

petted child. To explain his presence, he had invented some story or other about an



Archduke's birthday, a Prussian holiday, and they were celebrating his return.

When he noticed Herr Koltz, the unfortunate lad looked all around for an open door to escape, but the heavy hand of the master was laid on his shoulder, and the uncle was immediately informed of his escapade. But Gaspard's head was erect; he no longer appeared shame-faced. Then he who usually had so little to say, suddenly found his tongue. "Well, yes, I did run away," he said. "I don't want to go to school any longer; I will never learn German, a language of thieves and murderers. I want to speak French like my father and mother." He trembled with passion. He looked terrible. "Be quiet, Gaspard!" commanded his uncle. But nothing could stop him. "Very well, very well," answered the master, "Let him alone. We shall come for him with the police." And Herr Klotz sneered.



There was a large knife on the table. Gaspard seized it with so terrible a gesture that the teacher recoiled. "Well, bring on your police." Then his uncle, who began to get afraid, seized his nephew, and wrested the knife from his hand. As Gaspard kept crying, "I won't go! I won't go!" they bound him hand and foot. The poor boy bit, foamed and called to his aunt who had gone up stairs trembling and crying. Then while they were hitching the horses to the light wagon, the uncle invited us to have something to eat. I had no hunger, you may be sure, but Mr. Klotz began to eat greedily, while the miller was making excuses for the insults Gaspard had thrown at him and at his Majesty, the Emperor of Germany. That's what it is to be afraid of the police.

What a sad return. Gaspard lay stretched on the straw in the bottom of the waggon, not saying a word. I thought he had fallen asleep, weakened by so much passion and that he must be very cold, for he was bareheaded and had no cloak over him, but I did not dare to mention it to the master. There was a cold rain falling. Herr Koltz with his fur cap drawn down over his ears, hummed a tune, occasionally whipping up the horse. The wind made the light of the stars dance, and we went on our way along the hard white road.

We were already far from the mill. We could scarcely hear the noise of the dam, when a feeble voice, entreating pitifully, rose suddenly from the bottom of the wag-



gon, crying in our Alsaciandialect: "*Losso mi fort gen, Herr Klotz!*" "Let me go Mr. Klotz." It was so sad to hear that the tears came to my eyes. Herr Klotz smiled maliciously, and continued humming and lashing the beast. After a moment the voice commenced again, "*Losso mi fort gen, Herr Klotz!*" always in the same low tone, soft and almost mechanical. Poor Gaspard! you would think he was saying a prayer.

At last, the vehicle stopped. We had arrived. Madam Klotz was waiting in front of the school with a lantern, and she was so enraged at Gaspard that she wanted to beat him there and then. But the Prussian prevented her, saying with an ominous laugh: "We shall settle with him to-morrow. He has had enough for to-night."

Oh yes, the poor child had had enough. His teeth chattered, he was trembling with fever. He had to be carried up to bed. I also fully believed that I had the fever that night; all the time I felt the jolting of the waggon, and I heard my poor friend saying



in his pleading voice, "*Losso mi fort gen, Herr Klotz!*"

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