

## UNDER THE EVENING LAMP

### THE STORY OF A POOR SCHOLAR

BY D. ALCOCK, AUTHOR OF "THE SPANISH HEROES," ETC.

#### CHAPTER II.

After a sound sleep of two or three hours, Wenzel woke up suddenly. Through the tiny unglazed window the moon shone brightly in. It was very cold; but what did he care for that, as he nestled snugly and well covered up in the clean warm straw? He was quite comfortable, and content with his surroundings. Being wide awake now, he began to think. "I wish I had told that kind old man a little more," he mused. "It would have been good to have a talk with him about home. But perhaps he will ask me more in the morning, before I go away. I hope he will. Then I shall say to him—what shall I say? I will tell him my father was a knight and noble, who fought well under Kaiser Karl; and that he was also a true Brother of the Unity, who counted all things but loss for—how does it go?—for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. He came home to Bohemia to confess his faith in peace and freedom, as he hoped. But there persecution followed him. Almost my first recollections are of evil days—of terror, flight, hiding in the mountains, sometimes even in frost and snow. At last my mother died; and some time afterwards, whether long or short I scarcely know, my father was taken away to prison. Once they let me see him—oh, I shall not be able to tell much about that; it won't do to talk of it, though there is nothing I remember half so well, and I shall never, never forget it. His every word, his look as he blessed me, and bade me take the poor scholar's staff and knapsack, and beg my way, if need be, to the land of freedom, and to Wittenberg—Dr. Luther's Wittenberg. But not as I ought to tell truly, for Dr. Luther's sake only, since we have kindred there. Years ago my father's brother took refuge there from persecution, bringing with him his wife and child, and, I think a sister also. These, if they live yet, will welcome me, I doubt not. Soon afterwards, I heard of my father's death in prison. I burned to fulfil his charge, but was hindered for a while by my mother's kindred, who were Catholics, and wanted to keep me with them. However, I escaped their vigilance, and here I am. That is what I have to tell grandfather Fritz to-morrow. I am sure he will bid me God speed, and wish me good luck in the name of the Lord. Then I shall go on my way to Wittenburg, and get there soon, no doubt. I shall learn in the famous School, and study hard, night, noon, and morn. Oh, as for living, 'twill be easy enough to live there! If I find my kindred, all will be well, for no doubt they will help me. In any case, I can help myself, for my hands are strong, and my heart too. At the very worst I can serve for bread while I study, as some say our Master John Huss did himself; or sing for it, like the great Dr. Luther, when he was a boy. To be sure I am nobly born. No reason why I should not serve, if need be, though good reason why I should also practise the exercises befitting my degree. And then one day perhaps, scholar though I be, I may fight and win battles, and gain renown, and make the fair name of my father's an honored name again, as in the days gone by." At this point his thought began to grow confused. He was talking with his young cousins in the cattle yard of Melnik, his uncle's residence; he was cleaning Dr. Martin Luther's boots in Wittenberg; he was bartering a battered Virgil for a long sword with a basket hilt;—in fact, he was once more fast asleep.

He woke again; this time not in stillness and moon-light, but amidst noise and glare. A bright red light flashed through the unglazed window, and the air was full of voices that screamed and shouted. He sprang up and looked out. To his horrified eyes the cottage seemed a sheet of flame. Outside, a group of children in the scantiest clothing clung screaming to their mother; while the old grandfather seemed to be making a desperate, vain attempt to climb the pear tree. Wenzel rushed out, buckling together as he went the clothes he had not thrown off.

"God sent you!" gasped the old man, pointing to the little upper window, like a half-closed eye in

the thatch. "Two children there—and Gretchen!" Wenzel made a rush to the door of the burning house.

"Not that way!" cried the old man. "No passage. The pear tree! You are light. You can climb."

That was easy enough. Wenzel found foothold near the top, and saw at the little window—too awfully bright—the white face of Gretchen. She was silent, but the children with her were shrieking aloud in their terror.

"Put one through to me. I can reach over. The smallest first," cried Wenzel.

Gretchen handed out the toddling wee thing, next in age to the babe in arms. Wenzel caught her in his arms, descended rapidly, and gave her to the grandfather, who was waiting below. But the next was a harder task. It was very difficult to push the stout child of three, who was struggling and kicking lustily, through the little window; and Wenzel, in trying to catch and hold him, nearly fell to the ground. Still he managed, he never knew how, to get him safely into his grandfather's arms, and ascend the tree again; for a piteous cry was sounding in his ears—

"Oh come—come quick! I'm burning!" Never doubting his strength, though his foothold was none of the surest, Wenzel stretched out his arms. "Come to me," he cried.

Oh the anguish in the voice that wailed, "I can't—can't—get through!"

Wenzel stooped down. "An axe!" he cried breathlessly. "An axe!"

It was brought by the eldest boy, a smart little lad of ten.

"Climb as high as thou canst, and hand it up."

The boy obeyed. Wenzel, leaning down, caught it from him, and sprang across to the blazing roof. Heedless of the smoke that was choking him, of the flame that was scorching his face, he flung his whole soul into the mighty strokes he was dealing against the woodwork of the window-frame. It gave way quickly.

"Out now!" he whispered. "Drop down. They will catch you. I—can—no more."

A sense of burning heat, and of falling, falling, falling—a sudden thought that for him the end of all things had come—and Wenzel knew no more.

(To be continued.)

## THE HOME CIRCLE.

### COURAGE

Wounded! I know it, my brother,  
The sword hath pierced thy heart  
Courage! in silent endurance  
Play thou the hero's part.

Make no sad plaint or moaning,  
Smile as in days before;  
Wrap thy mantle around thee,  
Cover the bleeding sore.

Fight! yes, fight with God-weapons  
Give blow on blow—but smile;  
Heel up! step out! march steady  
I ramping the long Life mile.

Brother, the road thou'rt treading  
Thy Captain Himself trod  
Shrink not, if His order come ringing,  
"Forward! the city for God!"

Finch not, though comrades be falling,  
Though loudly death-drums beat  
The Buglers of God are sounding  
"Forward! and no retreat."

Pledged to follow thy Captain,  
Through good report or ill;  
With a cheer take the post set thee,  
Rejoice to do His will.

Rejoice, if He think thee worthy  
To front the fiercest foe;  
And wrap thy cloak around thee,  
Thy wound let no man know.

### BRAVE MARGARET CARGILL.

Margaret Cargill was a lovely and cultivated Scottish girl, who, early in life, had the faith and the courage to leave home and friends, and, with the noble young man to whom