

AT EVENTIDE.

Look down the valley there
Between the mountains
All lit with Autumn's
Glorious tints of red,
Where some of Nature's trophies,
Yet unfaded,
Are mingling with the dead.

There when the dry brown
Stubble is enamelled
With the sweet violet's
Dusky purple hue,
And over all this scene
Of peaceful beauty
Heavens canopy of blue.

List to the rippling brooklet,
Wandering slowly,
Adown the valley o'er its
Pebbles bright,
While gentle replies
Play amid the glory,
Waiting the evening shadows
Into night.
Kissing the mountains
Tipped with crimson glory,
The gentle breezes bid
The day farewell;
And night, with sombre mantle,
Soft enshrouds
The beauties of this
Autumn-tinted dell.

Montreal.

H. BEEWICK.

GEIER-WALLY:

A TALE OF THE TYROL.

CHAPTER XIV.

BACK TO THE FATHER.

Joseph's motionless form lay stretched on Wally's bed in Wally's chamber. Everything around was still and quiet. Wally had sent every one out of the room, and was kneeling beside the bed, with her face hidden in her hands, praying, "Oh! God, my God, have pity upon me, and let him live. Deprive me of all, all, only let him live! I will never seek anything from him: I will avoid him; I will leave him to his fate—only he must not die!" Then she rose and applied fresh bandages to his head, where the blood was flowing from an open wound, and to his breast, which had been torn by the rocks, and threw herself upon him as if she would fuse with her own body the gates from which his life was streaming. "Oh! you poor lad—you poor lad—so crushed—so bruised—oh! what a sin, what a sin! Wally, Wally, what have you done? would you not far rather have thrust a knife into your own heart? would you not rather have looked on at his marriage with Afra, and then gone quietly away and died, than watched him lying there, ending his days like a beast the butcher's stroke has failed to kill?"

Such were her lamentations as she bandaged his wounds and meantime railed at herself with the same severity she usually displayed toward others. Had she possessed the power she would have torn her own heart to pieces with her hands, in the fierce, mad remorse that overwhelmed her. Just at that moment the door was gently opened. Wally turned in surprise, for she had forbidden any one to disturb her. It was the priest from Heiligkreuz. Wally, pale and trembling in every limb, stood before him as before a judge.

"God be praised!" exclaimed the old man; "he is really here." He approached the bed, looking intently at Joseph, and felt his pulse. "Poor fellow! you have been hardly used."

Wally clenched her teeth, that she might not shriek aloud.

"How did you get him up the precipice?" asked the priest; but Wally could not answer.

"Well, the Lord be thanked that His mercy has spared us the worst," the old man continued. "Perhaps he may recover, and then you will at least have no murder on your conscience, though in the eyes of the Eternal Judge the intention is as bad as the deed."

Wally tried to speak.

"I know all," he said, sternly; "Vincenz stopped at my house on his flight and confessed everything: your love and his jealousy. I refused to give him absolution and sent him to the papal army; there, by faithful service to the Holy Father, he may obtain God's pardon or atone for his crime by death. But what, what am I to do with you, Wally?" He gazed mournfully at her with his keen, searching eyes.

Wally covered her face with both hands, exclaiming, "Oh! your reverence, I am so terribly punished that no one can inflict any worse agony upon me. There lies the one I loved best in the world, dying, and I know that it is my fault! Can there be any greater misery! Is more punishment needed?"

The priest nodded. "So you have brought yourself to this—become a rough club used to commit murder! What I told you has come to pass. You did not submit to God's knife, and now the Lord throws you away and leaves the hard wood to burn in the purifying fire of romance!"

"Yes, your reverence, it is so; but I know of water that will quench the flames! If Joseph dies I will leap into the Asche. Then all will be over."

"Foolish child! Do you suppose any earthly water can quench those flames? Do you really suppose that you can drown the immortal soul with the earthly body? It would burn in the fiery torment of eternal remorse, though oceans were poured upon you!"

"Then what am I to do?" asked Wally, in a hollow tone; "what can I do except die?"

"Live and suffer; that is harder than death."

Wally shook her head; her dark eyes gazed into vacancy with an expressionless stare. "I cannot—I feel it—I can't live; the happy maidens will hurl me down—everything has happened just as they threatened in my dream. Joseph is lying crushed and bruised, and I must follow him. It is so ordered, and I must submit; no one can help it!"

"Wally, Wally!" cried the priest, clasping his hands in horror. "What are you saying? The happy maidens! What happy maidens! For Heaven's sake, are we living in the old heathen times, when people believed that evil spirits played their pranks with them? I'll tell you who the happy maidens are. They are your own passions. If you had learned to control your unbridled temper, Joseph would not have been thrown over the precipice. It is very easy to attribute our own guilt to the influence of hostile powers. That is why the true God came upon earth, to teach us that the evil powers are in our own hearts, and we must struggle with them. If we conquer ourselves we also conquer the mysterious powers which drove even the giants of ancient times to destruction, since the latter, with all their physical strength, had no moral power. And you, with all your strength, hardness, and defiance, are only a poor feeble creature, so long as you cannot do what is accomplished by every plain, simple handmaid of the Lord, who, day after day, under the strict discipline of the convent, sacrifices her heart's dearest wishes on God's altar, and esteems herself happy! If you had only a spark of such greatness, you would no longer have cause to fear any 'happy maidens,' or attribute your fate to foolish dreams, but your own clear, conscious will. Reflect and see whether this would not be nobler and greater!"

Wally stood leaning against the bed-post; she felt elevated by a new idea, never understood before. "Yes," she answered, in a curt, firm tone, folding her arms over her heaving bosom, "you are right, your reverence. I understand what you mean and will try."

"I will try," repeated the old man; "you have already said that once, but did not keep your word."

"I will keep it this time, your reverence," replied the girl, and the priest secretly admired the expression of her face as she uttered the words.

"What security will you give me?" he asked. Wally laid her hand on Joseph's breast, and two large tears fell from her eyes. No spoken vow could have said more. The wise priest was silent; he knew nothing farther was needed.

The wounded man turned in the bed and murmured a few unintelligible words.

Wally applied a fresh bandage to his head; he half opened his eyes, but instantly closed them again, and relapsed into a death-like slumber.

"If the doctor would only come," said Wally, seating herself on a stool beside the bed. "What time is it?" The priest looked at his watch. "What time did you send for him?"

"Just after five."

"Then he cannot get here yet. It is just ten o'clock, and it takes three hours to go to Sollden."

"Just ten o'clock," repeated Wally, softly, and the good priest pitied her, as she sat so quietly, with her hands folded on her lap, while her heart was throbbing with such painful anxiety that its pulsations were distinctly audible.

He bent over the young hunter and felt his head and hands. "I think you may be comforted, Wally; he does not seem like a dying man."

Wally sat motionless, gazing into vacancy. "If the doctor comes and says he will live, I shall ask for nothing more in this world."

"That's a good thought, Wally; I am glad to hear it," replied the priest, in a tone of approval. "And now tell me how Joseph was rescued; it will shorten the time before the doctor comes."

"There isn't much to tell," answered Wally, curiously.

"Well, it is, at any rate, a brave deed, that does honor to all the men of Sonnenplatte," observed the priest; "were you not there?"

"Of course."

"Well, don't be so short. I spoke to no one on my way here, and as yet know nothing at all about it. Who brought him up from the chasm?"

"I?"

"God have mercy on us! You, Wally; you yourself!" cried the old gentleman, staring at Wally, in amazement.

"Yes, I?"

"But how did you do it?"

"They lowered me down with a rope, and I found him wedged between the rocks and a pine tree. If it hadn't been for the tree he would have fallen into the Asche, and nobody could have saved him."

"Child, this is a noble deed!" cried the old man, fairly beside himself.

"Why?" she said, quietly, in a tone that sounded almost hard. "If I had him thrown down, I certainly ought to bring him up again."

"You are right; that is nothing more than just," said the priest, making an effort to suppress his emotion. "Yet it is an act of atonement, which takes a portion of the guilt from your poor soul."

"All that makes no difference," said Wally, shaking her head. "If he dies, I have killed him."

"That is true; but you offered a life—risked your own life to save his; and, in so doing, atoned for your crime so far as lay in your power. The result we must leave with God."

A heavy sigh escaped Wally's lips; she could not feel the comfort contained in the good priest's words. "The result we must leave with God!" she repeated, mournfully.

The priest's eyes rested kindly upon her. In spite of its many faults and errors, God could not reject this soul. Old as he was, he had never seen her equal in good as well as evil. He looked at the wounded man, who, in his unconsciousness, was clenching his fists defiantly, and felt almost angry with him for having disdained the best gift earth can offer—such a love—and by his coldness hardened a heart originally so noble, capable of such generous devotion. "You stupid peasant!" he muttered, indignantly, between his teeth.

Wally looked at him inquiringly; she had not understood him.

Just at that moment some one knocked at the door, and directly after the physician entered.

Wally trembled so violently that she was obliged to cling to the bed-post. This was the man whose lips were to pronounce the sentence of deliverance or condemnation. A crowd of people pressed into the room to hear what he would say; but he waved them back. "This is no place for curious spectators; the sick man must have the most complete repose," he said, sternly, closing the door. Very few words were uttered during the visit, but when he removed the bandage from the wounded head he muttered, between his teeth: "Ah! a crime has been committed!"

Wally stood motionless and pale as a marble statue; the priest did not look at her, fearing to disturb her composure. The examination began, and an anxious silence pervaded the little room. Wally stood at the window, with averted face, while the doctor examined the bruised head and probed the wounds. She had lifted something from the floor, and now held it in a convulsive grasp, pressing her lips upon it; it was the thorn-wooden head of the Saviour, which she had chattered during the night.

"Forgive me, forgive me," she murmured, trembling with deadly terror. "Have pity upon me! I don't deserve it, but let Thy mercy be greater than my sin."

"None of the wounds are mortal," the doctor now said, in his dry manner; "the fellow must have bones like a marmoset."

Wally's strength failed. Her nerves, so long stretched to their utmost tension, gave way, and, sobbing aloud, she threw herself on her knees beside the bed, and buried her face among Joseph's pillows. "Oh! thank God! thank God!"

"What relation is she?" asked the doctor. The priest made a sign which he understood.

"Calm yourself, Hochstetbauer, and help me put on the bandages," he said.

Wally instantly started up, wiped the tears from her eyes, and began to make herself useful. The priest watched her with silent delight as she aided the physician, as deftly and skilfully as a sister of charity. She no longer trembled or wept; her manner had a calm, quiet composure—the composure of love and such a glorified expression rested on her brow—a transfiguration in the midst of her sorrow—that the priest scarcely recognized her.

"She will yet be saved!" he said, joyously, like a gardener who sees a pet plant he thought dying, suddenly put forth fresh shoots. When the bandage was finished and the doctor had given directions for the future, the priest went out with him, and Wally remained alone with Joseph. She seated herself on the stool beside the bed, and rested her arms on her knees.

The wounded man was now breathing quietly and regularly; his hand lay on the coverlid, close beside her; she might have kissed it without moving from the place. But she did not do it; she felt as if she ought not to touch him with a finger. If he had lain there dying or dead, she would have covered him with kisses, as before, when she believed him lost. The dead man had belonged to her, but she had no right to the living! So he had died to her at the moment when the doctor said he would live, and with bitter agony she buried him in her heart, while she received the tidings of his recovery like a message of deliverance. So she sat motionless, with her eyes fixed on Joseph's beautiful pale face. She was suffering all a human heart can suffer, but she suffered patiently. She did not sigh and moan; she did not, as before, clench her hands in the fury of her grief. In this hour she had learned the hardest of all lessons—she had learned to suffer.

What right had she, so laden with guilt, to complain? What better fate did she deserve? How could she have dared to still cover him for herself—she, who had been almost his murderer! How could she have still ventured to raise her eyes to him? No, she would complain no longer. "Oh! God, let me atone as Thou wilt; no punishment is too great for one like me!" she prayed, bending her face humbly on her clasped hands.

Just at that moment the door was thrown open, and, with the cry, "Joseph, oh! my Joseph!" a young girl darted past Wally and threw herself on the hunter's breast. It was Afra. Wally started up, as if a serpent had stung her. For a moment a bitter conflict raged in her heart—the last, hardest struggle. She clasped her arms around her own body, as

if to restrain herself from rushing upon the girl and tearing her away from the bed—from Joseph. She stood in this attitude for some time, while Afra was weeping violently on Joseph's breast; then her arms fell by her side, as it paralyzed, and drops of cold perspiration stood on her brow. What had she been about to do? Afra was only claiming her rights!

"Afra," she said, gently, "if you love Joseph, be calm and still and make no outcry; the doctor says he must be kept perfectly quiet."

"Who can be calm who has a heart in her body, and sees the lad lying there so?" wailed Afra. "It's all very well for you to talk; you can be calm enough; you don't love him as I love him. Joseph is my all; if he dies, I shall be entirely alone in the world; oh! Joseph, dear Joseph, wake, look at me—only once; speak just one little word." And she shook him in her arms.

A low moan escaped Joseph's lips, and he uttered a few unintelligible words.

Wally stepped forward and grasped Afra firmly but quietly; not a muscle in her pale face quivered.

"I'll tell you what it is, Afra! Joseph is here under my care, and I am responsible for having everything done exactly as the doctor has ordered, and this is my house, and if you don't do what I tell you, and let Joseph remain quiet, as the doctor wishes, I'll use my right, and put you out of doors, till you have come to your senses, and can undertake the care of nursing him; then—her voice trembled—then I'll leave him to you!"

"Oh! you wicked creature," Afra passionately exclaimed; "do you want to drive me out of the house, because I weep for Joseph? Do you suppose everybody has a heart as hard as yours, and can stand like a stick in the presence of all this misery? Let go my arm! I have a better right to Joseph than you, and if you don't like to hear me cry, I'll take him in my arms and have him brought home to me. There I can at least weep as much as I like. I'm only a poor maid-servant; but, if I were obliged to work all my life to pay for it, I'd rather nurse him at home, in my little room, than suffer you to show me the door, you proud Hochstetbauer!"

Wally glanced at Afra; but as she stood before her, with her pale face, and an expression of mortal agony around the silent lips, the young girl cast down her eyes, in confusion, as if she suspected that she had wronged her.

"Afra," said Wally, "your need must be so unkind to me; I don't deserve it, for I brought him out of the chasm for you, and saved him; he will live for you, not me! An hour ago I would have strangled you before I would have let you come to this bedside; but now everything that was hard in me is crushed; my defiance, and my pride, and—my heart!" she murmured. "So I will freely make way for you, for he loves you and wants to know nothing about me. You need not have the sick lad taken away. Stay quietly here with him; I will go! I should have gone at any rate. You can be at the Hochstet as long as you choose. I will settle with him to whom it belongs. And I'll provide for you in every way, for you are poor and cannot marry while you have nothing. Perhaps then Joseph will some day bless Geier-Wally."

"Wally, Wally!" cried Afra; "Merciful God, what are you thinking! I beg you—oh! Joseph, Joseph, if I could only speak!"

"Let it pass," said Wally. "Hush, for Joseph's sake, hush! Let me go quietly, and don't torment me. I must go; don't stop me. I only ask one thing in return for all I do for you: take good care of him. You will promise that, so that I can go in peace."

"Wally," cried Afra, imploringly, "don't do this, don't go. Oh! what will Joseph say when he hears we have driven you out of your own house?"

"Spare your words, Afra," said Wally, sternly; "when I've once said a thing, I stick to it, come what may!"

She went to a chest and took out some clothes and linen, which she made up into a bundle and hung over her shoulder. Then she drew out a roll of linen. "See, Afra," said she, "this is the old linen, to be used for bandages, and here is coarse, to be made into lint, which the doctor will need when he comes this evening. Here are scissors; you must cut it into strips a finger long. And every quarter of an hour you must put fresh bandages on his head, to draw out the inflammation. Can I depend upon you not to neglect anything? Think; suppose after saving him from the chasm, I should hear that you—you had neglected anything in nursing him—here, by his bedside. And, remember, he must always lie with his head high, that the blood may run down; keep his pillows well shaken. I believe that is all; I know of nothing else. Oh! dear, you can't lift and move him as I do—you haven't the strength. Call Klettenmaier to help you; he is a faithful servant. And now I leave him in your hands." Her voice failed, her knees trembled; she could scarcely hold the bundle she carried. She cast one last look at the wounded man. "May God preserve you!" Then she left the room.

The priest was standing outside the house, talking to Klettenmaier.

Wally approached them.

"Klettenmaier," she whispered, "go in and help Afra nurse Joseph. She is now in my place. Joseph will stay at the Hochstet, and I going away. You must all look upon him as your master and obey him as you would me, until I come back. Wa betide you if he should