titles and princely names. A social game, which Arnold arranged, also conferred upon him much attention. The mistakes he committed against society's regulations were overlooked and laughed at as eccentricities, and even admired.

"Now, your *entrée* into society has been very auspiciously launched," said Arnold. "You make conquests like the great Caesar."

Wulf made no reply. His face glowed: his pulse quickened. He was as yet so unaccustomed to so much attention.

"Only wait awhile," pursued the young ensign; "you will get cool, if, only, you do not take cold."

When Wulf returned late to his lodgings, his room looked even comical. He tried to study; but great, splendid forms capered around his books, and he did not long for his mother's spinning-wheel that night.

VI.

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts."
—AS YOU LIKE IT.

It was now Winter in Berlin; but the season was much less severe than on the sea-coast. Did the many closely crowded houses restrain its power, or did the smoke which curled up from so many thousand chimneys frighten the wind back to its home-country? Whatever it was, Wulf had never experienced such warm, mild weather at this period of the year. From without and within he was so comfortable. Did he realize that much of this warmth was due to the pleasant intercourse which had banished his feeling of solitude?

He was standing before a table in his room. Two letters had just been received. One read: "Herr and Frau Professor Ferri beg the pleasure of Herr Student Ericksen's presence at an afternoon tea, with dancing, at eight o'clock, Thursday evening."

The other note was simply: "Frau and Major Von Eckluhn would be delighted to have you take tea with them to-morrow evening."

At both places Wulf had scarcely made his first call—and already invitations came! He would not have been human had he felt no agreeable sensations over so much attention. Besides, he was by far too well pleased with "society" not to be attracted thither again and again. At first it had appeared to him only a kind of chaos, veiled in light and splendor. Gradually emerging out of the confusion of names and faces, Wulf began to be much attracted and interested in the distinguished people around him. He began already to speculate in his own mind whether he should accept this or that invitation; where he should meet this or that person; and to calculate accordingly the most favorable outlook for merely an agreeable or a very delightful evening. Meanwhile invitations multiplied. Wulf often wondered and asked himself what key had opened to him, an apparent stranger, the doors of so many distinguished residences. He never dreamed that rumor had falsely imputed great wealth to him; and Lady Von Kahring did not contradict it. If she had introduced Wulf, for her son's sake, she preferred to patronize a rich youth rather than a poor one. Besides, Wulf's presence was very attractive—only twenty-one, but exercise, wind, waves, and self-reliance having externally matured an early manhood, he was really an ornament to any assemblage. It is said that in England stately-looking military men are sometimes hired for funerals, christenings, weddings, etc., in order to give additional *éclat* to the occasion by their imposing presence. Is it, after all, very different in so-called society when a person without merit becomes fashionable for a little while, only to be cast aside without reason, like the hat of a former season?

Accordingly, here at Berlin, every body in the highest social circles became duly excited to see and seek after any new-comer who was ingenuous and entertaining; and Wulf was correspondingly happy over the attentions received while every thing he did was accepted and admired, which fact was very pleasing to his *amour propre*. It also engendered great self-possession of manner; for it is easy to be amiable when every body is agreeable and kind around us.

Let us accompany Wulf this evening, in order to learn something about the people with whom he associates.

He has been invited to a reception at the privy counselor's from Wurzel. His toilet had demanded more care than usual, but it is fortunate for him that no variety is required in this regard among gentlemen.

The servants are no longer embarrassing to him by their imposing behavior; in fact, he scarcely observes them. His first greetings being over, with quick, eager glance Wulf seeks Fraulein Sibylla Von Herbig, who, above all others, has made more than a fleeting impression upon him. His keen eye fails to discover her, and he stations himself as near as possible to the entrance, to note her coming. Meanwhile he revolves in his mind the comparative beauty of all the lively, friendly young ladies present, and continues to wonder over their luxuriant tresses and stylish, rich costumes. Just now Fraulein Von Kahring bows to him as to an old acquaintance, and he hastens toward her as gracefully and securely over the polished inlaid floor of the drawing-room as if he had always been accustomed to its smooth surface, and would rather stumble over the rough boards of a sailor's dwelling. Near Fraulein Von Kahring stands a blonde young gentleman, who is always to be found beside her or some other lady at every church, every theater, every fair, every concert, every party.

"Allow me to present Herr Von Lenkseuring," says Eugenie to Wulf, who finally learns the name of the gentleman whom he has so often seen invariably attired in brown pantaloons.

Then Sibylla Von Herbig enters. She is a daughter of the widow Frau Colonel Von Herbig, and she is always surrounded by a bevy of admirers. Why are so many attracted to her? Is it her indescribably beautiful oval face with its southern tint, her raven hair and brilliant dark eyes, or the animated conversation which she carries on?

Every one acknowledges her intellectual superiority, and although her words are often sharp and sarcastic, and at times seem merciless, her influence is fascinating, for she is never tiresome.

Wulf hastens toward her, but the "greyhound," as Herr Von Lenkseuring is called, is there before him and says:

"Fraulein Von Herbig, you were not on the ice yesterday. I looked for you in vain."

"No, I was not there; but the skating was fine?"

"I do not know; I only looked for you."

"I am sorry," replied Sibylla, curtly; "to me the ice is the principal thing."

Herr Doctor Uhlhart, a young man, thin and ugly as Mephistopheles, besides being feared on account of his sharp wit, stands near Eugenie also, and can not forebear addressing a remark to her.

"Fraulein Eugenie, how do you do? How are you enjoying this season?"

"O, I am delighted," replies the young *débutante*. "We are out constantly; during the past nine days we have attended twelve parties."

"A multitude of parties, therefore, constitutes the degree of your happiness," pursues the young doctor, with a bitter laugh.

Eugenie looks up ingenuously.

"And do you not enjoy parties? You are always to be seen everywhere. Why do you attend them?"

"O, my dear Fraulein, you forget what Goethe says:

'The world is a salmagundi;
We eat it every day and Sunday."

Whether we relish it or not is another question. And, then, I come here because it amuses me to see how people satisfy themselves with empty baubles."

Eugenie looked up inquiringly, and was relieved when a lady approached her, and interrupted the conversation. She did not understand this young scoffer, whose penetrating eyes pierced her like a knife; but his quick perception divined her thoughts, and he withdrew to join Sibylla, whom he had known for a long time, and who, by virtue of this long acquaintance, permitted him to use with her a somewhat familiar tone of address.

"Finally," he said with a sigh of relief, as he sank into a chair beside her, "finally by a human being. For one hour I have aimlessly floated around in my tub like Diogenes:

'Here it is serious, there it is gay;
Hatred to-morrow where love is to-day;

and still, like Diogenes, I roll around my tub incessantly. O, no answer? I thought the great Goethe would reply for you."

"You still carry about with you that terrible blade," says Sibylla, rising; "but listen to what Goethe says in such a case: 'What satisfies the heart and mind in conversation so much as the noble soul which speaks through the eyes? Comes to me that one yonder with spectacles, I am still! still! for I can not talk common sense with any one through glasses.'"

While Dr. Uhlhart's countenance grows more and more sinister, Sibylla suddenly observes Wulf standing near. He has overheard her last expressions and can not forbear laughing heartily. As every natural laugh is contagious to her, she immediately turns to Wulf, and Uhlhart walks away, piqued. He is perfectly aware that Sibylla will tolerate no innuendoes in her presence.

"You are astonished at our book pedantry and quotations?" said Sibylla. "Ah, well, Dr. Uhlhart and I are somewhat notorious for our Goethe-ism, which, by the by, is the only thing we do agree in. During long, tiresome intermissions we amuse ourselves quoting Goethe to each other. Do you also share in our Goethe worship?"

"Yes, indeed," assented Wulf zealously, inwardly vowing to study the great poet hence forth more than ever.

"And are you familiar with our current literature—I mean, especially, the latest?"

"I regret that I am not," confessed Wulf. "My studies, together with Berlin's innumerable attractions, leave me little time for such things."

He determined, however, to subscribe at once to the nearest library, in order to acquaint himself with this field.

"Pity," laughed Sibylla, "great pity! I should like to guess with you what novel Herr Von Lenkseuring has just read."

"How should we be able to fathom it?" responded Wulf.

"O, very easily. You see, he always deports himself like the hero of the last book he has read. Now, he is the quiet, thoughtful observer; then, again, the prude; now enthusiastic from top to toe; then an especially embittered, misanthropic hypochondriac. He was most lovely when he had read Freitag's 'Debit and Credit.' Then he personated Fink—Fink thoroughly—only it was a pity the nature was wanting to him. But now he must have been reading a romance of chivalry, where the cavalier hero was perfectly *comme il faut*; for only see him: he consumes himself in amiability. If he would only read something else soon! for I am sure he can not hold out very long in this way."

Wulf laughed so heartily that Sibylla contemplated him with genuine pleasure.

"But suppose he had no particular favorite, what *rôle* would he assume?" inquired Wulf eagerly.

"O, I shall rejoice in the day when he will simply play the fool—himself," exclaimed Sibylla. "It is all enigmatical to me," she continued in playful seriousness, "whether, indeed, all his heroes invariably wear brown escarpins; for of Herr Von Lenkseuring it may justly be said: 'Changeable in mind, but true in color.'"

They go to supper. Wulf is happy to escort the beautiful Fraulein Von Herbig. At her left is seated a wealthy gentleman from the provinces, Herr Bolton; *vis-á-vis* Dr. Uhlhart has stationed himself, with the sword always in his eyes. His neighbor is a rosy young, bashful, but pretty *ingènue*, Olga Von Steinfels, who has just made her *entrée* into society this season.

But the richly laden table, nevertheless, represents a veritable famine. Nothing there will stimulate any worthy conversation. It is approached as the *table d'hôte* of a public inn. People sit beside one another as strangers. There is no deep tone of interest, no sign of the true inner life, no pulse-beat of sincere regard. There may be deep spiritual natures among many of those present, but there is no outward manifestation of the same. One is beautifully nourished here upon the superficiality of society's higher grade; one presents a pleased expression of countenance, is immeasurably friendly toward others; but not one single golden word will be uttered: all will be false coinage continually.

Host and hostess are amiability and kindness personified; but while they are able to entertain a company which has no immediate connection with the family, comprising for the most part strangers bound together by no ties of sympathy, they can not impart to it any warm, intimate domestic tone; and they have no desire to do so. The guests are received inwardly and outwardly in the parlor. Family rooms are not shown. Perhaps, indeed, there are none; they are all empty and bare, to serve the purposes of "society."

Lady Von Kahring is an admirable person to revive a drooping conversation.

It has occurred to her at this time to project a splendid bazaar for the benefit of the poor. She, herself, will direct every thing. The young ladies shall paint and embroider; influential wealthy people have already promised their assistance. The court-decorator shall have charge of the decorations; gentlemen will buy; there will be a raffle, a lottery; and other attractions can be added, which will fill the treasury.

Every body is in ecstasy over it. Lady Von Kahring has acquired for herself the reputation of having the interests of the poor at heart; but the need has risen to such an oppressive height during this Winter, she argues, that the work must be taken up more thoroughly and systematically by all the noble ladies, as an example that they shun no duty or sacrifice.

A playful expression of incredulity may be seen in Sibylla's face; but she bites her lips in order to conceal the tell-tale smile.

Wulf is a novice concerning bazaars. They appear wholly commendable to him. He can not, therefore, understand Sibylla's want of interest, and quietly asks the reason.

"It is wicked, but I can not help it. I see, in my mind's eye, Herr Von Lenkseuring, as its good genius, capering around every booth. O, if he had only wings to bear up such a praiseworthy

enterprise wholly! And then I think how charming we shall all be as importunate sales-ladies in white or heavenly-blue costumes. Please, Herr Ericksen, do not fail to buy something from me. When we bring to the good deed so much self-sacrifice, you must not hold back!"

Wulf is bewildered. What kind of a girl is this Fraulein Sibylla?

But Lady Von Kahring and other elderly ladies deliberate long and earnestly over the affair. It has so many sides, and has already reached a culminating point. Many of the managers rejoice when they see in their mirrors that night persons who belong to the noblest and most magnanimous of their kind. Indeed, a maiden lady who is distinguished for her spirituality, already expresses herself with holy unction concerning the "work in the Lord's vineyard," which no one dares to evade.

"I am also a worker in the vineyard," exclaims Herr Bolton, as he empties a glass of wine as fast as Sibylla refills it.

Wulf hears the shameful blasphemy with burning heart and head. He would resent it, but even more shocking is it to him when Sibylla looks upon the man with smiles.

"Fraulein Sibylla, how can you suffer such audacity?" he says reproachfully, adding: "He addressed that remark to you."

"What would you? With wolves one must howl or——" and Sibylla grew serious as she continued: "Do you imagine this Philistine, so near to me and yet so remote, knows that he has uttered any thing unbecoming? He thinks he had made a *bon mot*. No; I should hesitate to begin a contest here. The fundamental rule of society is never to disagree with any one."

Wulf pressed his hand to his forehead, thankful that he had escaped committing an unpardonable offense.

"When I contend," continued Sibylla, "it must be worth the while. Besides, with such a one as that—the spirit has flown, the dregs remain!"

Dr. Uhlhart had followed the lively conversation between Sibylla and Wulf with the closest attention. Unfortunately he has not been able to catch much of it, as he is obliged to give a share of interest to his fair neighbor, who timidly offers an occasional remark. He has become accustomed to regard Sibylla as his especial companion at these evening parties, because she was the only one sympathetic, gifted person on intellectual equality with him. He was far too clever to feel satisfied with society's beaten track; its hollow intercourse, inward deceptions, etc., disgusted him, although he was a participant in them. His disagreeable manner repulsed most people, and he revenged himself by keeping every body at arm's length as far as possible. He was, indeed, unusually talented, but his immeasurable self-conceit caused him to make the most imperious pretensions. A premature knowledge of the world, together with a good share

of self-indulgence, had not tended to make him very amiable. The world, therefore, either ignored or avoided him. This galled him, and laid an encrusted hate upon his heart, out of which stone the water of human love and kindness seldom sprang.

Sibylla was the only one who could perform this miracle. So beautiful an objector, and one with so keen an intellect, was rarely found among women. These qualities, added to a long acquaintance, enabled her to comprehend this hard and yet weak heart. But her pride towered high over the domination which Uhlhart at times endeavored to exert, and she had an especial delight in showing him that she was free from his influence. She realized her power over him and his dependence upon her—weaknesses which no true woman will suffer; and she inwardly detested the man whom she could twine around her finger, and who trembled before her. But she enjoyed Wulf's fresh personality. It amused her to see with what undisguised pleasure he enjoyed things which had grown wearisome and insipid to her; and Wulf not only delighted in her lively conversation, but every thing he experienced was heightened in attractiveness and interest by her assistance, she seemed to have such a true, clear view of people and their surroundings.

But to return to our company. Dr. Uhlhart had made the unwelcome discovery that Sibylla was not troubling herself about his dark, disapproving glances. He therefore decided to begin an interesting conversation with his little neighbor, Olga Von Steinfels. He was confident he could talk well; but what was the trouble? She is quite taciturn now, and he can not fail to observe that she only turns to him occasionally, while heart and ear are fixed upon Wulf, who, having once addressed her, is rewarded with a blush and sustained attention. Dr. Uhlhart bites his lips. What does he care for such an upstart? But he will not permit any one to detect his discomfiture.

Herr Bolton is now conversing animatedly with Sibylla upon sheep's-wool. He seems to think that war and peace, Winter and Summer, exist solely for his wool. "I and my wool," "My wool and I," are the two poles around which the earth revolves. Sibylla is politely attentive, although she is scarcely aware of what he is saying. But he is interesting to her as an example of the race of genuine Philistines, who, in every thing that happens, find only material for the aggrandizement of their own little selves, and in this instance whose highest interest culminates in the rocking risks of a wool-dealer's cradle.

Wulf listens to the conversation devoutly for some time, until it becomes apparent that Sibylla is only carrying on a lively banter with the self-important wool-merchant, and he can scarcely refrain from laughter.

Arnold Von Kahring has been sitting at the extreme end of the table. The cloth having been removed, he hastens to Sibylla. Wulf is somewhat surprised to find that the young baron does not appear to observe him.

"You seem to be enjoying yourself very much, Fraulein Sibylla."

"Why should I not?" she replies.

"There is such a charming simpleton here, and therefore, as usual, plenty of laughter," interjects Dr. Uhlhart sarcastically.

"And would you condescend to observe such a one?" retorts Sibylla pertly.

At this juncture the clock is observed, and the discovery made that it is high time for the company to disperse—a fact that had been ignored too long on account of the agreeable intercourse. The host and hostess beg every one to remain; but, difficult as it may be to separate, this is impossible; so they exchange compliments and depart, as they came, strangers to one another. They sought nothing, and found it.

But has no one lost any thing?

Host and hostess have made their final courtesies at the door. The latter sinks exhausted into an arm-chair, while the former draws a profound breath of relief and exclaims:

"Thank God, the drudgery is over. I thought they would stay forever!"

"Wurtzel, I entreat you," whispers the wife, shuddering, "do be still. They will hear you; they are not out of the hall yet."

With a gesture of horror Herr Wurtzel checks himself.

Let us accompany to their homes some of the well-known guests.

Wulf has not been able to recover himself altogether in his small apartment. He is still in the glittering salon, and finds it difficult to rid himself of its gay impressions. But when his solitary life at the beach recurs to him, he can not refrain from instituting a comparison between his mother's humble cottage and this elegant mansion. What a contrast! The one so poor, the other so rich! How happy he is to have learned to know all these great people. It is true he had not witnessed their deeds; but had he not heard their conversation, their plans and resolutions, which inspired him with enthusiasm? Wulf reflects upon all this, and then rejoices that Sibylla has been invited on the morrow to the Kahrings. No one else has interested him so much.

But Arnold Von Kahring is wondering how he can give Wulf a sleep-potion, to render him unfit for society during the coming twenty-four hours. There was a time when he preferred him to all others, but to-day Wulf is not only intolerable, but very much in his way.

Herr Bolton, the merchant, is soon fast asleep, resting as sweetly on his downy bed as if he lay upon his darling wool-sacks. He dreams of the latter, and then the sack is transformed into a head, which bears the resemblance of Fraulein Sibylla Von Herbig.

Olga Von Steinfels can not find rest. She sits by an open window, thinking of all the romances of princes, cavaliers and heroes that she has read. The best and handsomest to her mind is Herr Ericksen. How pleasantly he had spoken to her, more pleasantly than any one else—or had any one else spoken to her at all?

Lady Von Kahring is considering the preparations for her entertainment on the morrow. So many bottles of champagne must be ordered, and so much fire-wood for the open hearth. When she reckons the number of guests and the amount of gas to be consumed, both of these orders must be increased. With such thoughts she falls asleep, and in her dreams the wood has been ignited, and her house can not be saved with the precious bottles of champagne.

Dr. Uhlhart is still sitting in a drinking-saloon. He seldoms returns home before morning. He can not sleep until then. He is angry with all the world—O no! he is too *blasé* for that; he despises it. The voice of his soul echoes his favorite blasphemous verse:

"In the ocean of my life,
Rocks and whirlpools I defy;
My own *self's* the guiding star;
My own *self's* the God on high."

And Sibylla? Well, she is just Sibylla.

VII.

"Better to be a little wise than in knowledge to abound;
Better to teach a child than toil to fill perfection's round;
Better to sit at a master's feet than thrill in a listening state;
Better suspect that thou art proud than be sure that thou
art great."—GEORGE MACDONALD.

To-morrow the college will close. The Summer vacation lay before Wulf like a blank, unwritten page. An enjoyable Winter and a delightful Summer lay behind him. Parties and balls, picnics and concerts in their turn—the Summer had been somewhat more quiet than the Winter; and

this was fortunate, as Wulf could not neglect his severe studies; and he had recently worked so diligently to keep his grade that he felt quite satisfied with his progress.

Something else, therefore, is the cause of contracting wrinkles in his forehead. His rent had been reckoned with other expenses, and while he counted the balance of ready money, he discovered, to his annoyance, that he had expended far too much. He might have economized more, he must confess, for even in the society life in which he moved there was not a very great pecuniary drain upon young men; but it brought with it, naturally, some gift obligations, and these Wulf had dispensed with greater liberality than his circumstances permitted. What was to be done? It could not continue any longer, but it would be difficult to forsake the beaten track and walk in a private path. Wulf looked out of the window, and saw some of his happy comrades pass along the street. Diplomas in hand, they are going out into the wide world. How beautiful it will be in the Tyrol, in Switzerland, in Italy! But he must deny himself the pleasure of travel for want of sufficient means to defray expenses; and then in the light of a reproving conscience, he asks himself honestly: "Do I deserve this recreation after my year's work?" Seldom and brief have been the letters to his mother. How little he has thought of those nearest to him! And yet a home is there still, and friends who love and think of the distant one. Here at Berlin every body is going away, and no one inquires about his going or remaining; but——

Among the crowd of people hurrying by, Wulf sees no more of them. His eye skirts the distance, and reflects the blue sea, with the gulls flying over its billows. Yonder stands the lowly cottage, with its brown thatched roof; at the window the form of his mother, waiting patiently for her son. Wulf throws himself upon a couch and buries his face in his hands.

Upon another day he is hastening home. The last stretch of the way lies behind him. Evening approaches as he nears the end of his journey. The surroundings become more and more familiar; old recollections are awakened; every thing rises up before his footsteps as a sunken world. There is the beach, the home-beach, the very one on which he formerly spent his turbulent desires. On the strand lie boats—even his own is there. And now the windows of the little cottage where he once dwelt glisten in the sun's departing rays; the simple garden, with its hollyhocks and four-o'-clocks, is just the same; every thing unchanged but himself.

The first greetings are over. The joy of reunion was great—so great that few words are spoken. Wulf sees his mother gazing lovingly upon him. Yes; she has grown older. Is it excessive care that has whitened her locks so much? And the mother would read in Wulf's face whether he is still her honest, unstained son.

"Wulf, you look pale. Have you studied too hard?"

"No, mother; but naturally one is more within doors at Berlin than here. I still look dark there, compared with others."

Karen has observed her brother from all sides, and asks:

"But what do you have such fine linen for? and such a fine hat?"

Wulf blushes.

"Yes, Karen; one must dress differently there. But that is nothing."

The mother announces supper.

"We have only oatmeal," she says. "I did not know you were coming."

"Mother, I am so glad; it is so long since I have eaten any porridge."

Soon the humble repast was served, and Wulf did full justice to it; but yet it was not agreeable for him to see how Karen held her spoon and how old Peter ate.

The supper ended, all sat by the door, and the neighbors came to greet Wulf heartily. He is very happy, and relates stories of Berlin, to which all listen with open mouths. Even his mother feels a certain additional respect for him to hear that he has really seen the king several times, although it seems rather incredible that he has not seen his golden crown. A king without a crown! No; she knows better. Wulf talks well. Even old Peter lays aside his nets and listens to the marvelous tales. At times he shakes his head doubtfully; and even for days after refuses to believe wholly, without some token more visible to his senses.

A few days afterward Wulf called upon Captain Nielsen and his daughter, who had been visiting their pastor. Alas! Ingeborg had only grown paler and more feeble; but her deep blue eyes had gained, if possible, in expression. She knows much of Wulf's life and efforts; for the Kahrings had but recently left the beach, and she had been a great deal with them.

Once more the days pass as of old in Frau Ericksen's cottage; but there is sunshine within, now that her son has returned. Yes; he is a good boy, and has begged his mother's forgiveness for having written so seldom. He desires to help her every way, but she declines with: "There is so little to do, and you must study, and not spoil your hands."

He tries to work, but there are many lonely, unoccupied hours. During these times he takes Ingeborg out on the water. It is a pleasure for the sturdy fellow to test his strength with the oars, to battle with the winds and waves, and master them.

On Sundays, all rest by attending Church.

"You go to Church every Sunday at Berlin?" inquires the mother by the way.

This question has been dreaded for some time. It might afford her joy to hear him say, "Yes;" but Wulf, true to his nature, frankly says: "Only occasionally."

"Occasionally? Why not always?" is the astonished reply. "What, then, do you do on Sundays?"

"I study—or else do not much of any thing."

"I have thought," continued the mother, somewhat constrainedly, "it might be well for you to study your catechism again."

"Mother, you don't understand," replied Wulf finally. "One learns to consider many other things if one is clever. Prayer, for example——"

"O, never mind," interrupts Karen. "You are too clever for us."

Wulf would continue the controversy; but Ingeborg's gentle voice adds:

"Wulf wants to prove every thing; but yet, after all, isn't it lovelier to attend Church on Sunday mornings in this way?"

They had now reached the little, unpretentious house of God. The bell was ringing through the clear air, and from all directions people in neat attire were entering.

It was a beautiful sight, and Wulf nodded assent to Ingeborg's question, and said: "You are right." In the evening he read willingly a selection from a volume of sermons; but his thoughts were far away, and he was heartily glad when the "Amen" was reached.

Wulf rarely went out with his mother and sister. After the first pleasure of seeing them again was over, he could not conceal the fact that they had remained unchanged. It had been so different in his own case that, involuntarily, he had expected progress among those at home. But a kind of petrifaction seemed to lie over this corner of the earth. The few Summer guests, with their gay attire, were like the day-flowers which sprang up between the rocks; they did not take root here, and were soon gone. But beneath the rocks rushed living springs, of which Wulf had no knowledge, and therefore were undiscovered. He was always dissatisfied here, and time went on crutches. His life-work, which mightily stirred him, was absent. He was no longer congenial to his old acquaintances, and they had become as narrow to him as a garment outgrown. And while he could regard his mother's employment with genuine respect, and recognize the superiority of her simple, homely faith, he could not share her life and opinions.

He loved to stroll on the beach alone. Was he happier now? Had he attained his desires? It could not be denied that he was richer in knowledge; but did the feeling never present itself that there was something wanting to his life? What was it? Something that his mother and those around her possessed in common. Was it their religious faith? Never; for that was only fit for close-sighted people. Was it the constant study attendant upon his profession? No; he enjoyed this labor. What was it, then? He could not tell. Was it, then, the stirrings within of conscience?

"Happiness, happiness," thought Wulf; "how shall I win it? Will it bow down graciously before me? or must I attain it by ardent endeavors over rough paths? Which form will it take?"

He threw himself on the sea-sands, closed his eyes, and meditated long; but the meditation was only dreaming, in which happiness appeared to him white and glistening, accompanied by charming melodies. She sat at his feet, and sang sweet songs of love and pleasure. "Sibylla," murmured the dreamer; and then the siren sang more confidently, laying her hand upon his arm while the tones grew stronger. Suddenly he awoke. What was that? The bands of the dream were broken; the reality appeared before his astonished gaze. He had lain down in a place which the flood-tide covered. Lightly the waters were rising and approaching him, intoxicating their victim with the spirit of music, in order the more surely to destroy him. He had awakened just at the critical moment. He felt the cold water rippling about his neck, and with one bound he was in a place of safety. Why did he look with such terror upon the clear water? Was it the sudden shock that held him spell-bound?—for it is no small matter to have death so near. Ah, no; Wulf was not thinking of death. Other and, to him, even graver thoughts moved him. Was this dream, then, a vision of his future? Should happiness approach him with ensnaring flatteries, only to destroy him? It was thoughts like these that stirred Wulf's soul as he slowly sauntered home some hours later.

At a fashionable bathing resort in the mountains we find Lady Obrist Von Herbig and her daughter Sibylla. The latter, with her burning thirst for freedom, evinces her enjoyment in her beaming face. She is like a bird set free from its cage. Now she is with nature, which is so beautiful no language can describe it, and which only persons of deep appreciation can perceive.

Was Sibylla happy? There was, indeed, not wanting to her that pure joyfulness which nature bestows as a heritage; but she did not live in an atmosphere that called the gift into full exercise. She was not wholly free; her mother is near, and any opposition to her wishes was unthought of. Just at this moment the latter, a stout little woman, is seated on the veranda of one of the bathing-houses. A school director from the provinces is beside her. His attenuated figure looks as if it had been hewn out of wood; his forest of white hair stands high and bristling, and his long arms gesticulate with solemn profundity. Report says he is an author. Conversation between the two is fashioned upon pedagogic questions.

"These are dangerous principles upon which the youth of the present are shaped," announces the school-man pathetically.

"O, the young girls!" exclaims Lady Von Herbig. "Only look at them! Where is nature? These artificial frizzes! These frivolous engagements! Instead of being like flowers, they dress like canary-birds."

"The emancipation of women," continues the pedagogue, heedlessly, "is the root of all evil; this false self-reliance, this independent judgment, this free-and-easy manner, while young girls should consider it rather their first duty to assiduously avoid every thing bizarre in their behavior."

"Where is poetry? Always to be found in a sensitive heart! Nature is banished!" Lady Von Herbig interjects, vainly endeavoring to keep her companion to the text. "Nature must be restored; æsthetic pictures, nowadays, present womanliness as more perfect than consecration to the reality."

Both agree, and rejoice over their mutual intellectuality. Be assured, on the next morning Lady Von Herbig will purchase a red gilt-edged book, the latest work of the school director.

Sibylla sits alone, with busy pencil. She has written the following in her journal: "How beautiful it is to lead a do-less, easy, enjoyable life! Mornings, paint a little; at noon, partake of a fine dinner, a nap; then reading, walking, or bathing, or a concert, etc.; a plate of strawberries with sour cream; reveling enough; then a comfortable bed. All earnest thoughts rest in the lumber-room of my brain. If I could only have my own way, and enjoy nature! The woods appear to be very beautiful; but my fondest desires go out to the fresh, sparkling, rushing mountain springs, for which I long every morning, and dream! There my life could have full play. Ah! the sunshine amid the leaves, and—the air! But I am in a rendezvous of the *beau monde*; a great decorated hall, where music is playing, ladies promenading in elegant toilettes and banged hair. Gentlemen sit reading newspapers, smoking, and playing at cards. There are amusing people, too,—one exceedingly handsome Hungarian with the physiognomy of a gypsy; a stout major is continually passing me with a conscious *élan* of presence, his steps taken with dancing precision. That appears to be the highest attainment in life here. It is too comical to see all the gentlemen walking in this way, while their eyes are either centered upon the gaming-table or seeking a pair of more beautiful eyes among the ladies. In the morning it is dancing for a Church; yesterday they danced for relief to a city where there had been a conflagration. There is no calamity too great but they are ready to dance for it. O, and the people seem to regard music as something to be seen, not listened to; for it only affords opportunity for increased conversation. But the best folks here are the children: they are worth looking at. Near every little spring is found a group of little ones, so quaint and pretty, in their simple, national costumes. On the whole, I prefer this place to Berlin; and tiresome city people I need to see only at a distance. I wonder whether Solomon, after he obtained possession of his wise heart, ever found any thing that was particularly wearisome? I am reading a very intellectual English

romance in three volumes, Herder's 'Ideas of Humanity,' and Rosencrans's 'Psychology of the Subjective;' and I am still able to enjoy what is good, whether I find it in a plate of strawberries or a beautiful fir. To think upon the good in every thing keeps one always fresh in spirit, and is best, I think."

The postman now approached Lady Von Herbig, and gave her letters. Sibylla was not curious, and remained quietly resting in her place. A vehement movement and a light cry, however, brought her quickly to her mother's side.

"No! is it possible one has lived to see such a thing?" exclaims Lady Von Herbig in great indignation. "It is revolting, atrocious!"

"What has happened?" asks Sibylla, calmly. A long experience enables her to know that these outbursts of her mother have never any real and sufficient foundation.

"What has happened? O, she was always a singular person; but her family never should have permitted this!"

"Has any one been betrothed against your will?" asks Sibylla.

"To be betrothed is the destination of young women, and every one who fails to make a man happy in domestic life fails in her calling," is the frigid reply.

Sibylla turns away. It is impossible for her to believe that marriage is the sole destination of a woman; but she would not controvert her voluble mother, and starts to go away.

"Sibylla, my sweet child, thank God it is something you would never do," cries Lady Von Herbig, impetuously; and fearful least her daughter should leave before she could tell her, she adds quickly: "Fraulein Theodora Von Kahring has gone to a cholera hospital, to nurse patients there. Of course she can have no communication whatever with her family, nor, indeed, with any one in the entire outer world. In a word, she might as well be in a convent. O, this exalted fanaticism!"

Sibylla received the news in astonishment; her lips were compressed in passionate agitation. What was passing through the mind of this proud young woman? After a slight pause she remarks:

"No, the charge of fanaticism can never be laid to Theodora; on the contrary, she is really calm and cold-hearted."

Lady Von Herbig continued to read her letter: "'The cholera rages at Berlin. All the best families have left the city. The Kahrings remain in a most incomprehensible manner.' How can they permit their daughter to sacrifice herself in this manner? I should never expose my daughter so; and we, too, must not remain here long. *My* daughter would never compromise me in this way."

"*My* daughter" at this moment is seated again before her journal, staring upon the lines she had just written: "How beautiful to lead a do-less, easy, enjoyable life!" She had not penned this in any momentary impulse; it was the impression of her soul. But she did not refer to the *dolce far niente* of a fashionable watering-place, but to the entire present life. And yet here had been one young woman not only able to look with contempt upon the proprieties of conventionalism, but who had been strong enough to break these little bands, and to perform a clearly recognized duty. "Something you would never do!" These words rang continually in Sibylla's ears. "No; I should never do it," she said in her frank way; "I am too cowardly, too conservative, too proud for that. O, to nurse such patients, how horrible! No, I should never do it!"

But why was Sibylla unable to rid herself of these words? She would gladly do so. Was it the power of their truth from which she could not escape? And yet she had simply replied to her mother's lamentation over this unheard-of action: "No, I should be too useless for any such service." Whereupon Lady Von Herbig raised her hands in horror as she looked upon her lovely daughter. She desired to say something else but contented herself with: "You must always contradict me, even if you do not mean it." Then she went off to write letters to the more congenial spirits who did not continually oppose her.

Sibylla was silent, but could not banish Theodora from her thoughts. She had recently seen her rarely, as the much older girl did not appear in society. But now she was constantly present before Sibylla. "When I return to Berlin, I shall seek out this Theodora. She shall be my friend; of this I am determined," was her firm resolve.

VIII.

"He that leaves out of this brief life eternal blessedness, deceives himself and builds upon the 'Rainbow.'"—FREIDANK.

Wulf has returned to Berlin. His heart beats high, and it seems to him as though he had just arrived home—his real home—to visit. He greets his books as old friends, and is delighted to be with them again. As he steps to the window and looks down on the variegated, active life-picture below, he feels himself a part of it. And all the dwellings around about, in which thousands of lives pulsate—how much joy and happiness they may conceal for him! They are both there, and it only remains for him to knock at the doors to find them.

But first he will seek happiness in work. Without being fully aware of it, he has learned much during the past few weeks. His mother's and sister's faithful discharge of duties has not been

without its influence upon him. He is almost ashamed of himself when he compares his efforts with theirs. The world Wulf has indeed inhaled; but there is a good kernel in the boy, for he is his mother's son.

His work renewed, Wulf seeks his old friends, and before he is conscious of it he is again swimming in the current of society's tempestuous waters.

It is all just as of old—so attractive, so brilliant! People greet Wulf as one they had seen but yesterday. They inquire indifferently of his travels; in fact, they have not missed him. Has he become any more unworthy by having visited his home friends? Why is he cut with such cool recognition? A loadstone lies upon him to-day, and he feels himself a stranger among those he well knows. Conversation is carried on concerning the news of the day, what such a noted tenor sings, or such a celebrated actor plays. Wulf is not yet *en rapport* with the times, and can not therefore join in it. Interesting matters are stirring in which he has no share. Has every body changed, or has he become different?

Yet there are several persons to whom Wulf's *entrée* is especially interesting. Olga Von Steinfels is only too much gratified to see him again, and the place suddenly becomes attractive to her because he is present. How long her eyes have sought in vain for his manly form and bronzed face! What a sensation thrills her to think how this young man might influence her poor little life!

But he is seeking Sibylla, the undisputed queen, as usual, of all assemblies.

It is said of the rainbow that if it remained stationary a quarter of an hour we should never care to look upon it. Sibylla can not, therefore, be a rainbow, but rather a star, which one loves the more, the longer one beholds it. And yet, outwardly, she resembles the rainbow, with its continued changes of form and color, more than the quiet star.

Finally Wulf has an opportunity to approach her; but she greets him as curtly and lightly as ever; and the fact that she immediately begins a lively conversation with him is for the purpose of ridding herself of a disagreeable chatterer whom she will not permit to lead his prey so easily as he solicits.

"May I be allowed to escort Fraulein Sibylla to supper?"

"Thank you, I am engaged," she replies, coldly.

Dr. Uhlhart is standing near. He knows Sibylla well enough to be assured that she is not telling the truth. And now supper is announced, and the couples begin to form. He approaches her with, "May I be permitted?" offering his arm.

Sibylla is exasperated. Is she then so bound to him that he is able to wield her as he wishes? Proudly and haughtily she replies:

"Has not Dr. Uhlhart been standing near enough to hear that I am already engaged?"

The doctor bit his lips and stepped back, as Sibylla looked him steadily in the eye.

Wulf has heard nothing of all this, having been engaged in conversation with a professor. As the couples begin to pass out to the supper-room, Sibylla looks anxiously around for a rescuer. If only some old gentleman would come, with whom she could go informally. Uhlhart stood with sneering smile, enjoying her discomfiture. Wulf has just observed her; has she no escort? The next instant he is at her side, and she has taken his arm, the two bringing up the rear of the procession. Wulf's act had been so quick in perception that Sibylla made a remark she would have done to no one else. Her face beaming with pleasure, she exclaimed, "O, you have saved me!" and thereupon related her embarrassment. Wulf was happy—yes, delighted; and Sibylla permitted him to escort her when it pleased her.

Dr. Uhlhart observed the two with disapproving glance, and his heart nursed bitter thoughts.

Arnold Von Kahring also observed how happy Sibylla seemed to be with Wulf, and over his countenance flashed an ugly expression; but Arnold was an enemy no one need fear.

At table, chance placed Olga Von Steinfels and Herr Von Lenkseuring *vis-à-vis* to Sibylla and Wulf. The latter chafed inwardly to hear the exaggerated compliments which Lenkseuring paid to the poor child beside him, who appeared to lend a too willing ear. He well knew it was Olga's fortune, not herself, that the flatterer loved, and he pitied the poor girl. But why should he care?

At this moment Lady Von Kahring, who was always an authority in spiritual matters, turned the conversation to a young clergyman who had been attracting general attention. He had introduced high liturgical views, and now the question was whether this kind of divine service would be acceptable to the Berlin Churchmen. While the different *pros* and *cons* were being advanced, Sibylla suddenly turned to Wulf and asked if he did not wish to defend the absent clergyman. He excused himself, and Sibylla continued: "You have surely admired our beautiful church from without?"

"Both from without and within. I have attended service there several times," replied Wulf.

"Ah, indeed!" she said somewhat satirically, and without waiting for further explanation she added with animation: "I am no friend of the Roman Catholics, but their custom of keeping their churches open daily is one I envy, especially if they be beautiful ones. With us no one can enjoy a beautiful church without taking with it a tiresome preacher."

Wulf looked up approvingly. He had often indulged the same sentiment; but he asked:

"Are all preachers, then, tiresome?"

"Naturally."

He was obliged to laugh at her frankness; but he inquired whether she ignored all the pleasure of divine service. Sibylla was silent a moment, then said:

"No, largely, and I may say on the whole, there is a certain churchly festivity there. The number of people assembled, the strangeness of the place, the organ music, and the singing, all these contain elements calculated to elevate; but the services should be shorter and more beautiful and artistic."

"For the ordinary person, the common people, this would be of little value," ventured Wulf.

"Do you think so? O, I am sure that art is not without its influence upon every body."

"But, I ask, how many people there are who have lost all sentiment for the beautiful? Do you not observe how every workman, every tradesman, undervalues it in his anxiety to make money in these realistic times?" interjected Wulf.

"When a child has heard and seen nothing of his mother for years, he may forget her for a time," said Sibylla, deeply moved; "but bring the child back to her, do you not think his natural love will be reawakened, and he will fare nowhere so well as in his mother's arms?"

"Nowhere so well?" reiterated Wulf. "Shall not, then, religion satisfy the ordinary man or woman best?"

"Try it," replied Sibylla, curtly; "and as certainly as we prefer joy to pain, just so surely will art make life joyous, and religion render life gloomy. I hesitated a long time to which I should give the preference," she added in a subdued voice, "art or Christianity; but I hesitate no longer. I feel that I am formed for happiness and I intend to enjoy life."

"You are in error," responded Wulf earnestly, "and you do not understand the essence of true art. Art and religion are intimately connected."

"I thought so once," interrupted Sibylla, "and for a long time sought to unite the two; but the fundamental ideas of religion contradict the essence of art."

"Both bring to greater perfection; both strive for harmony," persisted Wulf.

"O, I think," continued Sibylla, "art will do more than make people merely virtuous. That she can not and does not do; but she permits people to be happy, and this Christianity never allows. Where does the Bible exhort to pleasure and enjoyment? 'Deny thyself,' 'Thou shalt deny

thyself,' is the everlasting precept. Our minister preaches nothing but self-denial, conflict, and sin, while art encourages happiness at all times."

How beautiful the young woman looked as she uttered these daring words! Wulf was not convinced by the latter, but he was continually attracted toward the fair speaker. Now he said:

"Still in every art lies a struggle for some principle, in order to establish a lofty thought or a spiritual ideal."

"Yes, indeed," responded Sibylla. "When I was at school a pedantic instructor declared to us his conception of the beautiful was 'spiritual substance in a more complete form!' But the thought is still a human thought, and the form not of the life of this world, which, according to the teaching of Christianity is destructive and sinful. Greek art makes the human body its ideal; but what says Christianity? Perishable dust, perishable and corruptible. Beneath a picture of life is the hateful form of death with the moral: Despise the beauty and good of this world; resign them for an uncertain hope in a nebulous future; torment yourself, destroy your dearest wishes—and all for what? For a faith which no one is sure whether it be true or not. We have the gods of the Greeks; their myths and sayings we must throw aside for a new light. Who shall assure us that just such a fate shall not await religion in later times? Every thing changes; one opinion controverts another. Where is truth?"

With increasing astonishment Wulf listened to the excited girl. Then he said:

"But how do you reconcile the thought of the end with happiness? There comes a time when life ceases."

"Is a short happiness then no happiness? Just because life flies so quickly I shall enjoy it. Besides it increases gratitude and praise to the Creator to rejoice in a world he has made so beautiful. I fulfill his will when I am happy."

A pause ensued. The views were new to Wulf; he felt that they were superficial, but he bade them welcome. There still lay in his heart a remnant of godly fear; but he decided to investigate both sides of the question. His studies had often said to him, "God's Word is not true," and life everywhere around cried, "We do not need it." He listened to these voices, but they had not mastered him. Something drew him away from them; but to-day this something was silent. Sibylla had spoken. What to think he scarcely yet knew. She continued:

"Narrow fetters and barriers, rigorous injunctions and commandments, are the methods to torture and embitter men. Art leads to freedom. She is the guiding-star of our intellect and our endeavors; she fills our hearts with her beauty, and remains our consolation in the misfortunes of our greatest calamities."

The supper-table had become deserted. Soon after, the guests separated to their homes. Who carried any thing with him from this company? Whose heart was richer, whose strivings nobler, whose love had grown warmer? Who had found refreshment from business cares? Who had gained one true friend? No one went away richer than he came; but did no one return to his home poorer?

When Wulf entered his chamber, his first glance fell upon a skull which lay on his writing-table. "So will you look in time," said something within loudly. "Then I shall enjoy life, if it be so short," he replied; "for enjoyment is life."

IX

"A long, long time since that voice was heard,
The only one my heart has stirred.
Nothing has thrilled it quite the same,
As the voice for which I long in vain."

—FROM THE GERMAN.

A young woman is hurrying with quick steps through the wintry streets. She has approached the Kahring mansion; but instead of ascending the broad, beautiful entrance, she glides through the garden and up the narrow, little steps in the rear, asking, upon answer to the bell:

"Is Fraulein Theodora Von Kahring at home?"

The servant bows assent, and the lady hastens forward as one to whom the place is familiar.

It is Sibylla who enters Theodora's room, evidently not for the first time, as her words of greeting plainly show that Theodora is an intimate friend. Hastily throwing off her wraps, she draws a low stool close to Theodora's sewing-table, and says without further ceremony:

"Do you think every girl should marry in order to be happy?"

Sibylla might have found the answer in Theodora's clear, pleasant face; but the latter looked up smilingly, and said:

"Are you happy in your present condition?"

"No."

"And do you think that an outward change would, of itself, make you so?"

"No."

"I have often," continued Theodora, "endeavored to answer your question, and I have come to the conclusion that an unmarried woman's life need not be joyless because she is single, any more than the life of a woman will be happy on account of having a husband."

"You also think," exclaimed Sibylla, "that the blame lies in myself if I am restless and dissatisfied?"

Theodora hesitated to reply; but Sibylla laid her head on her friend's lap, and said:

"You need not answer; I know all."

It was very still in the room. Did an angel's wings rustle through it?

Then Sibylla talked softly about experiences which her proud heart had never revealed; of her home life; of her mamma, who, although so old, could not pass a single day without some pleasurable excitement; of the throng of visitors that wearied her, and yet must be tolerated because solitude was worse, and they at least amused her; of her discernment of people's follies, which she despised while concealing it; of coming home evenings with a troubled conscience, reading Thomas á Kempis, and praying sometimes; concluding with:

"I can do no more, but it does not relieve me."

Theodora laughed:

"Can not you bring out of your company something better?"

"What then?"

"Discern the good," said Theodora; "for society people also have good, noble sides to their character, and a word is often only necessary to open to us these closed-up treasures."

Sibylla shook her head.

"Society people are all so superficial."

"Or appear so to you," interrupted Theodora. "How do you appear, and what do you give to them? I have heard that Fraulein Von Herbig is the loveliest, happiest of women to count many conquests among gentlemen as a reward for her coquetry. So, you see, there lies a mask upon every one in society, and even the best may not show very often his true self in this circle." After a pause Theodora continued: "Still another thing may be learned here—compassion for the weaknesses of people, compassion which strives to show itself in helpful deeds."

Sibylla winced. To do something—really to do, to bring sacrifice! That a Theodora might accomplish, whose most agreeable employment seemed to be able to supply a need. A flood of

thoughts passed over Sibylla; feelings asserted themselves whose existence had always been disclaimed. Suddenly she asked Theodora:

"Have you ever loved?"

A slight blush suffused Theodora's face; she understood the question.

"Could you love?" pressed Sibylla.

"Never—or always," was the answer.

"Tell me your life-history," entreated Sibylla; and, to her own astonishment, the reticent Theodora complied with this wild girl's request, who, half kneeling before her, looked up with her great eyes full of expectation.

"This will be only for you to know," said Theodora.

Sibylla assented, as one that could be trusted.

"Do not expect any detailed story," began Theodora. "I will tell you in a few words how it happened that my life is so different from the rest of our fashionable family. I know you must have often wondered at it.

"I am my father's eldest child. I have never known my mother, as she died soon after my birth. My father traveled extensively, and I was intrusted to the care of a French *bonne*. When I was six years old my father married again; then there was a mamma, and after a time two children, Arnold and Eugenie. I can tell you very little about my childhood. I believe I was a kind of home-body, who continually bemothered her sister and brother. It is unnecessary to speak of our home-life, except that I often envied Arnold and Eugenie their mother's love; for while she was always good to me, I felt that I stood alone. I had my little troubles, but I need not weary you with them; suffice to say my life and prospects were not the happiest. There were questions I could never answer, since the things that most persons prized as the highest good were worthless to me, and my mind, guided by no careful hand, often struggled beyond the boundary restricted to women, and I knocked boldly at portals which opened only to the wisdom of men.

"Thus I grew to young womanhood. A keen thirst for action possessed me, and as it found no outlet in external channels, it reverted to study. I studied with a real burning hunger. I was soon distinguished as a scholar, although I did not deserve it, and more and more recognized how little I knew. But in spite of all my acquired knowledge, there was a longing in my soul which never was satisfied. Then came—you shall soon know all—a young tutor in the family to give me instruction in a particular branch. Mamma was always opposed to this; but papa wished to gratify me. Sibylla, this young man looked into my being, and saw there a poor soul, which, despite its struggles and acquisitions, cried out for a delivering answer. He gave this answer. We

continued in our position of teacher and pupil; but suddenly there beamed forth from nature, as well as from science, an answer to my unexpressed queries: this answer was God.

"For the first time I learned that Christianity was not in dogmas and forms, but in its life. I learned that a deep Christ-like contemplation of the world elevates to god-like things, that it even awakens and nourishes spirituality in the most unattractive occurrences of every-day life. I recognized that Christianity holds out to us the highest prospect for the future, and that it also teaches us to be diligent in making a proper use of the opportunities afforded us in the present.

"Sibylla, I learned all this; but I learned still more. My youth spread her wings, and flew joyously heavenward. I loved, and I was beloved. Not a word had been spoken; but there was that secret outgoing of one soul toward another, in which we find the harmony of our deepest, innermost life. One day my parents informed me that my studies must be discontinued, as my teacher had asked for my hand. I declared simply that I loved him. He was poor, but his salary at the university would have amply supported us, if we had married; but it must not be.

"Let me pass over what followed. His teachings would have been in vain, if I had not learned to obey the Fifth Commandment. I did not see him again."

"Never?" cried Sibylla.

"Not for a long time. He resigned his position at the university, and accompanied a gentleman to Austria. I never heard from him. O, Sibylla! the conflict in my heart was a terrible one. I desired to do wholly what was my duty, and God helped me, and even gave me new love to my relatives. But one thing I have never done; in this point I could not obey my parents: I could never promise love and fidelity to any other man. But we will come to the end. Three years passed, when there came a letter from one of the city hospitals, it announced that I must hasten thither, as a dying patient desired to see me. I was at home alone. Leaving a note to my father, inclosing the one I had received, I wrote that I might not return home that night. I ordered the carriage. O, Sibylla! I was so restful, not morbidly so, but full of peace. I found my beloved, dying. He had been ill a long time, and had returned to Berlin to die—at home. Home? He had no relatives on earth; but where I was, there was his earthly home. I remained at his side all night. He never lost consciousness for a moment; could speak but little, but he kept his faith to the end, and I was permitted to see with my own eyes how faith in the only begotten Son of God is the victory that vanquishes even death.

"When morning dawned he was in his eternal home. Gladly would I have remained at the hospital to undertake the self-denying, self-sacrificing duties of a deaconess if it had been offered to me. It would have given a purpose to my life; but this was not to be. Still my parents allowed me, thereafter, to conform my life more in accordance with my own will, and I sought from without a mission which was denied me at home. One treasure I held in my hands. My

beloved had bequeathed to me all his spiritual effects—such as essays, letters, his journal, etc.—and I learned much from these. He had a rich soul—rich in love toward every one that needed help.

"I was ill for a year after; no heart sickness—my soul had peace in God—but a physical ailment, which was followed by a painful surgical operation. This remaining scar, I bless God for it, excuses me from the burdens of society life, and I can live quietly here in my little sunny back room, and last Summer I was enabled to enter, as assistant, the hospital which is so full of associations to me. My life is now full of work, but it is also full of joy and happiness—O, full of deep and grateful heart-felt happiness!"

It had grown dark in the room. Sibylla's head lay in Theodora's lap. As she remained quiet and unresponsive, Theodora exclaimed playfully: "She is really asleep!" Lightly stroking her face, she felt it wet with tears.

When the lamp was lighted, Sibylla took a sudden leave, with a sincere "Thank you, thank you;" and before Theodora could hinder it, she imprinted a warm kiss on her hands.

Sibylla read late that evening Goethe's "Knowledge of a Beautiful Soul," and she could not help thinking that Theodora, really and truly, had just such a beautiful soul.

X

"Work! for the field far reaches,
  The laborers' hands are few;
The world's great need beseeches;
  There is something for thee to do.
O, linger not, idly dreaming!
  The golden moments speed;
While the sun's broad rays are streaming,
  The summons to labor heed."

—S. A. STOWE.

The *haute volée* are to-day in a quandary. A highly gifted man has been invited to deliver his lecture entitled "The Shady Side of Modern Culture." His name is distinguished, and his theme an unusual one. When one is daily satiated with honey, a little mustard or caviare is desirable. The large hall is crowded. There is not an empty seat in the crimson plush chairs of the circle. All are eager to hear, from his own lips, this renowned professor's views in behalf of the working

classes, as they had been promulgated in his interesting, original books. He enters, and takes his place behind the speaker's desk, his great, full eyes sweeping over the audience with searching glance. There before him sit those who pass their time in worldly dissipation and sensual enjoyments. There they are, in elegant gowns, fashionable hats, and velvet wraps. There they sit, with happy, contented faces. What matters the rain to them behind their closed windows? In long rows before the hall stand their expensive equipages, for their delicate feet may only tread inlaid floors. What a different picture the speaker has witnessed in his intercourse with the poor! What a contrast! Here luxury, there beggary. He gazes as though he would penetrate the hearts of his hearers. Then he recollects the time has arrived for him to begin to speak; for in one brief hour this assemblage must separate to dress for a party, or they will be too late. If his lips are somewhat bitterly compressed, his heart is even more so when he thinks, "They have little time for the poor, and I must embrace it, to drive, if possible, an entering wedge into their consciences."

With earnest tone he begins: "To the especial glory of Christianity, which we may here designate 'the kingdom of God,' belongs (after its inherent nature) the outward exercise of its sublime calling; that one dominant, universal, regenerating influence which it exerts not only upon solitary individuals, but upon the social life of communities, upon all mutual action in the struggle for gain among men. Christianity is not doctrine alone, but histories, and histories of awakened life, and a life, indeed, that is designed for the cure and regeneration of the old faith."

Then the speaker showed, in a few brief touches, the progress of this kingdom during the past thousand years, which was still far from its end, having to call forth from sin many who were reluctant to be embraced within its fold. He then reverted particularly to the situation at Berlin. How many complaints were heard everywhere over the condition of affairs in the city. But he did not wish to offer denunciation like those, who uttered it only to shake the dust from their feet of this great Sodom-like city, and then depart out of it. He desired to present unbiased facts, gathered after an unprejudiced, critical examination of the lower classes, in order to awaken sympathy in their behalf. Numbers should speak; statistics and police reports testify.

We shall not follow the lecturer step by step, and only extract a statement relating to the condition of Berlin tenements. "In the basements are 11,985 homes, containing 55,942 occupants. Dwellings of four or more stories in height number 7,260, with 31,699 inmates. Besides these, 87,641 persons live in underground cellars. What wretched abodes for body and soul! But further: There are in Berlin 6,228 abodes, consisting of one room, each occupied by six persons; 4,041 rooms, with seven occupants each; 2,328, with eight; 1,160, with nine; 508, with ten; 196, with eleven; 65, with twelve; 43, with from thirteen to twenty occupants in each room. And the picture these numbers reveal," added the speaker, "shows also that 13,771 people have no kitchens; they cook, live, sleep, eat, and often work, in the same room, Winter

and Summer. In the same room where a young life awakens to the light of the world, frequently lies the dead body of another, while the daily employment is pursued in the midst of this death and life. How can such family life prosper?"

But enough. We shall pass over that part of the address in which the speaker begged the assistance and personal services of the rich. One fact may, however, be stated. He imputed to women of all ranks a great part of the blame for the low, depraved condition of many of their own sex. "Your love of luxury," he said, "your expensive apparel, your diversions and pleasures, have eaten downward like poison. Naturally every woman imitates those who occupy a grade above her. Instead of seeking to do noble deeds, women of influence and position look scornfully upon poor fallen girls in their sin and shame. And here it is worth while not to look with resignation for the strong rolling effects of an avalanche, but to work, with consideration and hope, to succor and rescue where this is yet possible."

At length the professor's discourse was ended. It had been followed throughout with breathless interest, even with agitation and emotion.

An hour later we find the greater part of this audience assembled at the residence of Counselor Wurtzel. Most of them had cast off with their garments the effects of the lecture; they were now in full evening dress. But what a welcome theme for conversation the address afforded!

"I must confess," remarked Lady Von Herbig, as she reclined upon a luxurious satin divan, "I find it rather disagreeable to have such dark pictures presented to us. What if one should dream of them at night?"

"Yes; such men usually apply their colors strongly," said Herr Von Lenkseuring; "they are so regardless of the highly strung nerves of the people before them."

A languishing glance of approbation from Lady Von Herbig rewarded the young man, while she lightly fanned herself.

"I do not think it is so bad as he represents," said Lady Von Wurtzel, the hostess. "Certainly one hears and sees nothing of such misery."

"And I maintain," interrupted a lady who rustled in satin, "that it is of little use to arouse desires in such people, which they have never felt. One must always remember that they have been very differently reared from those in our class."

"There lies a democratic sentiment," piped an elderly, prim-looking gentleman, in nasal tones. "It only excites the rabble to pay them so much attention, and gives them a claim to offer complaints. And as for the class of women for whom he interceded, and whom he would have assisted, there is nothing better for them than the whipping-post."

"What do they want of us?" began another society woman. "We have so much to do already; the obligations of our every-day life are so exhausting. I am convinced that the majority of these so-called poor women do not have a tenth part of what is required from us. Our homes, our social duties, our position—O, we have duties to fulfill of which these creatures have not the remotest idea."

"Yes, indeed; that is true," said Wulf, softly. "People become hard through voluptuousness. Visiting becomes duty, dress and finery important affairs."

"You are right," responded Arnold Von Kahring, who stood near. "I am disgusted with this masquerade; but I can do nothing either here in high Olympus, or yonder in the world."

"Papa gives annually a large sum to the Society for the Improvement of the Poor," added a young woman; "if every one did the same, the need would not be worth talking about."

"The Nurembergers hang no one, then they have them," retorted Arnold sarcastically; but the fair maiden did not understand the allusion.

Sibylla had remained silent until now. In spirit she was in sympathy with wretched rooms in which eight or ten human beings were penned together amid life and death. And she asked herself whether art would exercise its heavenly calling in such places, whether it would elevate and console. Her nature was too practical to answer this question affirmatively, and she was too noble to assert it against the truth. Wulf approached her.

"Fraulein Sibylla, what effect has this much-talked-of discourse had upon you?"

"It has exasperated me," she replied.

"May I ask why?"

"Yes, I will tell you. I can not bear to have such misery pictured to me when I am not able to alleviate it. I believe every word is true. The statistics and the professor's honest face affirm this. But, tell me, what is the use of presenting such horrible scenes to me—scenes that make me shudder against my will? I love the blue sky and the sunshine."

"Would it not be possible to help?" asked Wulf.

"On that point the learned professor has not clearly spoken. Evidently he knows no way. But that is what these gentlemen do: they thunder down upon us poor sinners, and then go their way."

"One might call upon him, and ask him direct questions," said Wulf.

"O, you are not in earnest, Herr Ericksen! He would send us on the street with a package of tracts, and say I must wear the dress of a deaconess and wash all the old women's feet. No; we are both, honestly speaking, much too great ease-lovers for that."

Sibylla was right. Impressions had been made on Wulf's heart, but he did not have the moral courage to put them to the test.

"It is terrible to know that twenty or thirty thousand women and girls come to Berlin annually to seek work. Police reports confirm this. I ask you what is to become of them?" said another aristocratic dame.

"Most of them find what they seek," replied the wife of a rich manufacturer. "My husband employs, in his factory alone, over six hundred girls, and their work leaves nothing further to wish for. Their labors are light and they can earn, if they are very diligent, nearly four dollars weekly."

"O, I am glad to hear that!" exclaimed Lady Von Kaiser. "Early this morning the manager of an employment bureau called upon me to beg situations for respectable girls. She has had them under her personal supervision since their confirmation. When they are fourteen years old and ready to help themselves, she finds great difficulty in procuring positions for them. Could not some of these girls enter your husband's factory?"

"My dear," replied the manufacturer's wife, graciously, drawing nearer to the speaker, "I am sorry to say to you, send us no respectable girls. Those in our factory are all fallen."

"But do you make no efforts in their behalf?" exclaimed the kind-hearted baroness, affrighted.

"Could you not, in your position, remedy such a condition of affairs?"

"Thank you!" heartily laughed the informant. "What would you have me do? I told you they are all fallen."

The lecture was also being discussed by the younger people. They talked with great animation, and resolved to take action immediately. Lady Von Kahring was elected chairman, and it was decided not to separate before something was determined upon.

"Our young folks," she said, "have to-day, for the first time, had presented to them a glimpse of misery of which previously they had no conception. With susceptible, tender hearts, they wish to help with all their youth and strength. They declare they will not enter upon dancing until something has been decided."

Her words appeared to give universal satisfaction among the company. To-day a fresh breeze had passed over the stagnant water; but a few older heads were doubtfully shaken.

"Doing and repenting—no, no!" echoed another. "We must first make the necessary inquiries, and gain correct information of the affair."

"We must deliberate slowly," suggested a third. "When we meet again we can decide further."

"Only let there be nothing rash," said a thoughtful voice.

"Enthusiasm is no fish-commodity, which one pickles for a year," came from the rear of the room.

Scarcely any one heard the remark, but Sibylla writhed beneath it, having recognized Dr. Uhlhart's voice. O, how repulsive it was for her to think that she was in accord with him in so many opinions! Had not the very same words entered her own mind that he had just uttered?

The young people seized the word with enthusiasm and became increasingly animated. Soon the opposing element was silenced. Resolution after resolution was passed. "We will hold a lottery;" this was lost. "A bazaar will not be profitable as there have been so many recently."

"How would a masquerade ball do?" suggested a young officer; "admittance two dollars. That would insure a handsome amount."

"No, no; we have just danced for the benefit of poor, starving families," interposed a lady.

A lively discussion followed, in which the object to do good was lost sight of in the endeavor to combine pleasure with it. They from whom the idea of doing good had emanated had never dreamed that they could be deviated in such a way.

Lady Von Kahring still held the chair. Finally it was decided to have *tableaux* in a hall which should accommodate a large circle of acquaintances; admission tickets should be issued at a high rate, and surely no one would refuse to be interested in *tableaux*.

"What do you think will really be the expense involved by those that participate in this affair?" Wulf asked, turning to Sibylla.

"Not less than twenty or thirty dollars apiece," she replied.

"If this amount were only offered now for the good cause," continued Wulf, "we should be taking a speedy step forward."

"Ah! but there would be no enjoyment in that," maintained Sibylla. "O, please let them have this pittance of joy! Don't you see how delightfully they all amuse themselves in the very anticipation?"

"And the unfortunates for whom all this will be done will never be thought of again?"

"Of course not," laughed Sibylla; "and I, too, shall hear no more of them, for I can not help them. Happy is he who can forget when he can not alleviate!"

But what says Herr Bolton, the wool-merchant, all this while? Standing up and clearing his throat, he announces in a loud voice: "Such a laudable undertaking as the one under consideration deserves the co-operation of every worthy person. In view of the expense attendant upon the project, allow me to place in your hand, Mrs. President, the sum of fifty dollars. Please, please no thanks," he added graciously. "I know it, and where these come from there will be more to follow."

Around Sibylla's mouth a scornful smile played. Wulf observed it, and said:

"He seems to be a very worthy person."

"Yes, his worthiness bores me to death," replied Sibylla.

The conversation continued upon the working-classes, social questions, etc. The subject must be an important one to have taken such a hold upon the participants. *Pros* and *cons* were advanced briskly; in general every one seemed to take a pride in the discussion. Wulf said very little. It affected him painfully to see these serious topics treated by those present so lightly and superficially.

"There is a refractory spirit among the common people," said Bolton, petulantly; "they no longer obey, but only make claims."

"Well," interrupted Lenkseuring, who was persevering in his endeavors to converse with Olga, "where are the laws and penalties for such actions? Let them be administered strictly, instead of so carelessly."

"O, I wish," said Sibylla, "the speaker himself could be laid hold of and kept strictly, so that for a year he might not deliver his falsehoods to poor Olga."

Wulf's glance rested upon Olga. She was so young, and appeared so infatuated with that flatterer. If she only had a mother to warn her before it should be too late! Olga's condition grieved Wulf inexpressibly; but he made no reply to Sibylla, who looked at him with surprise.

"Here in the city," remarked the old Baron Von Kahring, "people are worse off than elsewhere. They hear so much about 'man's rights' and their 'claims,' that they make demands which formerly they never dreamed of doing."

"But should these demands be wholly ignored, even if they go beyond the limit?" interposed Lady Von Kaiser.

"Certainly; entirely so," emphasized an old excellenz. "Rest assured, from my personal experience, the common people have every thing they need."

"But there is real want existing."

"O, may be in isolated cases; but what they do not have they never miss. This talking to them only gives knowledge of their deprivations."

"And you must not compare the lower classes with us," said Arnold at this juncture. "They have, indeed, eyes and ears, as we have, but they see and hear very differently."

"Yes, indeed!" flustered Lady Von Herbig; "these working people can not feel the same as we do; they never have great thoughts."

Wulf had listened with increasing indignation. At length he said:

"I beg pardon; but history and experience teach otherwise. Stein, for example, in one of his essays says that nobility is not acquired through birth, but by merit. The most beautiful period of German history knew nothing of hereditary descent. Archbishop Williger Von Mainz was the son of a poor woman, and Duke Billing of Saxony was the son of a possessor of seven hides of land. Please also recollect Fox, Livingstone, Luther, Neander, and many others—they were all poor children."

"O, well, I grant," said the hostess, "that here and there such examples may be found. And when any one such child of the common people does a great deed, we are very willing to overlook the misfortune of his birth."

"Misfortune of birth!" Wulf arose and stepped backward a few paces, his hand reaching toward a chair as if he would hurl it in defense.

"But, madame," said the sharp voice of a young lieutenant, "is it not true that the fact of being one of such children must be very uncomfortable? When innate crudeness comes in conflict with natural refinement, the process of passing from one to the other is best settled by us in complete withdrawal."

Some laughed, others looked embarrassed by these rude words. It had become very still, when Wulf said in a clear, calm voice:

"I am not the man to remain silent under such aspersion. I am a working-man's child. My father was a fisherman, and lived by the labor of his hands, as I have also done."

These words flashed over the assemblage like lightning. Silence fell everywhere.

Many approved Wulf's words, but waited to see their effect upon others. He stood there calmly, while a triumphant expression played over Dr. Uhlhart's face. Suddenly—O, the second terror

was far worse than the first!—suddenly Sibylla arose, walked toward Wulf, extended her hand, and said in a clear, kindly tone: "You are perfectly right."

But the working-man's child did not compromise himself. Instead of cavalierly kissing the proffered hand, he drew himself up as to an equal, and simply said: "Thank you."

XI.

"Whether 'tis evil, or whether 'tis good,
  Done in the day, or in darkness of night,
Even the thoughts that do lie in the heart,—
  All shall be brought to the glare of the light."
—TRANSLATED FROM FREIDANK.

It had been a blow in the face to good society. The misfortune of Wulf's low birth might have been condoned; but the fact of his having so openly, and even defiantly, claimed it as a distinction could not be passed over. The affair, therefore, paralyzed many a mother who had been quietly laying plans to capture the young man. Who would not prefer a pleasant young son-in-law to an old *blasé* standing on golden feet? But this Wulf was discovered to stand only upon his own. Lady Von Kahring was reproached with great venality by society at large. She had introduced him, as well as protected him, under her powerful name, and she had even intimated that he was a wealthy Austrian. Beneath this fine showing, this one and that one had blushed when she thought of him, and how heartily and urgently all, even men, had coveted his presence. But now he must be made to feel his true position.

Of course there were some far-sighted ones who looked into the future, and were not disposed to decry a physician; and there were others who recognized the nobility of Wulf's behavior; but what could these few do in the face of the great majority? Conformity to fashionable usage is a terrible tyrant, but non-conformity is a still greater one. Ericksen was poor, his humble origin evident; therefore he was doomed. Naturally they were too polite to ignore him immediately; but he must occupy a different position. But their sufferance Wulf did not desire. His manhood was aroused—a manhood which refused to bow down before these people. What had they given him that he should render tribute? He wished to tear himself away from them, to turn his back upon them, to require nothing from them as if they were beneath him. Only one pang entered his soul: if he were banished from society, there would be no opportunity to see Sibylla again.

And yet she had evidently sought to encourage him. How she had prevailed upon her lofty-minded mamma to send him an invitation was more than he could guess. Besides, the Baroness Von Kaiser also recognized him most amiably, as well as the Kahrings; for while Lady Von Kahring was fortified with great pride, she and her son did not forget that the fisherman's son had saved two valuable lives in their family. Elsewhere the doors were closed to Wulf, and he no longer craved to have them open. But society was still a friendless circle to him.

The ill-usage a man experiences sharpens his understanding, but embitters the heart. Wulf began to be very unamiable, and to look at every thing with hypercritical eyes. When one stands in a dark corner he can see all the better what goes on in the light. Wulf now observed keenly that fashionable society intercourse was devoid of love and favor, and that while every one carried himself finely and courtly, no one had the courage to appear just as he really was. A large part of the young people were young without youth; what sounded fresh and bright was tiresome and stereotyped—first to slay, then artfully to restore to life. Where had his eyes been, hitherto, that they only saw these people surrounded with glory? Now he observed for the first time that empty heads sat by full tables, and that while the pearls which adorned the lovely forms were genuine, the hair was false. He saw and heard even more. He was convinced that Herr Von Lenkseuring ridiculed the inexperienced Olga, at the same time he was weaving a web around the rich maiden's love.

"Have you caught the gold-fish yet?" a lieutenant was heard to ask Von Lenkseuring.

"It has bitten, but I shall let it wriggle awhile," was the coarse reply.

"Take care it doesn't escape."

Just then Wulf was observed standing near.

"P'st! the fisherman's son!" laughed the lieutenant.

Wulf controlled himself. He was indeed a fisherman's son; but these gentlemen should take heed lest the fisherman's son let the fish out of the net. He approached Olga Von Steinfels. In his bold, frank way, he said earnestly:

"Fraulein, beware of Herr Von Lenkseuring: he means no good to you."

The style of his warning was not commendable, but it scarcely deserved the treatment it received. The young woman blushed deeply, and without a word turned her back upon Wulf. Dr. Uhlhart had seen the proceeding. Perhaps he divined the cause. He enjoyed interpreting things falsely. It was now only a short time before all sorts of unseemly and regardless things were repeated, which Herr Ericksen had perpetrated. Many believed too readily these buzzing rumors in the air, as confirmations that low birth and low inclinations went hand-in-hand. It is marvelous how like a serpent creeps a wicked, calumniating word from place to place; one can

not catch it, but the poisonous breath it spreads around an unfortunate person is evident. And Wulf soon perceived this venom, without knowing whence it came. Always earnest, he devoted himself to his studies. True, the ideal of his professional calling was removed far from him. So demoralizing had life been to him on account of his experiences with the want of integrity and human love, that his ambition to become a celebrated physician, in order to relieve suffering by his skill, had been dispelled. The ideas which formerly animated him were now repulsive, and stood like good spirits lamenting in the distance. Besides this, a formidable enemy approached Wulf. It was materialism. He could not reconcile the intuition which science gave him with the fundamental principles of Christianity as he had learned them at home. He gave to materialism, which raises its head high to the student of medicine, a sacred, prominent place, second to Christianity. If he had only possessed the true spirit of the latter, it would have comforted and calmed him; but it was only a vague, empty shadow. God, Christianity, immortality, gradually became to Wulf vain, hollow words. While he still battled for them against the advancing enemy, and only desired to know the truth, he was continually entangled by them. Science had not informed the young, vigorous student how to interpret those deep watchwords in the controversy.

Olga Von Steinfels sat in her room. She had now been two years from boarding-school and into society. As an uncontaminated lady she had returned to her father's home. Childhood had been outgrown. Why had she pursued so many hundred studies? Why had she continued French and English so long, if not to show their utility in society? And yet a good genius had folded its pinions around Olga, in order that the allurements of pleasure and the fascination of wealth might not harm the susceptible maiden. This good genius had been a love for Wulf.

He had been the first to pay her marked attention in the days of his glory; but she had been pressed back by the circle of her associates, on account of a natural timidity, and they had praised and monopolized the one whose manly beauty and agreeable friendliness had been so pleasant to her. How she envied them! Soon she had builded airy, fanciful castles, in which Wulf the king, and herself the queen, were enthroned. True, he had given her little encouragement for these fantasies, but Olga never knew how much she really owed to the fisherman's son. He was the star upon which she gazed, and the miserable baubles she had formerly admired faded away utterly. She was, for the most part, like many girls of her age, from youth accustomed to think herself the center of the universe; to adore externals more than to discern true merit; to enjoy herself with the happy, and to shed a tear with the sorrowing; to pass her days as best she might, and look upon the childish frivolities of life as its highest aims.

To-day Sibylla has called upon Olga. They are not intimate friends, but the fair hostess is not wholly able to conceal from her guest her hopes and happiness. Sibylla is too polite to question her very closely; but she has, herself, thought Wulf had shown recently much solicitation for

Olga, and Dr. Uhlhart had also intimated the same to her. Suddenly, however, she has become so cool and restrained that little Olga is wholly frightened. When Sibylla had returned home she said to herself: "What is it to me? He can do as he pleases; but if he really loves this superficial girl, he is not the man I have believed him to be. And as for Olga—well, when one feels deeply it is difficult to express a sentiment. But what does it matter to me?"

Sometime after, Dr. Uhlhart called upon Sibylla. He talked of various things, and finally mentioned Wulf. Being careful to defend him, he at the same time related so many wicked and disagreeable stories about him that one so bright as Sibylla could not fail to be impressed. And the doctor knew her well enough to discern just what displeased her. He described how Wulf had suddenly evinced a great interest in the lower classes; how he loafed in beer-saloons in order to acquaint himself with the working-men who especially pleased him. He regretted Wulf had so little consideration, and that he went so far as to ridicule those with whom he had formerly associated. In this way he dropped the poison in Sibylla's ear. She was silent. At length she silenced him with: "And why, pray, do you tell me all this? It interests me very little to hear of people's failings." The doctor bit his lips. But why did his glance pierce Sibylla so keenly? Had he made a good stroke, or had he made a fool of himself? He feared the latter; but a point had been gained, perhaps, and he knew it was necessary to take many tricks to win a game.

Lady Von Steinfels sat holding a letter in her hand. It had come by post, without seal or signature. The writer declared his desire to call her attention to the fact that Wulf Ericksen was paying court to her daughter, and not in vain. He had observed this himself, as well as heard it spoken of in many places. He therefore felt under obligation to inform the mother by direct communication. At first Lady Von Steinfels threw the letter indignantly aside, feeling that an anonymous letter was unworthy of notice; but after some conversation with her daughter, she discovered that her unknown correspondent knew more about her family affairs than she did; for Olga stood before her, and, with hot tears, protested she loved Wulf, and that any opposition from her mother would render her unspeakably miserable.

"Child, child!" said Lady Von Steinfels, soothingly, "you are too young to know the meaning of love. Only believe me when I assure you that what we imagine to be love at first, soon passes off, and is nothing but a dream or fleeting fancy. In a little while you will laugh over this, and look upon it as a folly."

Olga turned scornfully away. She had not been educated on a mother's heart, and she had scarcely been out of boarding-school before her young soul had been filled with love's dreams. Her mother was no friend in whom she might confide. Olga had never been taught to trust her, and how could she expect this inexperienced, intoxicated girl to please her or to obey her with a willing heart?

But the mother's heart was bitter. An inner voice warningly asked: "Why have you given over your only child to strangers? Was not your home large enough for both?" "Alas! there was no room there. Social duties, a husband's position, left no time to look after my daughter. I did what thousands of others have done—gave her the advantages of the best boarding-school and the most expensive teachers. Now I want to be her friend. O, why should I be treated so?" she mourned.

Olga continued steadfast in her love and trust. But how long? When she found that Wulf no longer gave her any attention, when she heard nothing but evil reports of his behavior, she confessed that her mother was right. It was the young soul's first disappointment, and she was bitter and hard in her conclusions. Olga asked: What is the use of living? Why dress and go out into company where everybody deceives and lies? What should she do there? Lie and deceive also? A torturing pang shot through her inmost soul during these days, when she was forced to accept the position as the best wisdom. Well is it for us that the future is hidden!

What Dr. Uhlhart had repeated was not wholly untrue. Wulf had really desired to become acquainted with the so-called "common people;" he wished to discover whether they possessed, under perhaps a rude exterior, a better kernel than those among higher classes. Perhaps he did not take the best method to secure his aim, especially since Uhlhart, who had proffered his services as companion, was no good guide.

Wulf had a horror for this man, and yet he could not shake off his influence—an influence that Uhlhart exerted over many with demoniacal power. Wulf found as little of what he sought among the working-class as he had in aristocratic circles, and it was very agreeable to him when one of his instructors strongly advised him to spend his third year in some other place. He desired to go away from Sibylla, as his affection for her continued to increase, and he had no reason to believe it was reciprocated. What she had approved so openly upon that eventful evening concerned the subject, not the person. She was among a circle of acquaintances who gave her perfect liberty of action. She had openly enough during the latter months shown Wulf that she asked nothing from him, as she only vindicated him on account of the opposition against him. Wulf was too honorable to ask her a direct question; for he had no home to offer and as yet no prospect of one. Still, for a time longer, life played itself away, until now it was Summer, and people were enjoying themselves at the various watering-places. If one met an acquaintance on the streets of Berlin it was a source of as great surprise as if he had met him on the bay at Naples.

Then Wulf packed up his traps, and started off likewise. This time not homeward; he had no desire to go there, and all communication with his relatives had been confined to an occasional letter. He would first wander through Thuringia, then go to Jena. When he went to take leave of

Lady Von Herbig, he found she had gone; Uhlhart had given him a later day for her departure. But it was well enough so, as it made his own leaving easier.

Wulf had learned many things in Berlin. His knowledge, his intuition were richer, and his understanding had been formed. He had also unlearned much. He had not become actually wicked, for his manly heart revolted against dishonesty; but many of his noble aspirations had been wrested from him with icy grasp. He longed for the good things of earth; but he was not happy, for his soul was not satisfied. So he went to Jena. "I behold a youth whose true inner self excites my love, but I fear he is only too apt to swim with the current of time. He has given his rudder into the hands of one who will prove unfaithful, and his frail boat will not be able to stem the tide, but will obey the guidance of its destroyer."

Uhlhart accompanied Wulf, whom he called his friend, to the railroad station. When he had disappeared from view, he rubbed his hands gleefully and said: "Now, with regard to Fraulein Sibylla it shall be 'out of sight, out of mind,' and I shall take care she will learn what a vulgar peasant has attracted her attention."

XII.

"God is in the orient,
God is in the Occident;
In the northern, southern lands,
Rests the peace of his own hands."

—GOETHE.

Let us return again to our acquaintances by the sea-shore. The sea rolls on in eternal change as before, the days following one another in its ebb and flow; and a day will come which to one of the dwellers there, shall be the last.

Captain Nielsen, the old traveler, stands this morning in his usual place. He has grown older, and he gazes with increasing solicitude upon Ingeborg, his sweet daughter, the solitary jewel that remains to him. His wife and three lovely children, years agone, wandered pale and wan, with hectic flush upon their faces, until one after another had passed away and been carried to the silent church-yard. That was long ago, and little Ingeborg knew nothing about them except what her old nurse, Johanna, had told her. The happy child did not miss them; but she often spoke of them, and believed they were in heaven. Once, during a violent storm, she had been looked for and found on the beach, unwilling to return home. "O, let me go! When it lightens, the heavens

open, and I will look in to see my mother and sisters!" Thus she seemed to live with the dead whom she had never known. She was her father's darling, but was left much alone.

After every hemorrhage she declined perceptibly. "She will yield to it," her father thought; but as the days and years passed, the small, wan face, the hectic flush, the brilliant eye, all reminded him of those who had gone before. Must the father part with his last child?

He had hoped for Wulf's return with skill acquired at the great Berlin colleges, to heal his daughter. But Wulf tarried long, and this year did not return home at all. Then the captain went to Hamburg to consult an eminent physician there. "I ought to see your daughter," said the doctor; "but from what you have told me I think she should be taken to a milder climate. Could you not find it convenient to pass the Winter at Cairo?"

Why not? Captain Nielsen had abundant financial means and was accustomed to travel. It was entirely feasible. Indeed it had seemed strange to remain so long in this quiet haven, away from the bustling world. So he immediately began to make his arrangements at Hamburg for the journey, and a few days later returned home.

He has just made his plans known to Ingeborg. She scarcely realizes them at first. Once she might have been eager to go; but now her head droops. "O father, is it really necessary? We have no friends there; but that is no matter."

"Don't be foolish, darling. An old seaman like me doesn't need friends to acquaint him with strange places. You have spoiled me here, and I ought to go East again."

Then Ingeborg began to realize what she should lose. "I can not live without the sea, or Mother Esther. They will both miss me so much."

"Ah, what is that to your health?"

Ingeborg was silent. What made the journey most undesirable to her she would reveal to no one. In fact, she scarcely desired to be well again. Heaven, with its blessedness, seemed as near and certain to her as the Christ-gift tree from an open door to the children in an adjoining room. And now she was even filled with regret that she must wait still longer. She rested her head upon her hands, and all the glories of the New Jerusalem passed through her mind. Here the sky was gray, full of sin and clouds; there all was brightness and purity and beauty, and her young heart went out in longings for that home of rest and peace. Then another picture presented itself to the weary child. Here was her old father, by whom she loved to be, and must remain. No, no! she would henceforth fix her eyes upon the earth. Continually beholding the beaming splendor of eternity made the present, with its duties, grow obscure and worthless.

"Father, when shall we start?" she asked, with soft voice.

"Every thing is ready, my dear child, and we shall start in a fortnight. Johanna will care for the house in our absence, and we must begin to consider what to take with us and what to leave behind."

As her father seemed unusually wearied, Ingeborg brought him a pillow, and said, lovingly:

"Won't you take a little sleep, dear father? You have not been accustomed to travel, and arrived home so late last night."

"Well, darling, I don't usually sleep in the mornings; but I will indulge myself to-day for I am very tired. But I shall sleep regularly when we get to Egypt, God willing."

Ingeborg was passing lightly from the room when she heard her name called:

"Dear, you have not read to me for several evenings, and I can't go to sleep so well without it. I missed it so much in Hamburg. Read me something."

Ingeborg opened her Bible, and read from the twenty-first chapter of Revelation the following words:

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God; and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true."

"Thank you, thank you, my child. Now go; I am so tired," murmured the father.

Some minutes later Ingeborg looked into the room, and her father was asleep. Then she went over to Mother Esther's to tell her about the journey. The old mother shook her head.

"My child, it doesn't seem right to me. I think we ought to stay where the Lord places us. Your father is old and feeble, and you are young and weak. What if any thing should happen to either of you?"

Ingeborg was also fearful, but she replied:

"You must not talk so to me. God will go with us. It is all decided and can not be changed."

Then Mother Esther silenced her doubts, and gave the young girl all kinds of advice. Ah! she had never left this spot; what did she know of this hot Egypt? But Ingeborg listened, and promised

to be very careful of herself and her father. As she passed out of the house and saw the sea sparkling, it seemed as though she should never be able to part with this old friend.

But the child was already separated from her oldest friend. When Ingeborg returned and entered her father's room, he was still sleeping; but his head had fallen, and she went to adjust the pillow. Her hand trembled, for the face she touched was icy cold. Looking more closely, she was seized with a spasm of terror.

"Johanna! Johanna!" she cried.

The old nurse came quickly, and uttered a loud shriek. Captain Nielsen was dead! He had taken that long journey whence none ever return. After Ingeborg had recovered from the pain of the first shock, she felt strange and solemn. There before her lay, lifeless, he who only a few hours previously had talked cheerfully about his future plans, and who had the strongest love and tenderest care for his only child. Stiff, motionless, cold—O, how cold! But Ingeborg looked less upon the shell—she would gladly have seen where the soul tarried. Once only, when a child, she had been present at the death of a person, and had imagined heaven's door would open in the separation of soul and body, and she might be permitted to catch a glimpse therein. But the great secret had passed over her, on the threshold of which she stood so ready. She looked at her own transparent hands, and said joyfully: "I shall soon follow." How softly her father must have slept away! He had passed through the eternal gates, his last thoughts upon the New Jerusalem, only to awaken to find himself there!

Poor little Ingeborg! and you are still here. He desired to travel with you, why did he not take you with him?

Ingeborg folded her hands: "Dear Lord, what shall I do here? Behold, I am alone; come thou and help me!"

Ah! poor, weary child! Thy father's life-work is ended; therefore he can rest; but yours is not yet finished.

Every body was astonished to hear of Captain Nielsen's sudden death. But no idle talk was indulged over his body. The lowly dwellers by the sea were earnest, and they looked upon the frail child with a sympathy far-reaching and sincere. "Our life hangs upon a thread, but God holds the thread," said Mother Esther.

Ingeborg bowed. Her life's thread lay in the same hand, who knew what was best for her, and she could lovingly say: "Thy will be done."

"I would gladly go in this way," continued Mother Esther; "no lingering illness. How is it with you, my brother?" she said, turning to the body; but the lips remained closed, and she added softly: "I shall soon know."

Time passed. Ingeborg watched the sea dreamily, and saw the waves come and go. Whither did they go? Rolled they to eternity? Why did they not take the sick child with them, when she longed to be landed at the port of Eternal Life? Ingeborg did not go to Egypt. What should she do there?

Old Johanna took faithful care of her, and every thing went along smoothly in the little house. Yes; it was very quiet and lonely in the world. Wulf had been absent three years, and Ingeborg had not seen him for two years. Arnold Von Kahring had given her tidings of how Wulf passed his time—pleasing, displeasing, singing, and dancing. He had also intimated that Wulf was frequently criticised for his behavior. This he had not done intentionally; but the way and manner sank deeply into Ingeborg's heart.

"If Wulf does wrong, it is the wicked people at Berlin who are to blame. He is not bad—no, never, I am sure," she would reply.

One night Old Peter knocked at Ingeborg's door, and said: "Come quickly, Frau Ericksen is dying."

While the young girl had begged for the privilege of being with Mother Esther when such an event occurred, when the summons came her blood ceased to circulate and her limbs trembled.

But it was not death that had approached the old mother's home. A stroke of paralysis had occurred during the night; her peculiar breathing had awakened Karen, and now all stood around her, anxious and powerless.

At last the doctor arrived. He declared that there was no immediate danger, but was unable to tell when the stroke might return. It was possible she might lie in this condition for many years. Her entire right side was paralyzed, rigid as marble. With foot and arm helpless, mouth drawn, and partial vision only, she could scarcely utter inarticulate sounds. But her mind was clear and she was perfectly conscious of all that was happening around her. When the physician said she might linger for years, a shadow fell across her wrinkled face, and her eyes filled with tears. How different from what she had prayed and hoped! It is a terrible affliction when a woman of her active nature is obliged to lie passive and helpless.

Karen undertook to nurse her mother with great fidelity. But the demands of the business and the house must receive attention. Therefore it happened that Ingeborg sat for hours long by the bedside. She was happy that finally she could be useful to some one. Karen was enabled to work without, as the mother was in excellent hands.

Poor Karen! Her sky was not always bright. Martin had been absent three years, and nothing had been heard of him. Even though he were a poor writer, he might have found an opportunity to send one letter. Besides, his father was rather proud, and no doubt would prefer his son to

marry a richer girl, although Karen, with her amiable disposition and chest-linen, was on no account to be despised. But now a sick mother was no agreeable addition to the dowry; but he felt sure Karen would fulfill her duty right and left until death. What could be done? If Martin were only here!

Meanwhile Frau Ericksen and Ingeborg had a lonely, quiet time. True, one only heard the latter's soft, low voice in response to Mother-Esther's glances of expression which were so perfectly understood. Both enjoyed the sacred grove of the Psalms, and, like fresh waters, these old songs rustled through the shade. Beyond it they saw with clear vision the heavenly city, when Ingeborg repeated:

"Jerusalem the golden!
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice oppressed;
I know not, O, I know not,
What social joys are there,
What radiancy of glory,
What light beyond compare!

With jasper glow thy bulwarks;
Thy streets with emerald blaze;
The sardius and the topaz
Unite in thee their rays;
Thine ageless walls are bonded,
With amethyst unpriced;
Thy saints build up its fabric,
And the corner-stone is Christ."

But it is only sweet to die when the world is no longer attractive, when there is nothing either for us to live or suffer for.

Ingeborg had written to Wulf of his mother's illness. He had replied affectionately, and expressed his grief, but could give no hope of recovery. He rejoiced that Karen was able to give her so much attention (for Ingeborg had not mentioned herself), and hoped during the year to pass his final examination and to visit his home, when he should be able to assist in the care of his mother. He had spent a year at Jena, and was once more at Berlin; but of his plans, desires, hopes, fears, and the struggles of his heart, he said nothing. How could he? These people by the sea belonged to another class, whose aims and necessities were other than his.

But love sharpens the understanding. Both women avoided each other's glance after the letter had been read. Neither would betray her apprehensions. Ingeborg sighed. She wished she might rescue Wulf from danger, even as he had once saved her life. Now he was in danger, and here sat only a weak, fragile creature!

XIII.

"It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind."

—SCOTT.

"Sibylla, my child, the air is warm, and I think the east wind has made it more pleasant; will you not go out for a walk?" said Lady Von Herbig to her daughter.

As the latter did not reply, she continued: "I dislike to have you go alone; but you know I can not endure the morning air."

Sibylla glanced somewhat derisively toward the clock, which pointed to 12.15.

Wholly undisturbed, Lady Von Herbig added: "You have not been out to-day; the roses on your cheeks will be faded. Ah! if Madame Dormieux were only here, we might have some French conversation together!"

"I am thankful she isn't," rejoined Sibylla; "this German original sin is as odious as death to me."

The mother dropped her knitting-needles in her lap—a signal for a long dissertation.

Sibylla observed it. Ah! how gladly her mother took up any thing to discuss it at length; and Sibylla was her particular point of attack, perhaps on account of her opposition. Therefore, she sprang up suddenly with, "I will go."

Lady Von Herbig knew she must say very quickly what was in her mind, for her energetic daughter was already at the door; so she reserved the controversy upon her beloved "French" until another time, and only exclaimed: "But dress warmly; your dark-blue wrap will make a lovely effect against the first white snow. And listen: don't go under the Lindens, I beg of you. The young officers——"

"Are seated in the Academy at present, and can not harm me. After a while I shall not be permitted to look out of the windows alone."

"O, these young folks!" sighed Lady Von Herbig, after the departing one; "how very different they were in my time! Now they look boldly into the world; then I looked with downcast eyes; and when my darling Herbig passed by, it was *ma chère bonne* who always informed me of the fact, but now——!"

Sibylla had hastily donned hat and mantle; but whether it was the "dark-blue" one or not I can not say, as she thought very little about such "effects." The world and her heart seemed so empty to-day that not even her Apollo Belvidere could have made the spot sunny. She hurried by "the Lindens," when suddenly a friendly "Good morning, Fraulein," met her ear, and Herr "Wool-merchant" Bolton stood before her. He was exactly the very person to restore her disturbed equilibrium. She endeavored to walk on quickly, but with rustic *naïveté* he held her fast, and begged to escort her.

"In the name of every thing, what shall this wool-sack do in the museum?" thought Sibylla.

Still he held his position, and would not leave her side.

"I beg pardon, but I must do some shopping here;" and before the confounded man could recover himself, Sibylla had vanished.

But he could wait, and Sibylla observed with terror how he remained without. "You or I," she said to herself. "I don't get hungry easily." Then she almost distracted the poor salesman. Nothing pleased her; she wavered; she rejected, until her purse was exhausted; then finally left, to the deliverance of the clerk.

Herr Bolton waited for her a long time. It would have delighted him to promenade with such a charming young lady; indeed, it had even occurred to him that she would be quite suitable to have on his arm as a wife, not only on the street but through life. She knew how to entertain so well; and he was often so much in need of amusement.

Sibylla had now reached the museum, and was finally within the sacred precincts of art, from which she hoped for relief and consolation. She had often experienced the power of genius; but she desired not only this. In her strong, energetic nature and best hours she would prove its high moral claims, and bring comfort out of discomfort when the latter was particularly disagreeable to her. Sibylla wished to know the truth of every thing; to be stirred by the beautiful; to make herself so beautiful within that every expression, every action, every motive, should be beautiful; to show forth the sentiment of an artist who once said: "Genius is the necessary result of the production of the beautiful, and precludes the idea of difficult duty." But what a contrast there is when one steps out of the still halls of the museum, and the

conventionalities of every-day life grate upon the ear again—people running hither and thither with sugar-loaved hats and cabbage heads! Precisely just such a contrast lies between the quiet, dreamy aspirations of a maiden's heart and the duties which her position enjoin upon her. At times Sibylla's heart was very bitter when she saw the superficiality of the people around her. She could not understand it; and yet she had understanding enough to perceive that many of those who were without artistic culture, and even without good taste, were better than she was, and ah! perhaps happier!

Her thoughts reverted to Theodora, whom she loved, and upon whose deeds she looked reverentially. And yet sometimes she wished she had never known her, as she had stirred within her so much dissension. By her side she made the best resolutions, which, alas! she never carried out. The day before, Theodora had quoted a sentiment from Goethe which she could not get rid of. It was: "How can one learn to know himself? Never by self-examination alone, but by action. Strive to do your duty, and you will soon know what manner of man you are."

Ah! Sibylla did not need to make the trial for the first time. She said honestly: "There is nothing in me but to play on the stage of this life; but yet there must be a time when I shall become different."

She had sauntered a long time among the pictures to-day, and her soul had grown calm. Suddenly she saw Wulf in one of the galleries, hastening toward her with evident pleasure.

Like an old friend, this proud, cold girl greeted him. She could give no reason for her feelings, but she was glad to see him again. And did he not wear a Spring flower in his button-hole? A Berlin gentleman would scarcely wear such a promise of Spring in Winter; and so, if Wulf was no ideal, he now seemed even a little provincial. But Sibylla could endure any thing better than affected, artificial manner.

The first greetings over, they looked at some pictures together. They stood before the portrait of a Spaniard who looked dark and sinister, and who, although he had a demoniacal semblance, one could not escape the expression of his eyes, which seemed to follow everywhere.

"I am afraid of that picture," said Sibylla; "and sometimes it seems to exert an evil influence in my life."

"Fraulein, I tell you never to marry that man," said Wulf, laughing.

Sibylla shuddered.

"How foolish to say that! He lived hundreds of years ago, and frightens me!" and she laughed herself over the idea.

"I know, Fraulein, I know," cried Wulf; "I know whom he resembles! Dr. Uhlhart. Not the mouth, nor the nose, nor the eyes; but the expression is his. Isn't it so?"

Sibylla assented with lightning rapidity.

"Why haven't I had eyes to see that long ago?"

But speak of the wolf and he is not far away. Just at this moment Dr. Uhlhart passed and greeted Sibylla. Both were astounded. He could not have overheard what they had said; but like pictures so are people: there was candor in it.

"Strange!" said Wulf. "I have not seen him for a long time, and yet he passes me by coldly. One never knows how to take people here."

And as if to verify his words, Sibylla suddenly became formal and constrained.

Ah! she had forgotten, during the first moments of seeing him again, the evil reports she had heard concerning Wulf, and she did not feel at liberty to ask him whether they were true or false. But having seen Uhlhart, all these base slanders had been revived, and she bowed coldly. Wulf realized that something had entered between them. Was it the shade of the Spaniard? Dr. Uhlhart gnashed his teeth. He had observed the familiarity between Wulf and Sibylla, and was well aware what her first thoughts would be after his intervention. Had he not related to her the worst stories, and put them in their strongest light? Had he not marked the blush and the expression of contempt which flitted across her proud face? Had she not continually thereafter avoided the mention of Wulf's name? And now he was scarcely returned before she had apparently forgotten every thing.

A year had passed and Dr. Uhlhart had made no advance. Did he love Sibylla? Yes; as deeply as a thoroughly egotistical person could love another. She was the only one that resisted him, and who filled his heart with a wild passion. It had gone with him in his downward course. In the presumption that his inner impulse represented him at his best, he pursued it; but for want of more moral integrity he always went to meet greater neglect. He also felt assured that his life would not run off to sand, but that it would end in a swamp, or, still more probably, in an abyss. But he did not wish to perish alone. Self longed for companionship even in destruction. Sibylla should be beside him; he would possess her, not for the mere sake of ruining her, but to make his own way more agreeable. Besides, he could not bear the thought of seeing her belong to another. That she would be unspeakably miserable with him and indescribably happy with another was clear to him; but what did he care?

Who was the man with whom Sibylla could be happy? Uhlhart's keen discernment had long ago discovered what she herself did not know. It was Wulf Ericksen; and that Wulf loved her, Uhlhart knew, although the young fisherman had never uttered a word. For this reason he had

endeavored indirectly to prejudice Sibylla against Wulf; and when the latter left Berlin Uhlhart breathed more freely, for now the field was clear to himself. But why, then, did he not attempt to win Sibylla at once? Simply because the wily doctor feared a refusal. It is true he had "clear sailing" with her mother, who believed Uhlhart to be rich, while in reality he merely had a moderate but sufficient income; and it would have pleased Lady Von Herbig to see them united. But he did not wish to marry the mother—it was the daughter; and because she was the aim and struggle of his life he feared to take the decisive step.

But it must be done. Once he had cherished a hope. He knew he exerted an influence over Sibylla which she could not always resist. She felt that he knew her thoroughly, she who could pride herself as a sealed book to people generally. She feared him; she humiliated herself to him, and on this account he laid the foundations for a victory.

The lights are burning brightly this evening in the Kahring mansion. Let us glance into one of the apartments. First, it is noteworthy how Baron Von Kahring, who sits near his wife, is devoting himself to the cold Northern Light which yonder, in the person of Fraulein Albertina Kouzky, streams forth its pale beams. Her millionaire father is always flattered when the high aristocracy condescends to notice his daughter, and we find Baron Von Kahring wholly transformed. Usually he is taciturn, even sinister; now he evinces so much amiability that, if his wife were not continually transcending him, one would imagine him to be a suitor. He is striving to draw his son into the conversation; but Arnold is absorbed with Sibylla, and does not heed his father's dark glances.

"Fraulein Sibylla, you were at the museum to-day?" says the young baron.

"Yes," replies Sibylla, suddenly turning to look at him.

"And amusing yourself?"

"Amusing?" she repeats somewhat contemptuously. "What an expression! do I go there for amusement?"

"I beg pardon, Fraulein; but do you not find enjoyment in nature?"

"The highest art is indeed nature, and that is achievement," replies Sibylla.

Herr Von Lenkseuring, "the greyhound," enters the room with great springs. He immediately seeks Eugenie Von Kahring, to whom he is playing the *rôle* of a sighing lover. As her eye-glances are unattainable, the world has nothing further to offer him, but to assume the attitude of a tragic hero just as he drains the poisoned cup, and awaits his end with stoical repose.

Sibylla, being beset by Arnold and Dr. Uhlhart, looks annoyed.

"Please sing something for us; I long to hear your voice," says the charming Lady Von Kahring.

Sibylla would fain decline, which is not usual with her, for her heart is stifled; but her mother presses upon her a troop of assurances which she finds it useless to gainsay, and she walks toward the piano. By so doing she will at least be rid of her besiegers.

"Perhaps Lady Von Kahring has some favorite song?" she asks, listlessly.

"Favorite? O no; and yet, if I may choose, let it be 'The Erl-king.'"

Sibylla shuddered. She sang the part of the child; who would take the other was assured. Seating herself mechanically, she is unable to divine why she is so listless. Is it too warm in the room? Have Dr. Uhlhart's piercing eyes burned her soul? O, if she were only at home! Then follow the first wonderful chords and a gentleman's voice behind her begins:

"Who rides by night this woodland so wild?
It is the fond father embracing his child,
And close the boy nestles within his loved arm,
From the blast of the tempest to keep himself warm.

'My son, upon what dost thou fearfully gaze?'"

And Sibylla responds:

"'O, father, see yonder, see yonder!' he says;
'O, 't is the Erl-king, with his staff and his shroud!'

'No, my love, 't is but a dark wreath of the cloud,'"

Answers the voice.

But now Sibylla shrinks within herself, as Uhlhart continues in siren-like tones:

"'O, wilt thou go with me thou loveliest child?
By many gay sports shall thy hours be beguiled;
My mother keeps for thee full many a fair toy,
And many fine flowers shall she pluck for my boy."

O, how full of tender fear trembles Sibylla's sweet voice!—

"'O, father, my father, and did you not hear,
The Erl-king whisper so close in my ear?'

'Be still, my loved child, be at ease,
'T was but the wild blast as it howls through the trees."

Then Uhlhart sings with wonderful beseeching:

"'O, wilt thou go with me, thou loveliest boy?
My daughter shall tend thee with care and with joy,
She shall bear thee so lightly through wet and through wild,
And hug thee and kiss thee and sing to my child.'"

With thrilling pathos Sibylla asks:

"'O father, my father, and saw you not plain,
The Erl-king's pale daughter glide past in the rain?'

And the answer comes soothingly:

"'O no, my heart's treasure, I knew it full soon
It was the gray willow——'"

Wherewith Uhlhart bends low on the music page, his breath upon Sibylla's neck, while, half-menacingly, he cries:

"'I love thee, I love thee; no longer delay;
Or else, foolish child, I shall drag thee away.'"

The instrument wails loudly, and Sibylla shrieks as if in wild despair:

"'My father, my father, now, now keep your hold;'"

And then as if exhausted she adds:

"'The Erl-king has seized me, his grasp is so cold!'"

The entire company had drawn near the singers. All were entranced, fascinated. There was a fearful, dramatic force in the music. Never had "The Erl-king" been sung with so much expression before. The listeners felt as though they must spring to the rescue. Then in the most agonizing dismay is sung:

"Sore trembled the father; he spurred through the wild,
Clasping close to his arms his shuddering child;
He reaches his dwelling, in doubt end in dread;
But, clasped to his bosom the child was dead."

With the words "clasped to his bosom" the music was softened; then followed an unearthly stillness, and with "the child was dead," Sibylla grew so pale she began to fall from the piano-stool. Lady Von Kahring hurried to her side. But Sibylla was no admirer of sentimental scenes; she drew herself up, and with a strong effort said smilingly: "It is nothing; this music always affects me; the accompaniment is also difficult, and it is so warm here."

Seating herself by an open window, she begged to be allowed to rest a moment. Soon the hearers had recovered from the impression produced by the music; and at length Sibylla, too, had overcome her emotions. All partook of refreshments, and she permitted Uhlhart to serve her and to sit beside her. She was alone with him in a window-niche; but she was satisfied to have it so, for she felt that an end would come to the affair this evening, and she desired to see the result as speedily as possible. It was one consolation that so many were near, and she should not be in the doctor's power. Sibylla had guessed rightly. Uhlhart was excited with wine and music, and desired to know his fate:

"*Rouge ou noir?*" he said.

He spoke to her in unmistakable language. Sibylla understood him, and was silent. She had expected it, and had prepared herself to reply to him; but now her tongue was tied, and fear repressed her words. Upon this fear, Dr. Uhlhart had reckoned. He became more passionately moved, and it seemed as if Sibylla had been led to the verge of a precipice where she would cling to something which proved to be grasping the air; now the tempter seized her, and she had no power to resist. Uhlhart regarded this as a favorable sign, and attempted to draw his arm around the frightened girl. This dispelled the illusion. She thrust him indignantly back. He felt he had overreached himself, and at once recovered his poise. Words fell from his lips like siren tones. O Sibylla, steer your bark with a firm hand; the waves are enveloping thee! Sweeter and more ardent became his protestations—now entreating, now expostulating for her consent; but he could gain no reply. She sat as one in rigid spasm; she saw and heard, but could neither speak nor move. Encouraged by her silence, he murmured tenderly:

"I love thee, I love thee; no longer delay,
Or else, foolish child, I shall drag thee away!"

The charm was broken.

"Never, never!" exclaimed Sibylla; "die rather!"

"Then die," snarled Uhlhart; "but die with me."

At this moment Arnold Von Kahring stepped before them. He was not aware of what had been taking place; but he saw that Sibylla was about to swoon away, and that the doctor stood ready to care for her. With one glance at Arnold she cried, "Help!" and slipped from her chair.

The ladies present soon surrounded her, with an abundance of tears and sympathy. "Poor child!" "The frightful performance!" "And sitting by this open window!" "Young people are so imprudent!"

Sibylla soon recovered, but she went home. As she lay in bed, the frightful face of Uhlhart bent over her. O, she had, indeed, read his eyes! Love or hate—no medium for him. But, in spite of all weakness, rather a battle between life and death than to become his wife. The feeble girl with the passionate man!

Sibylla folded her hands helplessly. Did she cry out to her sacred Art to sustain his disciple? Begged she the eternal essence of Beauty to uphold her?

Ah no; upon her lips were the words, "O God! help thou me!"

XIV.

"Now I feel by proof
That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
Nor lightens aught each man's peculiar load."

—MILTON.

The "day" is not yet over, for in the society-world they begin to reckon it at ten o'clock in the evening. It is therefore early, although nearly midnight, when we enter the room of Baron Von Kahring. The old gentleman, his wife, and Arnold are together.

"And now, tell me," says the baron to his son, "why did you behave so toward Fraulein Kouzky to-day again? I had particularly requested you to give her attention, but you paid her only the most formal courtesies."

"She is too tiresome," replies Arnold. "I don't know what to say to a goose."

"Please speak more respectfully of your future wife."

"O ho! we are not so far along as that," rejoins Arnold contemptuously.

"Because you always fancy to marry Fraulein Von Herbig. But she has nothing. I have personally, in your interests, taken the trouble to inquire into her finances. The Widow Von Herbig has nothing but her pension, and she lives so extravagantly, this scarcely suffices to meet expenses. Sibylla hasn't a penny, and will be obliged to take a position as governess or companion when her mother dies. You see she is no mate for you; with your meagre lieutenant's salary you can not marry."

The old baron paused and gazed intently at his son, who remained silent. Then he continued:

"Now look at Fraulein Kouzky. She is young, handsome, loves you, and burns to become Lady Lieutenant Von Kahring."

"Well, she may burn," interrupted Arnold. "These tedious, prudish people are so limited in their actions and words. 'Fraulein, have you read Faust?' 'O, pray do not mention it; my mother does not approve such literature for young girls.' 'Have you read Werther?' 'O, pray do not mention it: I may when I am older.' And yet she is at least twenty-five years old."

"Ungrateful one, she has become so on your account," said the baron, bitterly. "I have often trembled, for I know she has had offer after offer——"

"Yes," interjected Arnold; "her money has had offers and lovers, not herself. But a baron has not bitten yet; and rumor has it that the upstart, Kouzky, will take into consideration no proposal of lesser rank."

"Fool!" exclaimed the Baron. "What has his business to do with his daughter? She always improves upon acquaintance. In conversation with her to-day I was astonished at the wealth of her mind. 'Still water runs deep.' I will guarantee she has far more heart and mind than that proud, lofty Sibylla. And as to external appearance, she will lend much greater credit to our position with her carriage, her dignity——"

"Whip up the mud as you may," interrupted Arnold, contemptuously; "there will never be any cream on it."

"Very well," cried the old baron, angrily; "then I shall tell the plain truth. If you do not consent to-day to marry Fraulein Kouzky, in six weeks I shall be a ruined man!"

Therewith father and mother unfolded their affairs to the son. Every thing had only a superficial glamour in order to conceal their misery. Arnold had long suspected this, but did not think the crisis so near. Not a chair, nor a table, nor a picture belonged to them. They had for a long time privately economized and suffered want in order to appear well before the public. There might, indeed, be some hope yet, if this or that speculation were fortunate; but that required time and a continuance of their present style of living. They could borrow no more; besides which, that was a perilous step; for how easy it would be to destroy the two feasible ways of escape out of

their difficulties and cause Arnold's and Eugenie's marriages to be failures. O, there had been terrible hours experienced!—hours that necessitated Lady Von Kahring to smile upon her guests, and urge them to enjoy refreshments unpaid for, and when the old baron saw bottle after bottle of champagne emptied and his credit at the wine-dealer's gone.

Arnold waxed paler and paler. He shuddered when he realized the fearful condition of affairs. The fatal poison of deceit and falsehood had surrounded him since childhood, and no great storm had taken him in its arms and shaken him. Indeed, it had been like a draught of fresh air to sit beside Sibylla. Even if she was so fearless, loveless, and sarcastic, she remained the one person in this circle to him. But now what must be done? Simply pay all that could be paid; sell every thing to be just to creditors, to declare openly how matters stood; then cut loose from society, and go to work—perhaps in America—but to work hard and be honest. Of the three persons in this room, not one had a useful trade, to accept or enable them to listen to such a course. Finally Arnold asked:

"Does Theodora know of our trouble?"

"No, and she must not learn it; for if our house be sacrificed her entire fortune will be ruined."

Arnold sat there for some time, his parents anxiously awaiting his decision. At length he sprang up and exclaimed, with a bitter smile:

"I have often read that when the shipwrecked are suffering, one after another is sacrificed in order to save those who remain. The lot has fallen first upon me. To-morrow I shall make a proposal of marriage to Fraulein Albertina Kouzky. Are you satisfied?"

The parents would have embraced their son, but he thrust them aside, while the old baron said, pathetically: "God's blessing be upon you, my son!"

Arnold laughed wildly.

"Keep God's blessing away from this filthy business. We shall be happier if he does not trouble us."

No sleep visited the young lieutenant's eyes that night. Sibylla, Ingeborg, and Albertina Kouzky were conjured before his mind. With Sibylla he could have lived; after Ingeborg he longed when he was weary and sad; but Albertina was a nonentity to him, if not positively unbearable.

Two days later handsomely engraved cards were sent out, which created a marked sensation. They read:

"*We have the honor to announce the engagement of our daughter, Albertina, with Herr Baron Arnold Von Kahring.*

"*BANKER KOUZKY AND WIFE.*"

XV.

"Unruly blasts wait on the tender Spring;
Unwholesome weeds take root with precious flowers;
The adder hisses where the sweet birds sing."

—SHAKESPEARE.

We know already that Wulf has returned from Jena. His life there had been very different from the one at Berlin. He had learned the free life of a peasant. And now, finally, he was prepared to become entirely self-reliant. From year to year he had returned to Berlin, in order to complete his medical studies; but now the consideration of a home of his own was feasible; and the hope of having Sibylla as its presiding genius, which had been dark so long, need not be further discouraged.

But he could scarcely hope to find her still free, as Dr. Uhlhart had long since informed him that Sibylla and Arnold were destined for each other, and he had no opportunity of confuting it, as he kept aloof from society, because he was studying diligently, and because he was too proud to enter again this circle.

But Sibylla was free—and now the announcement of Arnold's engagement! Wulf could scarcely believe his own eyes. He felt that he should like to know what impression this news had upon Sibylla, and therefore hastened to the Herbigs', where he found Arnold introducing his betrothed to Sibylla's mother. The prospective bridegroom was constrained and ironical as usual. Albertina was stiff, every single lock of her hair moving automatically. The conversation consisted of the most commonplace remarks, except when Sibylla animated it. She was in her brightest spirits, and her humor flew like sparks around. The bride looked frightened. The scene made a painful impression upon Wulf. Was Sibylla endeavoring to show Arnold the marked contrast between herself and his betrothed? He spurned the thought; and yet—and yet!——

The young couple soon withdrew and Lady Von Herbig began to air her opinions.

"She is a stiff stick! I did my best to interest her in poetry, flowers, and music; but she had absolutely nothing to say. O, O, the young women nowadays have no minds! When I was young——"

"Mother," interrupted Sibylla, "they don't marry minds in these days—only what surrounds them."

"My child, love——"

"Love, love!" exclaimed Sibylla; "poor love! What do men call love? To one it is a good horse to ride; to another, a well-furnished table to tickle his palate; to a third, a rose that he sticks in his hat. What matters if it be withered before evening? He throws it away, and plucks a fresh one. Now, do you know what love is? It is a good asylum for the aged."

Wulf had never seen Sibylla so excited. Like a sword, the belief pierced his soul that she loved Arnold. If he had been permitted to look into Sibylla's heart he would have judged otherwise. She who read with sharp insight the souls of others was to herself an enigma. She had never made it sure to her own mind that she loved Wulf; but she knew she felt different beside him than with any one else. She could tell him all her childish struggles; and she knew that he understood her inmost thoughts, even those she detested and with which she never desired to be alone; she could consider fearlessly with him, and when he was near she felt sheltered. But to the question, "Do I love him?" the clever girl had no answer. That he enjoyed her society was natural, but he had never said or done anything that she could interpret to be deeper sentiment. She detested hypocrisy and affectation, and for this reason she inwardly looked up to Wulf; but Sibylla had never spoken of him to others. This young woman so frank and ingenuous, who appeared to wear her heart on her tongue, had, deep in her being, a closed room into which no one dared to look. One keen, penetrating man's glance she justly feared—that of Dr. Uhlhart.

Violently moved by the scene with him, she was yet obliged to listen to her mother's most fulsome praises of this odious one, as well as her lachrymose reproaches over Arnold's marriage. Suddenly she ceased to praise the doctor and to lament Arnold, and began to sing the good qualities of Herr Bolton, the wool-merchant. Sibylla hearkened—of this one she had never indulged a thought. What could this mean? He made visits, and was received with exceeding friendliness by her mother; so much so, indeed, that Sibylla had sometimes thought Herr Bolton might have taken her father's place. O, he was so amiable! She soon learned to know the different varieties of his sheep, and was already familiar with the special, noble race of "Arabian fat-tails." Finally, when Herr Bolton had spun out his virtues, his money, and his flocks, he laid himself at Sibylla's feet, which acceptance should give her an entrance to this paradise. A short, firm, decided "No" was Sibylla's answer.

Herr Bolton was confounded. That he would be rejected, he had never dreamed. But Lady Von Herbig knew how to console him. It was only a girl's modesty, she said; a young woman's embarrassment, the evidence of a beautiful spirit. She told him how the cavaliers in olden times

sought to win their beloved, and allowed no opportunities to escape. If he could not set free in open battle, like a second Siegfried, his Brunhilde, he might still be permitted to wait patiently for her with true German fidelity. Until the beloved should assent, until the dear image relent, be calm and angelic!

Her words fell upon good ground; for Sibylla's "No" had made the same impression upon Herr Bolton's prosaic nature that his rare old wines did upon his head: for the instant it cooled him, only to inflame the more. But there followed sorry times for Sibylla. She would have greatly preferred the raging storm to the continuous, monotonous single drops that fell upon her head. Such a dropping was the constant plaint of her mother; how she had always hoped to find happiness in her old age through her only daughter; if she were to die now (and she felt this event was not far distant), she should be obliged to leave her child friendless and alone in the world; how she must perforce eat her bread among strangers, and be deprived of the luxuries she now enjoyed. Then followed a long, poetic picture of country life, contrasted with a terrible dependence upon others; and, intermingled with these pathetic laments, came the reproach that she had not deserved this from Sibylla,—usually closing the scene with a hysterical spasm of weeping.

Sibylla would have replied indignantly, or left her presence, if her mother had not been so wretched-looking and so constantly ill. But two things found an echo in her heart: First, that she had given her mother, who had no one else in the world, very little joy; and, secondly, from childhood she had always had her own way, denied herself nothing, and worked little or none. She trembled for her future, which promised only labor for others and a want of the luxuries to which she had been accustomed.

In spite of all this, however, she maintained her "No;" and Cavalier Toggenburg must "wait until the beloved assent." What would Sibylla have done if she could have guessed that Herr Bolton had made Dr Uhlhart his confidant, and the latter had especially encouraged him to persist in his endeavor?

Life went on its way. Visits were exchanged, and made to the Art Museum. Upon one occasion Herr Bolton and Wulf accompanied Sibylla and her mother to the latter place. While the wool merchant and Lady Von Herbig were admiring a fruit-piece, Wulf and Sibylla were standing before a painting which was attracting much attention, entitled "The Chase after Happiness." A rider rode upon a bridge which led to happiness in the distance, pictured upon a soap-bubble. Happiness was depicted as a beautiful, sensual woman, from whose vesture fell gold-pieces. She held a crown in her hand, upon which the rider's eyes were fixed; but not his eyes alone: his whole reaching figure, the outstretched right arm, the eager, extended hand, the far-stretching horse—all representing a picture of fearful, consuming passion. A noble, womanly figure had thrown herself in the way—in vain! He did not heed her, but rushed on madly in pursuit of the

decoying happiness. But the wild man shall not attain it. Beside him, distant but a few inches, rides death, whose grasping hand will more certainly seize the hunter than he the distant goal. One more step: the bridge ends in a frail rafter, and horse and rider are plunged into the abyss—death with them. Smiling "Happiness," however, remains calm, only to allure many others to venture and—to lose.

Sibylla looked at the harrowing picture a long time. Finally she said softly, pointing to the rider, "I am he;" and her lovely countenance attested the anguish of her soul.

"O, Arnold, what have you lost!" cried Wulf's heart in deep emotion. But was he not just such a searcher after happiness, to which all his strivings and endeavors aimed? What he had formerly hoped to attain hovered threateningly serious, but at such a distance that he no longer recognized its power to attract him. He looked around. Every body, all his acquaintances were in pursuit of happiness. To be sure no one recognized himself in the picture; all hurried by it. Sibylla alone had the courage to be true. This hunger after happiness, which dwells in every human being, she had professed to tear from her soul, from its deepest foundation; and now she had cried out for it with wild intensity. At this moment Lady Von Herbig and Herr Bolton approached.

"O, horrible!" exclaimed the former. "I can not bear to look at it; it affects my nerves!"

"The colors are loud," remarked her companion; "but it is rather a good animal picture."

Sibylla turned her head away contemptuously.

At another time Wulf asked Sibylla if she believed any one was perfectly happy. To his surprise she replied:

"Yes, there are such persons; and I know one especially."

"Who is it?"

"Theodora Von Kahring. She is happy. It is true her manner of life would not have the same result with me; her happiness would not be my happiness; but O, I would that her peace and her devotion were mine!"

"It is well," said Wulf, "that we can not all build happiness under equal conditions. One finds it in enjoyment whose attraction is certainly its fleetness; others find it in the regular employment at their own firesides; while others obtain it in sacrifice and renunciation. And does Fraulein Von Kahring really belong to this latter class?"

"No; O no, indeed!" exclaimed Sibylla; "no trace of sacrifice or renunciation! That would always repel me. She is—how shall I describe her?—no sacrificing Iphigenia, no lovely Leonora, no celestial Mignon, and even no industrious, domestic Charlotte, because she has something of each. Most of all I might liken her to Dorothea. She is so simple and yet so profound, so pure and true, so diligent without worrying over work; always from within and without so calm, so devout! The piety that I admire! She is not beautiful, but exceedingly handsome; neither is she poetical, and yet she has the poetry of the *Niebelunglied*, which no one understands. And now I shall also tell you what she is: No lyric song, no tragedy, no ballad, no comedy, but a true, hearty folk-epic!"

Wulf listened to the animated speaker with wonder. Would there be revealed to him this day a glimpse of Sibylla's twofold nature?

As a serious thought in the midst of a playful song affects us singularly, so Wulf was moved by this exhibition of the light-hearted Sibylla, who had on this occasion shown so much intelligence and observation, coupled with the longing desire for a higher life. He decided to approach this Theodora, who, he knew, corresponded with Ingeborg. Just then Sibylla exclaimed in a different tone:

"But if happiness is not always reached upon a quick horse, neither will it come to us if we stand too long waiting for it. In olden times the romancers ushered it with the sound of trumpets and cavalry, but that day is passed. In real life it comes so that we first recognize it when it is lost to us. Naturally nothing can be more sublime, because we are so pitifully small."

Wulf was silent. With prophetic instinct he realized that his own happiness or unhappiness was indissolubly bound up in the beautiful being who stood before him.

"I am the son of a working-man," he had said upon a memorable occasion, and he was proud that he had done so. Having written to his old uncle, the teacher of his boyhood, about the affair, the school-master had replied:

"It is not difficult to perceive that you have acquired and begun to put to use practical knowledge. A physician stands between two strata of society, which at present are separated from each other by fixed limits—the rich and the poor. Your profession brings you in contact with both; but, my dear boy, your uncle would rather see you a physician to the poor. Sickness brings misery to all, but the rich have ways and means for its alleviation. I am sure you will never give the preference to a mere question of money. Besides, do not bury yourself in your books and post-mortems, but keep your eyes wide open to living beings and issues. Shall you have no intercourse with distinguished people? you may ask. I can not tell; but I think you have been inclined to observe the higher classes with prejudice. At first they appeared altogether perfect to you; now they seem wholly despicable. Truth lies in the medium, and I am convinced

that when you are older you will find many good traits of character among those whom now you condemn. Still I simply wish to advise you now to look at circumstances from the working-man's stand-point in your own neighborhood; opportunities at Berlin will not be wanting. And never forget the truth (while it is unnecessary to impress it at all times), that your father was an honorable man of toil."

How vividly was all this recalled to Wulf's mind at this time! No, he would never forget it; and had he not already sought the acquaintance of the common people? It was on that account that his life had recently been so changed. But he was no longer susceptible to slights and neglect. Of late his evil star, Uhlhart, had accompanied him in such visits, and knew so well how to converse on the "social question;" but all these wanderings and this intercourse had been in the same places—the beer-saloons. There Wulf had sat willingly, for the good cause; but how often he was in a dilemma, in the mornings when he returned home with confused head and brain! He did not know then how he had been induced to gamble, as he detested cards, and thought he would only continue until he had recovered what had been lost. In this he succeeded for a time, but soon lost again, and was obliged to begin once more for the sake of honor. Alas! no friendly hand restrained him from the awful abyss—only Uhlhart stood beside him. And bear this in mind—had the winds or the birds revealed it?—Wulf's former acquaintances soon knew all that he did, and more besides.

The mistake which he made was one of the results of his investigation of the working-classes. Another was the conviction that among the poor, in addition to actual need, there was rampant rudeness, presumption, and vileness as well; that between them and the better classes stood no bridge nor bond of love. They stood opposed like bitterest enemies—on the one side, absence of love and haughtiness; on the other side, hatred and consuming envy.

There was to-day a knock at Wulf's door. The shoemaker brought his boots. He seemed to linger, and finally said hesitatingly:

"The charge is one dollar and twenty-five cents."

"Ah!" replied Wulf; "call around to-morrow to get the money."

"My dear sir," said the man entreatingly, "please pay it now that I may buy my children's supper."

"Supper!" exclaimed Wulf; "your wife will have that ready long ago."

The poor fellow's face grew still more pitiful as he added:

"My poor wife has been sick in bed for the past seven weeks."

"What is the matter?" asked Wulf, sympathetically.

"I do not know, sir."

"Have you no physician?"

"I have no money to pay either doctor or apothecary? The poor-doctor has called to see her, but he can do nothing," concluded the man, gloomily.

"My dear friend," said Wulf, "I can not give you any money to-day, but I hope to do so early to-morrow; but I am a physician, and will go with you to see your wife."

Here was another picture of the folk life which Wulf experienced. He found a room similar to those described by the distinguished professor in his lecture. It was in a cellar, damp and partly lighted. Here the shoemaker worked; here his wife lay sick; here his six children had grown up; here, in a corner, stood the bed of an apprentice, who must bear his part of the expenses. Wulf immediately turned his attention to the wife, whom he hoped to relieve. But who should pay for the medicine that he prescribed? Who should supply the nourishing food which ought to accompany it?

When Wulf thought of this, he cursed every unnecessary expenditure he had made. With quiet rage he also thought of the feasts squandered by the rich. O, for only a crumb here from the overflow! Was there no medium to convey it from luxury to this cellar? Yes, there was one.

Theodora Von Kahring entered the little room, and it became clear to whose influence the people here were contented and patient. She seemed well known here, and all hands were outstretched joyfully when she came. Every thing she said was so kindly, and while she was passing from one to the other, an encouraging word here, and as if by magic a supper there for the little ones, there was in it no trace of condescension; it was not the lofty mistress, but the family's motherly counselor. Wulf was so confused that he sat by the wife's bedside until Theodora had been gone for some time. How friendly she had greeted him, rejoiced at his coming, and expressed a hope they might often meet in this mutual way!

"Mutual way?" thought Wulf; "does her way lead to the gambling-table to win money? But I never should have dreamed she could come among such people so unaffectedly. Even the sick woman's face lighted up when she saw her gentle expression. O, why are physicians so chary of friendly words?"

If Wulf had gone out with Theodora, he would scarcely have believed his own eyes, for Sibylla awaited her without the door. She often accompanied Theodora on such visits, helping her with money; but she had not overcome her aversion to enter as yet.

"Do not judge young Ericksen too harshly," said Theodora as she related the circumstance to Sibylla; "perhaps he is now in evil ways, but it does not follow that he will be ruined."

Several days later most of the young people with whom we are acquainted were assembled at the residence of Lady Von Kahring. Wulf had also accepted an invitation, as there was to be all kinds of merriment on the evening before Arnold's nuptials. For the first time in a long while he met Sibylla. She had just declined to pose as Ximene, but she suddenly changed her mind and declared herself ready to do so. Wulf's heart beat loudly. He alone knew the reason. A glance from her had plainly imparted to him that he was expected to take the oath, and that she would stand with him alone. But Wulf was to learn still more. Sibylla said confidentially to him:

"I have really consented to take part in these festivities, with no pleasure on my part. I pity poor Arnold. I have always taken an interest in him, for he is better than he seems. But I wish he could have had a different wife from this Fraulein Kouzky. It will really be a marriage where they will appear as husband and wife only in public."

Was this prospect so rosy that it brightened Wult's countenance? His brown eyes lighted up as if he had found entrance to the Enchanted Princess. But Sibylla did not observe his beaming face. Her glance swept over the assembly; then she added:

"This season would seem to be a very promising one. Sometimes an entire Winter passes without any thing occurring of interest; then again one is full of events. Christmas is almost here; by that time we shall have another wedding under the tree."

"Whose, pray?" asked Wulf.

"Herr Von Lenkseuring will marry Eugenie Von Kahring in a fortnight. Ah! fourteen days reveal much. It is just that length of time since Olga Von Steinfels has been forsaken. The star of the Kahrings shines forth in the ascendency now."

XVI.

"Best beloved one, wanting thee,
What were all the world to me,
With its sunshine, love, and flowers;
With its brightest, happiest hours?
  Best beloved one, wanting thee,
  What were all the world to me?

Sunshine mocks me with its play;
Love lives out but half his day;
Brightest hours are fraught with gloom;
Flowers waste their sweet perfume.

Best beloved one, wanting thee,
What were all the world to me?

Life were one long, weary moan,
Yielding nothing to atone
For a hopeless night of fear,
Dark, and desolate, and drear.
Best beloved one, wanting thee,
What were all the world to me?

Life is life alone with thee;
Love is love eternally.
Press me closely to thy heart—
Life nor death can bid us part.
Best beloved one, having thee;
Love is all the world to me."

—CORNELIA McFADDEN.

Deep silence reigned in Lady Von Herbig's residence, for she was very ill. Heavy draperies were suspended from the windows; the bell was muffled, and no visitors were received save Herr Bolton, who stood faithfully at the side of the inmates. But this calm only reigned externally. In the hearts of both sick one and daughter the billows rolled high. The attendant physician's face was grave; he shook his head, and called several times during the day. Sibylla would not have been Sibylla if these indications had not been intelligible to her. Lady Von Herbig continually exclaimed that she would never rise from this sick-bed; but upon this Sibylla reckoned little. So long as she could remember, her mother had prophesied her death, not only every year, but every month. This time, however, it was serious. Sibylla had herself asked the doctor whether her mother's death was imminent, and he had replied: "So long as there is breath, there may be hope; meanwhile——" and a significant gesture closed the conversation. Then Sibylla perfectly understood the situation. Those are bitter hours when a daughter stands by the bedside of a dying mother with whom she has not been kindly; but still more bitter will it be if conscience speaks loudly of neglected duty, of love withheld, and will not be silenced. Sibylla's nature was so different from her mother's that she had always found herself in opposition to her. If Sibylla had been weak she would have conformed to her mother's opinions and ways; but she was quite the contrary. How often, therefore, they had met in collision! O, what would Sibylla now give to have blotted out all those scenes! How she was stung by the recollection of her mother's helplessness, who, in spite of all her eccentricities, at the foundation lived only to prove her love for her child! And now Sibylla would reach out both hands to keep this mother, if she could; for

when she was gone she should stand more solitary and alone than many others. Besides, the thought of death caused a shudder. She had always kept aloof from such scenes, had wished to close her ears and never hear the dreadful words, death, grave, dissolution. Why was death inevitable in this world? O, what horrible feelings must possess one leaving this beautiful, sunny life for a gloomy valley leading to a dark grave! She could not understand God, and had called upon him to answer: Why dost thou send life in order to destroy it? Why impart love to the heart in order to make it suffer the bitterness of separation? Why only sanctify in order to put to death? Heretofore her life had glided so peacefully; the first whirlpool she had encountered, but happily passed through, had been Dr. Uhlhart's declaration. She had never sung the "Erl-king" since that eventful evening, and now a fearful cataract appeared before her life's way. Would it destroy the rudderless boat?

"No excitement," was the physician's peremptory commands for Lady Von Herbig. Ah! the poor woman herself was so frightfully excited. The thought of leaving her spoiled darling alone, without friends or money, was so horrible to her. Then, too, she reproached herself with: "Why have I reared her so that she must now be dependent upon others?" And her weakness pictured the condition darker than it really was. She now desired to do right; she now wished to provide for her child; and had not Herr Bolton, the wealthy merchant, intertwined himself about her? Would her child not be as safe with him as in Abraham's bosom? And was he not now acting the part of a faithful son toward her? O, if she could only lend her vision to Sibylla, at least this time she would see it to be for the best, and with one act make amends for all her earlier omissions. Therefore in this clear hour she begged her daughter to become Herr Bolton's wife. She begged, she importuned, she entreated in the most tender expressions; but her daughter seemed to prefer walking barefooted to riding in an elegant equipage. But Sibylla could not maintain her opposition long against her mother's miserable, wan, pleading face. She answered evasively—the doctor had demanded freedom from all excitement—then the sick one became more urgent. "I can not die in peace," she cried; "O, will you not make my departure easy?"

Sibylla suffered far greater pangs than her mother. She endeavored to change the conversation, and withdrew from the room. In vain! As a shipwrecked manner turns his longing gaze upon the land that appears like a star of hope to save him from a watery grave, so Lady Von Herbig clung to the hope of her daughter's marriage to Herr Bolton. Sibylla heard the roar of the cataract which threatened to ingulf her; but she stood firmly, and clung to the single branch that grew on its edge.

Should she go to Theodora for advice? O no! Her deepest secret, that she had not even revealed to herself, much less carried to her lips—only the one who knew that could advise her.

The mother grew worse, and Sibylla became exhausted on account of the care, which she would permit no one to share. Leaving the sick-room to obtain some rest, her thoughts whirled like glowing foot-prints through her brain; for sleep and peace were fled. Another day her mother was able to persuade Sibylla more than usual, and she uttered the binding "yes," and helplessly permitted the happy bridegroom to place an engagement ring, which was in readiness, upon her finger.

Farewell, thou golden sun!

It was a relief to Sibylla that Herr Bolton found it necessary to leave the city on the following morning to attend to some urgent business; but he assured Lady Von Herbig that he should return in three days, with which arrangement she felt satisfied. She now seemed to improve. Joy apparently caused oblivion of pain; but it was only a joyous misery to Sibylla to know she had done a loving act for her mother's sake, the great cost of which she would soon forget; and she did forget it, as well as the betrothed, and when the time came for his return she shrank back in horror.

On the day of Herr Bolton's arrival Lady Von Herbig was alone with her daughter.

"Raise me up a little," she said; "I have something to say to you."

Sibylla obeyed; then knelt by the bed, and clasped the small, white hand of the sick one in hers.

"You are my dear, good child," she began; "you have given me nothing but pleasure. I feel that my end is near. Will you fulfill your dying mother's request?"

Sibylla bowed her head. What more could she do than had already been done in the giving of herself away? To her every thing else was now of little consequence.

"See," she continued; "I have only a few days to live. I feel death at my heart. When I die where shall you go? We have no relatives. To your guardian, who has always treated us hardly and contemptibly? No; the wife's best place is in the house of her husband. Decide, my child, to become the wedded wife of thy Edward. To see thee crowned with the myrtle-wreath has always been my fondest wish; fulfill it to me."

Sibylla shrank inwardly. The roar of the cataract deafened her ear and soul. She felt that she had fallen irrevocably into its depths; then only a moment and all would be over—the sooner the better.

Farewell, thou beaming sun!

"Will you, my angel?"

"Yes."

"O, what joy you have given me! Now my eyes can close in peace!"

"When shall it be?"

"To-morrow, for no time must be lost. The good Edward—O, what a husband you will get!—has every thing ready. Even the bridal garments are prepared for you!"

"One stipulation, dear mamma," begged Sibylla.

"Every thing, every thing! O, he will carry you in his arms. Roses and violets——"

"Let no strangers be present," interrupted Sibylla.

At twelve o'clock the next day an altar was erected near the bedside of the hourly failing sick one. Beautiful flowers covered and adorned it. The dying mother, somewhat fantastically attired, sat up with folded hands. Before the altar knelt a marble image, with living, but to-day weary and troubled eyes. A white satin garment enfolded her slender figure, and had the myrtle-wreath not crowned her head with its token of Spring, one would have seen what appeared to be a maiden of snow. Tearless the bride knelt there; kindly the bridegroom looked down upon her; the clergyman joined their hands. "Until death part you," he said—then all was over. Lady Von Herbig, under great excitement, embraced her children with hot tears and kisses. "You have sweetened my dying hour," she exclaimed to one and the other. Then followed extreme exhaustion, and the physician directed all to leave the room.

"It will not be long," he said; "she has concentrated all her strength, body and mind, in this hour. She will soon pass away."

The next morning Herr Bolton and his wife stood by the inanimate form of their mother. "Now you belong wholly to me," said the young husband.

Sibylla could not weep.

"*Farewell, thou golden sun!*"

XVII.

"They were children of two kings,
Who loved each other dearly;
They could not be united,
For the deep sea rolled between."

—GERMAN.

Wulf's landlady entered his room. "Here's a letter, and here's a paper for you."

Wulf seized the letter. Why? It was his own letter which he had posted two weeks previously to his uncle. Upon the outside was stamped: "Person addressed dead; opened by official authority and returned to writer."

"Dead! my good uncle dead! and I was not there to close his eyes! Alone, all alone! The old man dead! he who has done so much for me! Dead, now when I need him so much!"

Deeply moved, Wulf pressed his head between his hands, while hot tears streamed from his eyes. But suddenly the tears ceased, and his eyes became motionless and staring. Their glance had mechanically rested upon a name in the paper lying before him. In one column stood two notices. The first read:

"United in the holy bonds of matrimony, EDWARD BOLTON, leather merchant of Larkow, and SIBYLLA VON HERBIG."

The second read:

"Departed this life, at three o'clock A.M., Lady Von Herbig, widow of Colonel M. Von Herbig. This announcement is made in deep sorrow, to her friends and acquaintances by her children,

"EDWARD BOLTON,
"SIBYLLA BOLTON, *née* Von Herbig."

Three death notices!

XVIII.

"There's a love that lives a season,
  And one that lives for aye;
There's a love that knows no treason,
  And one that will betray;
There's a love that is deceiving,
  One that's worth the heart's believing,
And with each comes joy or grieving
  To every one some day.

Which my lot shall be accorded,
   No more I have to guess;
Fate its fiat has recorded
   What love I shall possess.
In thy heart's the love that seals it,
   Every day more clear reveals it,
And my heart exulting feels it,
   True love my life shall bless."

The Winter was more severe this season than usual. The sea was frozen over, and the ice had remained for a long time as firm as it was now. The people crossed it to and fro in wagons to the little neighboring islands. Lovely, quiet, and inclosed lay the little village in which our friends dwelt. Life flowed on with the utmost uniformity. When the day greeted the departing night, it said, "Mother Esther lies prostrate in her bed as usual;" and when evening returned again, the day only added, "And Ingeborg sits by her side the same as ever."

Christmas dawned. The day was short, and it grew dark very early. There were few festival preparations to be seen in the dwellings with which we are familiar.

Ingeborg was sitting quietly in her own room. In former years her father had been with her; to-day she was alone. An intense longing for her heavenly home came over the sick child. Just then the chiming of bells through the air called to vespers in the neighboring church. Ingeborg expected to sing in the angels' chorus, in which the assembled host announce, with great joy, good tidings to all people. She went out with faithful Johanna. Everywhere bright lights streamed over the white snow, all leading to the same place. O, how beautiful it was to see the single beams uniting in their journey to the sanctuary! Not one little cottage that did not send forth its worshipers. From Mother Esther's home stepped the slender Karen. Where was Wulf to-day? His light was absent; it did not beam God-ward. Flickered it like a Will-o'-the-wisp over the moors?

In the church there was a sacred silence. The lull organ peeled forth, and the chorus of children sang. Ingeborg folded her hands. "Next year I shall rejoice with the choir above," she murmured. They sang the message of joy; but she forgot to unite with them. It was only the familiar child's-song, but Ingeborg thought it had never sounded so beautiful before. At the conclusion, "Glory to God," all eyes were suddenly directed to the gallery; a deep, manly voice had burst forth, which was strange and yet familiar. Karen, too, looked up. O, what a glance! There stood Martin as first singer, at his old post—Martin, who had been absent, now, for three

years! Their eyes met. Karen dropped hers upon the hymn-book; but the words danced before her, and she could sing no more.

Ingeborg's face beamed with pleasure, but a deep pang passed through her heart.

Martin's first visit had been to the church. Mother Esther did not know of his return, and she hastened to carry the news. How the poor paralyzed one tried to express her joy! But only inarticulate sounds came from her lips. Then the two happy ones entered the room, radiant as a Christmas-tree. After the first greeting, Martin drew a letter from his pocket and handed it to Ingeborg.

"As I passed the post-office," he explained, "a messenger ran after me, and asked me to deliver this to you."

Ingeborg glanced at the superscription. It was from Berlin, from Theodora Von Kahring. She opened and read it. Why was her face paler than usual? Why did she press her thin lips so firmly as if to suppress a cry of anguish from within?

When Martin and Karen learned the letter was not from Wulf they had no further interest in it, and both went off together to visit Martin's parents. Frau Ericksen and Ingeborg were then left alone, and the latter read aloud the communication. It was expressed with that clear serenity which Theodora alone represented, and yet its contents were alarming.

Theodora had written to Ingeborg, as she knew his mother to be bedridden, that "a regard for Wulf," whom she "heartily loved," had prompted her to send the letter. Wulf was ill, bodily and mentally, and she deemed it very necessary that one of his own, preferably his uncle, should hasten to Berlin at once, either to care for him there, or, what would be better, take him home for a while. She intimated that it was rumored how gambling and drink had occupied much of his time; but she imputed this to the influence of a young man who enticed him to such places, and from whom he must be wholly separated. She also related how Wulf had faithfully attended for a long time a poor family, and expressed the belief that he would soon be restored to the better way. But something must be done immediately. She had learned of his illness and of his desire to see her; but upon calling, his landlady had denied access to his room, saying that Wulf had changed his mind. It was her opinion that he had contracted gambling debts, and was in the power of his inflexible creditors.

When the reading was finished, both women were silent. Ingeborg looked inquiringly upon the paralytic, but she indicated nothing.

"Who shall go to Berlin? Ah! if his good uncle had only been spared!" said Ingeborg, after a pause. "Wulf must be in great need, or Theodora never would have written so."

Frau Ericksen made a sign, from which her companion understood that she had no suggestion to offer.

"Karen cannot travel; she would never be able to find the way there. Martin does not know Wulf, and it would be a pity to separate the two after his long absence. Mother, send me; let me go."

The old woman shook her head, looked out of the window, and then at Ingeborg's fragile form.

"O, you mean that I can not? I am stronger than you think; you do not know how much I can endure. Some one must go. Let me."

Mother Esther lay silent for awhile; then she drew the young girl to her side, and laid her hands upon her head.

"I will talk to Martin," said Ingeborg, "and he can direct me. When I reach Berlin I shall have Theodora's help."

While Ingeborg was making preparations for the journey the Kahrings at Berlin were arranging for Arnold's wedding, which was to take place in three days; and on this account many were unable to celebrate Christmas; for tailors, caterers, and florists were all employed for the occasion. Every body was talking about the elegant apartments, the superb mirrored walls, the magnificent tapestries, the bride's princely dower. Every body praised the happy pair. "Yes, yes," said the upholsterer, who had skillfully draped the damask curtains, and was now observing the effect with unconcealed satisfaction; "yes, yes: if such as we only had even a little bit of all this splendor! But one sits all day with the happiness of her children's legs in her lap, and another runs all his life without being able to lay hold of an outside coat lapel." It was, therefore, not in the rosiest mood that he entered his little cellar home, and observed with discontented eyes his own poor, dilapidated curtains. But his wife had supper ready, and was so happy to have her husband at home in the evenings. The children sprang around the father, and had so many new discoveries to show in their little puppet-man and nut-cracker, that he soon forgot his useless ill-humor, and related to his delighted wife all the gorgeous appointments of the new house. She sat and listened with open mouth, and finally said: "O, if I could only see it!"

They who were soon to call this elegance their own had lived, meanwhile, in heaviness and gloom. Every thing forced upon a person, as from the beginning this affair had been, is calculated to be an infliction. Arnold felt so toward his bride. She did not know how to win his affection, and he overlooked her good qualities and observed only her faults. But she really loved him after her fashion. She desired his respect and commendation, but he only gave her the most perfunctory attention. Then she began to mistrust him—even to follow him with icy glances. Arnold was aware of this, but made no change in his manner.

If this was the condition of affairs during the six weeks' betrothal, what would it be in the marriage unto death? Arnold revolved this in his mind, and became indescribably wretched. On account of this condition his naturally indolent nature was aroused; he felt continually the ignominy of having sold himself for money, and in the depths of his really good-natured heart he pitied his betrothed in her mistaken life's happiness. And yet what was her happiness? She craved a distinguished title. Then he would give it to her. That she had any deeper sentiment for him he never dreamed.

Very often he had been impelled to make an open confession to her, to give back her promise, and shake off the yoke that lay so heavily upon him. But his parents—the dark despair of their future, the great pain of his mother, the reproachful face of his sister, who, by this step would have promising happiness secured to her—all this stood before him.

As the wedding-day drew near he felt proportionately miserable. This was the curse of the incompleteness which had accompanied him all his life; namely, that he had never been able to reach a right conclusion; never had the strength to will as he desired, still less to carry out his resolutions.

XIX.

"Every day is a fresh beginning;
Listen, my soul, to the glad refrain,
And, spite of old sorrow and older sinning,
And puzzles forecasted, and possible pain,
Take heart with the day, and begin again."

—SUSAN COOLIDGE.

It is the eve of Arnold's wedding. He had much to do, hear, and say, and was obliged to play the happy bridegroom. At the same time his thoughts were constantly with Sibylla, who, with her husband, had long since left Berlin, and whom he had not seen again. Why did he crave a better fate than hers?

The evening passed amid flowers, poems, presents, and drinking of the best wines. Dr. Uhlhart seasoned with his jests the epicurean feast. He missed Wulf, and had missed him from the play resorts for some weeks. But he had searched for him, and rejoiced to find the youth no longer actually ill, but wholly demoralized and miserable. Wulf loved Sibylla, and this was ground enough for Uhlhart's hatred; besides, she loved him in return, and that was ground enough for

him to meditate revenge. O, this wily doctor penetrated their hearts more deeply than they themselves did!

After the family had gone to Banker Kouzky's to the preliminary wedding entertainment, Theodora escaped to her little room in order to obtain the rest she needed so much. Her unsightly disfigurements excused her from participation in large assemblies, and she had the exclusive immunity to remain only for the ceremony at the morrow's wedding. She had brought no light, that she might be entirely alone with her thoughts. She remembered Arnold with sisterly love, wondering whether he would be really happy in his new relation. She feared he would suffer in many ways. And Wulf? For him it was only a question. Either he would be thoroughly reformed or wholly lost.

While her thoughts were thus engaged a lady was announced, who, upon going to meet her, proved to be Ingeborg. Theodora had not expected the young girl, as she was not aware of the death of Wulf's uncle. Few words, however, were necessary to place all the circumstances before her, and only a brief reflection upon them to enable Theodora to recognize that Ingeborg's coming was not only the sole thing to be done, but also the best.

After the young traveler had been rested and refreshed, and first of all learned of Wulf's physical improvement, both women conversed earnestly together. Theodora was well acquainted with life in the great world, its temptations and dangers, and now in her retirement she also followed with deep interest the development of persons and situations in her own immediate connection. With her clear judgment, her helpful inclinations, and large influence, which, although somewhat concealed, was none the less marked, Theodora had learned of Wulf's fall as well as of Uhlhart's treachery. But her lips remained closed on this subject. Meanwhile she imparted to Ingeborg her apprehensions that Wulf had been led to contract debts, and might be the prey of usurers, who carried on a nefarious business in large cities, and who brought many young men to destruction. She also interested herself in the life and misery of many at Berlin. Ingeborg was scarcely imaginative enough to conceive it all, accustomed as she had always been to the simplest ways, but she listened in amazement. "O," she thought, "if such horrible things take place in these lovely dwellings, I would be far from them!" But comfortingly Theodora's words also reassured her, as she talked of the golden Spring of Christian love, which, though often unattractive outwardly, and even invisible, still permeated this great city, offering its rescuing draught to old and young, rich and poor, as well as to the sorrowing, the lonely, and the forsaken. With this Ingeborg's heart beat responsively; for she could recognize God's great hand here also, building up this glorious kingdom, to further which they who would help must give up the crown for this life.

"Wulf will do well here yet," she said softly.

"I think so, too," replied Theodora; "but he will not receive this glorious call until he has been baptized in the sea of great sorrows."

They both decided that Ingeborg should wait until the wedding was over, then visit Wulf and ask him, now in the holidays, to go to his sick mother's home to recruit his health. As to his debts, Theodora begged that Ingeborg should exert all her influence to induce Wulf to leave his affairs in the hands of a reliable man, whose name she mentioned.

"Do you know," she continued, "whether they have money enough at home to meet all these obligations?"

"O, much, plenty!" replied Ingeborg.

The next morning the Kahrings were astonished to greet Ingeborg as their guest. "She has business in Berlin," explained Theodora; and as they were accustomed to question none of her assertions, and as the approaching wedding occupied all thoughts, there was no curiosity excited.

Ingeborg felt out of place in the midst of all this excitement. The whole atmosphere lay as a mountain on her soul. When Arnold approached Ingeborg, she seemed to be a reminding spirit of the better part of his life; but he exerted a gloomy impression upon her. How could he be so joyless and dissatisfied? Intuitively, Ingeborg felt that this marriage had not been made in heaven, and she became more and more timid in this great aristocratic house, and wished she might go home this day instead of on the morrow.

She went earlier than the others to the church, in order to see all without being observed. After the ceremony she would return with Theodora. Every thing conspired to render her solemn. What a great church! She had never seen one so splendid. Garlands of flowers were festooned, carpets laid, lights flashed, and the house was filled with spectators and wedding guests. At length the bridal pair entered. Ingeborg could understand how this cold, stately lady inspired no love. How dignified Arnold appeared—so different from his usual manner! And yet her eyes wandered until Wulf came. Dr. Uhlhart was with him. That was his evil spirit. But was this pale, dejected young man before her eyes the same strong, vigorous Wulf, who had rescued her from death? She could not look away from him. Had the people here made him so white and ill? He must leave; he must breathe pure air again. How fortunate that she had come! She would go even sooner than she had decided.

The ceremony being over, the wedding procession passed out of the church. Wulf was one of the last to leave. He did not look up; his thoughts drew his eyes downward. A frightful reaction was taking place within him: in the instant, whether he should begin a new life, become a new man—every thing hinged upon that—in order to gain the noble prize, or in an instant lose this prize forever.

He followed the crowd mechanically, when suddenly his hand was seized, and an entreating voice said: "Wulf, stay here. Let the others go; come with me!"

He was so ill, he was scarcely surprised to see Ingeborg before him. But he remained beside her, feeling as though he belonged to her. His home, his childhood, his sick mother, reached out to him, through her, a hand, and he grasped it.

The carriages were gone, and the spectators had dispersed. But there was one carriage remaining without, containing Theodora looking for Ingeborg.

At a glance she observed what had occurred, and, without losing her self-control, she calmly invited both to enter. They soon arrived in her quiet room. Here Theodora withdrew to superintend preparations for their entertainment. Wulf sat beside Ingeborg, having no apparent control of his will, indifferent to every thing. He scarcely inquired for his mother or for Karen, nor how Ingeborg came. The latter summoned all her strength, for she realized she must now be Wulf's stay. How gladly would she have accepted his guidance in every thing, but he remained in perfect apathy. She could scarcely have borne it, had not the hope of better things peered like a star through the present clouds.

She told him of Martin's return on Christmas, and of his rich father's joy, and his desire to give some outward expression as a token of his gratitude. Wulf listened quietly. Christmas? That had already passed, and Sibylla lost to him! Where had the succeeding few days flown? Ingeborg became exhausted. All her thoughts centered in the desire to have him at home. "Wulf," she entreated, "we will go away from here." He bowed his head abstractedly. "Shall I go to help pack your trunk?" she asked.

"Pack?" This question seemed to recover his senses. "Ingeborg, I can not go. I must stay."

"No, indeed! why can not you go?"

Wulf hid his face in his hands, and cried:

"Go away; I am a miserable creature. Go back alone. I must remain here."

"What retains you?" continued Ingeborg.

"My debts."

"Debts?" reiterated Ingeborg, cheerfully.

"Yes; I have debts, many debts; at my boarding house, to Dr. Uhlhart, to Jews—and no money to pay them."!

Ingeborg sprang up.

"O, I have so much money, so much!" and drawing from her pocket a packet of bills, she exclaimed: "There, Wulf; take it, take it; it is all yours!" while half weeping and half laughing she laid the money in his hands.

Now, for the first time in her life, she rejoiced in the possession of money and in her thoughtfulness to bring all she had at home with her.

Wulf remonstrated against receiving it; to accept it seemed more dishonorable than any thing else; but Ingeborg begged and insisted. Just then Theodora entered. How well she understood the method of restoring tranquillity out of agitation without intruding, and without wounding Wulf's sensibilities! The objections had soon been dispelled, and she was freely discussing with him the best thing to do. She undertook to pay Uhlhart after Wulf's departure. She accompanied him to his boarding-house in the evening to arrange matters there; she settled the Jew's account, who was astonished, and not too well pleased to have his money returned so soon; and when they came back, after arranging all these difficult affairs, they found Ingeborg quite rested and restored. Wulf, too, was much changed. This burden of debt had lain upon his soul like lead, and he trusted himself to Theodora's guidance as if he had been a child and she his mother, without realizing the dependence. She also began to exert an irresistible influence over him. Did he, too, feel that she stood upon that eminence which judges human nature humanely? and that she could forgive all, because she understood all?

While Ingeborg forgave all because she loved, Theodora, in spite of her real earnestness, seemed to have nothing to forgive, and verified that beautiful sentiment: "All must ardently recognize, as well as believe, that man himself has nothing to forgive."

"You will come to the train early to-morrow morning, at eight o'clock?" said Ingeborg as Wulf parted from them.

Wulf promised. "Yes, at eight o'clock I will be there."

But until that time, ten hours will elapse and there may much happen meanwhile.

Wulf went home to his boarding-house. The Kahrings had not yet returned from the wedding, but Theodora and Ingeborg did not wait for them. The former lay awake a long while thinking of her family. A strange sorrow withheld its blow far from her. Ingeborg was weary, but her heart was happy and her lips murmured softly: "God's angels keep my beloved from trouble, harm, or danger for evermore!"

XX.

"Life's a tortured, booming gurge,
Winds of passion strike and urge,
And transmute to broken surge
  Foam-crests of ambition.

Death, men say, is like a sea,
That ingulfs mortality,
Treacherous, dreadful, blindingly,
  Full of storm and terror."

—M. FIELD.

Let us now return to the wedding festival. It was celebrated in the Hotel R——. The beautiful, spacious drawing-room had been adorned with exquisite plants and flowers, which concealed the walls, while fountains here and there rustled their melodies during the pauses of the music. Around the table, on which hundreds of wax tapers glowed in rich silver candelabra, while the rarest viands and choicest wines in the world vied with one another, sat a large company, partly of the nobility, partly of those representing the aristocracy of money—outward show concealing inward emptiness, as false hair the bald heads.

In the center sat enthroned the young bridal couple; Arnold more attentive and amiable than usual; his bride cold and stately as ever. It seemed as though the greater part of life had been spent before a mirror, in order to regulate every movement of her body, every expression of her face, after the strictest model of propriety. Had she as well, one was tempted to ask, educated and molded her heart with even a tithe of this care and consistency?

An old proverb says: "Out of one wedding two usually come." This would appear probable to-day, from all indications. Herr Von Lenkseuring had for the past six weeks been devotedly attentive to the chosen one of his heart, and Eugenie Von Kahring looked upon her suitor with no unfriendly eyes.

A trick of fate, perhaps also some human intervention, had decreed to have them both neighbors at table. That was a favorable opportunity. The young man softly whispered to his fair companion many little phrases which made her blush for joy.

Lady Von Kahring looked benignly on the pair. When Eugenie should have married this rich young man, and Arnold had just performed a deed which had produced rejoicing, then were not the wishes of her heart as well as the necessities of her house satisfied? Still she was in anxious suspense; the fortune of her step-daughter lay in a well-formed contract in her father's hands, and the embarrassments of her husband had reached their utmost limit; indeed he could scarcely wave them off until this very day, when a large sum of money was due, and must be in

his hands. Surely Banker Kouzky could not deny him the favor of a loan. His honor was their honor; his daughter now bore the name of their son.

"To the one we love," said Banker Kouzky, laughingly, to his new relative Eugenie, as he leaned over the table toward her. "I think we not only have a newly wedded pair at table, but a betrothed one," he added, jestingly, to Lady Von Kahring, and in tones so loud that the neighbors of the baroness all smiled and looked at Herr Von Lenkseuring and Eugenie. The former seemed ready to receive congratulations then and there; but Eugenie begged him to speak to papa and mamma first, and not to make any announcement here. The scene passed, but not until the news had traveled the circuit of the table. But the air was stifling; all were oppressed, and, by universal consent, the table was deserted, and all withdrew to the adjoining salon. Here dance-music quickened the blood in the veins of the young people, while the older guests sought the smaller rooms or cozy corners in groups, as they found it congenial. Every one was perfectly free and unrestrained.

But what have the two old gentlemen, Baron Von Kahring and Banker Kouzky, to say so softly and earnestly to each other in yonder window-niche?—the baron growing more and more persuasive, the banker more and more cold and reserved. On the baron's forehead stand great drops of perspiration, while the banker's countenance remains as unmoved as that of a speculator when one would seek to read therein the rise or fall of stocks on the 'change. At length he remarks, icily:

"Herr Baron, do not mistake; my daughter and my money are two very different things. The one I have given; make no expectation on that account of the other."

The baron talked so earnestly it seemed as though one could hear his vehement words. It was in vain. At length he became silent and exhausted. The banker turned away smiling. Near by a game of cards was being arranged, and he said, suavely: "Shall we join this party?"

At this juncture an old general approached the two, with a wine-glass and bottle in hand:

"Baron, this is to the welfare of your house, on which has been grafted to-day a new branch."

"Long may it live!" replied the baron, accepting the glass and draining it; but his eyes were sunken and his countenance ashy.

The banker added his thanks, touched his glass to both, and laughed cordially.

The next morning Wulf was up betimes to prepare for his departure. He hoped nothing from this home-going; but he embraced it, as his only method of escape, with gratitude.

His landlady rushed into the room, pale with terror:

"Herr Ericksen! Herr Ericksen! Do you know what has happened?"

"What has happened?" inquired Wulf.

"Baron Von Kahring has committed suicide. He shot himself last night."

Wulf grasped the table. Every thing whirled in the room.

"Arnold?" he cried.

"No, the old baron. It was almost three o'clock when he returned from the wedding. An hour later his servants heard a fearful report, and hastening to his side, found him dead. So the milkman has just told me."

Away with apathy and weakness! Wulf hurried to the Kahrings. How changed every thing was! Despite the early hour, crowds of people were running hither and thither in great excitement. No servant announced him, and he passed unhindered to the baron's chamber. What a sight! Arnold and Banker Kouzky were there alone.

Poor Arnold! Slaughtered in vain. Wulf hastened toward him to embrace him, but he was repulsed. The old banker, standing coldly near, shook his head. He thought: "Could he not have taken a simple powder if he were determined upon this? That would have made no fuss and trouble like this. A physician's certificate for apoplexy might have been secured, and I should not have grudged the money for that; but——" and with an air of disgust he gazed upon the lifeless form.

The young baroness entered, and drew her husband to an adjoining room. Her heart was cold; education and custom had formed a crust of ice over it; but as this violent deed had interrupted the course of every-day life, so it also penetrated this hard coating, and the warm spring of love that exists in most women's hearts gushed forth freely. She had always been restricted and restrained by a sense of propriety, and it was well now that she could act. If we could have wished a loving hand to rest upon the old baroness, Eugenie, and Theodora, they had no reason henceforth to complain of any want of care and sympathy from Arnold's wife. Like a warm current this love fell upon her husband, and, in spite of all other thoughts, it burned his soul like fire. Had he deserved it? She, to whom he had behaved as though he had only married her for money? She, who now bore a stained name, and who must, with all her short-sightedness, realize the motives of those around her? But true love is a rose which blooms in the midst of thorns; in the springing clover fields it seldom thrives.

The first sad days over, the stunning effects were gradually relaxed; visits of condolence and letters of sympathy came from all sides. Herr Von Lenkseuring wrote that as he stood at such a distance from the respected Kahring family, he dared not intrude; but ventured to send this token of sympathy in such an extraordinarily sad calamity, etc. Lady Von Kahring received the

communication in good faith, but Eugenie wept hot, bitter tears. In the very last book he had given her stood the words: "Faithful even in misfortune."

Soon after this occurrence wagons came to carry trunk after trunk to the railway-station. The young baron, with his wife, his mother, and sister, set out upon a long journey through Austria. Through the young baroness's influence her father was persuaded to accept the responsibility of settling the estate. They are now off to the far south, where we shall leave them to begin a new life; leave them for the present in the hope that, having experienced the emptiness of this world's happiness, they will strive for the higher and better way.

The once elegant apartments of the Kahring mansion stand deserted and lorn, awaiting another division of life to be enacted therein.

XXI

"Such let my life be here:
Not marked by noise but by success alone,
Not known by bustle, but by useful deeds;
Quiet and gentle, clear and fair as light,
Yet full of its all-penetrating power,
Its silent but resistless influence;
Wasting no needless sound, yet ever working,
Hour after hour, upon a needy world."

—H. BONAR.

The last day of the year had come. But such a struggle and event as it brought with it none of the preceding three hundred and sixty-four had witnessed. The dunes looked around in surprise, rubbing with one hand the snow from their eyes, and thinking Summer had returned again. They could not imagine why there was such a concourse of people moving to and fro. What had occurred in this quiet spot of the world that it had been transformed into such a place of excitement?

Nothing had happened as yet; but on the morrow Martin's father had decided to give a festival in honor of his son's return, such as had never been witnessed on sea or land. All the people round about should participate in it; great and small should rejoice with him. There was no public house large enough to accommodate every body; but this did not trouble Herr Niederog's mind. Did not the sea spread itself out to unseen width, and arch her bosom with ice

as firm as a ship's deck? Did it not sparkle and beam in dazzling whiteness? On the ice, then, they would go; play, eat, drink, skate, sled—all partake of the joy which the father entertained.

Great preparations were begun. Herr Niederog hastened them as much as possible; for while the ice now stood firm and hard as marble, the banks here and there began to give signs that probably in several days water would flow between the main-land and the ice-plain.

To-day all was safe and beautiful. The finest weather greeted the festival, to which every body was invited. O, how the children anticipated, with longing eyes, the preparations of the refreshments yonder, in a gayly decorated tent! For once noon-time came too late; but a half hour after, no one was seen in the houses; old and young were out. Those who could not play and skate looked merrily on, and not a single person remained behind save the solitary invalid of the village, Frau Ericksen. Karen would have gladly remained with her; but, being Martin's betrothed, she was one of the chief personages of the festival. At length she, too, was gone, and the paralytic one lay in a position which enabled her to look out on the sea, and at least share with her eyes in the general enjoyment. Had Ingeborg been here, she would have remained at the bedside, as such pleasures were indifferent to her; but she was at Berlin, having written a few lines to Mother Esther, after her arrival, to the effect that she had reached there safely; had seen Wulf; he was no longer ill, and should soon return with her. Further Mother Esther knew nothing.

Quietly she lay there, thinking, recalling the occurrences of her life. With what pleasure she would have witnessed her happy daughter on the arm of the joyful bridegroom! Then her thoughts reverted to Berlin. Her beloved son was there, and she could not help him. How gladly she would have hastened to him, embraced and rescued him! But alas! she was lying here, helpless. Through the clear air came shouts of laughter, and Mother Esther looked out upon the gay picture in the distance. But it was too far away to recognize any one. Much easier could she read the beautiful inscription on the wall, which, as a child, had been deciphered with so much difficulty, and which had silently witnessed all the joy and sorrow of her life. It had stood there as long as the house, and would accompany Karen, also, through her new life, helping her to bear the good and evil days which might recur to her in this little abode:

"In storm and tempests high,
  Great God, protect my life!
And from my little home,
  Keep distant rage and strife.
Let angels hover near;
Then shall we never fear!"

Several hours passed in this way. Early evening came, and moonlight fell upon the pretty picture of merry-makers. Suddenly, as Frau Ericksen looked out over the sea, she perceived a little white cloud rising near the horizon. It gave her unspeakable anxiety, as she understood so well weather signals. In about an hour there would be a frightful storm, which would disturb the water, cause the ice to be flooded and all would be lost. "O God!" she thought, "is there not one among them wise enough to interpret that little peculiar cloud, that will soon become monstrous, and bring destruction in its path?" No; all are happy, living only in the present enjoyment. How well she knew this class of people! Quiet, thoughtful, difficult to arouse to mirth, but doing every thing heartily and thoroughly—work or play. No one would dream of danger, and suddenly it will come upon them all!

Mother Esther's solicitude gave vent in a loud cry, which was followed by successive ones. Alas! her shrieks did not reach beyond the little room. They were all in vain; no head turned away from the strand; there was no cessation of pleasure, and the cloud grew larger and larger.

There is no time to lose; many lives hang on thy efforts, thou poor, lame woman!

She looked once more out of the window. The moonlight threw its pale beams over all, and only showed to her more plainly the gathering blackness. Now life hangs on a moment to attract these merry unfortunates. Then, a fearful conclusion: the power of the will controls the body. Frau Ericksen, who, but a few moments before had been unable to stir, crept out of bed, crawled to the stove on hands and knees. God be thanked, there is still some fire there! Seizing a brand she threw it upon her bed, and in a moment it was wrapped in flames. Now she must reach a place of safety herself. With superhuman effort she gained the door, and then, a few feet from her home, she saw the red flames leap from the window and seize the straw upon the roof. Only partially clothed, she knelt in the snow, her whole spiritual strength concentrated in her eyes. She gazed intently hither and thither. Yes, yes! now they see the clear fire-light, and in wild haste all rush to the land. Then the wind sprang up and accelerated the destruction of the widow's dwelling, and still more the approach of the villagers, who now recognized their double peril. The sky had grown dark; the ice cracked and snapped; the wind is become a storm, flapping the flaming tongues like whips, but in the wild escaping all are there; and as the last foot presses the strand the ice breaks, and the furious waters rush and roar as if in rage that their victims have escaped. All are saved, every one.

Martin and Karen outran the others. They were the first to discover the motionless form of their mother, prostrate on the ground. Nothing could be saved from the house. The situation was grasped by all, and one feeling animated every heart. At the same time, from another direction, with flying feet, came Wulf and Ingeborg. They had seen the light of the fire, and had hastened thither as rapidly as the approaching storm. They do not ask what has happened. The condition of Mother Esther permits no time for questions.

"Take her immediately to my house," says Ingeborg.

"No, to mine," "to mine," is heard on all sides.

"I have plenty of room, and it is not far," says Ingeborg, firmly.

Every one offers to carry tenderly the old mother; every hand would render some immediate service; every eye would see her; every lip would bless her.

Now she lies feeble and pale in Ingeborg's comfortable bed and warm room. All signs of lethargy have flown from Wulf, and as yet he does not grasp the situation, as his professional skill is wholly claimed. But there is nothing to hope. A second paralytic stroke has affected the whole body; a third will not be long delayed, and it will end her life.

But Mother Esther is not unconscious. She looks up and recognizes Wulf, Karen, Ingeborg, and Martin. Through the open door many enter. She knows them all, and receives their grateful thanks for their life and her love. Many eyes are wet with tears; many hard palms press the stiffened hands of the old mother. She looks up so inquiringly, that, comprehending her expression, they tell her all are returned safely, and that she has rescued them. Tears of joy fill her eyes as she seeks to read the faces of Karen and Martin. She had destroyed their home, and now her daughter is portionless. They embrace her assuringly, while Herr Niederog advances and says:

"Make no apology, Mother Esther; we owe our lives to you, and I will establish Karen as a princess."

"I will also contribute my share." exclaims an old seaman; "but for you I should be in a watery grave."

"The poor girl has lost mother and home for us," added another. "A shame to any who will not do what he can."

At length the room is cleared. Wulf requests rest and quiet for his mother, he alone remaining at her side until she fell asleep, when he went out to learn the particulars of the affair.

Without words, without ostentation, a simple old woman had done a heroic deed, which was crowned with success. With her own life she had purchased many, and yet there lay upon her face an expression which seemed to ask forgiveness for having destroyed her child's home. Wulf heard the story of the day. And yet this faithful mother he had overlooked and neglected; had given her anxious care instead of joy, and had imagined himself to be better than she! Youthful confidence in unbridled strength on the one side, selfish compliance to every allurement and impression on the other side, had engendered the bitter disappointment in a struggle that had not been able to discriminate between the real and the unreal. Made recreant to his faith,

disappointed in his love, he had witnessed the downfall of every thing that had at first seemed beautiful and only worthy of attainment. The usual currents in which he moved had shown their inner falsity and ended in a precipice. Finally he was weary of the chase. He had recognized his want of decision—he who had desired so much and attained so little; but his strength to resist was broken. Knowledge and theory, words, and even experience, could not help him—only deeds and life. Here was a deed; it thrilled him. God be thanked, it created dissension within him. And now his heart was a purgatory in which good and evil struggled for the mastery. What would he not give, now, to have his mother again? He needed her more than ever. "Mother, leave me not," he cried. "Alas! that I followed the false thirst which enticed me from this peaceful calling here! What do I bring as a compensation?"

Mother Esther slept long. Even the raging of a furious storm without did not disturb her. When the angel Gabriel shall sound the trump at the day of judgment she will awake out of her sleep and hear the voice which called "Lazarus, come forth," say to her: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Her funeral was like that of a princess and a heroine. As in the few days previous all had gone forth to the merry-making, so now no one remained behind from this festival of sorrow.

Wulf stood by the open grave, and looked into the narrow place which should henceforth be his mother's resting-place. What equipment had he, with all his thinking and striving for eternal life? She had never aspired to do great things, and yet she had accomplished the noblest. He, whose ambition would lead him to bless the whole world with startling effect, would he be mourned as a benefactor like this one? Wulf was deeply moved, and these days of heaviness continued their work as they led him to contemplate the months and years of his early life. The corn was laid in the earth.

"Karen, Wulf," said Ingeborg, several days later, "your mother was also my mother; we are brother and sisters. This house belongs to me. It is large and empty. For my sake remain here."

"We will thankfully accept your kind and generous offer, at least for a time," they both replied.

So the three remained together, and faithful Johanna occupied a mother's place among them.

It was decided that Karen and Martin should be married here, and the wedding should be a quiet one; for no grass as yet sprang from Mother Esther's grave. But all the rich love and sympathy which the bride received from the villagers on her wedding-day, was it not typical of the more beautiful flowers springing and growing from that suggestive spot?

XXII.

"Happy places have grown holy;
  If ye went where once ye went,
Only tears would fall down slowly,
  As at solemn sacrament.
Merry books once read for pastime,
  If ye dared to read again,
Only memories of the last time
  Would swim darkly up the brain.
—MRS. E. B. BROWNING.

A landscape so golden and bright spreads out before our gaze, it would seem that there were no sorrow in the world. We are at Larkow, the residence of Herr Bolton. It is the wonderfully beautiful month of May; birds sing, flowers bloom. Heart, poor heart, bloomest thou?

Sibylla had dreary months in the retrospect. When her husband brought her here, during this severe Winter, the icicles hung from the roof of their dwelling, twenty-four inches in depth. When her gaze rested on the vast snow-field, upon which here and there black crows searched eagerly for food, she closed her eyes. Every thing was so harmonious; without, all frozen; within, all frozen.

Her husband was, indeed, no sun whose mild, patient beams endeavored to thaw this frigidity. The death of Lady Von Herbig had somewhat calmed him; but he found it necessary to recall the same forcibly, in order to justify the sorrow of his wife. That Sibylla was even more buried than her mother, never entered his mind. She certainly ought to be very glad to enter here as mistress; and he wished she would relieve the dreariness a little for him, and permit herself to be admired in society. It was very unacceptable to him that she did not do the former, and very disagreeable that she made her mourning a pretext for avoiding the latter.

She had too much intuition to be deceived in her expectations concerning Herr Bolton. She only desired one thing, and that was to be left free and alone. That she had duties to fulfill, never occurred to her. It was enough, she thought, if she outwardly performed the obligations as mistress of the house, and if she were as little as possible annoyed by his presence.

Thus the Winter months had passed, monotonously and joylessly. Herr Bolton had shortened them by frequent journeys to Berlin; Sibylla employed her pencil, drew, and practiced music; but art did not exert over her its former attraction and power.

This was unfortunate; besides, conscience would not remain silent, but constantly reiterated that her life was more useless to others than that of her humblest maid-servant. But she desired no other life; only to live and satisfy self. Did life satisfy? In bitter mockery came the reply from her lips. Her heart leaped and cried aloud for happiness; but happiness only turned its back upon her, and would not be allured. Lost, forever lost!

Now Spring had come. The sun shone, the ice melted, and Sibylla had always been affected by nature. A rainy, gloomy day made her melancholy; a bright, sunny one had an enlivening influence. Her natural gayety returned, and the servants wondered to see their mistress so pleasant, while her husband emerged from his pouts, in order to sun himself in the beams of his wife's amiability.

Sibylla was an accomplished horse-woman, and it pleased Herr Bolton to show his wife all his fields and meadows, which were numerous and varied, if not very beautiful.

At first Sibylla rode out merely for the sake of the exercise. When she sat on a horse, there was a sense of freedom which her lively nature enjoyed. But gradually it became a pleasure to see the possessions which her husband pointed out with so much pride, and in time she began to be interested in them. Her husband, now, had something to talk about; they were mutually thawed, and, even if only upon the surface, there was a step forward taken.

Who would not rather see a cheerful face near than one of discontent? Who would not strive to please when she sees its beneficial result upon another? This feeling came over Sibylla. Happy she could not be, but she now desired to make her husband and those around her so. She would strive, through the "morning-door of the Beautiful," after true nobility and the faithful performance of duty, onward and upward to perfection.

Æsthetic culture should become the foundation of ethics. The effort to make her husband happy, which she had heretofore neglected, she would now consider as a paramount duty, and thus reach peace for herself.

"If one only learn to press the hand upon one's own heart," she said, "the exercise will not be too difficult."

Every body met her more than halfway; her husband treated her to discussions of his darling "art." Was it not easy to converse upon sheep-raising and the manufacture of beet-sugar?

One evening Herr Bolton returned from a business trip of several days to Berlin. Sibylla welcomed him pleasantly, although his absence was not at all irksome to her.

"I have two items of news for you," he said. "Guess!"

Sibylla begged for their communication.

"Well, first, Herr Von Lenkseuring and Olga Von Steinfels are betrothed; and, secondly, we may expect a visitor."

"Olga? O, that will be lovely!"

"No; she has promised to come later; but to-morrow I think Dr. Uhlhart will be here."

A blush of disappointment suffused Sibylla's face, while an inward terror convulsed her.

"Dr. Uhlhart! What will he do here?"

"Visit us. I have known him a long time, and find him a very amusing fellow. He knows something about every thing."

"Yes, he is clever," said Sibylla, reluctantly.

"Now, see, that is what I think. I have a foolish lawsuit which must soon appear. It is somewhat peculiar, and I should like to be directed to a cautious attorney. I do not trust mine wholly. You say yourself Uhlhart is clever."

"And yet I wish he would not cross our threshold. He will bring us no good fortune."

"Ah, foolish one!" exclaimed Herr Bolton; "what have you against him? I could scarcely do otherwise if I wished. It might have been unfortunate for me if he had not so kindly and nobly assisted me once; and he is welcome, for in my affair with you matters stood awry."

Sibylla scarcely heard this latter. Should she tell her husband of Uhlhart's proposal? She disliked to do so, since no such confidence had passed between them; and yet she would have waived this, if she could have gained the slightest concession thereby. But she was certain that the affair must be struggled with alone, and that she must open her eyes to discover Uhlhart's real aim; for Sibylla well knew he did not come to Larkow to gather flowers.

The doctor came. He was apparently a guest too inoffensive and ingenuous to harm a child. He was as amiable here as he had always been in society at Berlin. The knife in his eye, a fine cigar in his mouth, he could recline for hours on the sofa, and listen with undivided attention to his host's long-drawn-out conversation upon his worldly possessions, how he lived, and increased his fortune, etc. Toward Sibylla, whom he had not met since the eventful Erl-king scene at Kahrings', he was simply the old friend of the past, who had never overstepped the boundaries which his position gave him. But she perceived clearly the special attention he gave to her, and keenly detected his piercing, ardent glance beneath the polished surface, while his presence became hourly more and more offensive.

When neither he nor her husband gave any sign of departure after several days, and it seemed as if he expected to remain for weeks at Larkow, Sibylla overcame her scruples, and imparted

the marriage proposal to her husband, adding her discomfiture at his insolence in entering her home, and intruding himself there so long under the guise of a friend.

Bolton laughed heartily: "My dear woman, do you think you have told me any thing new? That child's play Uhlhart confessed to me long ago. Besides, he never intended to be serious that evening; he had merely taken a glass too much."

Nothing can calm a woman's perturbed spirit sooner than the accusation of imagining herself to have been loved by a man who disowns the fact. When a young girl, Sibylla might have turned away without a reply, but as a wife she felt she must remain and defend herself.

"Pshaw!" she said; "and do you believe that?"

"He has given me proof which attests it. Know, my dear child, that when your mother lay ill and your giddy little head scorned me wholly, it was he who encouraged me to persevere, and enabled me to obtain final victory. You see I have good reason to be grateful to him."

Sibylla winced. A light dawned upon her. She saw that when Uhlhart found his own case hopeless, he had made every effort to unite her to a man who he well knew was to her as fire to water. But she controlled herself. It had always been a matter of surprise how well she was able to do this, and wear a mask upon her face. This art she would now exercise, and Uhlhart should not discover her unhappiness. She would be bright and alert, in order that he should not observe the deception.

It was, however, the torment of daily life to evince a happiness she did not feel, and her husband made the task so difficult. Many things she now permitted for the first time in order to conceal her annoyance from the watchful guest.

Herr Bolton's behavior was at no time very circumspect, and often wholly coarse. Cultivated manner is so indispensable to make life agreeable. It presents so many different grades that are often unobserved, but which are always felt; and Uhlhart, as well as Sibylla, had a fine appreciation for courtesies.

One day both gentlemen were enjoying a siesta. Sibylla withdrew, and gave orders to have the horse saddled, which she usually rode. The groom made excuses, and said his master had left word that this horse should not be taken from the stable, as it had been ridden in the morning. But Sibylla desired to be alone, and only rode comfortably upon this special horse. She concluded not to ride far; a short ride would not matter.

How delightful it was to be upon the back of this faithful creature, and to be away, far away, from here! She had suffered so many wrongs on this very day, of which her husband had no suspicion; and she saw with terror the influence Uhlhart exerted over his weak character. At times she was penetrated by the fear that he would use this unfortunate lawsuit in order to

injure him financially. That he knew more of Herr Bolton's resources than she did, also disturbed and annoyed her. Wrapped in these thoughts, she rode farther and farther, before observing she was several miles from Larkow. She then perceived the horse to be slightly lame; and just as she had discovered it, he stumbled and fell with a broken knee.

She dismounted skillfully, and while the poor creature made desperate efforts to rise, they were in vain. Sibylla looked anxiously for aid, but found herself in a wood, a forester's hut in the far distance. She hastened there, but the forester shook his head gravely when he looked at the prostrate animal. "It will be necessary to kill him," he said, sadly; "the bone is broken, poor creature!"

Sibylla wept bitter tears, as she threw her arms around the neck of this faithful creature, which she had loved better than any thing at Larkow. The forester was ready to send his servant to Herr Bolton to announce the accident, and to have a carriage sent immediately for his wife. Added to the grief over the loss of her horse were self-reproaches. Her husband had forbidden its use on this day, and yet she had done so. What did it avail that she had not intended to ride so far? She had no desire to palliate her fault. She had done wrong, and was ready to answer for it honestly and openly, and to beg her husband's pardon: that was her nature.

The resolution was indeed difficult to carry out, when she entered her own yard, and was received by her husband and the doctor. How gladly she would have spoken to him alone, especially as she dreaded his reproaches. But after an instant's hesitation she approached him and said, entreatingly: "Edward, do not be angry; I have done wrong. I will in future have more regard for your wishes. I am very, very sorry."

"Well, the horse is worth, at a low estimate, three hundred dollars. I am vexed, but I have promised not to be severe toward you. I was terribly angry; but he, there"—pointing to Uhlhart—"has interposed a good word for you."'

Away flew all feelings of blame, all humility from Sibylla. She drew herself up haughtily, and said: "I scarcely thought to have needed his intercession with my husband——"

"Still, still," interrupted Bolton; "be thankful for it; you needed it."

Reaching her own room, Sibylla fell upon her knees, hid her face in her hands, and wept hot tears. She felt indescribably unhappy. This was one of similar scenes which were daily enacted. After some weeks the unwelcome guest took his departure; but the beautiful May that surrounded his arrival was gone, and hot Summer had come.

The relations between wife and husband also chilled after Uhlhart's leave. The tender buds which had trusted themselves to the daylight, had been blighted. Sibylla felt sick and wounded in heart, and Bolton treated his wife with distrust.

It seemed to Sibylla as though he were having more regard for his money. She saw stamped documents, and heard the ringing of coin. Upon inquiring what they meant, she received evasive replies; but she overcame her scruples, and asked again, as she felt sure Uhlhart was interested, and that much of her husband's business passed through his hands.

"Women don't understand; these are men's affairs," he said. "But when I borrow money and give five per cent for it, and invest in stocks which yield ten per cent, the advantage is apparent."

Sibylla was silent. She did not understand exchange speculations; but she knew that, while fortunes were sometimes easily made there, they were much easier lost. She asked herself whether Bolton had the shrewd perception, the fine calculation necessary to benefit by the constant rise and fall in stocks? And granted that Uhlhart possessed this ability, and directed every thing, would he use it for her husband's emolument, or exercise it in order to ruin him, and her with it?

This money-question scarcely permitted Sibylla to sleep.

"Edward," she ventured one day, "the overseer says we must have a new stable."

"That is my affair, and he has no business to speak to you about it," was the non-assuring reply.

"But you are here so seldom, always traveling, that you scarcely concern yourself with the farm."

"Do you concern yourself about your own business?" he asked sharply.

The question pierced. Sibylla realized that she had given offense, and decided to mend matters.

At another time, she said:

"Edward, we must have several new carpets; the old ones are threadbare. Let us get them before cold weather."

"To the devil with your eternal wants!" was Bolton's coarse reply. "I have no money;" and, slamming the door behind him, he passed out.

Sibylla had expected more from her cherished art in life. Things must be in a bad way for her husband to speak so. From this time forward a dense cloud hung over her young head, and she simply waited for the time when it should burst, and the lightning strike the roof of her dwelling. To be poor and alone had seemed very hard one year ago; but to share poverty with a man she did not love made her shudder.

She resolved, however, to trouble herself no more about money matters, but to economize in small ways, although she was not very efficient in bringing this about. She longed to find

distraction in art, but she shrank from the vehement though mournful sound which the lightest call awakened. She could see and hear no prospect of relief. Ah! even to act nobly and conscientiously under these circumstances was difficult; nay, impossible.

Then came a distressing rumor that a cattle-plague had reached Larkow. Herr Bolton turned pale when it became evident that pneumonia had appeared in the midst of all the neat cattle. Skillful physicians were summoned by telegraph. They came, and shrugged their shoulders. The terrible disease was in his stables. Every body fled from his estate, and its vicinity. How easily this pest might be carried to the cattle in the village!

Horrible stillness reigned over all, unbroken save by the pitiful lowing of the creatures, who were sure to die. Men came from Berlin, who bought the finest of the herd at unheard-of low prices—cows perfectly sound, but they must be rapidly transported. And what precautions were taken to convey these splendid animals to the capital! A wide, roundabout way must be taken, as no one would permit a passage through his fields. Even on the railroad, upon which large, separate apartments were constructed in special cars, straw was burned behind them. Fear and dread had taken possession of all.

It was midnight. Sibylla could not sleep. She opened her window to see once more the beautiful creatures, so long the pride and joy of the farm. The servants ran to and fro with lanterns. Yonder stood the dear, patient beasts, lowing mournfully through the night-air. Once more the physicians made a careful examination, and separated those who presented the slightest symptoms, in order to have them immediately killed. Then the door opened, and the old housekeeper emerged in excitement and grief. She knew every animal. That rich milch-cow was her joy; that stately ox yonder, her pride; wringing her hands, she ran hither and thither, prophesying the ruin of the estate. It was like a mother about to be separated from her children.

Sibylla witnessed it all. The darkness of the night, the unearthly stillness with which the cattle were taken away on the straw, added to the grief-stricken old woman, filled her with dismay. It seemed also to her as if every thing was going to destruction, and a night should come when she, too, would just as silently turn her back on Larkow.

These impressions were no longer so vividly painful the next morning, but stood before her like a confused dream. That it had not been a dream was evident from her husband's pale countenance. She longed to comfort him, to direct him to a brighter hope; but she did not believe her own words, and how could she administer them as consolation to another?

The neat-cattle was a heavy loss to the estate, and Herr Bolton appeared to find, only at Berlin, some solace for the affliction.

XXIII.

"O, Lord of Light, steep thou our souls in thee!
That when the daylight trembles into shade,
And falls the silence of mortality,
And all is done, we shall not be afraid;
But pass from light to light; from what doth seem,
Into the very heart and heaven of our dream."

—R. W. GILDER.

The air is heavy which we have breathed recently; let us visit the sea, and survey there the pictures of love and peace which celebrate the coming of Spring. It is the last on earth to one we know.

Ingeborg has grown more and more feeble. The journey to Berlin and the exciting circumstances attending her return have exhausted much of her waning strength. But she is very happy. Wulf lives with Karen, it is true; but he is still near her, and in consultation with the resident physician. They can do very little for the sick girl. To watch over her condition and lighten her pain, Wulf may be instrumental. Ah! the hopes were idle which he and Captain Nielsen had entertained upon the completion of his studies, when he should be able to cure Ingeborg; it had rather been that the feeble girl had rescued the strong young man.

Wulf remained here, because it was necessary for the restoration of his health. He had severe struggles. Besides the battle against temptation was the problem whether he should become a fisherman again, as an expiation for the past. But of what avail would such a conclusion be now? Would not an expiation in spirit be better, an emulation of his mother's unassuming life be more useful, in his former chosen calling to others? Therefore he decided to prepare for his examination in this quiet place.

Ingeborg never thought the world could be so beautiful as this past year had been. She longed to go out on the water as before, to listen to the waves' melodies. The Spring had appeared so timely as if for her sake. Leaning upon Wulf's arm, she is again on the beach, hearing the songs which she wished might lull her to eternal rest. Berlin lay like a dim picture behind her. She did not fear the people now; she had no resentment against them now. Nothing but compassion reigned in her heart. If Wulf were only perfectly well again, she knew he would stand high above all those people. He dared not remain here where so few would appreciate him, no more than a warrior might conceal himself in a hermitage before the advancing host. Wulf must go forth to battle—must save the poor, of whom she had seen so few, but concerning whom she had heard so much; he must help them out of their troubles in life to victory. Where he led, all should

follow; in his ship many would be taken, who, without him, would drift on the wide ocean of destruction. Yes; he should be the pilot to guide all to a haven of rest.

Ingeborg wished now that she might live to witness all this, but she felt confident it would be accomplished if Wulf's health were only restored. How should he regain it? O, if he loved God with all his heart, supremely, it would be well with him; the world would lie at his feet, and he would be happy! These were Ingeborg's musings.

One day, as they sauntered to the beach, the sea lay before them as a great Æolian harp moved by the zephyrs. Wulf had brought a book to read to Ingeborg. On the frontispiece was a portrait of the author, beneath which were the words: "Let Thy grace be sufficient to keep me from the world's allurements, and yet keep me here to lift it up to Thee!"

"How beautiful!" exclaimed the invalid. "O, he must have been a grand man! What a handsome, earnest face! He resembles you!"

Wulf laughed.

"All good people in your eyes bear a resemblance to me."

"O, Wulf, if you are ever painted you must have these words under the portrait."

"Don't be foolish," replied the young physician; "that will never be. Besides I should never write what I did not believe."

"Now you could not, I know," responded Ingeborg, earnestly; "but when the time comes you will."

"Do you think it will ever come?"

"Very certainly."

"When?"

"I do not know. When you are good enough to love all men," said Ingeborg, softly. There was an eloquent pause. "Please, Wulf, read now," she continued.

If she had not been so ill, Wulf would never have been so indulgent; but how could he deny any thing to the poor child whose days on earth were so few and numbered?

He opened the book cheerfully, and began to read. While he was reading, tender feelings were excited within him. The poetry made a deep impression on his heart. He was silent for a time, then asked:

"Tell me, Ingeborg, what shall I do in order to be good?"

"You must love God above all else," replied his companion.

"What do you demand? Love begets love. If God rules over all, he has not favored me very much. He has taken from me every thing upon which my heart leaned—mother, friends, honor, and soon you will be gone. He has given me restless struggles and longings, without needful strength to attain the end. But I shall not complain against God. I blame only myself for the failure of my life to——but forgive me, if I am not so strong in faith as you are."

While Wulf dilated thus upon goodness, his heart was occupied with one thought—Sibylla; and yet he had never mentioned her name to Ingeborg.

"You must not talk so," said the latter, with tears in her eyes. "God has always loved you, and guided you out of his great love."

"Not to himself; no, there you mistake."

"Wulf, you will return to your Father's home, and then recognize that there is no place so beautiful. If you only knew how good he is!" she exclaimed, with an expression of rapture that astonished her listener, and he made no reply.

Many other times the two were thus together, and during some of them she read to him out of her dearest book. With that she was thoroughly familiar. She could give no learned explanations; but she had laid hold of the gospel with all her heart, and it escaped from her lips how Jesus loved her; how he healed here, and comforted there; reproved this one, and instructed that one, but loved all. "You see," she would continue, with an enthusiasm which seemed to be inspired, "while he forgave all the sins of his children, he said to them: 'As the Father hath sent me, so send I thee into the world;' and then he said: 'I am not come to do mine own will, but the will of him who hath sent me.' See, Wulf; he also says to you to go into the world and do his will."

The young man sat beside her and received the word; but it did not impress his heart. "Fallacies," he would have replied; but then if these fallacies make one so happy, was not the view he held cold and heartless, and one which he had never known to make any one happy?

Ingeborg seemed to divine his thoughts: "Wulf, this faith accompanied your mother through life, and made her death peaceful. She was obedient, and did what God sent her to do. It was such a beautiful death, Mother Esther's. How happy she must have been to rescue so many! I have often mourned because I have never been useful, never helped any body. O, it must be blessed to save one soul! But the dear Lord has said to me: 'Be still, and let my grace be sufficient for thee,' and now I am more cheerful."

Wulf was silent. There was no room here for resistance.

As the end approached for Ingeborg, no one recognized it so clearly as Wulf. When the flowers she had planted so lovingly on Mother Esther's grave should have bloomed, then her time would come. And Ingeborg, too, was perfectly aware of it. But the longing for death and heaven which once possessed her had disappeared, although the fear of death was still absent. This life was now beautiful to her. Even this suffering was beautiful, she often thought; but she knew the life beyond was even more beautiful, and her heart rejoiced that it was so well with her, and that she was accompanied to the entrance with so much love, and that she would be welcomed at the portals of the heavenly Jerusalem by Eternal Love.

She arranged all her temporal affairs. After providing for faithful Johanna, she made Wulf sole heir to her not insignificant estate. Once she had decided to leave all to the poor; but Wulf needed it now, and in his hands it would bear rich interest for the sick and needy. He never dreamed of the fact, and Ingeborg rejoiced over the moment when he should discover it. "Then he will be happy, and think lovingly of me, to know how heartily I loved him."

Then she distributed her personal treasures. Articles which had become endeared by association, her jewels, her wardrobe—in them all she included so much love that the gifts were doubly valuable. There was no one of her acquaintances in the village without some evidence of kind remembrance.

"Now I am ready; I have nothing more to do," she said to Wulf one evening. "I have given something to every body, but you shall have the best."

"Whatever you give me is good, and I shall prize it."

"Will you really prize it, and really make use of it? I will give it to you now; to-morrow it may be too late." She lifted her Bible, and handed it to Wulf with trembling hands. "It belongs now to you; it was the dearest of all my possessions."

Wulf received it with deep emotion: "Thank you; I shall always value it as a treasure."

"And read it?" asked Ingeborg earnestly.

"Also that, for your sake."

"O, Wulf, for my sake, you will not read it long," she murmured. "How soon you will forget me! But only begin, and all will be well."

Wulf opened it and found written, in Ingeborg's plain script, on the first leaf: "Let us love Him, for He first loved us."

After this she was unable to leave her couch. For hours she lay as still as a child, gazing at her own folded hands.

"What do you see on your hands?" said Wulf once.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

They could not enjoy very long conversations, for her breath was short; but she had a pleasant "Thank you," for every service of love. She began now to grow impatient.

"Will it be much longer?" she asked.

"No, Ingeborg; you will soon be at rest," said Wulf, tenderly.

A mother could not have cared more affectionately for her than he. He realized that she had grown to his heart, and that her departure would make a void in his life. But she would not leave him alone; her words and the influence of her life would remain.

Painful hours of suffering and care followed. Wulf bent over her. He could not understand why his rough hand agitated the delicate form of the dying one; he desired to alleviate, but did not succeed. "O, God help me!" he groaned, unwittingly.

An expression of joy illuminated the sick one's face. "I am so happy," she whispered.

"Ingeborg, you are happy now in this suffering?"

"Yes."

"Tell me why?"

"Jesus loves me; and he also loves you."

Wulf started back.

The evening shadows began to gather. Ingeborg slumbered lightly. Wulf informed Johanna that he would remain all night, and she must be in readiness to be called.

"Comes He?" said the faithful servant.

"Who?"

"The Bridegroom," she replied, with tears.

"No; death," responded Wulf.

But still he lingered, although the sound of his wings was near. The air was oppressive in the room, and the dying one breathed with difficulty. Wulf opened a window. The darkness of night lay over the earth, unrelieved by a single star.

He bent over her, as her face now wore the impress of death; but he knew some hours might elapse before the final struggle. She opened her beautiful eyes. O, those deep-blue, beautiful eyes, in whose depths Wulf himself now longed to gaze once more! No fever over-clouded Ingeborg's mind, which was as clear as her vision. She recognized the watcher, and over her wan face played a smile. He endeavored to arrange her position more comfortably; her eyes met his in a long, searching look. It was now her only language—O no; lightly, softly came the whispered words: "Wulf, please kiss me!"

He kissed her lips and eyes fondly. A rosy blush flitted over the sweet face; then she smiled, and fell asleep again.

Wulf was unnerved. Clear as a flash of lightning a revelation came, of which he had not dreamed. Ingeborg loved him! Not as a child, not as a sister, but with the whole strength of her being! He had been so accustomed to her for so long that he accepted her affection as a matter of course. The chaste bud of this womanly love had not unfolded itself in the sunshine of reciprocation, and could never blossom in its blessed beams; therefore it had remained a bud. But in the hour of death its sheath had unfolded, and now lay as a flower, so beautiful, so pure, so sweet!

Wulf sat motionless beside Ingeborg's couch. With anxious suspense Johanna stood near. Would she waken again? Lightly and more lightly the breathing came and went; more still it became in the heaving bosom. Wulf's heart also stood still. There was a deep sigh, and Ingeborg was with Him her soul loved even more than those she had left behind. Wulf remained at the bedside a long, long time. The pale, sweet face had lost its lines of pain, and bore an expression of such joy and rapture that he was moved to ask again and again: "What dost thou behold? Why art thou so happy?" But the lips which had always been so ready to respond were silent. How strange that his thoughts should suddenly revert to the picture he had seen with Sibylla! That wild rider, with all his zeal, had not reached the goal of happiness. Sibylla, with her hungry heart, with her longings after joy and contentment, was unhappy: no one knew this better than he. And yet this child so frail, so delicate, had not only always been happy, but was now enjoying its fruition.

And Wulf?

He hurried away. As he stepped from the dwelling, deep silence reigned around. The sea she had loved sang its old wind-melodies. He sat down, mechanically, in the old spot where they had so often been together. The rosy beams of the morning began to gleam in the East. The shadows flew away before the coming day, like ghosts, hither and thither. The glorious sun arose, and kissed the sea with a morning's greeting, and its waters blushed beneath the kiss, and grew bright and joyous afar. The night was gone; a new sky had dawned.

Wulf covered his face in his hands, and wept bitterly.

XXIV.

"The night seems long, my Father; shadows rise,
  And dark across my pathway fall;
There is no light of dawn in Orient skies,
  And sorrow shrouds me like a pall;
The stars of Faith and Hope so dim have grown.
O, rift the gloom, and send their radiance down!"

The severe Winter, the early Spring, the hot Summer, were followed by a glowing Autumn. Like coals of fire the sun lay on the fields and meadows of Larkow, day after day, singeing what still held up its head there, and what would make efforts to ripen its fruit. Herr Bolton shook his head despairingly at the prospect. "Every thing comes at once," he groaned, "cattle-plague, failure of crops, lawsuit. Urlhart is right: I must try to gain in some other way what I lose here. If my stocks only go up, I can bear it. Heda!" he called to his coachman, "has the newspaper come yet?"

With intense impatience he awaited the *Stock Journal*. His first glance fell upon the gold-market, and with its rise and fall fluctuated his every-day humor.

Sibylla moved restlessly through her large house. Was there nowhere therein a cozy corner where good spirits were concealed, who could deliver her, and allure the sunshine to this unattractive home, where she could find no brightness? Would they not reveal themselves to conquer, and dwell as victors by this hearth? Was there nothing home-like to be discovered here? Alas! no. Home is only truly found where love and good-nature reign.

Good nature! That characteristic had always been insufferably tiresome to Sibylla. Her mind climbed higher! But now she was always so fearful and anxious, she would have been glad to summon the most tediously good natured being in the world, if he were only true, in order to seek help and direction, she was so terribly alone. The servants trembled before the capricious humor and frequent angry outbursts of the master. The misfortunes which had befallen the estate seemed to have fallen like a weight on his better nature. The old housekeeper kept up a lamentation in the cellar, and wandered through the house like a grim Cassandra. Herr Bolton was constantly perturbed. Usually kindly toward his wife, he nevertheless gave her no glimpse

of his business affairs. "Women don't understand money matters," he would say, positively, being wholly influenced by the presence of Uhlhart.

"That is your work," Sibylla's eyes flashed upon the hateful interloper.

"That is my work," gave back his villainous eyes, vindictively.

O, how Sibylla repented that she had not invited her husband's confidence in the first months of their married life, when he would have gladly interested her in his wool-sacks and money? She would now have been able to advise him; for her practical judgment was more alert than one would have suspected in a spoiled, giddy girl, and Uhlhart could never have obtained the supremacy which he now exerted over her weak husband.

"What was the wily doctor's real desire? For what was he working? What was his aim?" These questions revolved in Sibylla's mind night and day.

Undoubtedly, first, he desired to triumph over her—to sting her with a thousand needles. He knew her capacity for suffering, how exceedingly proud her heart was. But he had already accomplished this. Whither did he drive her husband further? Would he ruin him, and reduce him to beggary? That was devilish. But what of that, if he "feathered his own nest?" Sibylla knew he was not rich; that he worked little, but required much. He enjoyed the best wines, he loved to be surrounded with luxuries and mingle in the best society, besides having all kinds of exalted notions, which he pursued when so disposed.

She trembled; she felt herself in his power; she saw her husband tottering to the ground without being able to help him. Her imagination had been given full play during this desolation, and pictured the worst. She detested Uhlhart's presence, and yet she entered into it because her husband could at least be free from harm while she was at his side.

Uhlhart knew her fear of poverty and dread of work. Ha! Should he make her poor, and compel her to labor? Should she even be obliged to accept aid from his hand?

"Never!" she exclaimed, inwardly; "die rather!"

Die? And yet she feared death so much. How she had always banished from her mind the gloomy guest, was angry and resentful when he drew his fatal scythe in the circle of her butterfly life! And was not mythology on this very account so beautiful because it did not preach death and corruption, but only eternal youth, eternal beauty, eternal happiness? She who had so often sung, "This beautiful world still rules, with joy for its leading-strings"—this same Sibylla now cried: "Die rather!"

She had now been married one year. To-morrow would be Christmas Eve, and she wished to surprise her husband pleasantly. She had also provided for the enjoyment of her household,

and had left nothing undone for the occasion. Sibylla's deeds were always far better than her words. She hesitated to begin work; but when once entered upon, she engaged in it so heartily that the pleasure of accomplishing something made the exertion forgotten. She ran up and down stairs, stopping here, and arranging there. When she saw the large hall so festively adorned, with its great fir-tree in the center, the beauty of her position, which enabled her to do so much for the pleasure of others, came upon her with great force. O, perhaps she might yet become a good housewife and faithful mistress to all those around her! All sinister thoughts vanished, as they must ever pale before happy employment. No; every thing could not be completed this day. How fortunate there was still another!

She was confident her husband would return at six o'clock; then every thing would be ready, and she would lead him into the gay, bright hall. Perhaps, when he found his home so pleasant, he would be more amiable and remain longer.

Promptly at the time the carriage was at the station. As soon as Sibylla heard the rolling of the wheels she lighted up the tree. She was as happy as a child. For the first time she was enabled to present so many gifts, and it was like the elixir of new wine in its effects. Now she stood waiting at the door.

"Come in, dear Edward; see what the Christ-Child has brought!"

"Yes," he replied; "but see first what he brings to you—a guest."

Standing in the light hall Sibylla was unable to recognize the form in her husband's rear. But to-day any thing was possible. Could——she was greeted by the sarcastic tones of Uhlhart.

That man again! Just when she had been occupied with the thought of providing pleasure for her husband, he had been moved to do what should embitter her most! This time, however, she wronged him. It had not been his intention to bring Uhlhart; the impudent doctor had invited himself, and Herr Bolton was now too much dependent upon him not to present a cheerful face over a bitter pill.

Sibylla controlled herself; but her happiness was fled. She was scarcely able to say a pleasant word to any one.

"My dear madame," said Uhlhart, "your kind hand has provided something for every one but me. Please follow the example of Him who maketh the rain to fall on the unjust and just alike. Have you not something for me?"

For an instant Sibylla was silent. Her heart throbbed wildly.

"Yes, I have something for you—something very wonderful," she replied.

She seated herself at the piano and ran her fingers over the keys.

"You have often expressed a desire to hear me sing. Heretofore I have not found myself in condition to gratify you; but to-day, on account of the festival, I shall sing."

She softened the tones somewhat, and gave that grand aria with frightful, terrible force and expression:

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision.... Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

As the words were repeated again and again, it was no longer Sibylla flinging them in her power upon the unbidden guest, but a prophetic voice. Even to herself the true meaning of the aria entered her soul as never before, and it was like the defense to her of an Omnipotent One who ruled and triumphed over all godlessness.

Uhlhart understood Sibylla perfectly. For a moment he shrank from the power whose aid she invoked, and upon which she relied; but only for a moment. "There is no God," he said to himself; "even this God is only a clever man." He had sunken from step to step. There had been a time when he waged an unsuccessful battle between pleasure and duty; but the claims of life and the commands of Christ had never entered the threshold of his selfish heart, and he threw them aside, and endeavored to harmonize, at all hazards, his own desires with what might be regarded as duty, and-he desired no inward monitor to suggest any thing else. Religion is something primordial, and when its innermost germ is wickedly and wantonly eliminated by a person, it sometimes reappears faintly, as the dead body may be momentarily quickened by chemical processes.

From this time, Uhlhart renewed the battle more energetically than ever before. These new allies on Sibylla's side animated him to still greater triumphs. Soon after the festival he left Larkow; but Herr Bolton became daily more distrustful. He had burdened his estate with mortgages in order to obtain cash to purchase stocks which promised extraordinary gain. After these stocks had held a dizzy height for a time, they suddenly fell. He hastened, full of terror, to Berlin, to consult Uhlhart, who advised him to sell in order to escape further loss. Bolton hoped for a rise, but they fell persistently day after day. He consoled himself that as he did not actually need their conversion into money, he would allow them to lie even for years, until better times came.

His lawsuit followed, and was lost, including an expensive fine as well as the costs. What should he do? He had nothing to dispose of but the depreciated stocks, yet he must be glad if he realized half the investment. Even this was uncertain. Distracted in heart, ruined in fortune, he returned to Larkow.

Uhlhart himself was alarmed. It had come so suddenly. He had not desired this. To hold Bolton in his hand, to rule him, to make a profitable business out of him in the course of time, to annoy

Sibylla continually, was his aim. But now—what could he do against pestilence and crop-failure? Could he be blamed if the fire he had enkindled in this weak Bolton, instead of climbing up lightly, broke out suddenly in clear flames? He had, indeed, induced him to speculate, but never so rashly and precipitously. He had advised him to give up some of his acquisitions in order to increase his fortune, but he had not contemplated the whole sacrifice of his farm business. Cunning man! did you not know that when a feeble spirit destroys old fetters without gaining some mastery, it is only brought to ruin?

Uhlhart, however, showed himself as a friend. He came to comfort Bolton, and endeavor to make him forget his misfortunes—the easiest and best way, in his opinion, in a bottle of wine. There was nothing else to do but keep him in a room under its influence. How would Sibylla feel when she should see her husband enter her room intoxicated, with Uhlhart in his rear, in cutting sarcasm repeating: "My dear madame, be lenient with your husband!"

This was repeated, two, three, four times, until at length she listened to his coming with dread, exhausting every means to lead him from this dangerous way. How the minutes of such waiting resolved themselves into hours, the hours into eternity!

How much Sibylla would have liked to show Uhlhart the door, but he remained a fixture by her husband's authority.

It was now the latter days of the period for deer-hunting, and great vigilance was required from the foresters to prevent acts of violence. Night after night their faithful servant lay on the watch to keep injury from his district. Sibylla stopped one evening at his cottage just as his wife was giving him her farewell kiss and parting injunction. She said:

"Are you not anxious for your husband?"

"O no; it is his business," replied the young woman.

"But just now he is in constant peril," argued Sibylla.

"What can I do? I can only pray for him."!

"Pray for him!" The words struck Sibylla forcibly. Had she done this, as yet, for her husband? She desired, she longed for a helping hand. But difficult as it is for a tender plant to pierce the hard, dry earth, in order to reach the light, even more difficult is it for the obdurate heart to pray for the first time.

Necessity teaches supplication. Sibylla now learned to pray, even to cry, out of her dire need.

She yearned for Church privileges; not for a pile of beautiful architecture, but for a house of God, where she might hear God's Word.

Farther and farther drifted poor Bolton; deeper and deeper he sank, while Uhlhart drank even more heavily.

They went together to undertake some new business ventures at Berlin. Sibylla was filled with forebodings; for when the protecting wand of his home was absent, her husband became hopelessly lost. She felt she must go to him, and remain there. She was his wife; marriage is sworn fidelity. She hurried to Berlin.

There she lived in a tavern. O, what a life! She recalled her girlish assertions that when she should be married she should never be burdened with household cares, but would board at a hotel, because one is so free there. "O God, thou hast punished me for these silly expressions!" she cried. What would she not have given now for the comforts of a home? Here every barrier which restrained her husband vanished. In the morning it was business on the 'Change; then followed dinner, supper, wine-drinking, and card-playing. What a life!

"May God end this! I can do no more," murmured Sibylla.

And he made an end of it, very different from what she had thought. One morning her husband was too ill to rise; a nervous fever had taken possession of him. The physician came, and pronounced him unable to be removed.

Herr Bolton was now alone with his wife. Friends disappeared, but his misery remained. Sibylla attended him with daily renewed fidelity. We shall not follow the disease in its course. On the ninth day the crisis was reached, and on the tenth Larkow no longer had a master. He had recognized no one; his mind wandered continually upon stocks and bonds, and his last words were, "Eighty-eight and a half."

There are some people whose future life is indeed a mystery to us. What is lost by the discontinuance of such uselessness on earth, or what place they shall occupy in another world, is unknown. Sibylla returned with her husband's body, and he was buried at Larkow.

The weary period of suffering had matured her. The Sibylla who, fifteen months previously, had entered here as a wife in mourning garments, was very different from the one now standing by the open grave in somber garments. After a short time she permitted a competent notary to take an inventory of all the papers. Creditors came forward. There remained at Larkow nothing to sell. The most favorable result which the careful notary endeavored to bring about, the net proceeds, barely covered the debts; in any case there was absolutely nothing left for Sibylla. She had entered this house poor, and poor she must depart. But she had learned something there. It was not with hanging head she left Larkow. Although a violent storm had raged and shaken her, it had not stricken the young woman, and better principles only stood the firmer, and struck their roots the deeper.

XXV.

"What shall I do? Who will solve the question? What can I do? Who will give me a trial? What must I do? Can I do any thing uncomplainingly?—So much work for a shroud!"—PFATEN.

"How was that?" said Sibylla to herself one Summer evening, as she entered the great city of Berlin with her trunks and luggage. "Did not the professor in his address assert that before three years there would be twenty-four thousand women entering Berlin asking for work? Well, in this year there will be one additional."

She had rented a small apartment, and entered a new segment of life. Sibylla had no relatives, and her husband only step-sisters, who lived in distant countries. Her attorney had kindly suggested a place as companion to an old lady, but she had declined it. She felt that she must be alone and independent, in order to throw off any disagreeable impression which might arise in the exertion of self-maintenance. If the rosy morning which she inwardly hoped for were to be followed by a clear day, it must find her untrammeled.

She was now twenty-two years old; but it seemed as though she had been ten years from Berlin, she felt so aged and self-reliant. Sibylla not only wished to work, but her slender purse absolutely enjoined it. Of all her old acquaintances she would look for none. The only one for whom she longed—Theodora—was in a foreign land, and she had not heard from her in a long time. Sibylla had corresponded with no one during her period of suffering. She could only have done so at the cost of revealing the acts of her husband, and she was too proud for that. She also avoided the old circle for fear of meeting Uhlhart. Perhaps she was safe in this regard, for the unforeseen end of his cruel play had even frightened him. Still from both, the seclusion in which she lived concealed Sibylla in the great city.

She applied for work to a large upholstery establishment, where carpets and tapestries were manufactured, and was able to put to practical use the art of drawing, in which she was proficient. Instead of being obliged to sew, she designed patterns; and as this work paid better than any other, she gained a living by exercising great industry and economy. She had never dreamed, when she drew these designs in other days, that these Greek arabesques would in the future provide her bread and butter; and when the first embarrassment of the position was passed she took pleasure in it. But an active spirit like Sibylla's could not be satisfied always with such a life and employment. Her heart-promptings asserted that she must do something more.

A glance at the wholly useless life which she, as a girl, had led, and which now appeared in a very different light, naturally produced a reaction. She had learned to love and fear God in her trials and affliction. She had seen his strong hand in calamities, and still felt under its pressure. She desired to do good. Had she wasted opportunities in the past, now she would seek reparation in work. Had she exalted ethics and art above heavenly things, now she would consign them to a very small part of the earth, seeing that neither truth nor goodness depended upon them, although they were made the means of temporal deliverance; and as they had once been the motto for joy and satisfaction, so now her device should be: Sacrifice and denial.

Poor Sibylla!

The company with which she was engaged employed three thousand women and girls. As the work was distributed at certain hours, she must needs come in contact with the employees. At first this was not agreeable, but she endured it as a part of the imposed self-sacrifice. One day a pale young girl sat beside her, counting her wages. "O," she said, sadly, "only ten silver groschen for a pair of such fine shoes!" and with a sigh her eyes filled with tears. "Work as hard as I may, I can not finish them in two days."

"If you don't like the work," said a superintendent, "I know plenty of women who will be glad to take it."

"Must I make twelve pairs of such shoes?" asked the girl. "Can not you pay me something more?"

"We have fixed prices," was the cold reply.

Sibylla had listened sympathetically. She followed the pale work-woman, talked kindly to her, questioned her as to her earnings, and heard the following: She was the daughter of a humble officer who, at his death, had left behind a sick wife, a younger sister, and herself, utterly penniless. The former had only been taught to make fine underwear for ladies by hand; but sewing-machines came into use—she was too poor to buy one—and was obliged to give up competition with it. She herself had learned cutting of garments, and had been able to earn enough to supply their table and fifteen groschen a day. The other sister remained at home, as their mother's physical condition did not permit her to be left alone. "What shall we do," she said, "when I earn so little? And yet I am glad even to have regular work."

"How have you managed to live upon such small earnings?" asked Sibylla, in astonishment.

"Until now we had a number of valuable articles we could sell; but I have begun to carry our linen and the things we do not actually need to the pawnbroker's. This can not last long." And the poor girl wept.

Sibylla was deeply moved. Heretofore she had only regarded as poor, ragged, miserable-looking people; but here was one beside her in respectable attire. Why must there be want while she, Sibylla, had spent her money on so many foolish, useless things? When the color of a ribbon no longer pleased her, although worn but once, it had been thrown aside, and she had wasted sums of money, more than enough to have sustained this family for a week, upon expensive perfumery, highly scented soaps, and other accessories of the toilet-table. Ah! how she lamented her selfishness now!

She parted from the poor girl with friendly words, and I can well imagine there was that evening more happiness in that dwelling than its walls had echoed for many months. The postman brought a letter containing money, and as the sick woman opened it with trembling fingers a five dollar gold-piece fell from its folds, with a note containing these words: "An old debt."

Sibylla desired to make amends for former failures. She assisted now whom and where she could, even more than she was really able. She deprived herself in order to give to the poor, and there came an hour when she could calmly enjoy an appeased longing for some new, interesting book, for good music, for her cherished museum, having denied herself the pleasure because she regretted the time squandered which she had bestowed upon them.

Sibylla's doing was beautiful; yes, beautiful as a marble statue, which in a favorable light seems to live. We look at it as though the splendid form must move and the warm blood pulsate through it; but it remains cold and immovable, and with gruesome horror we turn away, rejoicing that beings are near us, less beautiful outwardly, it may be, but in whom loving hearts throb.

One day passed as the other; one month as its forerunner; out of the months there came a year.

But Sibylla was not happy, not contented in her doings. She was painfully impressed that she did not do these things gladly; that every step was a continual self-denial. Yet even this was atonement for her trifling early life; and perhaps in this way she might also make amends for the blame she attached to herself against her dead husband. It had gradually become clear to her that, having promised love and fidelity at the altar, she should have given them; but from the first she had gone her own way, unmindful of the happiness and salvation of the man who was her wedded husband. What she had done later did not eradicate the first error. And, besides, there was one other recollection which gave her bitter pangs—what she had done to Wulf. She had known her influence over him: how had she exercised it? To the susceptible youth who had sought the truth, she had scornfully and derisively asked, "What is truth?" and then answered: "Joy is truth; happiness is truth; all things else are gloomy specters, who must not venture to approach youth. Pluck roses while they bloom!" And Wulf had eagerly listened to wisdom from such pure lips. But she had often asked herself: "Would he have sunken so deeply,

would he have cast overboard his best treasure, his faith, if I had not pointed out to him the way?" Such reflections burned her as fire. All her good works could not now extinguish the brand she had kindled in Wulf's heart. She had committed an unpardonable wrong; and who might know how far this influence had been extended beyond him, and how many others been hurled to destruction?

"It is the curse of bad deeds,
They ever bring forth bad weeds."

If she could only see Wulf, could tell him how false all that she had believed to be pure gold had proved; if she could only give him her testimony that she recognized the value and truth of Christianity even though she had not been made happy thereby! But why were happiness and the truth eternally divorced? Whosoever seeketh after happiness will fall into an abyss, as the rider; whosoever seeketh after truth will languish in a desert; and Sibylla's brain grew weary over the mystery. She concluded with: "Rather work; then go out among others unhappier than I. Seeing another's misery enables us better to endure our own." Her poor and her sick became her consolation; but she cared for them; not from love, but rather to escape the thoughts in her own bosom when she felt desolate and lonely.

XXVI.

"Blindfolded and alone I stand,
With unknown thresholds on each hand;
The darkness deepens as I grope,
Afraid to fear, afraid to hope;
Yet this one thing I learn to know
Each day more surely, as I go,
That doors are opened, ways are made,
Burdens are lifted or are laid
By some great law unseen, and still,
Unfathomed purpose to fulfill,
'Not as I will.'"

—HELEN HUNT JACKSON.

More quickly than by rail or the telegraph's electric flash, but upon the wings of fancy, we leave Berlin. Piercing hill and valley, over city and river, and passing through the heart of a mountain, we are in the midst of a scene so overwhelmingly beautiful that no one may conceive it without seeing it for himself. We are in Switzerland, old Switzerland—on Lake Lucerne.

It is the most sacred water in the country, not only encompassed by heaven-high mountains, but encircled with histories and legends as with an eternal wreath. Here is the ground and faith of the old Swiss memories; here lie Altdorf, Schweitz, Uri, Rütli, Brunnen, Küssnacht—but the spot needs not the past; the present has tongues enough to allure us hither. Has "the eye of Switzerland" also bewitched the people in yonder little village, that they have now resided there for several years? Even Winter has not driven these strangers away, as the cold season ventures but timidly to enter this sheltered spot, and the cottage where they dwell has felt little of its severity.

It is a Swiss *châlet*, like most of those in the neighborhood, with sloping roof, green lattice, inviting gable-rooms, and a pretty garden, whose border frames the wonderfully clear, beautiful water. Just now it lies in the sunshine, surrounded with wild vines and cultivated roses. As the door is open we shall enter.

In the first room are two ladies, busy with needle-work. The elder, of majestic mien, presents an appearance of having seen much of life and suffering; but she is attractive, and her expression is kindly, as she says to the young woman sitting near:

"Eugenie, will you not see to dinner? It will soon be one o'clock, and Theodora will be here presently."

"Yes, dear mamma; but do not sew so diligently yourself any longer."

The mother smiled, and continued to sew on the wedding trousseau of her daughter. How could work be too assiduous under such circumstances?

Above, in one of the gable rooms, it is very lively now; some of the children looking out of the windows are preparing to leave, saying "good-bye" to a tall young woman in mourning, whose face is partially covered. One can not but perceive that the warmest bond of love exists between teacher and pupils.

Just now the former enters the mother's apartment, and is received with outstretched arms and solicitous inquiry:

"Are you tired, Theodora?"

An affectionate kiss and the reply follow: "No, dear mother; I seem to grow fresher during these hours;" and her large, clear eyes attest the honesty of her words.

Soon the three sat down to their simple repast, without the attendance of any servants. Times have greatly changed with the Kahrings, but for the better.

When the family had recovered from the heavy blow of affliction and adversity, Arnold and his bride went to Paris. Lady Von Kahring took up her residence here at Lake Lucerne, rather than at Geneva, because she would be less likely to meet former acquaintances in this retired place. It is true she might have accepted the offer of her daughter-in-law, who had acted nobly and generously, and requested to bear the expense of a modest home for them, as she was especially attached to Theodora; but the latter refused to consent to such an arrangement. She said she considered it dishonorable for three women, who were capable of self-maintenance, to be dependent upon others. She would herself undertake their support, if they were willing to assist. So Arnold's wife had been satisfied to render a little assistance, which was gratefully accepted.

As there happened to be a number of children belonging to aristocratic Austrian families who resided in the vicinity during the mild Winter, Theodora succeeded in obtaining them as pupils, and was able to provide for the family.

But there was still greater success for Theodora. After the frail staff of the world had broken, upon which Lady Von Kahring and Eugenie had leaned, and that startling occurrence had opened an approaching abyss, their hearts became more susceptible to Theodora's influence, and the latter was just as cheerful under misfortune as she had been in prosperity. While she carried the smallest care, her soul embraced the highest; and when she laid the money earned into the mother's hand, she shared with her better gifts than eyes could perceive.

In the elevating, quiet content of this home, Eugenie had obtained, unsought, what in vain she had longed for at Berlin. A prominent manufacturer had met Eugenie and paid his addresses, so that the little cottage was now the scene of a very secure, if not a very intoxicating, happiness.

To-day Theodora entered and drew a letter from her pocket.

"We are going to have a visitor, dear mother. What do you say to that?"

A light blush crossed the mother's face as she replied:

"Only no one from Berlin."

"Why not?" asked Theodora, heartily

"Circumstances can never degrade us; that we can only do ourselves; and then, dear mother, Sibylla Bolton is more unhappy than we are."

"Sibylla, the beautiful Sibylla!" exclaimed Eugenie; "where has she lived since her husband's death?"

"At Berlin. She finally obtained my address, and has written to me. She appears to be unhappy and lonely. I begged her to visit us, and to-day received her promise, with your per mission. May I send her that?"

Lady Von Kahring was heartily willing; Eugenie even more so, and Theodora rejoiced to be able to have her sick friend under their hospitable roof.

Sibylla had longed to go to Theodora in order to consult her in regard to her future. She felt she must do something substantial to obtain an outward and inward lasting security. She was bewildered and weary, and longed to repose confidence in her stronger friend. That Theodora lived in the beautiful Swiss country which she had never seen, was now a minor consideration. She was not one who believes nature can cure a sick soul. And yet to-day, when she approached the canton of Basle, and leaving at Lucerne the dusty railway-coach, entered the boat which lightly cut through the green walls of the lake, when Sibylla looked up and found herself in the midst of a picture so wonderfully beautiful, so charmingly still, while awaiting evening slowly unfolded its pinions, there came over her a calm and peace which she had not experienced for many months. She no longer thought; it was a relief to banish anxious care for the moment and permit the entrancing scene to penetrate her as a perfume. She could do nothing but gaze and yield to the inspiration. Around the lake reared heaven-high mountains, as wonderful and fascinating as the water itself. Here was Pilatus, that bare, indented, misty king; yonder the broad, rocky walls of the Rigi. Suddenly the boat stopped, and Sibylla found herself in Theodora's embrace. How long it had been since a friendly arm had encircled her, since she had been pressed to a warm, loving heart!

A beautiful life now began for the poor young woman. She saw first with astonishment the blessing of a regular calling and systematic action. The Kahrings impressed her differently, and seemed more worthy of regard than in the days of their prosperity. She also learned really to know and appreciate Theodora. Sibylla felt that this good woman understood all her feelings, and she began to realize that the ground of her discontent lay in herself.

The two friends had long and earnest communions in their solitary wanderings amid these splendid Alpine scenes, or journeying over these beautiful green waters. What had long slumbered in Sibylla's soul, and exercised itself unknown, finally became clothed in the certainty that henceforth not only the precepts of Christianity should be the rule of conduct in life, but the master of this teaching, Jesus Christ himself, was the Savior and Redeemer who had loosed the bonds of her soul, and given her a joyful liberty. With this knowledge her heart grew calm, and she knew forgiveness had not only been granted for her own sins of omission, but also for those committed against her mother, her husband, and Wulf.

There is a beautiful custom in Switzerland. All the churches stand open to give shelter and peace to those that seek it. Sibylla spent many hours in the little sanctuary of the village, and only God's angels looked upon the quiet corner where she knelt and prayed.

Theodora indulged her, refrained from hindering, and only attempted to clear away her doubts. She therefore waited until Sibylla asked advice for the future. The young woman desired to be useful, to live no longer for self; not so much to escape self as formerly, but to establish the relations on better grounds. She wished to associate herself with Theodora in her work elsewhere. This hope was presented, on account of Eugenie's prospective marriage, when the mother should live with her, and Theodora would relinquish her claims. She had been urged to accept a home with them; "but," she said to Sibylla, after a long conversation, "I shall not remain here. My own do not need me; the children can find another teacher any day. I have penetrated too deeply into the misery of the masses, into its temporal and spiritual wretchedness, which seems to be increasing at Berlin. I am free; no one needs me. I am well, and have had experience with the poor. It would be a grievous sin if I did not dedicate my life and service where work will never be wanting to me."

"I have nothing but two hands, a desire to work, and a heart which yearns to help you in this labor of love," responded Sibylla, beseechingly.

"We shall work together if God will, at least for a time," was Theodora's reply.

"No—always!" exclaimed Sibylla, fervently.

"Time will show," said her companion.

Did she dream that a character like Sibylla's could not continually give, but needed a support, and could go through life wishing but little? Theodora did not belong to that class of women who, when their own youth has faded, knew of nothing better than match-making among others, deeming it good work if every Hero had found a Leander. She thought higher, and left those things to God, believing he was better able to regulate them without her aid.

When Sibylla traveled homeward she kept in view the Alps until she could only see the horizon. They had been the mountains where she had found help. No friendly face greeted her at Berlin; even her room looked strange. The solitude was burdensome; but she pressed her hand to her heart, looked up and said: "I am not alone; for thou, O God, art always with me!"

XXVII.

"Before every one stands a picture of what he ought to be; so long as he fails to resemble it, his peace will not be perfect."—A. VOLLMAR.

It is time for us to look after Wulf, of whom we have entirely lost sight. We find him at Berlin again, where he is pursuing his studies with renewed zeal. His medical course is almost ended. As he looks upon the familiar dwellings there, his heart sings no song; they are no longer to him full of the mystery of magical beauty as when he first entered the city, but appear rather as "whited sepulchers, full of dead men's bones." And yet a spirit of love and forbearance, which manifests itself in good-will toward every body, has taken possession of him, he scarcely knows why.

It had been Ingeborg's wish that Wulf should make a journey through Switzerland in order to recruit his strength before renewing his studies, and that he should visit Theodora, with whom she had been in constant communication. That had happened, and the beneficial results to his health were realized. Wulf had also endeavored to become familiar with Ingeborg's parting gift; but he had read it with the understanding only, and instead of accepting the central fact, and harmonizing the whole from that basis, he dissected the sacred book in detached fragments, and was astonished to find it was not consistent. He wished to talk to Theodora concerning this: but she did not seem to enjoy the discussion of theological quibbles, and yielded to him, as it had been her experience that in their controversies Wulf was only strengthened in his convictions.

"You diverge now from the old faith in which you were reared, wholly on account of your hypercritical views," she said to him upon one occasion; "but no matter: the time will come when self-evident testimony will reinstate it."

For this time, therefore, she waited. It is true Wulf did not then perceive Theodora's influence upon him, and it was only clear in after years how much he owed to this intercourse with her. Just at present he only struggled after what was good and right, to recognize strictly moral convictions, and to live henceforth in the performance of duty, placing great reliance and hope in acts of self-denial. He desired only to become a useful factor in the world, and to carry out the work Ingeborg had delegated to him.

Sibylla had now been married nine months—and just so much of his life this act had taken away; for Wulf belonged to the few who love but once, and love forever. He made no vows of celibacy, for he was so firmly decided on that point as to give it no consideration. But he would live to make others happy, although he could have no happiness himself. But

"The rose exhales no more the same,
Since——!"

He often raked up petrified blossoms of a past which the world no longer gave him, just as men learn of the earth's earlier periods by excavating from its interior stony palm-trees. His few acquaintances of former years he never sought. It would have been useless; a whirlwind had scattered them all over the world.

When his studies were ended he passed a fine examination; then undertook a long journey, not only to see foreign lands, but to meet distinguished physicians, and study in the various hospitals. He could not have done any thing better. He learned to know many persons, for whom he could cherish profound respect, and gained advantages not only in his profession, but to his inner self. By intercourse with strong personalities, and association with their work, Wulf learned prompt decision in circumstances and action. His professional knowledge was adjusted without destroying the free development of his own individuality. He attained a self-possession and reliance which gave his will greater freedom for a wider formation of manly maturity.

"Ericksen is lucky," said his fellow-students, when they heard of his travels, his life abroad, and the commendations of this or that eminent medical scientist.

"I am luckier than I deserve to be," said Wulf to himself; but his eyes did not betray the thought, nor his purpose become less earnest.

In this way two years had passed, and he desired to return to Berlin and establish himself in his profession. On his return journey he stopped at a celebrated watering-place on the Rhine. It was a mild Autumn evening. The beauty of the place attracted him, and he decided to spend several days there. He found pleasant lodgings near the water, and sauntered out to enjoy the air and scene. Later in the evening he dined at the chief hotel, where a great ball was in progress. Wulf gave a glance into the stifling room, where misery and physical ails were being danced away and forgotten, and then passed into an adjoining apartment. He escaped from Scylla, only to fall into Charybdis; for here card-playing held sway. It was no pleasant sight to see people so absorbed as to appear dead to all surroundings, neither speaking nor thinking—only living in "tricks and trumps." What magic power lay hidden in these red and black cards to fascinate so terribly? The same which attracts others to drink. The player would thus intoxicate himself in order to forget all the reality and truth of life. He would banish *ennui*, trouble, care, grief, qualms of conscience, satiation, in the transient and stifling dominion of gambling.

Wulf was about to turn away when he caught a glimpse of a face that seemed even more absorbed and lifeless than the others, but one which made an especial impression upon him. He looked more closely. Yes, there was no doubt: Herr Von Lenkseuring was the player.

The first pause impelled Wulf to tap his shoulder and say: "Good evening."

Herr Von Lenkseuring sprang up, looked confusedly at Wulf, as though the latter had come from another world, and a second look were necessary to convince him of the presence of flesh and blood.

"Wulf Ericksen!" and with these words Herr Von Lenkseuring collected himself. "Ah! very glad to see you—only I have not a moment's time. *Pique* is *á tout*."

"I shall not disturb you," said Wulf. "Only one question: is your wife here?"

"Ah, ah! she is at the ball. Will you not go to her? Please; she will be glad to see you;" and turning away, "Yes, yes, Baron, I will finish playing;" and he added to Wulf, "A player never can find an end."

Wulf withdrew. He looked again in the ball-room, but despaired to find among these excited dancers, these fashionably attired butterflies, the innocent face of Olga Von Steinfels.

This kind of pursuit after happiness was no enticement for him; but had he not once been upon the same road? He thought of the lovely being that had once stood before him so earnestly, and with whom one hard word had torn the veil from his heart. "Can you conceive a player or drinker who is not cowardly?" "No; for otherwise he would drink and play no longer." She was right. Wulf detested such cowardice now.

It was after midnight when he was awakened by a knock on his door.

"Doctor, there is a very sick child in the room below. The regular physician is not to be found. Will you please come down?" entreated the speaker.

Wulf found a lovely ten-months-old baby suffering with a severe attack of croup. He quickly applied the necessary remedies to avert suffocation in the already convulsed child. The nurse obeyed his instructions amid trembling and tears. After a short time the immediate danger was passed, and both felt relieved.

"Where are the parents of this child?" asked Wulf.

"At the ball," replied the woman.

"At the ball? And why did you not call them at once?"

"O, the little dear was hoarse all day, but master thought there was nothing to fear. I must not run and call them for nothing. When the attack came I did not think it would be so bad, and as I heard a doctor arrived yesterday——"

"It was fortunate you called me," interrupted Wulf, "or else the child would have died. But run and call the parents quickly; we are not safe a moment."

"O, O! I thought he was all right again. The poor little child! But I am all alone; every body is asleep. Whom shall I send?"

"Go yourself quickly. I will remain here."

The positive, decisive manner of the physician left no room for controversy. In a short time the child's parents entered. Wulf arose, and stood before Herr Von Lenkseuring and his wife.

"Your child lies at death's door while you dance and gamble," said Wulf, earnestly.

What a night that was!

The little life hung in the balance, as death hovered over the sweet child's cradle. The little hands were wildly flung in the air, and the little face distorted in agony. By its side knelt the mother in her elegant ball-dress, her pale face concealed as yet by rouge. Wulf held the baby in his arms, using every means to procure relief. At length the little head was leaning exhausted on his shoulder, and sleep came.

Olga wanted to take him.

"Sh!" whispered Wulf; "no changing."

"But you are not accustomed to such nursing."

"I shall hold him so until morning. I think now we shall have a little quiet. Take some rest, my dear madame."

"Is the danger passed?"

Wulf shrugged his shoulders.

"Apparently—yes."

Olga slipped lightly to the nearest easy-chair. Her husband had been asleep on the couch for some time. Wulf sat motionless, listening to the little one's breathing.

Conflicting thoughts stirred the mother's heart. When the first outburst of anxiety over her child's life had been somewhat allayed, picture after picture passed over her soul. Shame, burning shame, that she had neglected her dearest duty, and that one had witnessed it whose respect she desired. Then her desolate life by the side of her husband, who, satisfied when he had reached his aim, had never been a guide to her, but when she resolved to do better had always discouraged her because it was not convenient for his wife to have other regulations than his, which were so excessively devoted to pleasure. What a difference between the two men! About the same age—one with a pale, worn face; the other with earnest expression and a strong physique, on which a feeble wife might have reposed so well.

Springing up and reaching out both hands to Wulf, she exclaimed: "Help me! help me!"

He turned slightly, but could not give his hand, as he still held the little one in his arms. But his sympathy went out to her, even if his mind did not grasp her whole meaning.

"I can not," he said, earnestly; "God alone can do it."

"What have you spoken?" said the monitor within, softly. "God alone is able to help? Who is God? What is God?" When he calmly reflected, the answer came: "Weak women and children have need to believe on a living God; they must have something upon which their tumultuous emotions may rest. They must believe, but men demand knowledge."

After the night of dread, morning at length dawned, and Wulf declared the little one beyond danger. Olga scarcely permitted it to be out of her arms. This illness brought her duty as a mother nearer, and the fear of losing her beautiful child made it dearer than before. The father begged Wulf to remain several days with them.

"I think it will do my husband and all of us good if you will remain," entreated Olga, with emotion.

Wulf remained, and discovered that this was a pleasanter married life than he had supposed. The young husband was not really bad; in fact, he would rather do right than wrong. But his will was weak, and consequently passion, indiscretion, and the force of habit constantly obtained the victory.

"If my husband only had a true friend!" lamented Olga. "Since you have been here he is so different."

"You must be his friend," replied Wulf.

"I? O, how can I? Besides, he is never at home."

"Make your home so pleasant that he will desire to be there. Strengthen his vacillating purposes," advised Wulf.

"That is, indeed, a difficult task," sighed Olga. "Who will strengthen me, then?"

"Your better self and your child. You dare not think chiefly of yourself. When you see your husband in a burning house, rescue him yourself," added Wulf, earnestly.

They had many similar conversations. On one occasion Olga innocently related the circumstances of Herr Bolton's death. Wulf sprang to his feet in speechless astonishment.

"Did you not know that he had been dead nearly two years?" asked Olga, in surprise.

"Nearly two years? Just the time I have been traveling abroad."

Then Olga imparted what she knew of Sibylla, of the unhappy end of her marriage, and the *rôle* which Uhlhart had played.

Wulf gnashed his teeth. "The infamous wretch! He also wished to ruin me, and came very near to accomplishing it. But where is Frau Bolton now?"

Olga blushed. "I am ashamed of myself. I visited her at Larkow shortly before my wedding, and learned there what I have told you; but since that time I know nothing more about her. I have heard she is governess in an Austrian family."

"In her need she stood alone, then," said Wulf, reproachfully; "and you did not trouble yourself about her?"

Olga wept. "O, I have been a wretched wife, mother, and friend. How could I behave so? If Dr. Uhlhart had only troubled himself as little about Sibylla as I have."

"Uhlhart? How so?"

And, like an open book, Olga gave Wulf information which threw light on all of Uhlhart's deceitful ways; how he sought by letters and conversation to injure and belie him, in order to drive him from Berlin, and when this was not accomplished, to ruin him.

"But what had he against me?" asked Wulf.

"He wanted to drive you away from Sibylla."

"Yes, that was evident; but why did he desire that? I was no hindrance to him."

Olga opened her eyes ingenuously. "O, this fellow was more clever than all of us, and could read our hearts better than we ourselves. He knew that you alone were dangerous to Sibylla; he saw that Sibylla loved you."

"Me?" interjected Wulf.

"Uhlhart loved Sibylla with a consuming passion," continued Olga; "and for that reason saw more deeply than Sibylla herself; but she feared him as her greatest enemy. O, wherever he may be I know he will never give up the wild chase after her."

A sudden pang thrilled Wulf, and would not permit him to remain longer at this place. He would go to Berlin, institute inquiries, write to Theodora.

The Lenkseurings parted with him reluctantly, and had good reasons therefor. If the husband's life had undergone no transformation, a stone had been thrown into the stagnant water—a stone, the widening circles of whose influence reached, perhaps, to the very shores of eternity.

XXVIII.

"Yesterday now is a part of forever;
Bound up in a sheaf which God holds tight.
With glad days and sad days and bad days, which never
Shall visit us more with their bloom and their blight,
Their fullness of sunshine or sorrowful night.

Let them go, since we can not relieve them,
Can not undo and can not atone;
God in his mercy forgive and receive them!
Only the new days are our own:
To-day is ours, and to-day alone."

—SUSAN COOLIDGE.

A nipping hoar-frost brought Wulf back to Berlin. Here he made strenuous efforts to obtain some news of Sibylla, but in vain. No one knew where she resided. That she was in the city he never dreamed, and therefore did not seek her there. He wrote to Theodora in the Swiss mountains; but either the letter had failed to reach her, or she had been obliged to make inquiries herself; for no answer came.

During this period he was not idle. He began his medical practice, and endeavored to establish a home of his own. Still he did not cater to the higher classes of society. His inclinations led him where there was the most misery. Should he be able to fulfill his uncle's expectations, and become a physician to the poor? It seemed so; for he was oftenest seen in the cellars and tenements, and rejoiced that this class of people reposed confidence in him.

It was toward evening, one day, when he called upon a poor, sick woman. Entering the cellar, he was obliged to wait a moment until his eyes grew accustomed to the dim, gloomy light, before he could distinguish any thing. The husband met him at the door, and Wulf inquired after the wife, whose groans now reached him in reply.

"Has she so much pain?" asked Wulf.

"No; but she has a wound in the knee, which is just being dressed."

Wulf approached the sufferer. At the foot of the bed, knelt a womanly figure, binding the wound, with her head bent deeply over the work. He looked at her keenly, but the room was so dark he could only distinguish the outline.

"Bring a light," he said, firmly.

When the husband had succeeded in finding one, the place by the bed was vacant.

"Who bound your leg?" asked Wulf, quickly.

"My good angel," moaned the woman.

"What is her name?" continued the young physician, so impatiently that her husband replied in some alarm: "She has been coming here a long while, and she lives near."

"But her name?"

"Frau Bolton; and she is very good."

The intuition which flashed through his mind and heart when he entered this room was then correct! He felt like rushing forth instantly, but he controlled the impulse. With a calmness inexplicable to himself he gave orders for the sick woman's relief. He knew Sibylla had recognized him, and he should find her. As he came out he saw a woman walking slowly before him. O, he could identify that figure among thousands! He quickened his steps; the young woman seemed absorbed in deep thought. Suddenly a manly voice said to her.

"Sibylla, dear Sibylla!"

Sibylla looked up: "Wulf!"

How can so much happiness, so much pain, so much terror, so much blessedness, lie in a single word?

She reeled, and would have fallen; but a strong arm upheld her, which she knew would never again be released through time and eternity.

A severe November storm raged around them; but as it drove Sibylla backward, the strong arm was protectingly behind her. They go on and on, and can find no end. She is not troubled on account of the distance; she has been long enough her own leader. The hands of both are clasped together as if they could never be sundered. As water which an unfriendly hand has parted reunites never to be separated again, these two are henceforth one.

Finally the bands of the tongues of these happy ones are loosed. What they said, no one heard; but perhaps imagination may tell us that as, out of the deepest woe, thoughts climb to heaven, so in the highest bliss they also climb thitherward.

It was very late when Wulf parted from Sibylla at her door.

"Come early to-morrow morning," she begged; "I am too horrid to be alone by myself." Entering the room, she fell on her knees, and cried through streaming eyes: "Dear Lord, can you have such love for me?"

How gloriously the sun arose the next morning!—no November sun, but one of May, full of joy and happiness. It shone forth strong, as if there were joy and delight in its nature, as well as storm and rage.

It was not very late when Wulf stood before Sibylla's door, but still not so early that she had not been looking out for him. How beautiful she was! Wulf met her with eyes of love and admiration. Yes; that was his Sibylla Von Herbig. It was incredible that she had ever belonged to another. He could not bear the thought of how he had struggled against all remembrance of her during the past years, believing it to be wrong. But now she was his, wholly his—and forever!

And Sibylla? If any one could have bribed her with every thing for which once she had been so enthusiastic and regarded essential to her life; if any one had brought to her liberty, beauty, art, riches, happiness of every other kind, it would have been no temptation. In resignation and submission she found her happiness. And—wonderful!—this happiness rejuvenated her; it flashed from her eyes; it beamed from her rosy cheeks; it uttered itself in every movement of her youthful form, as the sunshine unfolds the rose which had been only a bud for so long.

To-day Sibylla told Wulf that Theodora had returned to Berlin, and intended to remain. They went together to see their friend. Theodora was delighted over the happy circumstance that greeted her on the threshold of her new home. She had not received Wulf's letter. When he brought his sweet bride another day, she pressed Sibylla to her heart and said, joyfully: "May a good spirit accompany you through life, and the gold which you carry in your own person be transformed for every-day use into small change for every body!"

Yes; every-day life—that must show now what Sibylla really is.

XXIX.

"Go thou forth,
And fortune play upon thy prosperous helm!"
—ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

Thy name is my name, thy honor is my honor, thy life is my life; "whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

The solemn word was spoken, the union for time and eternity made. Wulf had taken Sibylla as his wife to their home. The brief betrothal had been followed by a quiet wedding. There was no wedding journey to distract the mind. From the church the young couple had gone directly to their home, where Theodora had met them. How different from what Sibylla had once imagined! To the young maiden a trip to Frankfort was not even good enough; there should at least be one to Italy, and thence toward the East, the cradle of all art!

But far more beautiful was it now in her quiet home; and most beautiful it was to sit by her husband's side, who was the dearest object on earth to her, receiving all from him, and giving him herself.

"How much my mother would have loved you!" said Wulf to his young bride. "You would have helped me to thank her for all she did. She rescued me as well by that heroic deed, at a time when mere words would have been unheeded."

Sibylla was very happy in these four walls. She is rich, indeed, who provides and cares for the man she loves. Wulf's profession called him frequently from home, and led him so much among the poor that he obtained the sobriquet of "The Poor-doctor." He heard this with pleasure, and observing how regardlessly the so-called common people were treated by his colleagues at times, his heart was uplifted.

Wulf cast no reflections upon his professional brethren; they must live so; but he made a vow to help and share what he had with all; neither to avoid place nor effort, neither inconvenience nor ingratitude, in order to fulfill his great mission.

He kept his promise, and Sibylla was his true helpmate. When the doctor prescribed a soup for the sick, he sent them to his wife; and if they needed a pillow for their straw pallet, it was safe to say Sibylla would provide it, always ready as she was with thread and needle in hand.

A physician has opportunities for knowing the resources and circumstances of many families, and stands in close relationship at their side. He can act and advise; and where Wulf opened a way, Sibylla furthered it with kind heart and friendly hand. Yes; the Herr-doctor had truly a Frau-doctor for a wife.

If he came home weary, his first glance met Sibylla sitting at the window, waiting for him with blushing cheeks; and the evening hours passed amid cozy companionship, more beautiful than any of which the young wife had ever dreamed. She resumed her old art; drew and painted,

often more venturesomely than correctly, Wulf thought. They sang and played together: it had always been Sibylla's ideal for young married people to sing together.

But they were not always alone. The home-circle widened. To one and another Wulf had said: "Come to see us; we shall be glad to have you." "We will come, for we love to," was the frequent response, and the sociability which shaped itself in Dr. Ericksen's dwelling was only an extension of the home-circle.

Invitations which sprang from mere courtesy, and stood formally prepared all day with polished exteriors for every body—mere forms, such as one accepts with *ennui*—were never given, much less received. The friendly circle which gathered around Sibylla and her husband, in which Theodora was always an honored and welcome guest, afforded true refreshment for all participants.

Even more than this; for while the most interesting intellectual conversations were found, there were not wanting suggestions for all kinds of charities to do good. Wulf at one time related an especially needy case in his own practice, which awakened his friends' sympathies, and at another time opened ways for worthy beneficence in other directions.

"These gatherings bring much and cost little," said Sibylla, triumphantly. "O, how much time and money for costumes and table-service we expended once, from which nothing resulted but a heavy head and an empty heart!"

And yet there was a little rift in their happiness. It appeared very small, even immaterial. Only Sibylla observed it; and yet at times the thought arose whether this little rift might not widen and widen, until the music of both lives should grow mute.

Sibylla had, as we already know, recognized the fact that every thing which did not spring from the deepest spiritual source could not give solid hold and peace. When she only looked at her husband—when she learned to know his work more perfectly, his earnest efforts, his thoroughly excellent life, his noble self-sacrificing deeds (and this latter had been the last stone of oppression in her own experience)—how far above her he stood! how she could look up to the man she loved! "Whoever acts as he does," she thought, "must be more than a good, brave man; he must be a Christian." And when he attended Church service with her as often as possible; when he talked with undisguised admiration of his mother, and with deep emotion of the lovely pious Ingeborg, Sibylla felt not only her outward, but especially her inward life was secure in him.

"O God, let me not die, not die now," she prayed one night out of a joyful heart; "for I am too happy!" And yet she felt this truth deeply, that Wulf only tolerated from her the deepest question she presented. He assented, and she could not agree with him. She endeavored to cast

the thought aside, but that did not bring peace. She wanted to have her beloved all in all, to share every thing with him, even this, and to ask the question herself in the simplest way.

They were walking out together. Wulf was deeply moved by the result of one of his cases; a patient had died, wholly unexpectedly to him, from an apparently simple headache.

"Was the death so unexpected to you?" asked Sibylla.

"To-day? Yes; I was not at all prepared for it. That serious results might happen in such cases I knew, and had consulted with another physician. It was an effusion of blood to the brain. I pity his poor wife and orphaned children."

"Did the man know he was about to die?"

"No; certainly not. Such information would only have done harm, and hastened the result."

"And yet if he had known the fact, it would have been good for his immortal soul."

"Dear Sibylla," exclaimed Wulf, straightening himself up, "if we regarded the souls of all our patients of more consequence than their bodies, who could be a physician?"

"Yet the soul is worth far more," rejoined Sibylla.

"Yes; but who knows that for a certainty?" sighed Wulf. "O child, I would not becloud you with mysteries; but if you knew how often science and faith stand diametrically in opposition! The heart might sometimes, it is true, accept as truth what the understanding must reject, but the fundamental maxims of science are so clear—even if not wholly satisfactory. What is the soul? The power to think? Animals also think; therefore we stand upon a certain equality with them."

"But does not the soul's power to rise mentally higher and higher make the difference?" argued Sibylla.

"Yes, indeed; for the thoughts of animals never make progress," replied Wulf; "and yet when one sees for the thousandth time (as in the calamity to-day) how one little drop of blood in the brain can render all thought impossible, must we not conclude that the brain is the sole organ of thought? I can not explain it to you—God be thanked, you would not understand it—but believe me, it is difficult for the heavy foot of man to keep away from the abyss, which a woman with her light tread scarcely touches upon."

There was a pause, when Sibylla resumed:

"But if every thing else ceases to exist, the soul of man is immortal. That is no hypothesis, but a truth which no science can controvert."

Wulf smiled—sadly, it seemed to his wife.

"Controvert? No; but science can and does clear away the theories of immortality, as well as others of the Bible, when they are not thoroughly uniform in their results. Some think the world itself will be further and further transformed, always becoming greater; that it is even now making incomprehensible strides, and will never be utterly destroyed. Others believe in the passing away of the world in which all will be swallowed up in eternal nothingness."

"O, the heathen thought so two hundred years ago," interrupted Sibylla. "If this is the product of modern science it has certainly not made any progress."

"Only with the difference," asserted Wulf, "that now science will prove what the ancients only dimly imagined. Still what is worth proving at all is worth proving thoroughly. The naturalist proves that in every movement of the human body a portion of mechanical strength passes away in heat, from which again only a part of this is transmuted back. If, then, the universe be left undisturbed by this flowing off in physical process, all energy must finally pass away into heat, and the possibility of any further change is cut off, and there will be a perfect cessation of every process of nature, and the universe will be condemned from that time forward to eternal rest: that is then the end."

"And a quiescent chaos to all eternity!" exclaimed Sibylla. "That would be the result: the beginning a quiescent chaos—the end a quiescent chaos. Why, then, resolve a world out of it? Why, then, this life, with its pains, its efforts, its desires, its aspirations? Why, then, the fear of death? Why did we not remain in chaos?"

"I have now an answer to such questions," replied Wulf. "It was to love you, Sibylla, to possess you, and to ease the pain of this poor life the one for the other. That is, indeed, worth living for."

"O no, no!" cried Sibylla; "that would be only a short, even though a generous, intoxication of the senses. Wulf, you do not believe what you say. Think of sweet Ingeborg's heaven, of her happiness. Was that a delusion?"

"If I had only heard of it I should have answered decidedly, yes; but as I witnessed it myself, I can not say so. Dear Sibylla, please keep your own thoughts. It makes me happier in every case than these dry discussions; besides, they are better. I can not help it, but I do not desire our friends, or especially one I love, to share my views."

"Dear Wulf, you are far, far better than your words. You are also nearer to God than you think. Then how can you act as you do? Your heart believes entirely different from your head. You have intrenched yourself to such an extent in certain opinions that you accept them without trying to harmonize them with your other views, and so the opposing factions in your head, being uncontroverted, do not observe that they do not mingle their elements. All this materialism which you have been expounding to me to-day is not you at all."

How gladly Wulf heard this sentiment from those lips! But "women must believe, and men must know," he thought to himself, resolving at the same time never again to attack Sibylla's faith.

The latter, when she sat alone in the evenings, reflected over the wonderful ways they had both been led. In this very way art had stood sharply opposed to Christianity, just as science and religion now were in conflict, to Wulf's mind. She could not close her eyes against it, and felt that his opposition must only be vanquished through the mighty power of the Holy Spirit. "But he is ten times better than I am, and he will soon conquer," she concluded. How little she dreamed what was about to occur!

It was on the fourteenth of July that Wulf entered her room at a very unusual hour and more animated than customary. "Do you know? have you heard," he exclaimed with enthusiasm, "that there will be war? It is now certain; there is no other redress."

For weeks war-clouds had been gathering in the political horizon. Now the dull, rolling thunder came from Ems, and indicated the outbreak of the storm. Wulf related the disturbance King William had experienced at Ems, and how he had defended himself. His eyes flashed; unconsciously he clenched his fingers. "I shall return soon; I have no more time," he said, as he hurried off.

Why did Sibylla turn so pale? Was she thinking of all the indescribable horrors that war has in its train? or did she, in imagination, already see the enemy's troops marching through the streets, relentlessly vindicating the conqueror's rights?

O no; nothing of these. Before her mind with unerring certainty was the thought, "Wulf goes with the king," and all other considerations vanished.

"Would I have it otherwise?" she asked herself. "Should I not reproach a young, sturdy man, with no other call to hinder, if he did not take the sword for his country's honor? Should I not do the same if I were in his place? Yes; and even if I could go with him and remain beside him I should fear no danger."

Sibylla's hot tears fell upon her sewing. Her happiness was so young, so new; she had lived so long without her beloved, had been too miserable without him, not to wish now to keep him with all her might. She murmured that God should permit this war, and yet the fealty of a German woman was aroused, and she felt that life without honor was no life. She struggled long with her emotions and finally said: "Ah well! I shall never be a hindrance in the path of glory to one I love better than myself. My entreaties and tears shall not restrain him; I will weep no more."

Wulf returned. He had not become any calmer. One could see he had under consideration an important event in his life. Yet every thing went on outwardly as usual, as though he possessed

the deepest inward peace. The war news spread from lip to lip, and every heart arose against French usurpation.

"As yet every body continues his business; but how long will it be before all these lusty workmen will be converted into soldiers, and Berlin become a vast military hospital? We shall finally conquer, but we must be prepared for any thing," said Wulf, earnestly.

"When are you going?" asked Sibylla.

"Sibylla!" Wulf looked at his wife, but needed no explanation of her inquiry, which was blessedness at this critical moment.

"O, Sibylla!" he continued, "that I go, that I hazard my life, is nothing. But to give up our happiness together, so full, so unspeakably rich, is something; and yet I do it gladly. I would not die, but conquer. How could I remain here with you, and permit others to go forth to the battle? The French shall realize that we fight for our noblest possessions, for our king, our Fatherland, our honor, our wives!"

"Have you, then, already taken steps to this end?" said Sibylla.

"No, not yet; I felt I must consult you first. Besides, the declaration of war has not yet been promulgated. To-morrow the king comes to Berlin!"

Sibylla wept no longer; Wulf was beside her. But no sleep visited her eyelids that night. It was something different to rejoice over the heroic deeds of others, to admire valiant action with enthusiasm, from giving up now her dearest one—the only one she could call her own in all the world.

The next evening husband and wife were at the railroad depot, where the king was expected to arrive. No newspaper had announced his coming, but a multitude of people welcomed him. And when he came, so earnest, so anxious; when he looked upon his subjects, thoughts like these doubtless stirred his heart: "How much sacrifice this war will cost! Will there be one of this throng exempt? Will it not entail pain and misery upon all?" Then a loud "Huzza!" rent the air, and an enthusiasm rarely manifested was the people's answer to the king's mute question, with the cry: "King William, on to Paris! King William, on to Paris!"

It was a moment such as comes but once in a century. That was no ordinary "Huzza!" ready prepared for homage, but like a mighty stream which had been flowing peacefully, and now suddenly bursts through gigantic bulwarks, bringing ruin with its deafening roar and heaving foam, and which, knowing its power, goes its way unhindered.

Wulf and Sibylla returned home in a serious frame of mind. A deed had been accomplished this day which they had been permitted to witness. That great events should take place, which would form a part of the world's history, they both realized, and with them all Germany.

The following day the army was put in motion. Wulf had never served. When he had been drafted in the past an insignificantly lame foot had gladly been offered in defense, that he might not be interrupted in his medical career. Now all was changed. He desired to enter the service as a volunteer, and sword in hand defend the Father-land.

He applied to a military bureau, but there was no vacancy. Like an enkindled thought the king's proclamation fell upon the crowd. Enthusiastically, the young, the mature, and the gray-haired thronged the ranks. The university emptied itself. Who can write the college history, which ought to be perpetuated in pen of brass, of those who went forth from thence to the battle-field?

Tradesmen and artisans left their shops; for who would buy and sell when the noblest possessions were to be acquired? The laborer left his work; the artist hastened from his studio, the assessor from his office. Enthusiasm flamed high. With some it was a wonderful passion; in all the harmony was deep and true, while a righteous indignation permeated every German breast.

"*Lieb Vaterland, kannst ruhig sein,*
Fest steht und treu die Wacht am Rhein."

The next morning Wulf was presented before an officer, well known to him. He shrugged his shoulder and said: "It is not possible. See the crowd; every one wants to be first."

But Wulf was not to be discouraged. He applied to another regiment, with the same result. "Well, then," he said, "if I can not go as a private soldier with naked weapons, I shall try to go as a physician." As such he was readily accepted. Every one felt it would be a bloody struggle and that many surgeons would be needed. To Wulf it seemed easier as a common soldier to meet the enemy, and to endure wounds; but it was really more beautiful and Christ-like to bind them up.

Sibylla was glad in the depths of her heart when she received this intelligence, as Wulf would not be placed in such immediate danger, although she was perfectly aware that he would not shrink from the most imminent risks in the performance of duty.

"O, can not I go with you? Can I not do something to help this great cause?" she sighed.

"You can, and you shall," replied her husband. "Women will have much to do at home. Let us each one serve in his place."

XXX

"The soul, secured in her existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years;
But thou shall flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amid the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.

—ADDISON.

The world's history went its way in the midst of thunder-bolts. "Die Wacht am Rhein," no longer stood firm and true, but the Fatherland could afford to be restful. The wheels of war had transferred themselves to France; the people who instigated the war were now to suffer its nearest proximity. Germany breathed freely. Her brave army (concerning which an English journal asserted that every single man in the invasion was a Leonidas in overalls and spectacles), led by heroes, had bloody conflicts to undergo. No pen is needed to recall them; their history is engraven in the heart of Germany. We shall only follow Wulf on his difficult way.

Yes, it was difficult—frightfully difficult. The unalloyed misery which a battle evokes, baffles all description. The hardest heart must learn to bear it for the first time. There in the front the battle raged—officers riding hither and thither; the infantry in advance, with the first company on its knees; the second bowed down; the third standing upright, ready, with murderous fire, to obey their leader's command. For their protection, the artillery is led forward, gigantic cannon awaiting the signal to pour death and destruction upon the enemy. From the sides there is already the sound of clashing arms; in the center the strange snapping of the mitrailleuse; while all around is heard the dull roar of the cannon. Wulf stands in the rear, just behind the lines, watching with breathless interest the drama unfolding around him.

But he can not long follow the course of the strife, as the regiment to which he belongs now enters the action. A frightful crashing and firing, then thick powder-smoke, and a few moments later, wounded men fall backward. Wulf casts aside the field-glass, takes up his package of bandages. The first one to be relieved is a young soldier who has lost an arm; a second follows, a third, a fourth. He can no longer count them. Beneath a great tree he has established his

quarters, and luminous for a long distance floats the white flag with its red cross, pointing out the spot where love and sympathy have found their way, even in the fearful misery of the battlefield. The combat has disappeared in the distance; the earth trembles with resounding shots uninterruptedly. All is covered with powder and smoke. Wulf only sees the ambulance-wagons approaching with the wounded and dying, to lay them in his vicinity; he hears only the terrible, agonizing groans and moans of the wounded—German and French, all bleeding, and needing succor. Then came the snorting of horses galloping from the front, wounded and riderless, followed by dragoons and lancers in confusion through a repulsed assault. Just before Wulf, a dragoon on horseback flew by; he sprang aside and caught the dying one, whose blood streamed over him. "Dead! all over! Gone!" he exclaims. "If it were so with all these poor fellows around me, much suffering might be escaped."

But, mayhap at home some Sibylla weeps for them?

Although Wulf is agitated by the thought, "Is it, indeed, all over, forever passed, or is there still another life?" another needs care, and he binds up wounds, calms and succors as well as he can. His orders are short and quick in the roar around, and, so far as possible, they are promptly obeyed. The wounded who have received attention are borne to the nearest house, or laid in wagons and carried farther. But the ranks did not become less; others were constantly brought forward to receive the murderous shots, and there seemed no end to the misery.

"Have we conquered?" asked a soldier, coming out of a deep swoon under Wulf's treatment. The latter looked up; he had forgotten the war and victory. But it is unmistakably the latter, and a messenger brings tidings of a splendid victory. He has scarcely time to rejoice, but he hears the "hurra!" which comes from the lips of the poor wounded one.

A strong man writhes in dreadful agony as Wulf endeavors to extract a bullet from his breast.

"We have conquered," Wulf says to him.

The warrior opens his eyes; a smile plays on his lips; he makes an effort to rise, and folds his hands, while he says clearly: "God be thanked, who has given us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Then he swoons away; and is gone.

Is it "all over" with him? Returns the substance back to its source?

On, on! the bloody conflict must begin anew. Evening approaches. The field hospital must be stationed at the nearest village, where every house is a Lazaret.

Wulf is steeped to the elbows in gore. The amputating-table is cleansed, while all around lie heaps of the poor soldiers' members. While the wounded are being laid in wagons, Wulf kneels beside a poor creature; he would have him transported, but discerns that it is useless. He gives him a draught of wine, and as the dying one drinks he seizes Wulf's hand, and gasps, "O, if I had

only been a Christian!" Wulf would administer words of comfort; but what shall he say? He is helpless. O, how chimerical seem all the results of his scientific investigations! "My mother always told me to pray," continued the poor fellow. Then he begged piteously, "Pray! pray!"

What should Wulf do? He would tear himself away; but the strong death-grasp restrains him, and the utterance:

"O, pray for me!"

Pray? To whom? The God whom Wulf has made his own for years is without hearing—and what shall he pray? "O, pray for me!" is repeated agonizingly.

Then he recalls an old, old prayer which his mother taught him when a child, and he repeats mechanically:

"Dear Lord, I would thee love,
That I may go to heaven above."

It is "all over;" and if he had not been so wearied he would have despised such an utterance. There is no heaven, and he for whom he has just repeated this falsity—well, the machinery of life has stopped; the parts disintegrate, and it is "all over" with him: that is certain.

Expeditiously the school-house is converted into a hospital, and there Wulf establishes his head-quarters for the present. Alone, far away from other dwellings, the red-cross flag floats in the air, and soon the little place is filled with the wounded—friends and enemies.

A hospital—but void of all comforts. A little straw is spread upon the floor, and those needing attention are covered with their cloaks only. It had not been possible to provide food as yet, but a small quantity of wine is available. Messengers are hurried off for water and hospital supplies, and the fearful work begins anew. Many die during the night, and their bodies are immediately removed to make room for new occupants. Wulf's surgical knife and implements are used unremittingly. Constantly messages arrive for him to come to some other house; he would answer, "Soon! yes, soon!" but the pressing necessities around secure him to this spot.

Morning dawned when Wulf stepped forth. The sun arose in the east as clear and splendid as if it greeted only happy people and joyous harvesters. Anxiety and the harrowing scenes of the past hours had made Wulf almost faint; but the fresh air from without now revived him. The night lay in his memory like a confused, troubled dream. What an experience it had been! Through what mental struggles he had passed! "To be or not to be," was "the question" to him. Were these dead really eternally dead, or was there an everlasting life beyond? If he answered the latter affirmatively, he must accept as truth the conclusion of a revealed God. Could this be

true, then also redemption through Jesus Christ were a confirmed fact. There was no intermediate view. Either his own opinions were correct and true, and it was man's highest aim here to attain a moral perfection in every thing, or God's Word was the truth, and man did not live simply for this world, but for eternal life.

Nonsense! nonsense! What need had man for God and immortality?

And yet there were thousands who had just now lost beautiful, young lives. If they must be ended, why this life at all, on which depends so much care and love? Had the love only beginning to strengthen, and the mind only begun to be cultivated, that a little piece of cold lead might destroy it forever? Infamous thought! A reconciliation between the hopes of all these hearts and their sudden extinction lay only in the idea of a continuation after death, a further, wider development in the certain confidence of an eternal life.

Was it this confidence which appeared in vision to the dying soldier when he exclaimed: "God be thanked, who has given us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

But there was no time for Wulf to indulge in these subtile inquiries; he must attend anew to the suffering. And yet, amid all the strife and whir and din of battle, he had heard one of the field-deacons give comfort and blessing here and there amid the wounded and dying, and administer to them the hope of eternal life. This one phrase, "eternal life," with its consoling assurances, Wulf could not comprehend, and he marveled that a nursery tale, a bare idea, could exert such power among so many thousands of different people. But his work went on and on. The hard surgical instruments were devoid of feeling, and could endure the strain much longer; not so the man of flesh and blood—he was well-nigh exhausted. Wulf had worked thirty-six hours without food, only stimulated occasionally with a glass of wine, which merely undermined his nervous strength. A deacon said: "Doctor, go now; I have a bed ready for you. You can do no more."

Yes; Wulf could do no more. Without controversy he threw himself upon the couch, and closed his eyes; but he could not close his ears to the groans around him. Every thing in his mind was in chaos, and yet out of this chaos a feeling was liberated more dreadful than all else—the instinctive fear of an after life in preference to annihilation. No sleep visited his eyes, or laid her peaceful hand upon his troubled brain, where every thing whirled. Suddenly he heard a voice say quickly:

"Is there no doctor here?"

"What is wanted?" replied the deacon.

"Immediately have him come to N——, where there lies a whole church full of wounded, without a surgeon."

"He will come to-morrow, early," was the answer.

"For God's sake, why not at once?" was the entreaty.

"It is impossible," said the inexorable attendant.

Wulf had followed the conversation with breathless tension. He knew it had been promised that he would go. He would spring up, but tongue and limbs refuse their service. He lay in a severe cramp, and in spite of redoubled effort he was not master of a word or movement. When the messenger had gone the band was unloosed; he sprang up and declared he should ride at once to N——. The prudent deacon forcibly restrained him for a time; but he overcame all remonstrance at length, learned the way to N——, left requisite orders for those behind, and a few minutes later was in the saddle.

In the beginning all went well along the highway. Then the road led through a little wood, then over a field, as the most direct route. The cool, fresh air relieved Wulf's burning head, and although his pulse beat feverishly, he determined not to yield to approaching illness. Gradually his thoughts began to wander; he allowed the reins to fall, and forgot to guide the horse. It began to grow dark; but the faithful animal kept on the way. Now they were in the shade of the wood, and suddenly the horse shied before a large, white stone, which appeared unexpectedly. The lurch threw Wulf from the saddle, while the horse galloped on. Suddenly awakened, Wulf endeavored to rise, and succeeded with difficulty, as his foot had been injured by the fall. He felt the wet blood trickling through his stocking, but believed the wound to be trifling. Even if it retarded his progress he should find the way again, and he limped wearily on. On and on, but the way through the wood seemed endless; and yet at every turn he hoped to see beyond. He was undoubtedly on the wrong path, but if he should walk to the right he must get through, and soon either see a light or hear footsteps. He had scarcely left the roadway when the ground began to yield under his feet; and struggling to extricate himself from the morass, he only sank deeper and deeper. He reached out for some overhanging branch, but none was near, and even more the ground seemed to vanish. It was wet and cold, and the slimy plants around seemed to stretch out hands after the unfortunate one, as if to draw him to the depths. After many vain struggles, he finally realized that every exertion only robbed him of strength, and he determined to wait quietly until he might hear footsteps, and cry for help. But even more icy than the slippery plants lay the wild thoughts in his mind. He knew he was stricken with fever. Was it now physical weakness or mental anxiety over the end, which paralyzed this brave man? He had just witnessed dying men whose sufferings had been greater than his own, and whose consolation was the hope of eternal life. Did this hope give strength? What had rendered death so fearless to his mother and Ingeborg? Had it been this same assurance? Then there was no hope for him; for he thought: "Now I would die, and cease to be." But he did not wish his existence to end. His youthful strength, his will, the pleasure of life, rose up in contradiction; and then his thoughts

centered upon Sibylla. No; he did not wish to die. He had not yet reached his goal; he was just beginning to succeed, to act. No; he did not wish to cease to be; and yet there was no help near. Could such a life as his end in the mire? Like the entrance of satanic malignity, the materialistic teaching of the origin of species came upon him; made of slime and returning to slime!

But his position became an agony. Would it not be better to close his eyes and die?

"To die—to sleep:
To sleep! perchance to dream:—ay, there's the rub!"

These words of Hamlet ran through his brain like spirit forms. O, the fear of something after death—that "undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveler returns!" Was it this dread that stimulated Wulf to renewed effort, that impelled him to cry aloud for help? Ah! these cries were so weak from that debilitated frame, they reached no friendly ear.

It was perfectly still in the wood.

No! suddenly there came the tramp of many footsteps, and the sound of song in distance.

Wulf listened; it must be a passing regiment, singing on its way. His feeble cry would be inaudible amid that tramping of feet and full chorus. What did they sing?

"I once had a comrade,
No better ever found;"

and here lay a comrade, with death hovering near, and they knew it not, but went on their way regardlessly. Wulf braced himself to call louder. In vain. But now the words reached him clearly.

"You can not give your hand,
You're in eternal life; that blessed land,
Comrade my own!"

"*Eternal life!*" O, how could he, in this condition of weakness, consider eternal life, when he had been unable to contemplate it in the full vigor of health? Should there take place within him some gigantic transformation, superinduced by a dire necessity? ETERNAL LIFE! Yes, there is eternal life. Horrible certainty! He would not perish here in this mire, eternally. He was sure that it would not be "all over" with him; but what then?

Should he go to his mother, to Ingeborg? No; he was not worthy of such a place; they had loved God. Should he see Sibylla there? God be thanked! No; Sibylla loved God; he had felt it, witnessed it, knew it.

Like furies these thoughts flew through Wulf's mind. Then followed the terrible feeling of wavering senses; the intellect of which he had been so proud was clouded by the dark pinions of delirium's eternal night. "O God, not that; only not that!" agonized his soul.

Where was God? Who was God, that he should help him? Was he the First Great Cause? the Eternal Essence? the Substance? A little star beamed mildly and friendly down upon him, and the sight gave him new courage. It burst the bonds from his soul; and now Wulf could pray, pray as a child to his Heavenly Father and loving Savior: "Give me life, eternal life! Help me; I would believe. Let me not die here, but live!"

He became calmer, but more and more exhausted. He closed his eyes to sleep and banish thought. Then he heard footsteps again. It was a patrol running and searching among the bushes. He had heard Wulf's feeble cry and hastened to him. Strong arms lifted him tenderly; he looked upon his rescuer gratefully, then became unconscious.

XXXI.

"I will arise, and in the strength of love,
  Pursue the bright track ere it fade away—
My Savior's pathway to his home above."

—KEBLE.

Sibylla had remained at Berlin. She was neither calm nor inactive, but full of appreciation for the enthusiasm that had called her husband to the battle-field. Had she been a man she would have gone with him, and regarded it no sacrifice. As it was, if he had left the decision of going or remaining to her, she would have said "yes."

Wulf's practice was in charge of an old physician. Theodora had again entered upon her beloved hospital work. She had been one of the first sent to the seat of war, and no one more competent could have been found.

Sibylla missed her friend sadly; but she exerted her utmost to fulfill her husband's intentions, then supplement all the remaining time to care for the wounded. It was a great satisfaction to her to witness the change which had taken place in the city. Where once had been superficiality and a chase after pleasure, one great idea, one noble aim, one grand sympathy, thrilled all hearts now, and the stupendous war produced a joyous self-sacrifice which was truly elevating.

Rich and poor brought their gifts; old pensioned men and delicate young women proffered willingly their services wherever they were available, and each one endeavored to emulate the other to prove his whole-souled interest in the occasion.

At one time a battalion of soldiers, belonging to the sanitary commission, passed slowly and with difficulty by one of the city markets. The fruit-women left their stands, seized their baskets of fruit and hastened to distribute them among the soldiers. The vegetable vendors looked over their stalls. Evidently they had nothing suitable for refreshment; yes, there were the turnips; and these were quickly transferred to the men. A loud "hurra!" went up as thanks; and, wiping their eyes with their aprons, the brave women resumed their positions.

Sometimes Sibylla purchased hospital supplies, etc. Every merchant gave his wares at lower rates; and often when it was difficult to pass through a crowd of people in her overloaded droschke, the cry of some one, "For our soldiers!" soon opened the way.

How often Sibylla thought of her dear husband in these days! He who had lamented so often the degradation of the common people, how he would have rejoiced over their transformation, their nobility, their advancement! She knew he would have gained new courage. The common people are not worthless; there is a good germ in them, that is shown frequently, when they sacrifice their all, joyfully, for the sake of their country's honor.

But Wulf was far away, and Sibylla knew he had many deprivations to undergo. She thought of her own comforts with regret; but she was animated to do still greater things. O, any thing, rather than allow her hands to be folded idly in her lap!

The interest of the women in patriotic love-service was one so universal that soon there was no want of helpers. Sibylla, therefore, turned her attention to other work, and found rich opportunities for devoting all her means and time.

Among the poorer class of her husband's patients she discovered many families whose financial support was deeply concerned in the war. Where the provider had not gone to the field, his source of industry often ceased, as business in general was depressed. Here Sibylla's friendly visits, words of counsel and comfort, and open purse were welcomed; and while she directed many anxious wives to God, who alone could protect their husbands, she herself drew more and more refreshment from the Spring whose water has all fullness.

This activity and reading of three different kinds constituted her life; the Bible, Wulf's letters, and the newspapers forming her recreation. "I can not read any thing else now," she said.

But alas! after a time her husband's letters were not forthcoming. A battle had taken place, where he had doubtless been engaged, and if not actually in the fray, he was in great peril; then, there was no communication whatever

All her acquaintances had received direct tidings from their loved ones, except Sibylla. True a letter might be delayed for a week, or even miscarried; this was her hope.

Eight days had slowly passed. All Sibylla's efforts to learn something of her husband were fruitless. She trembled when the door-bell rang. Should one of her own letters be returned to her with the words: "Person addressed, dead!"

Whoever has experienced the agony of suspense at such a time, will appreciate Sibylla's suffering; but when no one can offer consolation longer, the heart clings closer to its Heavenly Father, and is more deeply rooted in his infinite mercy.

One evening the bell rang. Sibylla's pulse almost ceased to beat. Was it another tone than usual that would pronounce her fate? She listened. There were unfamiliar voices. The servant entered with two cards: Baron Arnold Von Kahring; Baroness Albertina Von Kahring.

As a dream these names seemed now to Sibylla, and she was obliged to control herself, for since her marriage to Herr Bolton she had not seen them.

The Kahrings entered. How changed! revealed the first glance. Arnold, with manly, decisive expression, from which all trace of former *ennui* had disappeared; his wife, wholly free from the haughty inflexibility of her earlier days. Sibylla was delighted to see them, and deeply interested to know they had escaped from Paris. But what were her feelings when, after a brief preliminary talk, she learned that they had seen Wulf, that they had left him two days previously at a little village on the border, where he lay ill!

Question upon question, answer after answer! Great God! he lives. He is, indeed, ill with a light nervous fever, but there are good prospects for recovery! He longed to see his wife, in his conscious moments. That was the news which Sibylla received.

"When can I start?" she asked.

"To-morrow early, under my escort," replied Arnold, as he laid before her the plans he had formed for both. Sibylla perceived that she would soonest reach Wulf by following them, and her heart grew calm. She was now able to learn all the details of the meeting between Wulf and the Kahrings, as well as all that had happened to the latter since their removal.

"I should have left Paris immediately," said Arnold, "when the first news of the outbreak reached us; but I am really indebted to Paris and the many reverses of fortune experienced there, for I have learned to love and to work. My wife and two children have rescued me from the flippant idea I had of life; and I learned to prize for the first time, at Paris, what here I once detested—German fidelity and kindliness of disposition. When the war was declared I had only one desire: to return to Berlin, enter the army, and to educate my children in the Father land, that they might be reared among sterling principles and leave behind them honest reputations.

I have been so many years out of the regular army that I only hoped for a position as private soldier.

"But my wife's illness prevented the accomplishment of my wishes. I was obliged to remain there, and with indignation in my soul look upon the profligate behavior of the French. No patriotism, no enthusiasm, as I understand the sentiment—only words, insincerity, show! Therefore my residence among them, with their outspoken hatred of the Prussians, was not only unpleasant, but really very dangerous.

"Already many Germans had been banished, and I was forced to expect the same fate for myself. I employed the time, so far as possible, in arranging my affairs, and when the order came in legal form for me to leave, my wife had, happily, so far recovered as to make the journey possible, if not comfortable. The hatred of the rabble alone had reached such a degree, owing to the shameful incitement of the daily press, that we were obliged to leave our home by night, if we would escape the grossest insults. Our departure was more a flight than a journey. The railroads were overflowing. We endeavored in vain to secure transit; but the great burden of transporting the military, the flight of the wealthy residents from Paris, caused us to be everywhere driven back. To return home was not feasible. Finally, by paying a large sum of money, I secured a wagon; but I shall spare you the recital of the difficulties that further beset us.

"We reached the German army at last in a roundabout way, actually obliged to sneak forward like criminals. We halted one morning at a small village, but could not find accommodation, as the wounded lay everywhere. Conversing with some officers, they asked whether I would take with me to the next village a physician who had fallen ill that day. They added that soldiers of their company had just found him in an adjacent wood, half buried in a marsh, and so feeble as to be unable to extricate himself.

"I consented, but you may imagine my astonishment when they brought Wulf Ericksen to my wagon. He recognized me, although violently feverish.

"We reached the next town toward evening; but it was also filled with troops and stripped of provisions, so that we were forced to travel farther, and finally halted at a friendly spot on the frontier. Wulf's condition demanded our greatest care. We carried him to an inn, and hurriedly summoned a physician, who forbade further transport. Mental excitement and physical over-exertion had produced nervous fever, but he believed his strong constitution, to all appearances, would soon overcome the disease. When he learned Wulf was a physician, he begged permission to have him removed to his own dwelling, and to care for him while I should carry the tidings to you. I have brought my family here, and I have already rejoined my regiment, and shall go out as an officer. You know," continued Arnold, with a laugh, "that our

officers expose themselves so rashly that King William has threatened, if they persist in it, to take measures of proceeding against them! My route passes through the place where Wulf found such hospitable welcome, and, if agreeable to you, I shall accompany you thither. And now you will have all sorts of preparations to make for the journey. I shall see you early to-morrow morning."

Arnold's wife added some kindly words; then both took their leave.

Sibylla's heart was full of joy and gratitude. As she became more tranquil she could not help thinking how wonderfully Arnold and his wife had changed. "Yes; life is, after all, the first true education for people," she reflected. "Every thing else is only preparatory. And then this war! Does it not seem to have drawn to the surface the good traits of every body? Arnold Von Kahring and enthusiasm—these were two that no one ever would have dreamed of associating; and now he glows with purpose, and can not wait for the time when he may fight for the Father land. How ready I was with my criticism against Arnold, and now he has become so different!"

Yes; life educates and refines.

To-day, Wulf lay in complete possession of his senses. The past few days were more or less dark to him. He was very weak, and the silence around seemed very beautiful. He gazed with the greatest interest on the wonderful designs that adorned the arabesque tapestry. He had done this yesterday and the day before, but was not tired of them. Every thing was so quiet and lonely. Had it not always been so? He pressed his head, and thought. Yes; now he understood. The roar of cannon and crack of guns were the last things he had heard, and now all was still. Where was he, then? He looked around. The red stripes of the carpet—O God! was that blood? Then he knew that for long days he had stood in the midst of bloodshed, and had seen nothing else. Where? When? The scales fell from his eyes. He had left the battlefield, and a whole church full of wounded had expected him. Why had he not hastened to them? Slowly and gradually the interim gleamed up and unfolded its pictures. Yes; he had been in a swamp, and he had prayed there. Prayed? What then? Unconsciously he folded his hands and said softly:

"Dear Lord, I would thee love,
That I may go to heaven above."

Beside the bed, unobserved by Wulf, a beautiful woman was standing, watching the sick one with anxious eyes. She must control herself. This was the order, that his first consciousness might not be disturbed. Now she could restrain herself no longer. She drew the curtains back, and kneeling at his side took the beloved hand in hers, and fervently said: "Amen!"

"Sibylla!" cried the sick one.

"Wulf! my own Wulf!" responded the faithful wife.

Twice had her husband been restored to her! The kind old physician entered the room softly some minutes later, to learn if his patient slept, it was so still in the room; but when he saw Sibylla sitting on the bed, pressing her husband's dear head to her breast, both silent, but with eloquent eyes, he withdrew, and said to himself: "Such a reunion of joy and thanksgiving and love, between husband and wife, must be sacred to both." So do we also think, and therefore leave them alone.

XXXII.

"How far may we go on in sin?
  How long will God forbear?
Where does hope end, and where begin
  The confines of despair?
An answer from the skies is sent:
  Ye that from God depart,
While it is called to-day repent,
  And harden not your heart."

—J. A. ALEXANDER.

Wulf was not able to return to the front, and it was some time before his kind host would permit him to go home, where he and Sibylla re-entered with grateful hearts.

Only a few weeks had elapsed between his going and returning, but how changed the aspect of Germany! Where fearful determination and well-grounded anxiety had prevailed, there was now the established prospect of the fulfillment of long-cherished hopes; hopes which Germany had almost despaired of realization—a united country.

A wonderful war! Truly blessed of God through prayers and waiting! It is true the national glory which was born in those days had a dark, sad background. There was no family out of whose circle one or another of their dearest ones had not been taken. Yes; it had been purchased at great cost; but if the impression which this glory made upon our people shall remain, then truly the cost was not too great.

Conviction, that noble attribute, which had heretofore slumbered, now awakened and aroused, had also its effect upon Wulf when he was able to resume his practice. He had new pleasure in

serving the poor and unknown, as well as the rich and distinguished; and he also brought new power to the work. One day he entered his wife's room with a very serious face, and said:

"Have you ever seen or heard any thing of Dr. Uhlhart?"

"No; what do you know of him?"

Sibylla trembled, for she had always dreaded a meeting between the two men, as Wulf had never been able to conceal a certain kind of chivalrous paroxysm of defense whenever his enemy was recalled.

"He is here in this house," replied Wulf.

"What is he doing here? Certainly no good," exclaimed Sibylla.

"I think there is as little to fear from him now, as there was once good ground for expecting much. He is sick."

It is singular how that one word "sick" can allay, if not wholly conquer, all rancor in a woman's heart.

"How did you ascertain it?" Sibylla inquired with interest.

"Very simply. The janitor asked me if I would call to see a gentleman on the fourth floor, in a small room. He had not seen him for several days, and then he was sick. I climbed up there and found Uhlhart."

"Did he recognize you?"

"No; he has a fever, and is very ill. I have engaged a nurse to take care of him, as removal would be out of the question. Every thing possible at present has been done. I do not understand; it looks very poor up there. I always thought he was rich."

"He was not rich, but he had an income. Still, in the extravagant life he lived, he expended much and worked very little. Besides, perhaps, he has been as unfortunate in speculations as those which ruined Herr Bolton. But I should like to know what reduced him to such a condition, and brought him here to this house."

Wulf did not know, but we may lift the curtain and see how the stone rolled to the precipice with ever-increasing velocity.

Uhlhart had really never had any youth. He had early experienced all the various forms of vice and immorality in which the present century is rife. Without the power to govern himself, his unbridled passions led him to the usual end of all early ripened youth. After Herr Bolton's death, he made a momentary halt on the steep way—the catastrophe had been so sudden and

unexpected; but his awakened conscience soon slept again peacefully, through his sophistries, and to gain Sibylla once more was within reach of possibilities. He knew very well she would never be his willingly. What could overcome her? Perhaps the force of circumstances. Perhaps her proud spirit was crushed. Then, too, she did not seem to him quite so desirable, when he learned nothing had been saved from the wreck at Larkow, and she was earning her bread in a distant place. Uhlhart needed money now—much money.

But it was characteristic of his obstinacy to continue the chase. He had long detested work. His health was impaired, and it was much more comfortable to speculate with his little inheritance. But most of his ventures had been failures, and he was finally obliged to gnash his teeth and confess himself to be a beggar. What should he attempt now?

He had at times been intimately connected with a Jewish author who had rejected all religious and moral faith. This man familiarized Uhlhart with the literature of the day, and in return he furnished the Hebrew with newspaper articles in sympathy with his views. These essays were well paid for; they were as brilliant as they were poisonous. This kind of congenial authorship attracted Uhlhart. It enabled him to send through this channel into the world all the venom and gall of his nature. He wrote on the social question, men's rights, the Church, parsons, Humboldt's Kosmos, Protestantism; and every thing emanating from his pen was black—blacker than the ink with which he wrote.

Wulf took the greatest care of the unfortunate man. Uhlhart must have led a miserable life. In frightful mockery he had written this device upon the tottering table which served as a desk: "Learn to do without, O friend; defy pain and death, and no god in Olympus shall feel more free than thou."

It was not long before it became evident to Wulf that Uhlhart's recovery was beyond hope.

"Shall I go to him?" said Sibylla; "he might be relieved if I spoke a kind word to him."

"My dear, it is useless. He recognizes no one, and his language uttered in delirium I would spare you from hearing," replied Wulf, earnestly.

"Do you think he will never recover consciousness?"

Wulf looked doubtful.

"O, that would be so dreadful!" cried Sibylla. "No, no; that can not be. When I think that we played together as children—and now, if I could only help him!"

Of a want of external comforts Uhlhart had, at least, very little to complain when he became conscious. The fever left him only to give place to the weakness of death. Wulf was glad that he

gave no sign of displeasure in his recognition. Then he called Sibylla, who approached the bedside.

"Dr. Uhlhart, is it any comfort to you for me to say I forgive you all, and pray that God may also forgive you?"

The dying man made no reply; but when Sibylla took his hand she believed there was a slight pressure from him.

Soon the wild struggle of death ensued. Wulf and Sibylla remained with him until the last. Beneath their prayers he passed away, and Sibylla's hand closed his eyes forever.

XXXIII.

"'Not as I will!' the sound grows sweet
Each time the words my lips repeat;
'Not as I will!' the darkness feel
More safe than light, when this thought steals
Like whispered voice, to calm and bless
All unrest and all loneliness.
'Not as I will!' because the One
Who loved us first and best has gone
Before us on the road, and still
For us must all His love fulfill
'Not as we will!'"

—H. H. JACKSON.

It is a joyous, happy picture that is unveiled to the reader now. Golden peace reigns in the country and dwells in every heart. Sibylla, the rosy house-wife, with beaming eyes, sits by the cradle of her year-old baby. She sleeps so sweetly; she lies there so lovely in her unconscious beauty, that the happy mother can not take her eyes away. Once she had wavered in the decision as to which of her two ideals was supreme, the Apollo Belvedere or the Venus de Medici. Now she has known for a long time that her little Ingeborg is far more beautiful than both pieces of sculpture put together. "How can any one be so foolish?" she thinks, and again bends over the sleeping child, whose rest has something sacred in it. Steps approached. One would never have believed Wulf could walk so lightly; but he has accustomed himself to it "for baby's sake."

"Why, Wulf! I thought you were at the concert," said Sibylla, somewhat reproachfully. "How can you miss that splendid oratorio?"

Wulf has become woefully embarrassed.

"Wulf, Wulf! I fear you did not even have the intention to go."

"Well, well; never mind," Wulf plucked up courage to reply. "I would rather hear Ingeborg's 'um, um;' it sounds more beautiful to me than all this scientific musical structure."

"O, you never had much understanding for art," lamented Sibylla, roguishly.

"But a great mind for taste and beauty," interrupted Wulf, embracing his wife warmly. "I have always been able to distinguish between the beautiful and the ugly!"

Sibylla shakes her finger, and adroitly changes the conversation. "You know we are to have a visit this evening from the Kahrings and Theodora. Are you too tired to see them?"

"No, I am not tired, although my day's work has been a serious one, with many experiences."

Wulf was silent.

Sibylla approached him with questioning eyes, and he continued:

"O Sibylla, there is so much misery in the world! If I were only a physician who could make every body well—well, above all things, spiritually."

Ingeborg now awakened. Sibylla lifted her, and placed her in her husband's arms.

"There now, Wulf, you are at home, and must not have gloomy thoughts. Ingeborg, where is papa?"

The child knew him, and reached her little arms to embrace him; and when Wulf, with one arm encircling the mother and the other holding his baby, presses them to his heart, his eyes reflect the evidence that in these four walls he is the happiest man in the world.

Just then Theodora enters. She belongs here, and feels perfectly at home with the Ericksens. She is cordially greeted. Even little Ingeborg seems to recognize her, for she claps her pretty hands so eagerly as if she would perform her little exercise.

"Now the worker will appear in her most beautiful character," exclaims Wulf, laughing. "See, Theodora; even Ingeborg can not escape your influence. As soon as she sees you she begins her '*Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man!*'"

"She does not degenerate," replies Theodora, smilingly, at the same time handing Wulf a small piece of paper.

"Six, seven, eight only," says Wulf, cheerily. "Theodora, the condition of health among the poor is now very good. To-morrow, early, I shall visit them all. But how is it with old Weber? Still no change?"

"No, only he wants to see you very much. He thinks when you visit him sunshine enters his room."

Sibylla is silent; but she thinks how wonderful it is that she and old Weber are of the same mind.

"Theodora," she says, "I am ashamed of myself whenever I see you, to think how much you do."

"Very little," replies Theodora; "but there must be a change; there is so much work in the world. I have to-day, for the first time, realized that I have never really labored with might and main—never made one real sacrifice."

"Our outward life," interposes Wulf, earnestly, "never corresponds to the demands of the inner life. Willing and doing are not completely equalized, alas!"

In the evening we are with a small circle of the Ericksens' friends in their cozy room. The table is simply spread, with every thing necessary for an inviting supper. The tea-kettle sings a welcome, and Sibylla does not permit it to do all the pleasant service. The conversation is lively and bright, while deeper interests are not forgotten. One receives in giving, and receiving one gives again. All are unanimous in the belief that the hand must help the arm; all know that personal, loving diligence alone can ripen the seed of the word, the fruit of the deed.

"You always have such underground inclinations," says Arnold Von Kahring, who has resided at Berlin during the past year, in comic provocation to Wulf. "As a boy you searched after the moles in their cellars, and now you are after the poor just the same. At that time you killed your objects of love, now you raise them to life; that is the only difference."

"Yes, Arnold," interjects Theodora, laughing, "and he also had a habit in those days of rescuing people; for example, when he pulled you out of the water."

"That is true," responded Arnold. Thereupon he relates the story of that unhappy casualty. "And it is my misfortune," he adds, jocosely, "that I must be grateful now, and he presses me into all kinds of service. It is terrible! I am, for instance, already guardian for over one hundred and sixty-four children!"

"Don't go over a bridge this evening, dear," says Arnold's wife, in playful warning; "you will break a bone!"

"I know a person," adds Sibylla, "who spent an hour with me yesterday, and said to me that I should not regret my husband's undertaking so much charitable work outside of his practice, and this very person begged to be permitted to share such service."

"That is just the worst part of it," retorts Arnold. "That kind of men," pointing to Wulf. "can make us do any thing; for one must keep in the good graces of the doctor. One may get sick himself, you know, and—"

"Then he forbids him to talk," interrupts Wulf. "But just here while the conversation turns upon it and we are all together, let me heartily thank you, Arnold, for all your faithful assistance. There are not many men who have given their heart and time so wholly to this personal labor of love."

All are earnest, and for a moment there is silence.

"When shall we all, husbands and wives," said one present, "become conscious that we have, in and through our respective callings, higher duties to fulfill? No calling is so unprepossessing and poor that it may not be illuminated with heavenly luster through love and service; no calling so great and rich that humble endeavors to do good can not intensify its glory."

"Not all men and women," replied Arnold Von Kahring; "can do equally. Many have household cares and business duties which deter them from outside work; but still they can fulfill higher interests in a measure, and reap rich blessings."

"And perhaps many," added Wulf, "who have no especial life-work, if they could be shown avenues of service, would gladly embrace them, and learn for the first time what it is to have a noble aim and true happiness."

"I must testify," said Arnold's wife, "that in my experience time and strength follow the real desire to work."

"Yes; 'where there's a will, there's a way,'" concluded Theodora, impressively.

We now take leave of our friends. They have earnest desires, and will therefore find the right way.

Theodora lives with her brother. A cheerful, sunny room is her home; and although she is not entirely alone, she has perfect liberty. She wears no deaconess's dress, and yet she is one—a true helper.

A pleasant smile illumines her face this evening. She is thinking of Sibylla, whom she loves as dearly as though she were her own child.

"She was always better than her word," she says, softly. "I know that, among all of us who spoke this evening, she will do most." Theodora is happy, for she forgets self.

Albertina Von Kahring says to her husband: "What a beautiful home the Ericksens' is! I always feel there that outward good—call it riches if you will, be they great as they may—can not alone give true happiness, and that love, joy, and peace proceed from a very different source."

"The worst of it is,"' says Arnold, "that the spirit of the house is contagious. Contagion! that is the last thing we should desire to take from a physician's house!"

His tones were in comic severity, but his wife's glance interpreted their meaning.

Upon the balcony of their dwelling Wulf and Sibylla are sitting later in the evening. His arm embraces her, and she leans her head on his breast. They are silent. But whoever looks into their eyes may read therein: "We are in the haven. Many misfortunes may yet befall us, but we are happy and nothing can wrest this happiness from us."