

## WHAT THE SWALLOWS SAY.

A SONG OF AUTUMN.

(Translated from Théophile Gautier.)

Dry leaves drop silently, and cover  
The turf no longer fresh and green:  
Fair weather now alas! is over,  
The breeze at morn and eve is keen.

But, ere the Autumn days are ended,  
Earth's latest treasures charm the sight—  
The dahlia's full cockade is splendid,  
The marigold is flaming bright.

In bubbling drops the rain is beating  
On every fountain, while on high  
The swallows hold a monster-meeting  
To prate of winter, now so nigh.

By hundreds they have flocked together,  
Concerting plans to flee the cold:  
One says: "Tis always charming weather  
At Athens, on the rampart old."

"There, on the Parthenon I've wintered  
For many a year, in peaceful rest,  
And where a cannon-ball has splintered  
A pillar's frieze, I make my nest."

Another cries: "I hang my chamber  
Within a Turkish Café's walls,  
Where Hadjis count their beads of amber,  
And sunshine o'er the threshold falls."

"I come—I go—I find no trouble  
Mid Latakia's vapours white,  
And, while the long narghilehs bubble,  
I skim gay turbans in my flight."

A third: "In Baalbec's temple splendid  
A triglyph yields me shelter warm—  
There, lightly by my claws suspended,  
I screen my gaping chicks from harm."

A fourth: "In future, my address is  
Rhodes, once with knightly warriors fill'd—  
Beneath a capital's recesses  
On some black column I shall build."

A fifth one twitters: "I am fearful  
Age won't permit me far to fly:  
Still, Malta's terraces are cheerful  
Between blue water and blue sky."

A sixth: "For me the land of Pharaoh!  
I'll paste an ornament with loam  
High on a minaret of Cairo,  
And quickly have my winter-home."

The last one: "Soon I shall be sitting  
Above the Second Cataract:  
A granite monarch there is sitting,  
For swallows' nests expressly crack'd."

Then all exclaim: "With tireless motion  
To-morrow we shall voyage o'er  
Brown plains, white peaks, and purple ocean  
Whose foaming billows fringe the shore."

With quick shrill cries and wings a-flutter  
On the tall roofs and narrow eaves,  
Such is the talk the swallows utter,  
Scared by the Autumn's reddening leaves.

I can interpret all their prattle—  
Each poet is a bird of light,  
Though, like a captive, doomed to battle,  
With powers unseen that check his flight.

Then, "Oh! for pinions, airy pinions,"  
(As Rückert's charming verses sing)  
To rove, each year, o'er earth's dominions  
With swallows to eternal spring!

Montreal.

GEO. MURRAY.

## GEIER-WALLY:

A TALE OF THE TYROL.

CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

AT LAST.

"Ah!" Joseph drew a long breath. "Have you all seen it?" he asked, aloud—stooped and pressed a kiss on her hot, quivering lips. A loud hurrah pealed from every mouth. Then he raised her, and, almost fainting, she sank on his breast.

"Stop!" he said, sternly, retreating a step; "I want nothing more, one kiss is enough. You have now seen that I can conquer you, and I want nothing more!"

Wally gazed at him as if she did not understand him; her face was livid. "Joseph," she gasped, "then why did you come?"

"Did you suppose I had come to marry you?" said he. "A short time ago you said, before all the people, that Afra was my sweetheart because she could be so easily won, and Bären-Joseph would not have courage to struggle with Geier-Wally. Did you really suppose that a man who has any honor would allow such a thing to be said of him and a worthy lass? I only wanted to show you that I can cope with you as well as the bear or any other monster, and the kiss I've wrested from you I'll take to Afra, to make amends for the wrong you have done her. Remember this the next time your pride gets the better of you! I hope you'll now lose your fancy for public flouting and insulting poor, honest girls—for you've now, for once, felt what it is to be laughed at!"

A shrill peal of laughter echoed from every lip at Joseph's words. But the latter indignantly silenced the applause. "You have seen that I've kept my promise, and now I'll go to Zwiefelstein to soothe Afra, for the good little thing has been crying for fear I should harm the Höchstbauerin. May God be with you!"

He turned away, but all followed him; the joke had been too good. Bären-Joseph. Ah! he was a man! He had shown the proud Höchstbauerin that she had a master!

"It was good enough for the proud minx!"

"Served her right!"

"Joseph, this is the best thing you ever did."

"If this story gets abroad nobody will want her."

So the discarded suitors exclaimed in chorus; and all surrounded Joseph.

The dancing room was empty. Only two of the company remained with Wally—Vincenz and Benedict. Wally still stood motionless in the same spot. It seemed as if life had deserted her.

Vincenz, with folded arms, stood watching her. Benedict approached and touched her gently. "Wally, don't take it so much to heart: we are here and will get you satisfaction. Wally, speak. What shall we do? We are ready for anything: only say what you want!"

She turned and her large eyes glittered with an unearthly lustre in the corpse-like face. Her lips parted several times; but no words came. It seemed as if she had no breath to speak. At last, as if bursting from her inmost soul, she shrieked rather than uttered the words, "I want his life!"

Benedict shrank back. "Wally—God have mercy on you!"

But Vincenz approached her with sparkling eyes. "Are you in earnest, Wally?"

"In bloody earnest!" She raised her hand as if to call Heaven to witness the oath. The hand was stiff and the nails blue like those of a corpse. "So surely as my name is Wallburga Stromminger, I will marry the man who lays him dead at his Afra's feet!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

IN DARKNESS.

A strange, monotonous groaning echoed all night long through the silent Höchsthof. The maid servants sometimes awoke; but not knowing what they heard, fell asleep again. The floors creaked and the rafters shook.

It was Wally, who paced steadily to and fro with a heavy tread, struggling with fate, with Providence, in the death throes of her bleeding heart. Her clothes hung about her in tatters, the carved figure of Wallburga, the crucifix, and the Madonna lay shattered on the floor, crushed in her powerless fury.

She was half undressed, and her unbound hair hung dishevelled over her bare shoulders.

A candle burned low in the candlestick, and the flickering shadows distorted the features of the shattered Christ and seemed to animate them with life. Wally paused beside the fragments. "Yes, grin at me. You take me for a fool. You're all alike. Idols of wood and paper, that can help no one! You hear neither prayers nor curses. And those you represent are, Heaven knows where, and would laugh at us if they could see how we kneel before a bit of wood!" She kicked the fragments under her bed, that they might not interrupt her pacing to and fro.

Suddenly the report of a gun echoed from the distance.

Wally paused and listened. All was still. She had probably been mistaken. Why did the sound make her gasp for breath? She could not even be sure that it really was the report of a gun. Like a flash of lightning, the thought darted through her brain:

"Suppose Vincenz has murdered Bären-Joseph!" But that was nonsense; of course Joseph was sleeping quietly at home—or perhaps at Zwiefelstein, with his Afra.

At the thought she beat her head against the wall in unutterable torture, and visions rose before her mind which almost drove her mad! Oh! if he were only dead, dead, that she need no longer think of him! She threw open the window to breathe the fresh air.

Hansl, who slept on a pole before the window, woke and fluttered sleepily in.

"Oh!" cried Wally, as she held out her arms and pressed the bird to her heart; it was everything to her, the last thing she possessed in the world.

There, that was a second shot, and this time she distinctly heard that it came from the direction of Zwiefelstein. She dropped the eagle and pressed her hand upon her heart, as if the bullet had struck her. What was the cause of this terror? The trifling incident had suddenly conjured up before her soul the horrible deed she had suggested the day before. She was forced to think how she would feel if the shot she had just heard had crushed Joseph's head, and a mad, fierce joy took possession of her. Now he belonged to her; now he could kiss no one else. And as she thought of this, it seemed as if it had really happened: she saw him on the ground, weltering in his blood; knelt beside him, took his head on her lap, and kissed the pale face—the beautiful pale face. She saw it distinctly before her! But then a feeling of pity for the poor dead man suddenly overpowered her—an ardent, inexpressible pity. She called him by every loving name, shook him, rubbed him. In vain: he would never breathe again! No, no, this must not be; he must not die, rather let her perish!

It seemed as if some spasm had suddenly contracted her heart, so that no blood could flow through her veins; and now the spasm had passed away and the warm current again ran freely. She must go out; she must see if Vincenz were at home; she must speak to him before the morning: must tell him that the horrible deed could not be done. She felt as if she were in a fever; all her pulses throbbled. She had wanted—longed for—the crime; but

the mere thought that it might have come to pass quelled her anger; and she forgave!

She threw a kerchief over her shoulders and hastened across the farmyard and through the garden to Vincenz's house. What would he, what would every one think of her? Ah! she did not care. What did anything matter now?

She reached the house. A light was burning in Vincenz's room, on the ground floor. She glided up to it; the curtain was drawn aside, so that she could look within. Her breath almost failed: the chamber was empty, the candle had burned low in the socket. She walked around the house; the door was not locked. She softly opened it and entered. All was still—as death. The servants were still sound asleep; she glided through the whole house; nothing stirred. Vincenz had gone! An icy chill ran through Wally's frame. She entered his sleeping-room; the bed was in disorder; he must have lain down, but quickly risen again. His Sunday suit was hanging on the nails, but his working clothes were missing. His hat, too, had gone. She looked into the sitting-room: the nail on which the gun usually hung was empty.

Wally stood as if paralyzed. She did not know how she got out of the house. She was obliged to sit down on a bench before the door, for her feet would carry her no farther. She tried to calm herself. He had only been restless, and gone out to hunt. What harm could he do Joseph, who was quietly asleep somewhere—she shivered—on a soft pillow; and in the day-time, when everybody was astir, no one could injure him.

It was her evil conscience that conjured up these fears, and she buried her face in her hands. "Wally, Wally, what have you become?" Insulted, scorned, humiliated before all the people, and a criminal in the eyes of God! Where was there water enough to purify her! The Asche roared below. Yes, that could wash away every stain. If she plunged into the cold torrent, all would be removed—her agony and her guilt; the unhappy creature, who was created only for a torment, would perish forever! Yes, that was deliverance. Why did she still hesitate? Let her shatter the useless husk that held her soul imprisoned in the bonds of guilt and anguish! She started up, but could go no farther; and sank back on the bench. Did the crushed, dying heart still cling to life by some invisible thread? There—thank God!—a step crossed the turf: Vincenz was coming! Now she could talk to him: now all would be well.

"The saints preserve us!" cried Vincenz as she moved forward to meet him; "you here?" He looked at her as if she were a ghost. Wally saw, by the faint light of dawn, that he was pale and agitated; he carried his gun over his shoulder.

"Vincenz," she said in a low tone, "have you shot anything?"

"Yes."

"What was it?" She looked at his game-bag; it was empty.

"Venison!" he whispered.

Wally trembled. "Where is it?"

"He is lying in the Asche!"

Wally grasped his arm; and her eyes stared at him with the fixed glare of madness. "Who?"

"Can you ask?"

"Joseph!" shrieked Wally, staggering backward.

"It was hard work!" said Vincenz, wiping his forehead; "I never thought he would fall so quickly under a shot. The devil knows what sent him wandering about in the darkness. I had made up my mind to go to Sölden early in the morning, before he was up; but he ran up; he ran directly into my hands. It was still so dark that the first bullet missed, and the second only grazed him. But he must have grown dizzy, for he stumbled on the bridge and clung to the railing; I took advantage of the moment, sprang upon him from behind, and threw him over it."

A groan, like the rattle in the throat of a dying man, burst from Wally's lips, and, like an eagle swooping on its prey, she suddenly sprang upon Vincenz, clutching his throat with both hands. "You lie, Vincenz, you lie! It's not true, or I'll murder you."

"By my miserable soul, it is true! Did you suppose Vincenz would hesitate long when there was anything to be done for you?"

"Oh! murderer, base, cowardly assassin," sobbed Wally, trembling from head to foot. "I meant no such mean, skulking, vile work! I intended he should die in open, honest conflict. May a curse rest upon you in time and eternity! May you be an outcast in this world and the next! What shall I do to you? I should like to tear you in pieces with my teeth!"

"So these are all the thanks I get," muttered Vincenz, gnashing his teeth; "didn't you tell me to do it?"

"And, if I did tell you so, were you obliged to obey?" cried Wally, in feverish agitation. "People often say things, in anger, which they afterward regret. Could not you have waited till I could come to my senses after the horrible blow? Joseph, Joseph! I am wicked and savage, but I am no murderer. Oh! if you had only waited a few hours! But your own malice urged you on, and you couldn't rest till you had given vent to it!"

"That's right, throw all the blame on me," muttered Vincenz; "yet it's as much your fault as mine!"

"Yes," said Wally, "and I will atone for it with you. There is no mercy for either of us. Blood cries for blood!" she hissed, seized Vincenz by the neck, and dragged him away with her.

"Wally, let me go. What do you mean? Merciful God! are these your thanks? Mercy, Wally, you are strangling me! Where are you dragging me?"

"Where we both belong," was the hollow answer, and she dashed on like a whirlwind up the heights to the spot where a precipice slopes sharply down to the Asche—the spot where the deed had been done. "Down yonder," were the terrible words she thundered in his ear; "we two—together?"

"Merciful God!" shrieked Vincenz, in horror, "you swore that you would become my wife if I did the deed, and now you want to kill me."

Wally burst into her terrible, mocking laugh. "Fool, if I throw myself down there, shall we not be forever united? What? Do you try to defend your wretched life?" And, seizing him with a giant's strength, she forced him toward the edge of the cliff, to hurl him into the gray depths below.

"Help!" shrieked Vincenz, involuntarily, and—

"Help!" rose faintly, like a ghostly echo, from the abyss.

Wally stood as if petrified, and released Vincenz. "What was that? Was it a spectre? Did you hear that?" she asked.

"It was the echo!" he faltered, with chattering teeth.

"Hush!" There it is again!"

"Help!" once more rose like a breath from the chasm.

"May all the saints be praised! it is he. He lives; he is hanging somewhere; he is calling. Yes, I am coming, Joseph; wait Joseph, I am coming!" she shouted, in a tone like the blast of a clarion, and in the same clarion tones she roused the sleeping villagers as she flew down the street, knocking at every door. "Help! help! Some one has met with an accident. Help, for the love of God; a human life is at stake!"

The alarm roused the people from their beds; windows were thrown open. "What is it? what has happened?"

"Joseph—Joseph Hagenbach has fallen over the precipice!" shrieked Wally. "Ropes, bring ropes. Quick, quick; it may already be too late; perhaps it will be too late when we arrive!"

And, like the wind, she darted home, collected all the ropes she could find in the barn, and, with trembling hands, fastened them together; but though she knotted cords, ropes, traces, everything she could find, they were not enough to reach down to the bottom of the chasm where he lay—God knows where!

Meantime the people, still half incredulous about the terrible news, came running up, bringing ropes, grappling-hooks, and lanterns, for it seemed as if day would never dawn, and there was a confusion of questions and outcries, for no accident had ever happened here within the memory of man, and on the broad table-land they were unprovided with the means of rescue always at hand in other places, where dizzy crags and malign clefts and chasms yearly demand their victims. They reached the scene of the misfortune, and a thrill of horror shook even the most cold-blooded as they bent over the edge of the cliff and gazed down into the gray depths, where naught was visible save the floating mist that rested on the water. Vincenz had disappeared; far and wide a death-like stillness brooded over heights and depths. Wally uttered a shout that made the very air tremble. All held their breath to listen. There was no reply.

"Joseph, where are you?" she called again, in a voice that seemed to express the concentrated agony of the whole tortured human race. All was silent.

"He will never answer. He is dead," sobbed Wally, throwing herself despairingly and in anguish upon the ground: "now all is over."

"Perhaps he has only fainting or is so weak that he can't answer," said old Klettenmaier, consolingly, and then whispered in the girl's ear:—"Wally, remember the people!"

She rose and pushed her dishevelled hair back from her forehead. "Bind the ropes together; don't stand there so helplessly—what are you waiting for?" The men looked at each other doubtfully. "We must try whether he can be found," said Klettenmaier.

The men shook their heads, but began to fasten the ropes together.

"Who will be let down?"

"Who?" cried Wally, her dark eyes gleaming with an unnatural lustre in her pale face; "I will."

"You, Wally—you are crazy—the rope will scarcely bear one, far less two."

"It need not bear more than one," said Wally in a hollow tone, joining the men to hurry the work.

"That's impossible, Wally; you must bind yourself and him to it, or how is he to be drawn up?" said the men, helplessly stopping their work; "we can do nothing except send to the villages and order rope to be brought."

"And, meantime, if he faints, he will fall to the bottom of the chasm, and it will be too late!" cried Wally, despairingly. "I won't wait till they come; here, unwind the rope and see how it is. Quick! Forward!" She shook out the tangled mass, tried the length and strength, and the men once more bent to their task, wound up the huge coil, and began to make systematic preparations. The peasants stepped forward to form a chain. "It may be long enough to reach to the bottom, but it won't bear two!"

"If it won't, let him be drawn up alone. Where he has room to lie I shall have room enough to stand. As soon as I have found a