

pearance, she possessed, under all circumstances, a remarkable strength of mind and an unshaken calmness which no external events could disturb. She loved Felicitas with every fiber of her heart, and imparted to the young girl all her knowledge, the whole treasure of her thoroughly pure and healthful views of life, but her past was as much sealed to day as it had been nine years before. And Felicitas, with thoughtless haste, had touched this carefully guarded portion of her life—she bitterly reproached herself for it.

"Forgive me, aunt!" she pleaded. How gentle were the beseeching tones of the young girl Frau Hellwig had called "an obstinate creature," "a stick of wood."

The old mam'selle passed her hand over her eyes.

"Hush, child, you did nothing wrong but I—I am talking foolishly, like an old woman!" she said, faintly. "Yes, I have grown old, old and feeble. Once I could shut my tongue behind my teeth, and keep guard over it—but that time is past—I ought to lay me down for the last sleep."

She still held the little shallow box in her hands, as if trying to find courage to execute, without delay, the death-sentence she had just pronounced upon it. But, after a few minutes, she hastily restored it to its former place and locked the cabinet. The action seemed to restore her self-command. She went to the round table that stood near the cabinet, where she had been counting the money, and as if nothing had happened, added two more thalers to their glittering companions.

"Now we will wrap the money in paper," she said to Felicitas—her voice still betrayed repressed emotion—"and slip it into the pink cap—it will thus contain a blessing even before the little head is put into it. And Heinrich must be at his post punctually at nine o'clock this evening—don't forget."

The old mam'selle had her peculiarities—she shunned the light, even in her deeds of charity. Like the bat, she became active at night, and when the streets were empty and the eyes of men drooped wearily, visited many an abode of poverty. For years Heinrich had been her right hand, of whose acts the left was ignorant. He carried the old Mam'selle's alms to the homes of the poor as slyly and invisibly as though for such occasions, he had the power of slipping out of his clumsy form, and many in the town who believed the most monstrous stories about her lived upon her charity. This was certainly a peculiarity that would have been almost incomprehensible to those pious souls who devoutly fulfill the scriptural command: "Let your light shine!"

While Aunt Cordula was wrapping up the money with scrupulous care, Felicitas opened the glass door leading out upon the balcony. It was the end of May. Oh, much-praised Spring, how few know the manner of thy coming in the land of Thuringia! Thou art no fair haired, joyous child of the South, whose blood courses through the veins like wine, and in whose footsteps spring forth orange and myrtle blossoms. Majesty crowns thy brow and on thy lips rests the calm smile of thoughtful creation. Thy colors are mixed carefully, and thy pictures are painted with slow deliberation. We follow the strokes of thy brush with silent pleasure, they are not bold and daring, but lovely and full of grace. The brownish-green down which clothes the breast of the wooded mountain, while its head is still encircled by a crown of snow, the delicate green net-work of grass and weeds that covers the brown clods of earth, and the withered foliage of last year's growth still clinging to meadow and hill-side—all are gradually and noiselessly transformed by thy touch to the young leaves of May, snow drops, and clusters of violets, which, like a careful gardener, thou dost first produce ere lavishing thy guarded treasure of

color on hedges, groves, and fields. And the breath of thy mouth is that bracing air which steels the nerves and muscles of the child of Thuringia, makes his heart open to the influences of song, and persistent in clinging to poetic superstitions, upholds his sense of right, his tendency to antagonism, gives him his artless, loyal nature, and—his delicious bluntness.

The green stripes of the fields of young grain were already seen stretching, like broad ribbons, from the verge of the forest down into the valley. The youngest cherry-tree, as well as the gnarled wild pear-tree, stood adorned with snowy blossoms—an equally useful head upon each trunk—an impartiality of Nature man vainly longs to share. Hyacinths, lilies of the valley, and tulips were blooming on the top of the railing of the balcony, and at each side of the glass door large syringa and snow-ball bushes were growing in tubs.

Felicitas moved the round table into the inclosed portion of the balcony and placed the old mam'selle's comfortable arm-chair beside it. Then she spread a clean napkin on the table and made the coffee. The unfinished sewing was laid by, and when the brass coffee-pot began to hiss and bubble, sending forth a delicious odor of mocha, the old mam'selle sat comfortably in her big arm chair, gazing dreamily out at the world beneath, basking in the bright sunshine of spring.

Felicitas has taken up her work again.

"Aunt," she said, emphasizing every word, "he is coming to-morrow."

"So I see my child, by the paper. Among the items of news from Bonn it is stated that 'Professor Hellwig will spend two months in Thuringia for the benefit of his health.' He has become a famous man, Fay!"

"His fame has been easy to win. He knows nothing of the torture that can be caused by sympathy in the performance of duty. He cuts into the bodies or the souls of his fellow-mortals with equal pleasure."

The old mam'selle looked up at Felicitas in astonishment; this inexpressible bitterness of tone was new to her.

"Beware of being unjust, my child!" she said, slowly, after a moment's pause, with the utmost gentleness.

Felicitas looked up quickly—at that moment her brown eyes were almost black.

"I should not know how to begin to think more kindly of him," she replied. "He has sinned heavily against me, and I know I should never regret any misfortune that might befall him, and if I could help him to win any blessing I would not lift my finger to do it."

"Fay—"

"Yes, aunt, it is the truth. I have always brought a cheerful face here, because I did not wish to embitter the few brief moments of our intercourse. You have often thought me at peace, when a storm of emotion was raging in my soul. Let yourself be daily, hourly trampled into the dust, hear your parents reviled as exiles from the mercy of God, and every fancied error of your own denounced as a heritage from them, feel a continual aspiration for a higher life and be thrust down with sneering laughter to the ranks of the ignorant, see your tormentors wear a halo of piety and crush out your very soul in the name of God—and if you can bear all this quietly, if every drop of blood in your veins does not rebel, if you can still forgive, it is not the patient toleration of an angel, but the cowardly slavish submission of a weak nature, that deserves to be trodden under foot!" (TO BE CONTINUED.)

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