

and this, he hoped, would quiet all suspicion.

Max had descended the shortest way, and having come in great haste, ten minutes at least must have elapsed ere Bernard and his comrade made their appearance. He had therefore time so far to recover breath, and appeared to have been, who knows how long, in deep sleep.

"There lies the lubber snoring, instead of taking care of his goats," said Hans; "let us go on, he is harmless."

"Who knows that?" returned Bernard, distrustfully; and Max felt at the same time that the eyes of his enemy were fixed on him. "It is not the boy's custom to sleep when he should be awake. At all events, I will put a few questions to him."

"Thou, Max?" cried he, and pushed the boy with his foot, "wake up!"

In order not to excite suspicion, Max dared no longer continue his feigned slumber. He quickly sprang to his feet, rubbed his eyes, and appeared astonished.

"Hear, thou fellow, why didst thou pretend to be asleep?" said Bernard roughly. "Thinkest thou I did not see thine eyes winking when thou heardst us coming?"

Max's only answer was silence, and rubbing his eyes, he turned himself round to hide the blush that crimsoned his cheek. "Say nothing," he at last said, "of what you have seen to old John, if you should happen to meet him, for he would scold, and perhaps beat me."

"Well, and that would not do thee much harm," cried Bernard, laughing; "but is old John cross to thee? I always thought you and he were the best of friends."

"At times he is, and at times not," returned Max.

"Hearest thou, if such is the state of things, we two could perhaps become better friends with one another than we have been hitherto," said Bernard, and threw himself down under the shadow of the oak on the soft moss. "Leave us alone, Hans, for a little, and pluck some berries till I call thee. I have something to say to the boy. Come hither, Max, and sit down by me."

Max looked timidly at the man, whose character he too well knew. His heart beat quicker, and his colour changed. Who could tell what design he might have in his head! Had Bernard known (though that were impossible) that the youth had listened to their conversation, what would have become of him? However, he was in the power of the smuggler, and nothing remained but that he should conduct himself as coolly as possible.

"Be not afraid," said Bernard; "thou art a good boy, for thou hast kept thy word, and not betrayed me to the forester. Now come here."

Max placed himself distrustfully near Bernard, and looked inquiringly at him. In spite of the aversion and abhorrence which he felt for this dangerous man, he was desirous to know the reason of his confidence and familiarity.

"So, thou standest on not quite so good a footing at times with old John," began he, with feigned friendliness. "How one can be deceived! I always believed you were as father and son to one another, and that the old man kept no secrets from thee."

"Well, neither he has, though sometimes he has given me a rough word," answered Max, who, in order to secure his safety, spoke

rather doubtfully of the terms on which he lived with the old ranger. After what he had just heard, he knew well, that Bernard was only making a tool of him.

"Now, thou knowest quite well which way John generally goes to track the smugglers?" asked Bernard again.

"Oh yes, he often tells me," answered Max; "many times I have accompanied him, but he trusts to my not betraying what he confides to me."

"Yes, but you could tell it to a good friend," proceeded Bernard, "you see, that I have nothing to do with the smugglers, theirs is dangerous work; but the times are bad, one can earn nothing, and I confess openly that I have many times crept into the forest at night, to shoot down a deer in order to satisfy my hunger. I should be glad if thou wouldst tell me where the ranger goes, that I might avoid him."

Max saw immediately through the artfulness of the gang-leader. He might have been deceived, had he not so lately listened to the conversation related above.

"It is of no use," said he, shaking his head, after some consideration. "I dare not say whither old John goes; for, if I did, I should be the betrayer of one who has proved a friend. How wouldst thou have liked, if yesterday I had gone to the forester and told your secret, and, even less pleased would my old friend be if I betrayed him; but I will take your message to him, and bring back the answer."

"By no means, boy, or you suffer for it," cried Bernard, with a look which terrified Max. "One syllable to him, and thou art lost. He would immediately report me to the head ranger of woods and forests, and then—no, you dare not, and need not, tell him."

"Neither dare I tell you," said Max firmly.

"Ay, thou art no fool, Max," proceeded the smuggler, with insinuating voice. "See, now, thou art poor, so poor that thou hast to herd the goats. Now, if I promised thee a bright dollar, each time thou broughtst me news of old John, thou wouldst surely not hesitate; and as certain as my name is Bernard, thou shouldst have it, and here is a pledge, take that!"

"No, I cannot; the money would be sinfully earned, and would bring no blessing with it," returned Max, putting his hands behind him: "not for a hundred thousand dollars would I become old John's betrayer."

A deep flash of anger overspread Bernard's countenance when he found himself thwarted; still he governed his temper sufficiently to make a last attempt.

"Well, as thou wilt," said he, "thou art a stupid, foolish boy. The blood of old John will lie at your door, if I should at any time, in my own defence, have to shoot him down in the depths of the forest; thou mightest prevent it, if thou wert not so obstinate."

"Or, rather, such a thing would not happen, if thou wert not a deer-stealer, and walking in a way that is not good," cried Max indignantly. "Earn thy daily bread by honest labour, and thou wilt never be tempted to commit a shameful murder, neither entice a poor boy into ways of wickedness."

"Boy, I am not mad," shrieked Bernard, while he laid hold of him by the shoulders and shook him. "If a dollar is too little," raising his voice, "I promise thee a bright gold coin, on which thou mayest live many days happily. Wilt thou not consent?"

"No," returned Max; "no, I will not; for my mother has always told me to 'keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right.' What thou desiredst me to do is wrong, and therefore I will not do it; but I can go and tell old John what thou hast offered me, and he will know what to think of it. Now leave me, Bernard, for I will try and keep my integrity, and will have nothing to do with thee and thy sinful wages."

"But I will, nevertheless, have something to do with thee, now I know thy intentions, little venomous toad," said Bernard, with smothered rage in his voice, seizing with sudden grasp the arm of the boy. "Tomorrow thou mayst speak as much as thou wilt, but for to-day, at least, I will see that thou art harmless."

Ere he could call his faithful dog, Bernard had thrown Max to the ground, and stopped his mouth. The boy made a desperate exertion to defend himself, but what were his feeble efforts against the gigantic strength of the enraged man, who now also called his companion to help him.

"The lad must be imprisoned," said the leader to his comrade, "in one of the dungeons of the castle, or he will, by his tongue, bring all our plans to nought. Come!"

Max was, in spite of his exertions, carried off by the two villains. Through the thick underwood, through thorns and bushes that tore his hands and face, they led their young victim. They gagged his mouth so as to prevent him calling for help. Only a suppressed groan proceeded at times from his heavy heart. At the top of the hill they bound his hands behind him, and, forcing him over the old ruined walls, dragged him to a small oak door, almost hidden, which Bernard opened with a key taken from a crevice in the wall. A dark room lay before the eyes of the terrified boy, into which Bernard thrust him with a sneering laugh, slammed the door to, and cried, "Now, talk about me, and betray me, young viper, if thou wilt." He and his companion then hastened away. All soon resumed its former stillness. Not a sound was heard in that desolate spot, save at times when a raven would be heard cawing overhead, or some green lizards might be seen gliding over the walls, or comfortably basking on the broad stones which lay in the warm beams outside the iron grating.

(To be continued.)

WATCHING ONE'S SELF.—"When I was a boy," said an old man, "we had a school-master who had an odd way of catching the idle boys. One day he called out to us, 'Boys, I must have closer attention to your books. The first one that sees another idle I want you to inform me and I will attend to the case.'"

"Ah," thought I to myself, "there is Joe Simmons that I don't like. I'll watch him, and if I see him look off his book, I'll tell." It was not long before I saw Joe look off his book, and immediately I informed the master.

"Indeed," said he, "how did you know he was idle?"

"I saw him," said I.

"You did? And were your eyes on your book when you saw him?"

"I was caught, and I never watched for idle boys again."

If we are sufficiently watchful over our own conduct, we shall have no time to find fault with the conduct of others.