

of the young man who had lent him the clothes with which he effected his escape, and ordered him to go immediately and bring his unknown deliverer to the castle. After this, he went to the parlour amidst the acclamations of the people. One would have said that he was a general returning from a triumph over the enemies of his country. The count asked for something to eat, and then related the history of his captivity and deliverance.

"I cannot," said he, "complain of my treatment in prison; I was well fed, properly served by a good servant boy, whom I could only reproach for his silence, because to every question that I asked him, sometimes about one thing, sometimes about another, he always answered, 'I know nothing about it.' But what saddened my life was my ignorance of your fate. In vain I made every effort to obtain the newspapers, and to know what was going on in the world; I could never succeed. I pass over in silence a number of things that are, as it were, episodes in my history, to come to the principal circumstance, that of my escape. For a long time I had observed, that after relieving the posts, at six o'clock in the morning, the soldiers who were on guard at the entrance, went with the sergeant to a tavern where they drank brandy. It seemed that this was customary. Then the servants of the prison swept the yards, which, as you may suppose did not take them long. They are all dressed nearly the same as I am, with short vest, green hat and blue pantaloons. My clothes began to wear out; I asked for others; and, as if in a passion, and to gratify a whim, I said, that since I was a prisoner, I ask only the dress of the servants of the prison. They thought that I ridiculed them, took me at my word, and I received the livery of the servants. I now meditated my design. During the hours of walking, I observed that the stones of the wall which surrounds the prison, were badly joined; time and rain had destroyed the cement that connected them, and I persuaded myself one day, that if I should try, it would not be difficult, with a little address and courage, to gain the top of the wall but I did not know what I would meet with on the other side of the wall, whether a ditch or a street.—I asked my servant, who answered me with his eternal 'I don't know.' I regretted that I had asked him that question, because I feared that he might tell it: it seemed, however, that he made no use of it, as I did not observe that there was any unusual precautions taken concerning me. I then began to reflect seriously on my plan of escape.—I persuaded myself that the wall was also sloping on the other side which would facilitate my descent, and my resolution was taken. The day before the execution of my plan, I told the servant that not having slept well for the last two nights, and this was true, I would request him not to come

the next day into my room, until eight o'clock in the morning; he promised and went away. I arose at five o'clock, and finding that the night watches had retired, I made a cord of my bed clothes, and tied it to one of the bars of my window. I had some trouble to pass through the bars, which luckily were not very close, and let myself down; then I ascended the wall; and God giving me courage, I gained without much difficulty the top. Here I was mounted on the old wall. Looking around me I perceived no one; I then descended with the same ease. Behold me once more free. You may suppose that I did not wait long to see what was going on within the prison; but having made myself certain that no one had seen me, I took the road that led to my country. However, I was not without uneasiness. The time for sweeping had not yet come when I escaped, and if I had waited till the yard had been swept, I would have exposed myself to meet with the servants. I could then have chosen only this opportunity, which was indeed favorable for me, but which also must disclose my escape, as the sweepers would necessarily see my bedclothes hanging to the bars of my cell. I made all possible speed to the frontier, and even there I did not yet think myself safe, knowing the boldness of the enemy. I seemed already to hear the tramp of the horses of the soldiers, who were, indeed, in pursuit of me, and violated a second time our territory. At that moment, I met a young man to whom I told my troubles, and whom I begged to lend me a suit of his clothes. He drew from his Portmanteau this wig and morning gown, gave me his hat and cane, and said as he left me: "May God be your helper and guide." His prayer was heard, for the Lord has evidently protected me; the soldiers coming up with me soon after.—I sat down under a tree, and, leaning my head on the palm of my hands, I began to cough; they were completely deceived, and beginning to fear for themselves, they turned back without seizing me. Having arrived at the village of Baldenheim, I related everything to the burgomaster, who collected the peasants, and I hastened in this carriage to come hither and throw myself into the arms of my wife and children."

The children lovingly kissed their good father, and the countess at length pressed him to take off the livery of his disgrace, and dress himself according to his rank. The count assented. "To-morrow," said he, "we shall go to the capital; I wish to announce my escape in person, and to present myself to the prince in the same dress in which you saw me on my arrival."

"But will he receive you?" asked the countess, laughing.

"I hope so, my dear."