

"You know him then?" interrupted Ulric, with animation.

"Ah! I knew I would make him listen," said the old woman to herself. "I am truly sorry for you, my dear Ulric!" she continued aloud; "to my thinking you look better than your rival, even in that ploughman-like dress of yours; but then, he possesses an estate, and a castle! A castle, Ulric! is a talisman that has immense influence, not only on the minds of fathers, but on the hearts of daughters. You do not know what wonders the idea of becoming a baroness may work."

"But who, for heaven's sake! is this rival?"

"Do you not know him?"

"No! no! Do not torture me thus, my good Catherine."

"It is young Albert De Vorn."

"What! that rich and handsome young nobleman?"

"Well! now that you remind me of it, his figure and face are both uncommonly fine. His purse, his person, and his title, are enough to turn the head even of the most sensible girl."

Ulric heard no more. He tore himself from the grasp of the malicious old beldame, walked rapidly out of the village, and was not seen till two hours afterwards, when he joined his friend George at the Golden Sun. The next day he had disappeared, and a thousand conjectures ran through the village, as to his sudden flight.

George Arnold had also quitted the village, and had handed to the Frankfort banker 1800 florins, as the price of the 12th series of tickets, all of which he had disposed of.

Eight days after the scenes we have just encountered, the whole town of Frankfort was in commotion, on occasion of the drawing of the famous lottery of the Castle of Uternheim. The fortunate possessor of the castle could not, however, be known till the succeeding week, as the first operation consisted only in determining from which of the series the winning number should be drawn.

The spiteful and ill-natured character of Catherine Keller had led her into Frankfort that morning for the following reasons: A few minutes after Ulric had left her in the abrupt manner we have mentioned, she was passed by Farmer Wagner, who went straight to the Golden Sun, unconscious that he was closely watched by his observant neighbour. A quarter of an hour afterwards he re-appeared at the door, respectfully accompanied thereto by a man, in whom the spy at once recognised the orator of the public square. When these two had separated, the farmer found himself unexpectedly accosted by old Catherine, and thus caught, as it were, in the fact, Maurice could not deny that he had purchased some

tickets for the lottery, in the hope of obtaining a dowry for his daughter, that should make her a fit match for Albert de Vorn. His charge of secrecy was so strict, however, that not even she dared to infringe it during the intervening week; but on the morning of the eventful day, she set out for Frankfort, in the charitable hope of being the first to tell her neighbour that he had lost.

She was disappointed; the number 12 issued from the urn. It was from this series that a further trial was to select the fortunate ticket, and it may be remembered that this was the series with the disposal of which George had been entrusted.

Maurice Wagner had therefore, to the great grief of old Catherine, acquired a most favourable chance for the prize, and she returned to the village as quietly as possible, with the determination that her neighbour should hear nothing of his good fortune from her. But it happened, that almost the first person she met in the village, was the very one to whom, of all others, her news would prove most disagreeable, and she could not resist the temptation of imparting it.

"Let me be the first to congratulate you, my dear!" was her address to Clara, "on the prospect of having a rich and noble husband; yes, my child! fortune will perhaps render you worthy of the hand of Albert De Vorn. They say he loves you—after a manner—and would ask your hand were he not deterred by your poverty; for, after all, I must allow that he is rather fond of money. That, they say, was the only obstacle, and if, as we have reason to hope, fortune sufficiently favours your father, the high-born Albert de Vorn will be only too happy to receive the hand of the richest heiress in Germany."

Clara listened to this harangue, trembling and stupefied, and when Catherine had more clearly explained her "good fortune," she ran home to her chamber, there to weep in secret, and form vows against the fortune that threatened to elevate her above Ulric.

Maurice had, in the mean time, learned his success, and entered the house, transported with joy, and unable to contain his delight.

"Thou shalt be a great lady yet, Marguerite!" he exclaimed, striking his fist on the table beside which she was sitting.

"What?" exclaimed his astonished wife, rising from her chair as she spoke.

"A castle, a barony, basins, fountains, splendid parks, vast stables, attendants without number, feasts every day, game for the asking! Come, Marguerite! let us be merry! Run down to the market and buy a couple of partridges; and we will drink a cup of Rhenish in honor of my triumph!"