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A TALE OF THE TYROL.

During one of my excursions through the remote valleys of the Northern Tyrol, I happened to make the acquaintance of a benevolent Catholic clergyman, who invited me to spend a few days at his humble but hospitable abode.

Observe, said he, pointing to a rustic dwelling which was visible from the window where we sat—observe that cottage nestled under the brow of the mountain, as if seeking protection from the fierce mountain blast.

Nothing could look more unpromising, more desolate, than that spot did when first it came into Vostner's possession. He did not, however, despair. He had seen the effect produced by irrigation in other instances, and with unremitting labor he guided the precious waters through various channels, so as to reach and fertilize every portion of his little patrimony.

A little proud of his wealth, Vostner was more proud of his only child Theresa, who grew up to womanhood with a more than usually graceful person, and a character of the most perfect gentleness, while her intellect was, from various causes, cultivated and refined to a degree uncommon in her rank of life.

Matters remained in this state till the breaking out of our troubles in 1809. Ah! those were dreadful times! I cannot bear to dilate upon them. Our peaceful valleys then became the scene of cruel warfare, our finest youths turned into soldiers, and all our rural labors suspended.

Late in the evening Basil returned, accompanied by two of the principal inhabitants of the district. Deliberately seating himself, he remained some minutes silent. There was again that look of suppressed triumph that I had observed in the morning.

Thus saying, he presented her with a letter, the seal of which had been broken. She eagerly perused the contents, then started up wildly, clasped her hands together, and rushed out of the room. Her mother and I followed in the greatest alarm. We found her lying on the floor of the adjoining apartment in a fainting fit.

which might, too probably, be for ever—that the long-repressed feelings of the youthful pair burst forth without control, and that, with touching words and more persuasive tears, she besought him to guard well his life for the sake of all he loved.

The hope of proving himself worthy of obtaining the hand of Theresa, was, I believe, one of the prominent motives which induced Sebastian to court this dangerous service. It was agreed that, in case he succeeded, he should give us notice of it by lighting a signal fire upon the opposite mountain.

As midnight approached, every eye was fixed with intense anxiety upon the appointed spot; but minutes—hours passed away, and no welcome signal greeted our eyes. Poor Theresa kept her post except for a few minutes to comfort Sebastian's old grandmother, who was too feeble to bear the fatigue of sitting up.

Sebastian having evidently failed in accomplishing his mission, we passed the following day under the most dreadful apprehension. Evening, however, brought the welcome intelligence that the enemy, from some unknown cause, had relinquished their intention of attacking our village, and had passed over on the other side.

Though no tidings of Sebastian's fate had yet reached us, little doubt of its nature existed in the minds of any. Theresa, though profoundly afflicted, was calm and resigned. At length, some of the youths who had been out on military service returned, and amongst them Basil Alland. His first visit was to my house, where she and her family were collected.

At the sound of that name, the poor girl, starting from her state of abstraction, exclaimed, 'It is all over, then, and he is murdered.' Basil looked at her for a moment with an expression of malicious satisfaction in his countenance, and then replied, 'There is no occasion for this alarm about his life, Theresa. He is safe enough. He was too wise to risk that precious life for our sakes.'

'And do you suppose this tale will obtain credit here?' said Theresa, looking at him with sovereign contempt. 'Sebastian a guide to the enemy's forces! Sebastian a traitor! Would I could think your assurance of his being alive less false than all the rest of your story!'

'I see,' said he, 'that it is useless for me to speak to these who are determined not to believe; before night, however, I may be able to prove beyond the possibility of doubt that I am neither a liar nor a slanderer.'

So saying he departed, leaving us all in the utmost consternation—all except Theresa. She calmly said—'It is his malice only. He repeats what he cannot possibly believe. Surely no man can doubt that Sebastian would die a thousand deaths rather than commit such an action.'

I hoped she was right, but having seen more of life than the innocent Theresa, I could not place the same confidence in human virtue.

Late in the evening Basil returned, accompanied by two of the principal inhabitants of the district. Deliberately seating himself, he remained some minutes silent. There was again that look of suppressed triumph that I had observed in the morning.

'I am,' said he, affecting an air of sympathy as he addressed Theresa—'I am sorry that my duty towards my country obliged me to deliver this paper into the hands of the public authorities before I made it known to you. When you have read it, you will, perhaps, be less ready to accuse me of calumny than you were this morning.'

Thus saying, he presented her with a letter, the seal of which had been broken. She eagerly perused the contents, then started up wildly, clasped her hands together, and rushed out of the room. Her mother and I followed in the greatest alarm. We found her lying on the floor of the adjoining apartment in a fainting fit.

'Dear Theresa—I cannot let the message go without one line from my hand to your dear self. You will no doubt feel surprised that I should have been induced to become a guide to the enemy's forces; but I do not think you will blame me under the circumstances. How other-

wise could I act? 'Your ever faithful, 'SEBASTIAN FREILEITZ.'

It was with deep concern I found myself compelled to believe Sebastian a traitor; but I had then no time to give to my own regrets. Theresa was carried to her bed, where she lay so still that, but for the deep-drawn sighs that at times burst from her burdened heart, she might have been thought to be in a trance. From this state she was roused about midnight by the coming on of a fever, which soon increased to an alarming height.

She became more than ever remarkable for her activity. As the family were still afraid to return to their lonely dwelling, they remained at the house of a distant relation of her father, a wealthy person, according to Tyrolean notions of wealth. Raymond Landsberg had been left a widower in the prime of life. He was highly respected for the excellence of his character, he possessed a warm heart and a delicacy of feeling seldom found among those of his station.

Consideration for her recent disappointment for some time prevented the avowal of his sentiments; but when he perceived that her countenance, though still sad, had recovered somewhat of its natural placid expression, he ventured to disclose his wishes to me. Thus he did in preference to speaking to her parents, who might, he feared, attempt to exercise an authority over her which would be equally distressing to his feelings as a friend and as a lover; for his affection was not of a nature to be satisfied with an unwilling compliance.

I opened the business by an encomium upon his generosity. Theresa warmly concurred in this praise, and declared that it would give her the highest gratification to be able to show her sense of his kindness, but that, she feared, would never be in her power.

'You can, Theresa,' said I, 'show your sense of his kindness effectually, and at the same time confer an inestimable benefit upon the parents to whom you owe so much.'

'I suspect you guess my meaning,' said I, 'you know that Raymond has been like a son to your parents—make him such in reality; you will thus insure the comfort of their old age, and at the same time obtain for yourself one of Heaven's choicest blessings—a pious, virtuous, and tender husband.'

'Does my father know of this?' were her first words. 'No; Raymond was too considerate to mention it to him without your sanction.'

'Bless him for that, along with all his other kindness. How should I have been able to bear my father's reproaches for denying him such a son? Yet deny him I must; I cannot give a poor heart-broken creature, unfit to be the wife of any man, to my generous cousin; that would be a bad return for all he has done for us.'

'But he wishes it, Theresa; your depression of spirits does not discourage him. Nor will your heart always continue dead to happiness;—time and reason will efface all traces of past sorrows.'

'So girls always think when disappointed in love; but I never yet knew a reasonable mind that was unable to subdue an ill-placed attachment.'

'I have subdued it, father—I no longer love that unfortunate,' said she, her lip quivering as she spoke; 'but my heart seems turned to stone. I cannot love as a husband ought to be loved.—So convinced am I of this, that I have formed a resolution which I feared to tell you of, lest you should disapprove of it; I wish to devote my heart to God, and I feel that Heaven will not reject my sacrifice.'

'These are vain romantic fancies, my dear child,' said I, 'of which your reason truly told you I should disapprove. Each one has his duty to perform in life; yours is clearly pointed out—it is to contribute in every way in your power to the happiness of your parents. To see you happily and respectably married has long been their fondest hope, which to relinquish would be a severe trial. Meantime, you need fear no opportunity from Raymond. All that he asks is, that you make no irrevocable determination against him.'

The restraint which the knowledge of Raymond's sentiments produced upon the mind of his cousin soon yielded before the delicate respect to her feelings, which always governed his behaviour towards her. In any difficulty it was to him she had recourse for advice—in any affliction she was sure of his ready sympathy; and she, on her part, felt happy to testify her gratitude by increased attention to his domestic concerns.

A few months having thus passed away, and our country having been delivered into the hands of the conquerors, warfare had consequently ceased, and Vostner announced his intention of returning to his home, and endeavoring by renewed industry to repair the injuries which his little patrimony had sustained during the unavoidable intermission of his fostering care. As he announced his intention, he sighed deeply, for he felt that time had impaired his vigor, and that he was no longer able for the exertions which had proved so successful in early life.

Raymond strenuously opposed his design, urging him to defer his departure till the spring should be further advanced, and offering every assistance in his power to afford; but Vostner was inflexible. His pride suffered under the sense of obligation which he had been compelled to submit to; and finding that there appeared no probability of the secret object of his wishes—his daughter's marriage with her cousin—being realized, he could no longer endure to be a burden to his kind relative. When every effort to shake his resolution had been used in vain, Raymond, after fixing his eyes upon Theresa for some moments with a look of earnest melancholy, slowly rose and left the room.

'How is this, dear child?' said I, observing that her eyes were swelled with weeping; 'has any new evil occurred?'

'None, sir, only that my father says he will remain no longer here. He will return to his old comfortable dwelling, even before the weather has become warm; and I fear he is not fit to brave the sea-air, nor equal to the labor he must undergo. Raymond entreated him to stay, and promised, if he did, to assist him in his labors.—Then Raymond looked at me so, and I felt, father,' said she, trembling with emotion, 'I felt as if I were—'

'As if you were the cause of your father's inflexibility; was it not so, my dear?'

'If I thought I should really be doing right, sir—if I thought I could make Raymond happy—why, then, I think I could—I think I would—give up my own wishes for my dear parents' sake.'

'Whether you would be doing right or not depends upon whether you feel that you can bestow upon Raymond that degree of affection, that preference, that a husband has a right to expect.'

'Next to my parents, sir, none is so dear to me. He has obtained my honest, perfect esteem, my warmest gratitude; and yet I fear—I fear I cannot love him as he loves me—as once I—'

'Nor is it necessary you should, Theresa. The species of attachment you allude to originates more in the imagination than the heart, and seldom survives the first months of married life. But there is another kind, founded on esteem and gratitude, which will increase with the proofs you receive of the worth of the object of your choice.'

Emboldened by my counsel, Raymond ventured to solicit Theresa's permission to apply to her father for his consent to their marriage.

'Dear Raymond,' said she, 'since it is your wish to take such a poor faded creature to be your wife, I shall not deprive my parents of the blessing of such a son. All I ask is a little time to make myself more worthy of you.'

promise to be mine at a future day; till that happy time comes, your father will remain with me, and I will manage his affairs as if I were already his son.'

Vostner's joy at this event may easily be imagined. It was arranged that the marriage should take place early in the ensuing summer, and Theresa appeared to look forward to it with less and less reluctance every day. Her manner, though more serious than is usual at her age, was calm, sometimes even cheerful, and her regard for her cousin seemed to increase as she marked his unremitting attention to the welfare of her parents.

While matters in this promising state, it chanced that Theresa, who had gone to visit a friend residing at some distance amongst the mountains, was detained to a late hour by the importunities of her young companion, and the shades of night were closing round her before half her journey was completed. A peace was now restored, this circumstance gave her no concern, for our mountain maidens are accustomed to traverse these wild late and early without sense of danger. She was leisurely pursuing her way, her eyes cast down, her thoughts in that state of abstraction now become almost habitual to her, when her attention was awakened by a rustling sound amongst the low brushwood that skirted her path.

She turned her eyes in the direction whence the sound proceeded, and beheld a figure emerging from the shade, which with hasty yet cautious step approached. When near enough to be closely discerned, she, to her unspeakable dismay, recognized, pale and emaciated, the countenance of the unfortunate Sebastian. While she remained transfixed to the spot with terror, unable to give utterance to the cry that quivered on her lips, he advanced, and, in trembling accents, pronounced her name, extending his hand as if in the act to detain her; but, alarmed by the sound of approaching eyes, he relinquished his purpose, and hastily concealed himself amongst the weeds and brushwood. The party by whom he had been alarmed now appeared in sight. It consisted of a number of young persons from the village, who were gaily carolling their mountain airs. Along with them had come Raymond, in the hope of meeting Theresa; her appearance and attitude struck them with consternation. There she stood, with hands up-lifted, and eyes fixed and started, as if gazing on some terrific vision.

Raymond, almost distracted at the sight, endeavoured by every soothing expression to recall Theresa's wandering senses. Roused by his voice, her form relaxed from its unnatural rigidity, her eyes recovered their wonted expression, and she sank down exhausted on the bank; he seated himself by her, and holding her hand in his, gazed upon her still agitated countenance with intense anxiety. At length she looked up, and, faintly smiling, returned the pressure of his hand. Her young friends now, with instinctive delicacy, withdrew to a little distance, leaving her to explain to her cousin in private, the cause of the strange state in which they had found her.

'I have seen him!'

'Him!—whom have you seen?' said Raymond.

'The lost—the guilty—'

'Sebastian!' said Raymond, starting. 'Impossible! Recollect yourself, dear Theresa.'

'I saw him as plainly as I now see you. He spoke—he pronounced my name; then, scared by your voices, he disappeared amongst the brushwood yonder. Now, Raymond, if the unfortunate Theresa was ever dear to you, save him. Let him not die the death he deserves—the traitor's death. Oh, spare me that agony!'

'Theresa,' said he, raising and pressing her to his bosom, 'do you know your poor Raymond so little as to believe this supplication necessary?—Let this dear throbbing heart have rest, and tell me what I can do to comfort you.'

'Seek him out, and tell him—'

'What?'

'To fly—to save himself—and never, never to attempt to see me more.'

'I will—I will indeed; but I fear he will shun me as his bitter enemy. And yet I am not—Heaven knows I am not. To have lost you is punishment enough for all his crimes. But strive to control your feelings, Theresa, otherwise suspicious may be awakened which may be fatal to him.'