

and we will roll under the table! We must use, as my venerated father used to observe, but not abuse." Then, placing with care the basket outside, he closed carefully and locked the gate, put the keys in his pocket, and took the way to the first cave. As he went along he completed the basket with a bottle of old rum which he found apart from the others intrinched between two pillars of the vault, then he went up the stairs waiting for a minute to lock the doors. On coming near the vestibule he heard the bustle of making cakes and fixing the fire; he stopped in the entry on the sill of the kitchen and cried:

"Here are the bottles! On this occasion, Katel, I expect you to surpass yourself, that you shall make a dinner. But, a dinner!"

"Rest contented, sir," answered the old cuisinier, "you will not be any less satisfied with me on this occasion than you have been on any other for the last twenty years."

"I believe, it—but, then, one can do well, very well, and incomparably well."

"I will do all in my power," said the old man, "and you can ask no more."

Fritz Kobus, then, seeing on the table wood hens, a superior pike rounded in the tub, dainty trout, for frying, and a superb pate de fois gras thought all would pass off well.

"Very well," he said, "very well, indeed; that will do, ha! ha! ha! we shall laugh interiorly!"

Instead of going to his ordinary dining room he turned to the right and set down his basket before a high door, put a key in the lock and opened it. It was "The Gala Hall of the Kobuses." No one dined there but in great state. The curtains of the three high windows of the room were closed; you could see in the half shadow ancient furniture—yellow lounges, a great chimney of white marble—long walls with great frames covered with white muslin.

Fritz first opened the windows and drew aside the curtains. The hall, in its old, oak carving, was dignified and almost solemn.

You could see at a glance that good eating had descended there from father to son.

He then took off the covers of the portraits; one was the portrait of Nicholas Kobus, counselor of Frederick William in the year of our Lord 1715.

Monsieur the counselor wore an immense Louis XIV peruke and a chestnut coat with large sleeves turned over to the elbows; the bosom, fine lace; his figure was large, erect and dignified. Another portrait represented Franz Sepel Kobus—ensign in the regiment of dragons of Leiningen—with sky blue uniform, a surtout of silver, a white scarf on the left shoulder, powdered hair and chapeau set on the ear. He appeared to be about 20 years of age, and as fresh as a bouquet of eglantine. The third portrait represented Zachariah Kobus—a justice of the peace—in a black robe. He held in his hand a snuff box and wore a peruke with a rat cue.

These three portraits, of the same size, were large and solid paintings. One could see that the Kobuses had always had sufficient money to pay artists properly to send their physiognomies down to posterity.

Fritz had features in common with them all—that is to say, blue eyes, a broad flat nose, a round chin, broken with a dimple, a wide mouth, and a satisfied expression. On the right side against the wall was the portrait of a woman, Kobus' grandmother—fresh, laughing, her half opened mouth showing as beautiful white teeth as one could imagine; her hair raised on a cushion, and her form enveloped in a velvet robe of sky blue, bordered with rose. In this picture Kobus' grandfather took the greatest pride, and, after seeing it, it was unaccountable that the grandson had such little inclination to marry. All these portraits, framed in heavy gold moldings, produced a great effect in the lofty hall.

On the door there was a relief representing love carried away in a car by three doves. In a word, all the furniture—the doors of the armories, the old linen closets in rosewood, the buffet with large sculptured panels, the oval table with twisted legs, and even the oak floor, alternately inlaid with yellow and black—all announced the good style in which the Kobuses had lived for 150 years.

Fritz now pushed the table on its rollers to the centre of the hall, then opened the double doors of the high armories. In one was the table linen, beautiful as it was possible to desire, with an infinity of glister. In the other the dishes and plates of magnificent Saxony, flowered, molded and gilded; piles of plates, services of all sorts, sugar bowls, and above all, the silver. Kobus chose a beautiful damask cloth and extended it carefully on the table, passing his hand over it to efface the creases and making at the corners great knots to prevent it sweeping the floor. He did this slowly and with love. After that he took a pile of plates and placed them on a chimney piece; then more deep plates and other plates. He made a plateau of crystal glasses, edged with great diamond cuts. In these glasses the red wine reflected, turning the color to ruby and the yellow wine to topaz. Then he disposed the knives and forks with plates regularly around the table, one opposite the other; he put the napkins beside them in boats and bishop's bonnets; he placed them sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left, to judge of the symmetry. In this occupation his great good form had an air of receiving inexpressible satisfaction; his lips were tightly closed, and his eyebrows knit together. "It is right at last," he said, in a deep voice; "the grand Frederick Schultz at the side of the windows, his back to the light; the Professor Christian Haan facing him; Joseph on this side and myself on that side; that will do! that will do! When the