

VOL. XVI.

## MONTREAL, FRIDAY, AUGUST '3, 1866.

## THE TREASURE OF THE HARZ. [Translated from the German for the Catholic Mirror.

CHAPTER I.

The corporation of the shepherds of Rotenburg, in Franconia, had met, according to their time-honored custom, in that little town, for their annual assembly. They had transacted their business, had enjoyed a corporation dinner at the mn of the Golden Lamb,' and a rustic ball on the greensward of the public square. At sugset the dancers started for their respective villages, for some had come a distance of six or eight miles to attend the festival.

The older and richer shepherds remained at the inn, where, seated around a long table covered with mugs and jugs of wine, they prepared to spend a sociable evening. Some discussed the weather, others the breeds of their respective flocks. The generous wine unloosed their tongues and refreshed their memories, and they commenced telling stories. From adventures with wolves and narrow escapes during snow storms in the rugged mountain paths, they passed to marvelous narratives about witches and ghosts, and told such frightful tales that some of the quiet tradesmen of the town, who had remained eager listeners, felt their hair stand on end ; but they listened only the more eagerly.

Among the most talkable was an old shepherd named Father Martin, a weird looking patriarch, whom flowing locks and long beard had been whitened by the snows of eighty winters. He seemed to have an mexbaustible fund of marvel. ous adventures. Many of the topers had retired, and the remaining few had drawn closer to that end of the table nearest the wide chimney, in which blazed a huge log fire, when Father Martin called for another jug of wine to end the evening with, and addressed the company in these terms :---

· Comrades, you have told many adventures that smack of the marvelous and do credit to your imagination, and yet, without swerving from the truth, I might relate a certain story of my younger days which would eclipse all you have said. But the evening is so far advanced that I would not have time to finish it at this sit-

ting.' When the old man commenced to speak, all conversation had ceased, but at his last remark there was a general cry :

'Your story, Father Martin ! your story, to close this day of pleasure !'

'Finding that I could not be tempted, he ceased to insist, and merely added : " Thou shalt regret the lost opportunity.

silence, the spirit looked at me sadly and said : you could have made use of the 'Open-all,' but had been in reality a donkey. "Remember well what I am going to tell now you are too old to climb the Brocken. I Lucy grieved much to see her poor father ill-thee; treasure my words, and some day when knew all about this singular root; the best way treated. She had become very expert in all mayest turn the information to profit. An imcalled the Brocken. This treasure lies in a you seize the opportunity of the parent bird self of every little indulgence, in order to slip cave, lighted by night as well as by day. I have been guarding it for eleven bundred years, but | hole with a stout plug. Then hide where you from this day any one can take it who wishes ;-my mission has ceased. I had intended giving it | finds its nest closed, it will scream with anguish, | guests of the ' Golden Lamb' on the evening of to you, because I have taken a fancy for you, but ere long will take its flight westward. You since I saw you tending your sheep on the must have with you a red cloak or mantle, and Brocken.'

'The spirit then proceeded to tell me what I had to do to reach the treasure. His words are as fresh in my memoty as if I had heard them instant it touches the plug, the latter will come yesterday.'

"Go,' said be, 'to Mount Saint Andrew ;-there inquire the way to the dark little valley known formerly as the King's Vale. There you will find a small stream, which you will follow until you reach a stone bridge built near a sawmill. Do not cross this bridge, but keep to the cloth. And mind, the ' Open all' loses its virtue had taken no part in the general conversation, right of the stream till you get to a place where | if you hold it with the naked hand; you must a huge rock rises to its bed. At a stone's throw on the right, you will find a half filled excavation. Dig without fear, and you will reach the double walls of a narrow passage ; following this,you will discover a square, flat stone of some three feet diameter, well sealed in its bed of cement. Remove that stone, and you will have before you the narrow tunnel that leads to the

cave. " You will have to crawl on all fours, for the tunnel is very low, and you had better carry a miner's lamp between your teeth. Don't mind a few scratches; the road is rough, but push on, and you will come to a wide flight of stairs of seventy-two steps, by which you will descend to a spacious ball in the very centre of the moun-

tam. "" Three doors open at the further end of this hall. The one on the right leads to the vault where he the ashes of the former proprietor of the treasure ; touch it not. The door on the a viper's tongue, that attacked friends as well as left opens into the abode of imps and other evil foes. She quarrelled with her husband on the spirits. Go straight to the middle door; it is very day of their wedding, because he accisecured by a strong lock and heavy bars of iron, dentally trod on her foot while waltzing, and but it will open of itself the moment you shall their friends foresaw even then that their wedtouch it with the root known under the name of ded life would see more storns than sunshine .--' Open-all.'

heved by another old shepherd exclaiming :

await the return of the woodpecker, even if you have to stay there two days. The bird will re-turn with the root 'Open all' in its bill, and the him her hand, and he had been obliged to refuse, out with the noise and force of a cork from a Fridolin was an industrious, well behaved young bottle of champagne. You must lose no time in spreading the red cloth under the tree. The woodpecker, thinking it is fire, will be frightened, and drop the root. Some people build a fire of dry sticks, but this is not so sure as the red wrap it in dry moss or leaves."

These particulars, so minutely described by old Blase, furnished new food for discussion, and it was past midnight when the assembly broke up.

## ĨI.

Among the crowd of topers, one old fellow had remained silent, but without losing a word of what had been said. This man was known as Master Peter Bloch. He had been once a rich man, the owner of the principal inn of Rotenburg, and purveyor-in-chief oi the Senate. He was then a gay companion, loving fun and good cheer, and had many friends ; but times had sadly changed, and master Peter, in his old age, was a poor wretch, leading the life of a brute.

He had married early, when fortune was smiling upon him, but had made an unhappy choice. Bess [such was Mrs. Bloch's familiar appellation] was a vixen in temper; she was gifted with

little neglect or act of resistance on his part be-"What a pity, Father Martin, that you have ing sure to receive condign punishment at the Then, after remaining awhile in thoughtful let your secret rust so long. Forty years ago hands of his shrewish half, as deliberate as if he that day followed with the utmost solicitude the

thou shalt have become more reasonable, thou to procure it is through the agency of the black sorts of needle-work, and earned a great deal woodpecker. In spring-time you watch one of for a girl of her age; but she handed regularly mense quantity of gold and precious stones is these birds, and discover in what hollow tree he her gains to her mother. She found the means, buried in one of the mountains of the Harz, has made his nest. Once the little ones hatched, however, of saving a few sous, by depriving herleaving its nest in quest of food, and you stop the occasionally in her father's hand some small coin, wherewith to take his mug of ale or glass of wine. can watch the tree. When the bird returns and Thus it was that he happened to be one of the the festival.

He thought of his daughter with fond pride, for he could not give her the smallest dowry .--man, but he was poor; and Peter, who knew that his daughter looked favorably on the young man's suit, regretted bitterly that his poverty should prevent him from securiog her happiness.

Ensconced in a corner of the public room, be but had remained musing on his hard fate, and thinking by what means he could marry his daughter to her lover, and quit playing beast of burden for Madam Bloch.

His interest and curiosity were aroused by Father Martin's story, but when the sequel came, and old Blase explained so minutely the manner to procure the magic root, Peter became all ears; he believed implicitly in what the two shepherds treasure. While the company were discussing noisily, his unbridled fancy roamed afar ; he was in the Brocken, feasting his eyes on untold riches -then, again, securing his daughter's happiness and buying his own peace.

When Peter Bloch reached his humble home the idea of a visit to the Brocken had become a settled plan in his mind. His only regret was that it was not yet spring, and he would have to wait some months before he could procure the famous Open-all; but now he had hope to sustain him and strengthen him. At times the question would rise to his mind, ' It is halt a century since the spirit spoke to old Martin, suppose somebody else has had a similar revelation, and bas appropriated the treasure?' But he would not entertain such thoughts; a secret voice pocket to pay his travelling expenses. This done seemed to urge him on -he doubted not the final he pushed back the door, which closed of itself. result. Clumbing quietly to the loft where he and started gaily, alter shutting the street door. usually slept, he lit his little lamp, took pen, ink and putting the key in his pocket. and paper, and proceeded to write down the most minute particulars related by the two shepherds ; every word of theirs was graven on his memorv. The morning dawn found him finishing his expectedly she surprised poor Peter, pen in hand. 'You drunkard?' cried the amiable wife, you have spent the long night at the wine-shop, drinking the money you rob me of daily.'

. The disappointment of the innkeeper was re- work, and often also earned hard knocks-any last, one honest little fellow came breathless to tell him he had found a black woodpecker .----Peter rewarded the urchin generously, and from progress of nidification of the woodpecker .----Morning and evening he paid a visit to the tree, listening attentively for the first weak chirp. One day his patience was rewarded - he heard the tiny voices of the young brood, and thought it was the most heavenly music his ears had ever drank.

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He still wanted one thing, however. 'Red cloth had long since gone out of fashion, and he had been unable to procure any. One individual only was known to possess a crimson cloak, and that was the town hangman. Peter had always hesitated to approach this dread personage ; but he screwed up his courage, and having called on him, obtained the loan of the garment for a small consideration.

Peter followed old Blase's instructions to the letter, and met with entire success. At the sight of the red mantle, the frightened woodpecker dropped the root, and it was quickly wrapped in moss and stowed in Peter's pocket.

Master Bloch returned home with head erect. and a happy expression on his wan features that his wife's sharp attacks failed to dispel, at which she was much surprised and not a little mortified. Peter would not delay his departure, and circumtances favored his projects. The next day was a festival, and Bess and her daughter went to church, and he was left alone to mind the house. He resolved to decamp during their absence .--He had already shouldered his valise, when he bethought himself of a large safe, secured by seven heavy locks, the keys of which never left his wife's girdle. It was there the prudent Bess said, and resolved to attempt the discovery of the kept her hoards: not only her gains, but little sums presented from time to time to Lucy by her godfather. Peter was not permitted to meddle with the financial department, and had ever felt curious about the probable amount of his wife's savings. Here, then, was an opportunity to gratify his curiosity, and at the same time test the power of the Open-all. Uncovering carefully one end of the package, he touch the mas-sive door with the root. The seven locks drew in their bolts simultaneously, and the door flew open, revealing to his astonished gaze numerous little rolls of money, carefully piled up on the shelves.

Peter reflected awhile, and arguing that he was going to possess wealth compared to which this hoarded money would be like a doop of worker money would be like a drop of water

And they all pressed him so much that the old shepherd could not resist. He took a long pull at the jug, smoked his pipe, wiped his dripping moustache on the cuff of his coarse jacket, and began :

My first steps in life were painful. An orpnan from my early youth, I was left without where to find the precious root. friends or protection, and had to beg my daily bread from door to door. At last, having become a strong and hardy youth, I took service with a farmer of Hard, who engaged me to mind his numerous flocks of sheep. For more than two years I had followed this occupation, studded; but touch them not, it would be a sa- beir puffering or interfering with her culmary arwhen, returning to the farm one evening, I found that I had lost ten sheep. The farmer ordered me to go back without delay, and seek for them in the forest

" I started, and for several hours I wandered through the thick woods, my dogs having struck a wrong trail. I was benighted and could not find my way, so I resolved to sleep under a tree and resume the search next morning. Towards midnight, just as I was about falling into a sound sleep, my dog commenced growling and took refuge between my legs, with hair bristling and head drooping. I understood at once that there was something wrong, and I jumped to my feet. By the light of the rising moon I saw before me a human form of almost gigantic stature. This spectral being seemed covered with bair; his snow white beard descended below his waist; a sort of crown encircled his head, and his foins limbs quaked with fear."

"Thou chicken-hearted fool,' said the spectre, ' don't be atraid ! I am the keeper of the treasures of the Harz. Come with me, and thou wilt have as much gold as thou canst carry.'

'I tried to shake off the spell of terror that overwhelmed me, and making the sign of the cross, I replied :

" (Avaunt, Satan !! I do not want, thy gold."

The spectre laughed ironically, and said : ( Cowardly fool, thou refusest wealth ! - Well,

then, remain a poor wretch all thy life."

He turned as if to go, but seemed to change

"This root is not uncommon ; you cannot do to know peace under his roof. anything without it. The door can defy the Their first child was a boy. The foolishly strongest levers and mining tools. Any hunter | fond father spoiled him by continual indulgence. of experience in our mountains will tell you The little fellow was always roaming about the

will happen to you, though the door may open morsel he saw fit. Instead of scolding, Peter with a noise as loud as a clap of thunder. You will be dazzled by the magnificence and splendor piece of pie-crust, to eat with his meat. Not so task. Bess was an early riser; coming up unof the gems with which the walls of the cave are crilegious theft. In the centre of the cave rangements, she would fly at him and beat him stands a brazen chest of huge dimensions: it is soundly with the kitchen ladle or anything she filled with gold, and you can take all you can happened to hold in her hand. Bloch would carry-you will have enough for a lifetime.- then run and intercede for the culprit, and a Moreover, you will be permitted to return three quarrel would be the result. It is not to be wontimes to the cave, taking care to close the aperture each time. Should cupidity tempt you to lisbment, where they could eat their meals or attempt a fourth visit, you would be not only dis- | drink their wine in peace. appointed, but severely punished. You know rix : remember my instructions."

whip. When I looked around the spirit had dis- lass. appeared.

Old Father Martin thus ended his story .--Some of the listeners laughed, and told him it on a young sapling. He beckoned to me, but I implicitly, while the most circumspect looked friends and trusted them all, and, in contradic-could not budge; I felt cold all over, and my implicitly into the most circumspect si- tion with the principles of modern cupping fellow; be came to the conclusion that ney, instead of a bad dinner for much money .-there must be a sequel to the story-he wanted In a few years he was a bankrupt. to know if the old shepherd had attempted a visit to the cave, and with what result. Reaching a fresh jug, he replenished the old man's luck was against Peter. Some epidemic having shrugged his shoulders and went about his usual made up her mind to bear with her loss. Still, glass, and asked him innocently ;

Well, Father Martin, did you ever visit the cave, and find out whether the spirit had told you drove the poor children of Israel from the town the truth ?

Not I, replied the old shepherd, ' I aever moved a step to find that cave,'

"And why did you act ?"

For two reasons first, I did not care to expose, myself to some trick of the evil one, and

They were not mistaken. Peter Bloch was never

kitchen or near the dinner table set for the "Do not besitate, and fear not, for no barm boarders, and would help himself to any choice would laugh and give him a slice of bread or a

with Bess; whenever she caught her greedy

dered that the customers sought another estab-

What with too much eating and rough handnow how to reach the treasure of King Bructo- ling, little George died in his eighth year. But a second child, the pretty little Lucy, resisted As the spirit said these last words, my dog both the stuffing process of her father and the commenced barking, and I heard the distant rum- scoldings of her mother. At the time our story ble of wheels and the crack of a waggoner's begins she was an amiable, sweet-tempered

> Peter had found arithmetic the hardest study of his school days. It was a hard thing for him to keep the debtor and creditor sides of his ex-

The Town Council appointed Peter Bloch superintendent of the public water-works. But broken out in Rotenburg, the report spread that the Jews had poisoned the basins. The mob and sacked their bouses, which was the very object of the originators of the report. To crown this act of justice, Master Peter was dismissed on the charge of neglect of duty. - - / attent Poor Peter had never been remarkable for energy, and this last blow prostrated him com-

Master Peter was too much accustomed to matrimonial storms to mind the first squall,-It was in a very unruffled tone that he answered :---

' My dear wife, don't get mad. I am thinking of something that will make us rich and nappy.

'You find a way to make money?' exclaimed the irate dame. 'You fool, what have you been writing there ?'

' My will,' said he ; ' I don't know when I may die, and I want to arrange my affairs."

Lucy, who overbeard this commenced crying ; so soft-hearted.

'Your will !' she cried, and she laughed ironically ; 'your will ! you inveterate, good for-nothing drunkard. You have, squandered all we had, and you talk of making a will. What have you to bequeath ?'

Peter disdained to reply, or was probably not bad noticed him. disposed to a passage-of-arms with bis wife. He 

had completed his preparations, Denying him- facted with her customary active energy; a good

in a lake, he swept the little piles in his capacious

It was passed noon when Bess and Lucy returned home. They stood aghast when they tound the door locked and that no one answered their knocks. After much delay, and when Bess had made herself hoarse calling Peter in the shrillest tones, she sent for the locksmith to open the door. She was in a terrible passion, and prepared herself for a vigorous attack on Peter the moment he would return. But the day passed, then the night, and no Peter. The two women were lost in conjectures-learful forebodings presented themselves to their minds .---Lucy sat bathed in tears, for she loved dearly her old father, and Bess could not remain deaf to the voice of her conscience, reproaching her with the ill-usage which had driven her husband away, perhaps to the commission of some dreadful act. She could conceal no longer the terror of her thoughts.

'Lucy,' she cried; ' may the Lord forgive me, I apprehend your father has done away with himself !'

Poor Lucy had not dreamed of anything so dreadful. A yell of borror escaped ber, and she she thought her father might have a presentiment | fell senseless. When she revived, it was of approaching death. , But Dame Bess was not to give way to a paroxysm of uncontrollable grief.

As soon as it was day, Bess engaged some men to drag the river ; nothing was found. The most diligent inquiries gave no clue to the mysterious disappearance of Peter. He had left the town when everybody was at church, and no one

Lucy still mourned, but the practical Bess dradgery of carrying meal, bags on his back to something troubled her mind, who should carry the bags, to the mill? She must buy an ass Spring was approaching, and Master Peter, without delay, or her business would suffer. She self even his little allowance of wine, he had strong animal, was selected, the price agreed hoarded every cent obtained from the filial devo, upon, and the owner, told, to come to the house tion of Lucy ... With this money he had bought for his movey. Bess took her keys and went to a large value made of stout leather; that, and, a the safe -it was empty l; The furth flashed to strong stick out in the forest, completed his her, mind, Peter, had robbed her and went to en-l earned bis scanty allowance of food by hard errand; tonestsiof crows and blackbirds;; but at i dear lather was of dead; what did she care for

feather in ande instrumenter in ander in ander in ander of and the second content of and one of an of and the second of an of and the second of an of a second of any second of