

*THE SAINT OF THE DRAGON'S DALE*

"And you say your name is —"

"Ludwig of the Harz;" but again the Graf winced, and the wondering bystanders knew not what to hope or what to fear. They saw Jerome's stern face growing all grey and pale, yet still he questioned.

"You were three years a prisoner at Hems, then returned direct to Germany?"

"No; I searched for my father. I had heard he had entered a convent when I was taken, but I could not find him. He is surely dead."

The Graf was retreating step by step; the hermit followed him. They could see Jerome was nigh to falling, and that his great will bore him up.

"And was that father a man swift to wrath and swift to strike?"

"Yes; but, ah! dear Christ, so was I!" and now the Graf was more ashen than the hermit.

"And did you and your father part in love or hate? Speak for the fear of God!"

"He cursed me. He is dead. At the Judgment Bar he will rise up against me. I cannot bear it. God can forgive me; never he."