

"Well," continued the pastor, "about two thousand eight hundred years ago these Alps were peopled by a hardly aboriginal race, speaking the same language, or the germs of the same language, which is spoken here to this day by their descendants. These aborigines followed the instincts which God would seem to have implanted in the hearts of all mountain races. They wearied of their barren fastnesses. They poured down into the Southern plains. They expelled the native Umbrians, and settled as conquerors in that part of Italy which lies north of Ancona and the Tiber. There they built cities, cultivated literature and the arts, and reached a high degree of civilisation. When I tell you that they had attained to this eminence before the era of Romulus; that they gave religion, language, and arts to Rome herself; that, according to the decreed fate of nations, they fell through their own luxury, and were enslaved in their turn; that pursued by the Gaul or the Celt, they fled back at last to these same mountains from which they had emigrated long centuries before; that they erected some of those strongholds, the imperishable ruins of which yet stand above our passes; and that in this Etrusco-Romanish tongue of the Grisons survive the last utterances of their lost poets and historians—when, cousin, I tell you all these things, you will, I think, have guessed already what the name of that ancient people must have been!"

Now it happened somewhat unluckily, that Mr. Trefalden had lately read, somewhere or another, a review of somebody's book on this very subject; so, when the old man paused, quite warm and flushed with his own eloquence, he found himself prepared with a reply.

"If," said he, "I had not taken an impression—if, in short, I had not understood that the Etruscans were originally a Lydian tribe—"

"You took that impression from Herodotus!" interrupted the pastor.

"No; for the best of reasons. I never was Grecian enough to do battle with Herodotus."

"From Tacitus, then?"

"Possibly from Tacitus."

"Yes, Tacitus supports that theory, but he is wrong; so does Herodotus, and he is wrong; so do Strabo, Cicero, Seneca, Pliny, Plutarch, Velleius, Paternulus, Servius, and a host of others, and they are all wrong—utterly wrong, every one of them!"

"But where—"

"Livy supposes that the emigration was from the plains to the mountains—folly, mere folly! Does not every example in history point to the contrary? The dwellers in plains fly to the mountains for refuge; but emigration flows as naturally from the heights to the flats, as streams flow down from the glaciers to the valleys. Hellenicus of Lesbos would have us believe they were Pelasgians. Dionysius of Halicarnassus asserts that they were the aborigines of the soil. Gortius makes them Phœnician—Bosaret, Egyptian—Maffel, Canaanite—Guarnacci . . ."

"I beg pardon," interrupted Mr. Trefalden; "but when I said I had understood that the Etruscans were of Lydian origin . . ."

"They were nothing of the kind!" cried the pastor, trembling with excitement. "If they had been his countrymen, would not Xantus of Lydia have chronicled the event? He never even names them. Can you conceive an English historian omitting the colonisation of America; or a Spanish historian passing over the conquest of Mexico? No, cousin, you must forgive me for saying that he who embraces the empty theories of Herodotus and Tacitus commits a grievous error. I can show you such archaeological evidence . . ."

"I assure you, said Mr. Trefalden, laughingly, 'that I have not the least disposition to do anything of the kind. It is a subject upon which I know absolutely nothing.'"

"And, father," began Saxon, laying his hand gently on the old man's arm, "I think you forget—"

"No, no, I forget nothing," interrupted his uncle too much possessed by his own argument to listen to any one. "I do not forget that Gibbon pronounced the Lydian theory a theme for only poets and romancists. I do not forget that Stenb, whatever the tenor of his other opinions, at least admitted the unity of the Etruscan and Rhetian tongues. Then there was Niebuhr—although he fell under the mistake of supposing the Etruscans to be a mixed race, he believed the Rhetians of these Alps to have been the true stock, and maintained that they reduced the Pelasgi to a state of vassalage. Niebuhr was a great man, a

fine historian, an enlightened scholar. I corresponded with him, cousin, for years, on this very subject; but I could never succeed in convincing him of the purely Rhetian nationality of the Etruscan people. He always would have it that they were amalgamated with the Pelasgians. It was a great pity! I wish I could have set him right before he died."

Mr. Trefalden looked at his watch.

"I wish you could," he said; "but it grows late, and I shall never find my way back before dark, if I do not at once bid you good evening."

The pastor put his hand to his brow in a bewildered way.

"I—I fear I have talked too much," he said shyly. "I have wearied you. Pray forgive me. When I began upon this subject, I do not know where to stop."

"This is because you know so much about it," replied the lawyer. "But I have listened with great pleasure, I assure you."

"Have you? Have you, indeed?"

"And have learned a great deal that I did not know before."

"I will show you all Niebuhr's letters another time, and copies of my replies," said the old man, "if you care to read them."

He was now quite radiant again, and wanted only a word of encouragement to resume the conversation; but Mr. Trefalden had had more than enough of the Etruscans already.

"Thank you," said he; "thank you—another time. And now, good-by."

"No no—stay a moment longer. I have so much to say to you—so many questions to ask. How long do you stay in Reichenau?"

Some days—perhaps a week."

"Are you on your way to Italy?"

"Not at all. I wanted change of air, and I have come abroad for a fortnight's holiday. My object in choosing Reichenau for a resting place is solely to be near you."

The old man's eyes filled with tears.

"How good of you!" he said, simply. "I should never have seen you if you had not found your way hither—and, after all, we three are the last of our name. Cousin, will you come here?"

Mr. Trefalden hesitated.

"What do you mean!" he said. "I shall come again of course, to-morrow."

"I mean will you come here for the time of your stay? I hardly like to ask you, for I know the 'Adler' is far more comfortable than our little desolate eyrie. But still if you can put up with farmer's fare and mountain habits, you shall have a loving welcome."

Mr. Trefalden smiled, and shook his head.

"I thank you," said he, "as much as if I accepted your hospitality; but it is impossible. We Londoners lead busy feverish lives, and become enslaved by all kinds of unhealthy customs. Your habits and mine differ as widely as the habits of an Esquimaux and a Friendly Islander. Shall I confess the truth? You have just supped—I am now going back to Reichenau to dinner."

"To dinner?"

"Yes, eight is my hour. I cannot depart from it, even when travelling; so you see I dare not become your guest. However, I shall see you daily, and my young cousin here must do the honours of the neighbourhood to me."

"That I will," said Saxon, heartily.

Mr. Trefalden then shook hands with the pastor, and, Saxon having declared his intention of seeing him down the mountain, they went away together.

#### CHAPTER VI. THE VALUE OF A NAPOLEON.

As the two cousins passed across the grass-grown courtyard, and under the gateway, with the stork's nest overhead, Mr. Trefalden pointed up to the broken scutcheon.

"Is that a record of some medieval fray?" asked he.

"Oh dear no!" replied the young man, laughingly. "My great-grandfather smashed that heraldry when he bought the place."

"Then he was a zealous Republican?"

"Not he. Quite the contrary, I believe. No—he defaced the shield because the chateau was his, and the arms were not."

"I see. He did not choose to live in a house with another man's name upon his door. That was sensible; but he might have substituted his own."

Saxon's lip curled saucily.

"Bah!" said he, "what do we want of arms? We are only farmers. We have no right to them."

"Neither has any one else, I should fancy, in a republic like this," observed Mr. Trefalden.

"Oh yes—some have. The Rotzbergs, who lived here before us, the Piantas, the Ortensteins, are all noble. They were counts and knights hundreds of years ago, when the feudal system prevailed."

"Nobles who subscribe to a democratic rule forego their nobility, my young cousin," said Mr. Trefalden.

"I have heard that before," replied Saxon; "but I don't agree with it."

This young man had a sturdy way of expressing his opinions that somewhat amused and somewhat dismayed Mr. Trefalden. He had also a frightful facility of foot that rendered him a difficult companion among such paths as led down from the Châteaux Rotzberg to the valley below.

"My good fellow," said the lawyer, coming to a sudden stop, "do you want me to break my neck? I am not a chamol!"

Saxon, who had been springing from ledge to ledge of the slippery descent with the light and fearless step of a mountaineer to the manor born, turned back at once, and put out his hand.

"I beg your pardon," he said, apologetically. "I had forgotten. I suppose you have never been among mountains before?"

"Oh yes I have—and I can keep my feet here quite well, thank you, if you do not ask me to come down in a coranto. I have been up Snowdon, and Cadair Idris, and plenty of smaller heights—to say nothing of Holborn Hill."

Saxon laughed merrily.

"Why, what do you know of Holborn Hill?" said Mr. Trefalden, surprised to find that small jest appreciated.

"It is a hill rising westward, on the right bank of the Fleet river."

"But you have never visited London?"

"I have never been further than Zurich in my life; but I have read Stowe carefully, with a map."

Mr. Trefalden could not forbear a smile.

"You must not suppose that you therefore know anything about modern London," said he. "Stowe would not recognise his own descriptions now. The world has gone round once or twice since his time."

"So I suppose."

"I should like to take you back with me, Saxon. You'd find me a better guide than the medieval surveyor."

"To London?"

"Ay, to London."

Saxon shook his head.

"You do not mean to tell me that you have no curiosity to visit the most wonderful city in the world?"

"Not at all; but there are others which I had rather see first."

"And which are they?"

"Rome, Athens, and Jerusalem."

"Then I have no hesitation in prophesying that you would be greatly disappointed in all three. One is always disappointed in places that depend for their interest on remote association."

Saxon made no reply, and for a few moments they were both silent. When they presently left the last belt of pines behind them and emerged upon the level road, Mr. Trefalden paused and said:

"I ought not to let you go any further. My way lies straight before me now, and I cannot miss it."

"I will go with you as far as the bridge," replied Saxon.

"But it is growing quite dusk, and you have those mountain paths to climb."

"I could climb them blindfolded. Besides, we have arranged nothing for to-morrow. Would you like to walk over the Galenda to Pfaffers?"

"How far is it?" asked Mr. Trefalden, with a glance of misgiving towards the mountain in question, which looked fustier than ever in the gloaming.

"About twenty-three or four miles."

"Each way?"

"Of course."

"I am much obliged to you," said the lawyer, "but, as I said before, I am not a chamol. No, Saxon; you must come over to the Adler to-morrow morning to breakfast with me, and after breakfast, if you like, we will walk to Chur. I hear it is a curious old place, and I should like to see it."

"As you please, cousin. At what hour?"

"I fear if I say half-past eight, you will think it terribly late."

"Not at all, since you do not dine till eight at night."