

head forester. The forester was about to begin, when he was again interrupted by Agatha. "Dear mother," she said, "take the baby; it is comfortable now. How cold it was when it came in. I must run and make it some food, for I know it is hungry. See how it turns its little head and opens its mouth just as my brother used to do. Oh, mother, do not refuse to be kind to it; remember Anthony. Then placing the baby on her mother's knee, she ran down to the cellar for milk to make the soup. Dame Sabine took the little one up in her arms and covered it with kisses; then she begged her husband not to delay his story any longer, that she might know something about its origin. "Dear wife, it would be impossible to tell you all you wish to know. I saw this poor child in the forest, alone and abandoned, and as it cannot talk, I could not learn anything about it. I shall endeavor to give you an idea of the day's proceedings, hoping that you are not angry with me for bringing the child home. You know how the brigands are devastating our forests, and giving such trouble to the guards of the frontier. Very often they attack places by night; and, sometimes my comrades have to pay the villagers to help disperse these wretches. The director of the customs was informed that a noted band were about to attack three places on the Bavarian frontier. This expedition was to be made on Christmas Eve, as they thought that all the people would be at church or praying at home, and therefore would not be on the lookout. "Oh! the fiends," cried Sabine, "thus to profane Christmas Eve. If they do not want to pray, let them leave the others who want to do so alone." "I am sure," said George, "that they did not want to interrupt us; as they would have been better pleased had we been in church. Of course, the roads were all carefully guarded, but there were not enough men; that is why the director sent for me, as he wished me to accompany him on this expedition. As soon as I arrived, they placed me in command of a small body of men. We searched the forest thoroughly, and it brought us within the limits of Neumarch; at this particular place several taverns are found, which

are more frequented by brigands and poachers than by any honest people. The director had now come up with us; also Sebastrian and the foresters of Bar, with their men. Here we investigated thoroughly, but failed to find anything which would confirm our suspicions, but we could see nothing, and were just beginning to think that we had received false information. Still, we wanted to be on the safe side, so we decided to hide ourselves in the thickets that lined the highway, and here await the brigands. They could not possibly cross the frontier without being seen. We had been posted thus for about an hour, and were almost numb with cold. Our chief, however, exhorted us to hold out for a while longer. Another hour passed. Suddenly Castor, whose scent is keen, as you know, gave the alarm and became so restless that we could hardly keep him. Sebastrian, whose eyes are as keen as Castor's scent, told us that he saw three men and a woman coming. We allowed them to advance quite near, and then called to them to halt; for, if they moved another step we should fire. Without awaiting to hear any more, they threw down their things and took to their heels. We tried to follow them, but the head forester missed his footing and fell into a drift, with several of the men. Besides the frost had spoiled the rifles, and only one was fit for use, so that when we had helped the forester and his companions out, the thieves had fled, in time to give the others a warning. However, we took the booty, which consisted of several bags, filled with rich stuffs, and a casket of Bohemian pearls. These things the director divided among the men. I refused to accept my portion, as I knew the goods had been stolen, and God never blessed the fruit of theft. I feel very happy to think that this encounter passed without any blood being shed. We were just going home, when Castor began howling, and running back into the thicket, trying in every way to attract our attention. The head forester went over to see what it was, and after a few moments returned with a basket, and said "here is more booty," saying this, he raised the lid of the basket. O, Sabine! you should have seen frozen to death. All of us were as much