

hearts of the readers of this to do what they can to help this little band of church people to build a "tabernacle" in their midst, where they may have and enjoy the services of their own church.

The smallest contributions will be most thankfully received by the undersigned, on behalf of the building fund.

Apologizing for occupying so much of your valuable space, I am, Yours very faithfully,
JAMES ASHTON,
Missionary.
Princeton, Ont., May 14th, 1884.

Children's Corner.

MAX :

A STORY OF THE OBERSTEIN FOREST.

CHAPTER V.

THE COMMUNICATION.

When Max quitted his prison, the sun had already set, and there remained but a faint glimmer in the west, tinging the flying clouds with rosy brightness. Already over the wood lay the shadows of night, and across the meadows in the valley was spreading the veil of evening mist.

"I must hasten," said Max to himself, "lest I arrive too late for Father John."

Without heeding the feeling of exhaustion which followed the first ecstasy of joy, he took the nearest path leading to the village. Only once did he for a moment stop in his descent, as he thought of his little flock, which to-day had had no other guardian than his faithful dog, but the next minute he was flying with increased speed forward.

"Mohr will surely take care," thought he, "that they get safely home without accident, and even at the worst, they would only have to remain a night in the woods," while the important news that he had for old John was constantly before him. Farther and farther he proceeded in rapid flight, heedless though at times he scratched his hands on the thorny bushes. At length he came to the path that led straight to the village. Now he left the thickest part of the forest, and trotted along, unimpeded by trees, with redoubled haste. Night had fairly set in; the stars in their sparkling brilliancy stood in the heavens, like silent sentinels.

"Father John shall see," said he to himself, "that the boy he has generously trusted has no dealings with smugglers. Ever forward!"

Still another half hour must his tired limbs carry him, ere he could reach his old home.

"Halt! who goes there?" resounded suddenly from a rough, harsh voice "Stand, or I shoot thee!"

At the same time, he heard the loud bark and howl of a dog, and in the next moment, felt the large teeth on his shoulder. Any other would have been frightened to death at such an unexpected cry and seizure in the dark night; but Max gave a joyful shout, for the voice that had cried out so angrily to him was old John's, and the dog that barked and howled, and seized him by the shoulder, was none other than his dear, old, attached Mohr.

"I am not shot, Father John," cried he, merrily; "I am Max all safe and sound, and joyful of heart at having met you, for you were the very person I wished to see."

John came hastily out of the darkness of the bushes, and was soon at his side.

"Boy," said he, angrily, "yesterday thou

camest home late; to-day thou hast remained away altogether, and didst send the dog alone with the goats, frightening thy mother and me to death. Where, in the name of wonder, hast thou been hiding, lad?"

"Quietly, Father John, quietly," returned Max, glad at heart to have met his old friend, and not at all caring that he was not in the best of humors. "When you know all, you will not scold, neither will the mother, for I am indeed innocent. And so, my good, clever Mohr has taken the whole flock safely home by himself, a splendid, dear animal he is. Come here, old fellow, and let me stroke you."

The dog received some caresses, which he took with a joyful howl.

Old John, however, soon put an end to this, while he asked sharply: "Now, good-for-nothing, where hast thou been hiding? The dog, certainly, is more clever and circumspect than thou; stop your play and give an account of yourself."

"You shall know all, Father John," returned the boy, and related, clearly and sensibly: the adventure that had that day befallen him.

Father John listened silently, and with great attention, only occasionally interrupting him; as, for instance, at the mention of Daniel's name, or the happy discovery of the chisel, when he uttered a short exclamation. At length, when Max ceased speaking, the old forester laid his hand on his shoulder: "Boy, thou hast acted like a man; like a courageous, steady, reflecting, and upright man; for the future shalt thou no more be treated as a child. Enough, brave lad, the thing is made up, and many words would only be superfluous, especially when we have so little time. Are the smugglers in Bretterode?"

"In Bretterode, and at midnight will they depart," rejoined Max.

"Good!" said old John. "Now it is only ten o'clock, and long before midnight, we could reach the Steinberger valley, if we walk quickly. They must come that way, for there is no other over the mountains. Forward then, my boy!"

"But Father John," cried Max, terrified, "you will never go alone to apprehend that troop of wicked men; they have sworn to murder you. That must never be!"

"When duty calls, a conscientious man must hearken, without asking whether his life be in danger or not," answered the old man, with strong determination. "It is too late to call my comrades to assist; they lie on the other side in the Hallinger valley, whither that villain Daniel enticed them, and where I also should have been, had I not fortunately met Mohr coming home with the goats. The agony of thy mother induced me to seek thee, for my presence in the Hallinger valley did not seem necessary, and so by a happy accident, we two will I hope be able at least to prevent the villany."

"Five waggons are there, didst thou say?"

"Five;" returned Max. "I could not possibly be deceived."

"Well, then, come; we will go to the huntsman's house."

"But, my mother;" continued Max, "how anxious will she be if neither of us return; and then I am so faint and exhausted with hunger, that I can scarcely go farther without refreshment."

"At all events, we must go to the huntsman's;" said the old man, "it is barely a

quarter of a league from this, and we will send from thence a messenger to relieve thy mother's mind. There also, thou shalt break thy fast, poor boy, for I can well believe, after such a day, thou must be terribly hungry. When thou art satisfied, we will see what can be done. If it be a case of necessity, I will go alone, but I would much rather that thou didst accompany me; for two guns are better than one."

"Am I to take a gun," asked Max, hastily, "and go with you as a protection?"

"Not to protect exactly, but to assist me," answered the old gamekeeper.

"But to shoot people—Father John, indeed, I can not do that," said Max, feelingly and hesitatingly.

"Neither do I ask you, dear boy," answered John. "I have never yet raised my rifle against a human being, nor would I, so long as I could avoid it, consistently with duty. Such a thing will not happen, I hope, to-night."

"Then of what use is the gun for me, Father John?" asked Max.

"That I will explain," answered the ranger, "thou knowest the Steinberger valley is so narrow, that two waggons cannot pass one another. Now, when the smugglers have reached this narrow pass, where we shall in the meantime have taken up a safe position, it will be easy enough to prevent their proceeding further, (though I would right gladly have avoided this cruelty if possible,) by shooting down the horses. The confusion of the men will be so great, that they will not for the moment know what to do. Most probably they will run off for fresh horses, and so the smuggled goods would be left in our possession. Before they could return, I would dispatch a messenger to my comrades in the Hallinger valley, hastening them hither, and our numbers would then be so great, that they could not venture a skirmish. Consider now, Max, if thou wilt accompany me. I would not force it, although I cannot conceal from thee that thy presence would be of use."

"Away, away, Father John, to the hunter's," cried Max, "provided I have not to take people's lives. I should never forgive myself if I left you in the lurch in such an important cause. No; you shall see that Max will behave like a man, when it is the cause of truth against wickedness and wrong doing."

"Well, to tell you the truth, I expected nothing else from you, my boy," said the old man. "Let us then walk on as fast as your strength will allow."

"Oh, I am quite fresh again," said Max. "Only, quick, Father John, for well I know every minute is of importance."

And with hasty steps the two hurried through the dark quiet wood. When they had gone about a quarter of a league, they saw before them a light, and a few minutes later the dogs began to bark, and old John knocked at the huntsman's door.

(To be continued.)

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