

why you should not worry, dear mother; this is a night of mercy and the angels are watching. Besides father has his dog Castor with him." Dame Sabine rose, and walked over to the window, from which she could see the highway; but she gazed in vain, for there was no sign of her husband. Suddenly they heard a dog's bark. "There is Castor, dear mother," cried Agatha; "it is all right; nothing has happened; father is coming, but not by that road." As she spoke she ran to the door with a light, and her father entered, all covered with snow. The dog ran on ahead of his master, and jumped up on Sabine; after caressing it, she pushed it gently from her, and rose to welcome her husband, regarding with great curiosity a small basket he carried in his hand, and which he set down so carefully. "You are very good, George," said Sabine smiling up at him. "I see you have not forgotten us; doubtless this is a Christmas present." "You are right, my dear Sabine," answered George. "This is a present which I hope will please you both," and he looked at them anxiously. "I am sure," continued Dame Sabine, "that it is some pastry, and perhaps a bottle of liquor, and some of the famous Nuremberg biscuits. Oh! I shall be so pleased if it is." "You have not guessed rightly, Sabine," said George; "the basket contains something better than eatables."

"Oh! mother," cried the child, "I am sure these are the doves that father has been promising me," saying these words she opened the basket. But what was her astonishment when she saw a lovely little child, smiling up at her, and trying to hold out its little arms to her. Agatha's face was a study, and as for Dame Sabine, she could hardly believe her eyes. At last she said: "O, George! what a dear baby; it only looks about a year old; how comes it here?" "Dear Sabine, I will tell you all about it, but before I begin, I wish that you would give it something to eat, and see that it has a warm bed; it needs it." "Agatha, you can look after it, as you seem to like babies. When you have put it to bed, get me my supper; I feel ravenous after this long walk; meanwhile I shall change my clothes for these dry ones.

Dame Sabine made a sign to her daughter not to mind anything but the baby, she herself began to prepare a dish of carp for her husband. This was one of his favorites, and as he had a good appetite it was thoroughly enjoyed. At the same time he kept his eyes fixed approvingly on Agatha, who was warming the baby near the fire. His wife, however, did not seem to share their joy; she shook her head with a preoccupied air, and it was easily seen that she would have preferred another present. At length she said to her husband: "Tell me, frankly, my friend, is this child really a stray waif?" "Alas, it is too true, Sabine," answered George sadly. "And that his wife might be better disposed towards it, he said he found it in the middle of the forest." "Oh, how I pity its poor parents," said Sabine. "Please God, that he belongs to a good family, and that his arrival will bring down a blessing on the house." "We do not know who or what he is, but I shall leave no stone unturned, till I find out something about him. But as for doubting that God will reward our charity to this poor infant, for charity it is to bring it home,—this poor child to a good home and a kind mother and sister. It is almost impious to doubt that he will not bless us for this good action. Did I not do my duty, Sabine?" said her husband. "Indeed you did," answered this pious woman; "you could not have done otherwise, but tell me about it." Instead of answering, he looked over at Agatha with a smile, and told Sabine to look also. After she had caressed it to her heart's content, she had put it in the basket, and was kneeling beside it, holding its little head on her arm. At her feet lay Castor. Now and then he would raise his huge head and look at the little mistress approvingly. At last, Dame Sabine approached the little group, and watched the baby caressing Agatha; these marks of gratitude from so young a child quite won her heart. "Dear little babe," said she tenderly, "we will take good care of you. But, George," said she to her husband, who had also come over. "You say you found this child in the forest. What were you doing there at that hour of the night. I thought you were at Furth with the