

finger, said:

"David, I'll pay you back again!" and made no other answer.

Then the old rabbi laughed, and with good heart, with all the others.

The grand fenzel of the Bœuf Rouge now entered to clear the table, coming from the kitchen with a waiterful of glasses, Katel following with another waiterful of coffee and wineglasses.

The old rabbi sat himself down between Joseph and Kobus; Frederick Schultz took from his pocket a great pipe of Ulm, and Fritz went to hunt in the armory for a box of cigars.

When Katel went out the door remained open for a minute, and a little, fresh, young voice came through it from the kitchen:

"Ha, Kattel, good morning. Mon Dieu! but you are having a splendid dinner; all the village is talking about it."

"Chit!" said the old servant.

And the door shut.

All eyes listened at the table. The great preceptor, Haan, said: "My! what a pretty voice. Did you hear it? Ha! ha! One of Kobus' dependents, do you see?"

"Kattel! Kattel!" called the astonished Fritz.

The kitchen door opened, and Katel answered:

"Have you forgotten anything sir?"

"No," said Fritz, "but who is there?"

"The little Suzel, sir, the daughter of your farmer, you know, at Meisenthal; she has brought some eggs and fresh butter."

"Ah! so it is the little Suzel?" said Fritz.

"Well, well, tell her to come in; it has been months since I have seen her."

Katel returned to the kitchen.

"Suzel, monsieur wants you to go in."

"Ah, mon Dieu! Katel, I am not dressed."

"Suzel! Suzel!" cried Kobus, "come in."

Then a little girl, perhaps of 16 or 17 years, fresh as a bunch of daisies, with blue eyes, and a little nose with delicate nostrils, lips graciously rounded, and dressed in a skirt of white and sack of blue, stood upon the door sill, with her head bent bashfully down.

All looked at her with admiration, and Kobus seemed astonished.

"You have grown very much, Suzel," he said at last. "Come in, and don't be afraid! we are not going to eat you."

"Ah, I well know that," she said, "but—but—I am not dressed."

"Not dressed!" cried Haan, "are not pretty girls always dressed and prettily dressed?"

Then Fritz, turning round and shrugging his shoulder, said:

"An infant, Haan! a veritable infant!" Then to the bunch of daisies: "Suzel, you must take coffee with us. Katel, bring a cup for the little one."

"Oh, M. Kobus, I dare not; never!"

"Bah! bah! hurry, Katel," and the old servant returned with a cup.

Suzel, red to her ears, sat down between Kobus and the old rabbi, at the right of the board.

Fritz spoke:

"Well, Suzel, what are you doing at the farm? Is Father Christel well?"

"Oh, yes, monsieur. Dieu merci, he is always well," said the little one. "He told me to give you his respects, and my mother did, also."

"Ah, that is good; it gives me pleasure. You had a deal of snow last winter?"

"Yes, monsieur; two feet-around the farm for three montas."

"Then the sowing was well covered."

"Yes, M. Kobus, all covered."

"That's well. But drink, Suzel; perhaps you don't like the coffee?"

The old rabbi regarded her for a moment with an air tender and fraternal, then sugarced her coffee himself, saying as he did so: "There! you are a good little girl; yes, a good little girl, Suzel. Taste a drop of the wine; it will give you courage."

"Oh, thank you, M. David," said the little low voice; and the old rabbi was content.

Kobus watched the little one—so sweet, so gentle, so timid, and, as he looked, seemed carried away to the open country—to the old farm. She was the perfume from the woods—the breath of springtime; and in her low voice he heard the notes of the lark trilling over the harvest fields.

Then he spoke:

"I suppose the harvesting is all done, Suzel?"

"Yes, M. Kobus, all done. And father wished to see you; we have waited for you a long time; he has so many things to ask you about what to do before the winter comes again."

Then came a little silence. Kobus, seeing that the young girl had drunk her coffee and that she was still embarrassed, said to her:

"Well, you may go now, my dear child; I am happy to have seen you. Go to Katel, who waits for you; he will put a pate in your basket and a bottle of good wine for Father Christel."

"Thank you," said the little one, jumping up quickly and making a pretty reverence to excuse herself.

"And don't forget," said Kobus, "to tell your father I will be at his house in a few days."

"Oh, no, monsieur; I will forget nothing!" and she escaped like a bird from its cage.

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It was long after midnight when Fritz Kobus' guests arose and took their departure. The great preceptor, Haan, and the grand Frederick Schultz marched before, Joseph following after them, and after him David Sichel—all jolly fellows together.

And so ended Fritz Kobus' last bachelor dinner.