

Till that time, it had been almost impossible, as the ruins, which had been thoroughly drenched with the water used in extinguishing the fire, had been frozen in one solid mass, and covered with snow. He, himself, was constantly present at the work; and many useful articles, and among other things, a good deal of molten silver were found. At length appeared, contrary to all expectation, the small iron safe, in which he had kept his bonds, and other papers connected with them. The floor of the apartment, and with it, the safe, had fallen at the time of the fire; but such a quantity of ruins must have fallen with it, and secured it from the flames, that the papers were not destroyed, but merely browned, yet still so as to be perfectly legible.

Signor Bellini at once laid the bond, and young Fein's autograph letter before the court. Fein was summoned. As soon as he saw the papers, he became deadly pale, trembled, and could no longer deny the debt. The court ordered him to pay the principal, with interests and costs; and, moreover, for the pre-determined perjury which he had proposed to commit, he was sentenced to several years imprisonment.

Now, this very Mr. Fein was the man who, in order, as he said, to improve himself in business, had obtained permission to attend several hours every day, unremunerated, in Mr. von Walther's establishment. He was a finished flatterer: he was always neatly and becomingly dressed, and was very skilful and uncommonly industrious in his business; and this was the very man who suggested to my good master the false suspicions against me, and got himself chosen book-keeper in my stead.

When Mr. von Walther learned the villainies of the perjured Fein, the truth flashed upon him at once. He hastened to the magistrates, and got an order to search in Fein's house for the stolen silver and copper coins. They were accordingly found in his writing-desk; and thus the perjurer was proved to be, moreover, a thief and a calumniator, and the term of his imprisonment was prolonged.

For two days I had not left my house, and, as I never had any visitors, I knew nothing of the detection of Fein's perjury, or the discovery of the coins; when, on a sudden, Mr. von Walther ran with open arms into my little garret, and, with tears in his eyes, cried out—

"You are innocent! Fein has deceived me scandalously. He had, in the first instance, stolen the silver and copper coins; and, then, as I now see clearly, conveyed the gold pieces privately from my cabinet into your trunk, in order to ruin you in my eyes. I was too credulous and hasty; and, indeed, if the alleged theft had not wounded my darling passion, the loss would not have annoyed

me so much, and I would have considered the matter more coolly. But when a man's heart is engrossed by any inordinate passion, his reason easily becomes the toy of the first clever designing cheat whom he meets, or he even becomes his own deceiver. I have done you a grievous injury. Will you forgive me?"

We embraced one another with tears:

"Come with me, this instant," continued he. "You are now, if you will only consent to enter the service of one who has injured you, my first book-keeper. Fein is arrested, and will be put in gaol to-day."

I expressed my astonishment, and asked, how Fein's villainy had come to light.

"So you have not yet heard," said von Walther, "the scandalous frauds, and enormous treachery of this villain."

He told me the whole history—the denial of the debt, the intended perjury, and the stealing of the coins, which had been found in his desk. Many a time I exclaimed: "Is it possible? Fein? Has he acted so scandalously to me? I always thought he was my friend, and a very pious man. He was always most friendly with me, and was never without some pious saying or other on his tongue; and I never went into his room without finding a book of piety in his hand!"

"Yes, yes," said von Walther; "so did I always find him too; and his table was always covered with prayer-books and pious tracts. The rascal expected to marry my daughter Amelia, and sought to enlist my good will by his industry, my daughter's by his attention to dress and his politeness, and my wife's by his affected piety. The hypocrisy which led him to practise all his villainies, under the show of piety, was his worst and most damnable crime; but God has unmasked and punished the godless hypocrite. But come with me now—every one in my house is delighted to see you coming back again!"

He took my arm, and brought me to his house. The story had meanwhile become public, and every one congratulated me warmly. When we reached the house, the mother and daughter, the clerks and porters, the cook and kitchen-maid, were standing at the door, and welcomed me with the greatest exultation. It was past dinner-hour, and Madam von Walther expressed her regret, that, on so joyous a day, there had not been time to prepare an entertainment suitable to the occasion. Mr. von Walther, however, produced his best Rhenish from the cellar, and gave us in a full bumper, the toast, "Honesty is the best policy."

A bustle was suddenly heard in the street. We ran to the window; and saw, advancing in procession, bedizened with all his rich ornaments and