

for himself; but he sat there, in the same sad posture, sometimes sobbing quietly to himself, sometimes murmuring a prayer that God would take care of him, till it had grown dark, and at last slumber overpowered him—the first time he could remember going to sleep without Gola's tender care of him.

He was awakened by the horns and the stir among the troop, and he stood up, aching, weary, and too faint and exhausted even to feel hungry, so that he tottered when he began to move, and he felt a moment's hope that if he sank down, was forgotten, and left behind he might creep back into Treves, where there were plenty of Roman clergy, and perhaps find Gola once more. But he was disappointed. He was too valuable thus to be neglected, and presently he heard Hunderik saying what he knew too well meant, "Where's the little dog of a hostage? Ha! limping like a sickly calf. Take him up before you on your horse, one of you."

So Attalus found himself astride the neck of one of the great lumbering war-horses of the Franks, as wretchedly uncomfortable a perch as could be conceived, though he did not fall off, and was carried along, belted to the horseman, as a miserable forlorn piece of baggage for whose relief or ease the rider cared not in the least. However, it was important to keep him alive, and thus, when at the halting-place on the border of a forest he was found to have swooned quite away and was lifted down unconscious, he was shaken hard by way of restoration, and when he opened his eyes a wine-cup was held to his lips. He turned away his head, but heard, "Ho! ho! bring the horn." The notion of being drenched like a horse waked the boy thoroughly; he swallowed the draught, a long one, and then found himself revived enough to eat a bit of the toughest of flesh, half raw, half dry, and without bread or salt, but he was famished enough to swallow anything, and when lifted on horseback again he actually slept in a manner, though conscious all the time of the painful jar of the horse's tramp, the tight belt round him, and the roughness of the leathern garment against which his head hung rather than rested.

How he got through those last few days he could never tell—they were all like one long and horrid dream, in which he seemed to have been going on forever, bound fast on the rack of the rude saddle, with the tramp of the horse ever jarring through him; and he was past all curiosity as to what was to come next—it seemed as if there never would be any end, though latterly he began to be dimly conscious that the horse was mounting more slowly up a hill, and that there was forest ground all round, the tops of trees making a darkness. At last there was a halt, the belt that cut into him was unstrapped, he was lifted down, and when it proved that he

could not stand he was picked up in those same rude arms and carried into some kind of dark shelter, where there was a strange buzz of rough and shrill voices mingled together, and the light of a red flickering fire flashed out.

Something he heard in Hunderik's always alarming voice about a miserable little feeble mouse of a Roman hostage, who must nevertheless be kept alive and safe, for he might be worth something to them; but he was past understanding it, and had little perception of anything but being brought into warmth, laid down upon something soft and strange, and presently a woman's voice saying some word that probably meant "drink," for a vessel of something very hot and like broth was held before him, while a woman's arm raised him, and a woman's great knotted hand put a spoon to his lips.

"Wretched little weakling! Thou hast nearly been the death of him."

"No, no, Frau. Even a bishop's lambkin is not so frail as that."

So much Attalus heard and half understood while the very greasy soup went down his throat, followed by a dose of warm sour milk; and he was dimly sensible of figures carousing round a long table, of firelight, of female forms flitting about waiting on the men, and of the light glancing now and then on bushes of hair as fair and flaxen as that of Baldrik before it was shaven; of pitying, wondering, girlish voices now and then; but women and girls were strange, unwonted creatures to the Bishop's grandson, who did not remember his own parents, and had come to the household after the old man had ceased to be a senator and had become a priest. Gola was the only nurse he could remember, and sorely he missed him now, in the long feverish, exhausted state in which he lay before sleep at last gave a respite to his woes.

CHAPTER VIII.—HUNDERIK AT HOME.

When Attalus awoke there was morning light in the place, but it was for the most part in twilight, only that spots of red sometimes came in here and there, and played upon what he now saw to be the rude beams, or rather trees, of an open pointed roof of reed and heather. He was lying on a heap of fern and heather, but he felt dreadfully stiff and sore, and as recollection came back to him he was afraid to move, even if he could have done so without pain, for fear of bringing some of his tormentors on him, or waking the terrible-looking wolf-hounds with rough dun hair and long noses that lay slumbering by the still smouldering remnant of the wood and peat fire, where a little red light glowed among the ashes.

(To be continued.)