

MARGERY - VOLUME 3.

GEORG EBERS*

Volume 3.

CHAPTER XI.

Herdegen was to be back in Padua before Passion week, and I shall remember with thankfulness to the day of my death the few months after worthy Veit Spiesz's burial and before my brother's departure. Not a day passed without our meeting; and after my heart had moved me to tell Cousin Maud all that had happened, and Herdegen had given his consent, we were rid once for all of the mystery which had at first weighed on our souls.

Verily the worthy lady found it no light matter to look kindly on this early and ill-matched betrothal; yet had she not the heart, nor the power, to make any resistance. When two young folks who are dear to her are brimfull of high happiness, the woman who would turn them out of that Garden of Eden and spoil their present bliss with warnings of future woe must be of another heart and mind than Cousin Maud. She indeed foresaw grief to come in many an hour of mistrust by day and many a sleepless night, more especially by reason of her awe and dread of my grand-uncle; and indeed, she herself was not bereft of the old pride of race which dwells in every Nuremberger who is born under a knight's coat of arms. That Ann was poor she held of no account; but that she was not of noble birth was indeed a grief and filled her with doubts. But then, when her best-beloved Herdegen's eyes shone so brightly, and she saw Ann cling to him with maidenly rapture, vexation and care were no more.

If I had sung a loud hymn of praise in the woods over their spring and autumn beauty—and verily it had welled up from my heart—I was ready to think winter in the town no less gladsome, in especial under the shelter of a home so warm and well built as our old Schopper-hof.

In the last century, when, at the time of the Emperor Carolus—[Charles IV., 1348]—coming to the throne, the guilds, under the leadership of the Gaisbarts and Pfauentritts, had risen against the noble families and the worshipful council, they accused the elders of keeping house not as

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beseemed plain citizens but after the manner of princes; and they were not far wrong, for indeed I have heard tell that when certain merchants from Scandinavia came to our city, they said that the dwelling of a Nuremberg noble was a match in every way for their king's palace.

[Gaisbart (goat's beard) and Pfauentritt (peacock-strut), were nicknames given to the leaders of the guilds who rebelled against the patrician families in Nuremberg, from whom alone the aldermen or town-council could be elected. This patrician class originated in 1198 under the Emperor Henry IV., who ennobled 38 families of the citizens. They were in some sort comparable with the families belonging to the Signoria at Venice, from whom, in the same way, the great council was chosen.]

As touching our house, it was four stories high, and with seven windows in every story; with well devised oriels at the corners, and pointed turrets on the roof. The gables were on the street, in three steps; over the great house door there was our coat of arms, the three links of the Schoppes and the fool's head with cap and bells as a crest on the top of the casque. The middle windows of the first and second stories were of noble size, and there glittered therein bright and beautiful panes of Venice glass, whereas the other windows were of small roundels set in lead.

And while from outside it was a fine, fair house to look upon, I never hope to behold a warmer or more snug and comfortable dwelling than the living-rooms within which was our home the winter through; albeit I found the saloons and chambers in the palaces of the Signori at Venice loftier and more airy, and greater and grander. Whenever I have been homesick under the sunny blue sky of Italy, it was for the most part that I longed after the rich, fresh green foliage and flowing streams of my own land; but, next to them, after our pleasant chamber in the Schopper-house, with its warm, green-tiled stove, with the figures of the Apostles, and the corner window where I had spun so many a hank of fine yarn, and which was so especially mine own—although I was ever ready and glad to yield my right to it, when Herdegen required it to sit in and make love to his sweetheart.

The walls of this fine chamber were hung with Flanders tapestry, and I can to this day see the pictures which were so skilfully woven into it. That I loved best, from the time when I was but a small thing, was the Birth of the Saviour, wherein might be seen the Mother and Child, oxen and asses, the three Holy Kings from the East—the goodliest of them all a blackamoor with a great yellow beard flowing down over his robes. On the other hangings a tournament might be seen; and I mind me to this day how that, when I was a young child, I would gaze up at the herald who was blowing the trumpet in fear lest his cheeks should burst, inasmuch as they were so greatly puffed out and he never ceased blowing so hard. Between the top of these hangings and the ceiling was a light wood cornice of oak-timber, on which my father, God rest him, had caused

various posies to be carved of his own devising. You might here read:

”Like a face our life may be
To which love lendeth eyes to see.”

Or again,

”The Lord Almighty hides his glorious face
That so we may not cease to seek his grace.”

Or else,

”The Lord shall rule my life while I sit still,
And rule it rightly by his righteous will.”

And whereas my father had loved mirthful song he had written in another place:

”If life be likened to a thorny place
Song is the flowery spray that lends it grace.”

Some of these rhymes had been carved there by my grandfather, for example these lines:

”By horse and wain I’ve journeyed up and down,
Yet found no match for this my native town.”

And under our coat of arms was this posy.

”While the chain on the scutcheon holds firm and fast
The fool on the crest will be game to the last.”

Of the goodly carved seats, and the cushions covered with motley woven stuffs from the Levant, right pleasant to behold, of all the fine treasures on the walls, the Venice mirrors, and the metal cage with a grey parrot therein, which Jordan Kubbelmg, the falconer from Brunswick, had given to my dear mother, I will say no more; but I would have it understood that all was clean and bright, well ordered and of good choice, and above all snug and warm. Nay, and if it had all been far less costly and good to look at, there was, as it were, a breath of home which must have gladdened any man’s heart: inasmuch as all these goodly things were not of yesterday nor of to-day, but had long been a joy to many an one dear to us; so that our welfare in that dwelling was but the continuing of the good living which our parents and grandparents had known before us.

Howbeit, those who will read this writing know what a patrician’s house in Nuremberg is wont to be; and he who hath lived through a like childhood himself needs not to be told how well hide and seek may be played in a great hall, or what various and merry pastime can be devised

in the twilight, in a dining hall where the lights hang from the huge beams of the ceiling; and we for certain knew every game that was worthy to be named.

But by this time all this was past and gone; only the love of song would never die out in the dwelling of the man who had been well-pleased to hear himself called by his fellows "Schopper the Singer." Ah! how marvellous well did their voices sound, Ann's and my brother's, when they sang German songs to the lute or the mandoline, or perchance Italian airs, as they might choose. But there was one which I could never weary of hearing and which, meseemed, must work on Herdegen's wayward heart as a cordial. The words were those of Master Walther von der Vogelweirde, and were as follows:

"True love is neither man nor maid,
No body hath nor yet a soul,
Nor any semblance here below,
Its name we hear, itself unknown.
Yet without love no man may win
The grace and favor of the Lord.
Put then thy trust in those who love;
In no false heart may Love abide."

And when they came to the last lines Kunz would oftentimes join in, taking the bass part or continuo to the melody. Otherwise he kept modestly in the background, for since he had come to know that Herdegen and Ann were of one mind he waited on her as a true and duteous squire, while he was now more silent than in past time, and in his elder brother's presence almost dumb. Yet at this I marvelled not, inasmuch as I many a time marked that brethren are not wont to say much to each other, and even between friends the one is ready enough to be silent if the other takes the word. Moreover at Easter Kunz was likewise to quit home, and go to Venice at my granduncle's behest. Herdegen's love for his brother had, of a certainty, suffered no breach; but, like many another disciple of Minerva, he was disposed to look down on the votaries of Mercury.

Nevertheless the links of the Schopper chain, to which Ann had now been joined as a fourth, held together right bravely, and when we sang not, but met for friendly talk, our discourse was but seldom of worthless, vain matters, forasmuch as Herdegen was one of those who are ready and free of speech to impart what he had himself learned, and it was Ann's especial gift to listen keenly and question discreetly.

And what was there that my brother had not learned from the great Guarino, and the not less great Humanist, his disciple Vittorino da Feltre, at that time Magistri at Padua? And how he had found the time, in a right gay and busy life, to study not merely the science of law but also Greek, and that so diligently that his master was ever ready to laud him, was to me a matter for wonder. And how gladly we hearkened while he told us of the great Plato, and gave us to know wherefore and on what

grounds his doctrine seemed to him, Herdegen, sounder and loftier than that of Aristotle, concerning whom he had learned much erewhile in Nuremberg. And whereas I was moved to fear lest these works of the heathen should tempt him to stray from the true faith, my soul found comfort when he proved to us that so glorious a lamp of the Church as Saint Augustine had followed them on many points. Also Herdegen had written out many verses of Homer's great song from a precious written book, and had learned to master them well from the teaching of the doctor of Feltre. They were that portion in which a great hero in the fight, or ever he goes forth to battle, takes leave of his wife and little son; and to me and Ann it seemed so fine and withal so touching, that we could well understand how it should be that Petrarca wrote that no more than to behold a book of Homer made him glad, and that he longed above all things to clasp that great man in his arms.

Indeed, the poems and writings of Petrarca yielded us greater delights than all the Greek and Roman heathen. Master Ulsenius had before now lent them to Ann, and she like a bee from a flower would daily suck a drop of honey from their store. Yet was there one testimony of Petrarca's—who was, for sure, of all lovers the truest—which she loved above all else. In the dreadful time of the Black Death which came as a scourge on all the world, and chiefly on Italy, in the past century, the lady to whom he had vowed the deepest and purest devotion, appeared to him in a dream one fair spring morning as an angel of Heaven. And whereas he inquired of her whether she were in life, she answered him in these words: "See that thou know me; for I am she who led thee out of the path of common men, inasmuch as thy young heart clung to me." And lo! on that very sixth of April, which brought him that vision, one and twenty years after that he had first beheld her, Laura had made a pious end.

With beseeching eyes Ann would repeat to her best beloved, as they sat together in the oriel bay, how that Laura had led her Petrarca from the ways of common men; and it went to my heart to hear her entreat him, with timid and yet fond and heartfelt prayer, to grant to her to be his Laura and to guide him far from the beaten path, forasmuch as it was narrow and low for his winged spirit. And while she thus spoke her great eyes had a marvellous clear and glorious light, and when I looked in her face wrapped in the veil of her mourning for her father, my spirit grew solemn, as though I were in church. Herdegen must have felt this likewise, methinks, for he would bend the knee before her and hide his face in her lap, and kiss her hands again and again.

But these solemn hours were few.

First and last it was a happy fellowship, free and gay, though mingled with earnest, that held us together; and when Ann's father had been some few weeks dead our old gleefulness came back to us again, and then, after gazing at her for a while, Herdegen would suddenly strike the lute and sing the old merry round:

”Come, sweetheart, come to me.
Ah how I pine for thee!
Ah, how I pine for thee
Come, sweetheart, come to me.
Sweet rosy lips to kiss,
Come then and bring me bliss,
Come then and bring me bliss,
Sweet rosy lips to kiss!”

And we would all join in, even Cousin Maud; nay and she would look another way or quit the chamber, stealing away behind Kunz and holding up a warning finger, when she perceived how his Ann’s ”sweet, rosy lips” tempted Herdegen’s to kiss them. But there were other many songs, and oftentimes, when we were in a more than common merry mood, we strange young things would sing the saddest tales and tunes we knew, such as that called ”Two Waters,” and yet were we only the more gay.

Herdegen could not be excused from his duty of paying his respects from time to time to the many friends of our honorable family, yet would he ever keep away from dances and feastings, and when he was compelled to attend I was ever at his side, and it was a joy to me to see how courteous, and withal how cold, was his demeanor to all other ladies.

The master’s fiftieth birthday was honored in due course at the Tetzels’ house, and to please my granduncle, Herdegen could not refuse to do his part in song and in the dance, and likewise to lead out Ursula, the daughter of the house, in the dances. Nor did he lose his gay but careless mien, although she would not quit his side and chose him to dance with her in ”The Sulkers,” a dance wherein the man and maid first turn their backs on each other and then make it up and kiss. But when it came to this, maiden shame sent the blood into my cheeks; for at the sound of the music, in the face of all the company she fell into his arms, as it were by mishap; and it served her right when he would not kiss her lips, which she was ready enough to offer, but only touched her brow with his.

Forasmuch as she had danced with him the Dance of Honor or first dance, it was his part to beg her hand for the last dance—the ”grandfather’s dance;”—[Still a well-known country dance in Germany.]—but she would fain punish him for the vexation he had caused her and turned her back upon him. He, however, would have none of this; he grasped her hand ere she was aware of him, and dragged her after him. It was vain to struggle, and soon his strong will was a pleasure to her, and her countenance beamed again full brightly, when as this dance requires, he had led the way with her, the rest all following, through chamber and hall, kitchen and courtyard, doors and windows, nay, and even the stables. In the course of this dance each one seized some utensil or house-gear, as we do to this day; only never a broom, which would bring ill-luck. Ursula had snatched up a spoon, and when the mad sport was

ended and he had let go her hand, she rapped him with it smartly on the arm and cried: "You are still what you ever were, in the dance at least!"

But my brother only said: "Then will I try to become not the same, even in that."

Round the Christmas tree and at the sharing of gifts which Cousin Maud made ready for Christmas eve, we were all friendly and glad at heart, and Ann found her way to join us after that she had put the little ones to bed.

Herdegen said she herself was the dearest gift for which he could thank the Christ-child, and he had provided for her as a costly token the great Petrarca's heroic poem of Africa, in which he sings the deeds of the noble Scipio, and likewise his smaller poems, all written in a fair hand. They made three neat books, and on the leathern cover, the binder, by Herdegen's orders, had stamped the words, "ANNA-LAURA," in a wreath of full-blown roses. Nor was she slow to understand their intent, and her heart was uplifted with such glad and hopeful joy that the Christ-child for a certainty found no more blissful or thankful creature in all Nuremberg that Christmas eve.

The manifold duties which filled up all her days left her but scant time wherein to work for him she loved; nevertheless she had wrought with her needle a letter pouch, whereon the Schoppers' arms were embroidered in many colored silks, and the words 'Agape' and 'Pistis'—which are in Greek Love and Faithfulness in Greek letters with gold thread. Cousin Maud had dipped deep into her purse and likewise into her linen-press, and on the table under the Christmas-tree lay many a thing fit for the bride-chest of a maid of good birth; and albeit Ann could not but rejoice over these gifts for their own sake, she did so all the more gladly, inasmuch as she guessed that Cousin Maud was well-disposed to speed her marriage.

We were all, indeed, glad and thankful; all save the Magister, whose face was ill-content and sour by reason that he had culled many verses and maxims concerning love, for the most part from the Greek and Latin poets, and yet all his attempts to repeat them before Ann came to nothing, inasmuch as she was again and again taken up with Herdegen and with me, after she had once shaken hands with him and given him her greetings.

At supper he was as dumb as the carp which were served, and it befell that for the first time Herdegen took his seat between him and his heart's beloved; and verily I was grieved for him when, after supper, he withdrew downcast to his own chamber. The rest of us went forth to Saint Sebald's church, where that night there would be midnight matins, as there was every year, and a mass called the Christ mass. Cousin Maud and Kunz were with us, as in the old happy days when we were children and when we never missed; and in the streets as we went, we met all manner of folks singing gladly:

Puer natus in Bethlehem,
Sing, rejoice, Jerusalem!

or the carol:

Congaudeat turba fadelium!
Natus est rex, Salvator omnium
In Bethlehem.

and we joined in; and at last all went together to see Ann to her home.

Next evening there were more costly gifts, but albeit Puer natus was still to be heard in the streets, we no longer were moved to join in.

CHAPTER XII.

Every Christmas all my grand-uncle's kith and kin, or so many of them as were on good terms with him, assembled in the great house of the Im Hoffs. Everything in that dwelling spoke of ease and wealth, and no banqueting-hall could be more brightly lighted or more richly decked than that where the old man welcomed us on the threshold; and yet, how well soever the hearth was piled or the stove heated, a chill breath seemed to blow there.

While great and small were rejoicing over the grand old knight's bounty he himself would ever stand apart, and his calm, hueless countenance expressed no change. Meseemed he cared but little for the pleasure he gave us all; yet was he not idle in the matter, nor left it to others; for there was no single gift which he had not himself chosen as befitting him to whom it should be given.

The trade of his great house was for the most part with Venice, and it would have been easy to fancy oneself in some fine palazzo on the grand canal as one marked the carpets, the mirrors, the brocade, and the vessels in his house; and not a few of his tokens had likewise been brought from thence.

Before this largesse in his own house he was wont to bestow another, and a very noble one, on the old men and women of the poor folks in the town; and when this was over he went with them to the church of Saint Aegidius, and washed the feet of about a score of them, which act of penitential humility he was wont to repeat in Passion week.

Then when he had welcomed his kin, each one to his house, he would say to such as thanked him, if it were a child, very soberly: "Be a good child."

But for elder folks he had no more than "It is well," or an almost churlish: "That is enough."

This evening he had given me a gown of costly brocade of Cyprus; to Kunz everything that a Junker might need on his travels; and to Herdegen the same sword which he himself had in past time worn at court; the hilt was set with gems and ended in the lion rampant, coupé, of the Im Hoff. Ursula Tetzl, like me, had had a gown-piece which was lying near by the sword.

Herdegen, holding the jewelled weapon in his hand, thanked his grand-uncle, who muttered as was his wont "'Tis well, 'tis well," when Jost Tetzl put in his word, saying that the gift of a sword was supposed to part friends, but that this ill-effect might be hindered if he who received it made a return-offering to the giver, and so the token was made into a purchase.

At this Herdegen hastened to take out a gold pin set with sapphire stones, which Cousin Maud had given him, from his neck-kerchief, to offer it to his uncle; but the elder would have nothing to say to such foolishness, and pushed the pin away. But then when my brother did not cease, but besought him to accept it, inasmuch as he cared so greatly for his uncle's fatherly kindness, the old knight cried that he wanted no such sparkling finery, but that the day might come when he should require some payment and that Herdegen was then to remember that he was in his debt.

At this minute they were hindered from further speech by the servants, who came in to bid us to supper, and there stood ready wild fowl and fish, fruits and pastry, with the rarest wines and the richest vessels; the great middle table and the side buffet alike made such a show as though Pomona, Ceres, Bacchus, and Plutus had heaped it with prodigal hand. Yet was there no provision for merry-making. My grand-uncle loved to be quit of his guests at an early hour; hence no table was laid for them to sit down to meat, and each one held his plate in one hand.

Presently, as I strove to get free of young Master Vorchtel who had served me—and by the same token made love to me—I found my cousin in speech with my grand-uncle, and the last words of his urgent discourse, spoken as I came up with them, were that a woman of sound understanding, as she commonly seemed, should no longer suffer such a state of things.

Then Cousin Maud answered him, saying: "But you, my noble and worshipful Cousin Im Hoff, know how that a Schopper is ever ready to run his head against a wall. If we strive to thwart this hot-headed boy, he will of a certainty defy us; but if we leave him for a while to go his own way, the waters will not be dammed up, but will run to waste in the sand."

This was evil hearing, and much as it vexed me Ursula chafed me even

more, whereas she made a feint of caring for none of the company present excepting only Sir Franz—who was yet her housemate—and being still pale and weak needed a friendly woman's hand for many little services, inasmuch as even now he could scarce use his right arm. Nay, and he seemed to like Ursula well enough as his helper; albeit he owed all her sweet care and loving glances to Herdegen, for she never bestowed them but when he chanced to look that way.

When we all took leave my grand-uncle bid Herdegen stay, and Kunz waited on us; but notwithstanding all his merry quips as we went home, not once could we be moved to laughter. My heart was indeed right heavy; a bitter drop had fallen into it by reason of Cousin Maud. I had ever deemed her incapable of anything but what was truest and best, and she had proved herself a double-dealer; and young as I was, and rejoicing in life, I said, nevertheless, in my soul's dejection, that if life was such that every poor human soul must be ever armed with doubt, saying, "Whom shall I trust or doubt?" then it was indeed a hard and painful journey to win through.

I slept in my cousin's room, and albeit Cousin Maud wist not that I had overheard her counsel given to my grand-uncle, she kept out of my way that night, and we neither of us spoke till we said good-night. Then could I no longer refrain myself, and asked whether it were verily and indeed her intent to part Herdegen from Ann.

And her ill-favored countenance grew strangely puckered and her bosom heaved till suddenly she cried beside herself: "Cruel! Unhappy! Oh! It will eat my heart out!" And she sobbed aloud, while I did the same, crying:

"But you love them both?"

"That I do, and that is the very matter," she broke in sadly enough. "Herdegen, and Ann! Why, I know not which I hold the dearer. But find me a wiser man in all Nuremberg than your grand-uncle. But verily, merciful Virgin, I know not what I would be at—I know not....!"

On this I forgot the respect due to her and put in: "You know not?" And whereas she made no reply, I railed at her, saying: "And yet you gave her the linen, and half the matters for her house-gear as a Christmas gift, as though they were known for a bride and groom to all the town. As old as you are and as wise, can you take pleasure in a love-match and even speed it forward as you have done, and yet purpose in your soul to hinder it at last? And is this the truth and honesty whereof early and late you have ever taught me? Is this being upright and faithful, or not rather speaking with two tongues?"

My fiery blood had again played me an evil trick, and I repented me when I perceived what great grief my violent speech had wrought in the dear soul. Never had I beheld her so feeble and doubting, and in a minute I

was in her arms and a third person might have marvelled to hear us each craving pardon, she for her faint-hearted fears, and I for my unseemly outbreak. But in that hour I became her friend, and ceased to be no more than her child and fondling.

Herdegen was to be ready to set forth before Passion week; but ere he quitted home he made all the city ring with his praises, for, whereas he had hitherto won fame in the school of arms only, by the strength and skill of his arm, he now outdid every other in the procession of masks. Albeit this custom is still kept up to this very day, yet many an one may have forgotten how it first had its rise, although in my young days it was well known to most folks.

This then is to record, that in the days when the guilds were in revolt against the city council, the cutlers and the fleshers alone remained true to the noble families, and whereas they refused to take any guerdon for their faithfulness, which must have been paid them at the cost of the rest, they craved no more than the right of a making a goodly show in a dance and procession at the Carnival; and they were by the same token privileged at that time to wear apparel of velvet and silk, like gentle folks of noble and knightly degree.

Now this dance and its appurtenances were known at the masked show, and inasmuch as the aid of the governing class was needed to keep the streets clear for the throng of craftsmen, and as likewise the yearly outlay was beyond their means, the sons of the great houses took a pride in paying goodly sums for the right of taking a place in the procession. And as for our high-spirited young lord, skilled as he was with his weapon, he had seen and taken part in many such gay carnival doings among the Italians, and it was a delight to him to join in the like sport at home, and many were fain to gaze at him rather than at the guilds.

They assembled under the walls in two bands, and marched past the town hall and from thence to a dance of both guilds. Each had a dance of its own. The Fleshers' was such a dance as in England is called a country dance and they held leather-straps twisted to look like sausages; the cutlers' dance was less clumsy, and they carried naked swords.

But the show which most delighted the bystanders was the procession of masks, wherein, indeed, there were many things pleasant and fair to behold.

A party of men in coarse raiment called the men of the woods, carrying sheaves of oak boughs with acorns, and a number of mummers in fools' garb, wielding wooden bats, cleared the way for the procession; first then came minstrels, with drums and pipes and trumpets and bag-pipes, and merry bells ringing out withal. Next came one on horseback with nuts, which he flung down among the children, whereat there was merry scuffling and screaming on the ground. From the windows likewise and balconies there was no end of the laughter and cries; the young squires gave the

maids and ladies who sat there no peace for the flowers and sweetmeats they cast up at them, and eggs filled with rose-water.

This year, whereof I write, many folks in the procession wore garments of the same color and shape; but among them there were some who loved a jest, and were clothed as wild men and women, or as black-amoores, ogres that eat children, ostrich-birds, and the like. Last of all came the chief glory of the show, various great buildings and devices drawn by horses: a Ship of Fools, and behind that a wind-mill, and a fowler's decoy wherein Fools, men and women both, were caught, and other such pastimes.

My Herdegen had mingled with this wondrous fellowship arrayed as a knight crusader leading three captive Saracen princes; namely, the two young Masters Loffelholz and Schlebitzer, who had stirred him to dress in the fencing-school, mounted on horses, and between them my squire Akusch on the bear-leader's camel, all in white as a Son of the Desert; and the three of them fettered with chains made of wood.

My grand-uncle had lent Herdegen the suit of mail he himself had worn in his youth at a tournament;

Cousin Maud had provided his white cloak with a red cross, and as he rode forth on a noble black steed in mail-harness with scarlet housings—the finest and stoutest horse in the Im Hoff's stables—and his golden hair shining in the sun, many a maid could not take her eyes off from him.

Kunz, in the garb of a fool, hither and thither, nay, and everywhere at once, doubtless had the better sport; but Herdegen's heart beat the higher, for he could hear a thousand voices proclaiming him the most comely and his troop the most princely of all; from many a window a flower was shed on him, or a ribband, or a knot. At last, when the dance was all over, the guilds with the town-pipers betook them to the head constable's quarters, where they were served with drink and ate the Shrove-Tuesday meal of fish which was given in their honor. When the procession was past and gone my grand-uncle bid Herdegen go to him, and that which the old man then said and did to move him to give up his love was shrewdly planned and not without effect on his mind. After looking at him from head to foot, saying nothing but with no small contentment, he clapped him kindly on the shoulder and led him, as though by chance, up to the Venice mirror in the dining-hall. Then pointing to the image before him: "A Tancred!" he cried, "a Godfrey! Richard of the Lion-heart! And the bride a miserable scrivener's wench!—a noble bride!" Thereupon Herdegen fired up and began to speak in praise of Ann's rare and choice beauty; but his guardian stopped him short, laid his arm round his shoulders, and muttered in his ear that in his young days likewise youths of noble birth had to be sure made love to the fair daughters of the common citizens, but the man who could have thought of courting one of them in good faith....

Here he broke off with a sharp laugh, and drawing the boy closer to him, cried:

”No harm is meant my Tancred! And you may keep the black horse in remembrance of this hour.”

It was old Berthold, my uncle’s body-servant who told me all this; Herdegen when he came home answered none of my questions. He would not grant my prayer that he should show himself to Ann in his knight’s harness, and said somewhat roughly that she loved not such mummery. Thus it was not hard to guess what was in his mind; but how came it to pass that this old man, whose princely wife had wrought ruin to his peace and happiness, could so diligently labor to lead him he best loved on earth into the like evil course? And among many matters of which I lacked understanding there was yet this one: Wherefore should Epplein, who so devoutly loved his master, and who knew right well how to value a young maid’s beauty—and why should my good Susan and the greater part of our servitors have turned so spitefully against Ann, to whom in past days they were ever courteous and serviceable, since they had scented a betrothal between her and my eldest brother?

From the first I had been but ill-pleased to see Herdegen so diligent over this idle sport and spending so many hours away from his sweetheart, when he was so soon to quit us all. Nevertheless I had not the heart to admonish him, all the more as in many a dull hour he was apt to believe that, for the sake of his love, he must need deny himself sundry pleasures which our father had been free to enjoy; and I weened that I knew whence arose this faint-heartedness which was so little akin to his wonted high spirit.

Looking backward, a little before this time, I note first that Ann had not been able to keep her love-matters a secret from her mother. Albeit the still young and comely widow had solemnly pledged herself to utter no word of the matter, like most Italian women—and may be many a Nuremberger—she could not refrain herself from telling that of which her heart and brain were full, deeming it great good fortune for her child and her whole family; and she had shared the secret with all her nearest friends. Eight days before Shrove Tuesday Cousin Maud and we three Schoppers had been bidden to spend the evening in the house by the river, and Dame Giovanna, kind-hearted as ever, but not far-seeing, had likewise bidden her father-in-law, the lute-player, and Adam Heyden from the tower, and Ann’s one and only aunt, the widow of Rudel Hennelein.

This Hennelein had been the town bee-master, the chief of the bee-keepers, who, then as now, had their business out in the Lorenzer-Wald. His duties had been to hold an assize for the bee-keepers three times in the year at a village called Feucht, and to lend an ear to their complaints; and albeit he had fulfilled his office without blame, he had dwelt in strife with his wife, and being given to rioting, he was wont rather to go to the tavern than sit at table with his cross-grained wife.

When he presently died there was but small leaving, and the widow in the little house in the milk market had need to look twice at every farthing, although she had not chick nor child. And whereas full half of the offerings sent by the bee-keepers to help out their master's widow were in honey, she strove to turn this to the best account, and to this end she would by no means sell it to the dealers who would offer to take it, but carried it herself in neat little crocks, one at a time, to the houses of the rich folks, whereby her gains were much the greater.

Whereas her husband had been a member of the worshipful class of magistrates, she deemed that such trading ill-beseemed her dignity; and she at all times wore a great fur hat as large round as a cart-wheel of fair size, and all the other array of a well-to-do housewife, though in truth somewhat threadbare. Then she would offer her honey as a gift to the mothers of children for their dear little ones; nor could she ever be moved to name a price for her gift, inasmuch as it was not fitting that a bee-master's widow should do so, while it was all to her honor when a little bounty was offered as civil return.

Her honey was good enough, and the children were ever glad to see her: all the more so for that they had their sport of her behind her back, inasmuch as that she was a laughable little body, who had a trick of repeating the last word of every sentence she spoke. Thus she would say not: "Ah! here comes Kunz," but, "Here comes Kunz Kunz." Moreover, she ever held her head between her two hands, tightly, as though with that great fur cap her thin neck were in danger of breaking.

In this way she had dealings with most of our noble families; and the young ones would call her not Hennelein, as her name was, but Henneleinlein, in jest at her foolish trick of repeating her last word.

So long as I could remember, Mistress Henneleinlein had been wont to bring honey to our house, and had received from Cousin Maud, besides many a bright coin, likewise sundry worn but serviceable garments as "remembrances." And Herdegen foremost of us all had been ready to make sport of her; but it had come to his knowledge that she was ever benign to lovers, and had helped many a couple to come together.

The glad tidings that her niece was chosen by fate to rule over the house of the Schoppers had filled her above all others with pride and contentment, and Dame Giovanna having told her this secret and then bidden her to meet us, she stuck so closely to Herdegen that Ann was filled with vexation and fears. I could not but mark that my brother was sorely ill-pleased when Dame Henneleinlein patted his arm; and when she kissed his sweetheart on the lips he shrank as though someone had laid afoul hand on his light-hued velvet doublet. He had always felt a warm friendship for the worthy lute-player, who was a master in his own art; yea, and many a time had he right gladly mounted the tower-stairs to see the old organist; but now, to be treated as a youngster of their own kith

by these two good men filled him with loathing; for it may well be that many an one whom we are well pleased to seek and truly value in his own home and amid his own company, seems another man when he makes claim to live with us as one of ourselves.

Cousin Maud had not chosen to accept Dame Giovanna's bidding, perchance for my grand-uncle's sake; she thus escaped the vexation of seeing Herdegen, on this first night spent with his future kindred, so silent and moody that he was scarce like himself. He turned pale and bit his nether lip, as he never did but when he was mastering his temper with great pains, when Mistress Henneleinlein who had hitherto known him only as a roystering young blade and now interpreted his reserve and silence after her own fashion noted mysteriously that the Junker would have to take a large family with his young bride—though, indeed, there was a hope that the burden might ere long be lighter. For she went on to say, with a leer at Mistress Giovanna, that so comely a step-mother would have suitors in plenty, and she herself had one in her eye, if he were but brought to the point, who would provide abundantly not only for the mother but for all the brood of little ones.

This and much more did he himself repeat to me as we walked home, speaking with deep ire and in tones of wrath; and what else Dame Henneleinlein had poured into his ear was to me not so much displeasing as a cause of well-grounded fears, inasmuch as the old body had told him that the man who was fain to pay his court to Mistress Giovanna was none other than the coppersmith, Ulman Pernhart, the father of the fair maid for whose sake Aunt Jacoba had banished her only son.

In vain did I in all honesty speak the praises of the coppersmith; Herdegen turned a deaf ear, even as my uncle and aunt had done. The thought that his wife should ever be required to honor this handicraftsman, if only as a step-father, and that he should hear himself addressed by him as "Son," was too shrewd a thrust.

The next morning the Junkers had carried him off to the school of arms and then to the gentlemen's tavern to take his part in the masquerade; and when, at a later hour, after the throng had scattered, Ann came to our house, her lover was not at home: he had gone off again to the revels at the tavern where he would meet such workingmen as his sweetheart's future step-father.

At the same time, as it fell, Brother Ignatius, of the order of Grey Friars, had come many times to hold forth at our house, by desire of my grand-uncle whose almoner he was, and when Herdegen announced to us on Ash Wednesday that the holy man had craved to be allowed to travel in his company as far as Ingolstadt, I foresaw no good issue; for albeit the Father was a right reverend priest, whose lively talk had many a time given me pleasure, it must for certain be his intent to speed my uncle's wishes.

In spite of all, Herdegen was in such deep grief at departing that I put away all doubts and fears.

Ann, who felt in all matters as he felt and put her whole trust in him, was wise enough to know that he could have no bond with her kith and kin; nay, that it must be hard on him to have to call such a woman as Mistress Henneleinlein his aunt. Also he and she had agreed that hereafter he should dwell no more at Nuremberg, but seek some office and duty in the Imperial service; and Sir Franz had been diligent in asking his uncle's good word, he being one of those highest in power at the Emperor's court.

Now, when a short time before his departing they were alone with me, Ann, bearing in mind this pact they had made, cried out: "You promise me we shall build our nest in some place far from hence; and be it where it may, wherever we may be left to ourselves and have but each other, a happy life must await us."

At this his eyes flashed, and he cried with a lad's bold spirit:

"With a doctor's hood, at the Emperor's court, I shall ere long be councillor, and at last, God willing, Chancellor of the Realm!"

After this they spoke yet many loving and touching words, and when he was already in the saddle and waved her a last farewell, tears flowed from his eyes—

I saw them for certain.—And at that moment I besought the Lord that He would rather chastise and try me with pain and grief, but bring these two together and let their marriage be crowned by the highest bliss ever vouchsafed to human hearts.

CHAPTER XIII.

Spring was past, and again the summer led me and Ann back into the green wood. Aunt Jacoba's sickness was no whit amended, and the banishment of her only and comely son gnawed at her heart; but the more she needed tending and cheering the more Ann could do for her and the dearer she became to the heart of the sick woman.

Kunz was ever in Venice. Herdegen wrote right loving letters at first from Padua, but then they came less often, and the last Ann ever had to show me was a mere feint which pleased me ill indeed, inasmuch as, albeit it was full of big words, it was empty of tidings of his life or of his heart's desire. What all this must mean Ann, with her clear sense and true love, could not fail to see; nevertheless she ceased not from building on her lover's truth; or, if she did not, she hid that from all

the world, even from me.

We came from the forest earlier than we were wont, on Saint Maurice's day, forasmuch as that Ann could not be longer spared and, now more than ever, I could not bear to leave her alone.

Uncle Christian rode to the town with us, and if he had before loved her well, in this last long time of our all being together he had taken her yet more into his heart. And now, whereas he had given her the right to warn him against taking too much wine, he was fain to call her his little watchman, by reason that it is the watchman's part to give warning of the enemy's onset.

But while Ann was so truly beloved at the Forest lodge, on her return home she found no pleasant welcome. In her absence the coppersmith Pernhart had wooed her mother in good earnest, and the eldest daughter not being on the spot, had sped so well that the widow had yielded. Ann once made bold to beseech her mother with due reverence to give up her purpose, but she fell on her child's neck, as though Ann were the mother, entreating her, with many tears, to let her have her will. Ann of a certainty would not now be long under her roof to cherish the younger children, and it was not in her power as their mother to guide them in the way in which their father would have them to walk. For this Ulman Pernhart was the fittest man. Her dead husband had been a schoolmate of her suitor's, and of his brother the very reverend lord Bishop, and he had thought highly of Master Ulman. This it was gave her strength to follow the prompting of her heart. In this way did the mother try to move her child to look with favor on the desire of her fiery Italian heart, now shame-faced and coaxing, and anon with tears in her eyes; and albeit the widow was past five and thirty and her suitor nigh upon fifty, yet no man seeing the pair together would have made sport of their love. The Venice lady had lost so little of her youthful beauty and charms that it was in truth a marvel; and as to Master Pernhart, he was not a man to be overlooked, even among many.

As he was at this time he might be taken for the very pattern of a stalwart and upright German mastercraftsman; nay, nor would a knight's harness of mail have ill-beseemed him. Or ever he had thought of paying court to Mistress Giovanna I had heard the prebendary Master von Hellfeld speak of Pernhart as a right good fellow, of whom the city might be proud; and he then spoke likewise of Master Ulman's brother, who had become a servant of the Holy Church, and while yet a young man had been raised to the dignity of a bishop.

When the great schism had come to a happy ending, and one Head, instead of three, ruled the Church, Pope Martin V. had chosen him to sit in his council and kept him at Rome, where he was one of the powers of the Curia.

Albeit his good German name of Pernhart was now changed to Bernardi, he

had not ceased to love his native town and his own kin, and had so largely added to the wealth and ease of his own mother and his only brother that the coppersmith had been able to build himself a dwelling little behind those of the noble citizens. He had been forlorn in his great house of late, but no such cause as that was needed to move him to cast his eye on the fair widow of his very reverend brother's best friend.

While Ann was away in the forest Mistress Giovanna had let Pernhart into the secret of her daughter's betrothal to Herdegen, and so soon as the young maid was at home again he had spoken to her of the matter, telling her, in few but hearty words, that she would be ever welcome to his house and there fill the place of his lost Gertrude; but that if she was fain to wed an honest man, he would make it his business to provide her outfit.

These things, and much more, inclined me in his favor, little as I desired that he should wed the widow, for Herdegen's sake; and when I met him for the first time as betrothed to Ann's mother, and the grandlooking man shook my hand with hearty kindness, and then thanked me with warmth and simplicity for whatsoever I had done for her who henceforth would be his dearest and most precious treasure, I returned the warm grasp of his hand with all honesty, and it was from the bottom of my heart that I answered him, saying that I gladly hailed him as a new friend, albeit I could not hope for the same from my brother.

He heard this with a strange smile, half mournful, but, meseemed, half proud; then he held forth his horny, hard-worked hand, and said that to be sure it was an ill-matched pair when such a hand as that should clasp a soft and white one such as might come out of a velvet sleeve; that whereas, in order to win the woman he loved, he had taken her tribe of children into the bargain, and fully purposed to have much joy of them and be a true father to them, my lord brother, if his love were no less true, must make the best of his father-in-law, whose honor, though he was but of simple birth, was as clean as ever another man's in the eyes of God.

And as we talked I found there was more and nobler matter in his brain and heart than I had ever weened I might find in a craftsman. We met often and learned to know each other well, and one day it fell that I asked him whether he had in truth forgiven the Junker through whom he had lost the one he loved best.

He forthwith replied that I was not to lay the blame on one whom he would ever remember as a brave and true-hearted youth, inasmuch as it was not my cousin, but he himself who had put an end to the love-making between Gotz and Gertrude. It was after the breach between Gotz and his parents that it had been most hard to turn a deaf ear to the prayers of the devoted lover and of his own child. But, through all, he had borne in mind the doctrine by which his father had ever ruled his going, namely,

not to bring on our neighbor such grief as would make our own heart sore. Therefore he examined himself as to what he would feel towards one who should make his child to wed against his will with a suitor he liked not; and whereas his own dignity as a man and his care for his daughter's welfare forbade that he should give her in marriage to a youth whose kinsfolks would receive her with scorn and ill-feeling, rather than with love and kindness, he had at last set his heart hard against young Waldstromer, whom he had loved as his own son, and forced him to go far away from his sweetheart. I, in my heart, was strangely wroth with my cousin in that he had not staked his all to win so fair a maid; nay, and I made so bold as to confess that in Gertrude's place I should have gone after my lover whithersoever he would, even against my father's will.

And again that proud smile came upon Ulman Pernhart's bearded lips, and his eye flashed fire as he said: "My life moves in a narrow round, but all that dwell therein bend to my will as the copper bends under my hammer. If you think that the Junker gave in without a struggle you are greatly mistaken; after I had forbidden him the house, he had tempted Gertrude to turn against me and was ready to carry her off; nay, and would you believe it, my own mother sided with the young ones. The priest even was in readiness to marry them privily, and they would have won the day in spite of me. But the eyes of jealousy are ever the sharpest; my head apprentice, who was madly in love with the maid, betrayed the plot, and then, Mistress Margery, were things said and done—things concerning which I had best hold my peace. And if you crave to know them, you may ask my mother. You will see some day, if you do not scorn to enter my house and if you gain her friendship—and I doubt not that you will, albeit it is not granted to every one—she will be glad enough to complain of my dealings in this matter—mine, her own son's, although on other points she is wont to praise my virtues over-loudly."

This discourse raised my cousin once more to his old place in my opinion, and I knew now that the honest glance of his blue eyes, which doubtless had won fair Gertrude's heart, was trustworthy and true.

Master Ulman Pernhart was married in a right sober fashion to fair Mistress Giovanna, and I remember to this day seeing them wed in Saint Laurence's Church. It was a few months before this that I was taken for the first time to a dance at the town hall. There, as soon as I had forgotten my first little fears, I took my pleasure right gladly to the sound of the music, and I verily delighted in the dance. But albeit I found no lack of young ladies my friends, and still less of youths who would fain win my favor, I nevertheless lost not the feeling that I had left part of my very being at home; nay, that I scarce had a right to these joys, since my brothers were in a distant land and Ann could not share them with me, and while I was taking my pleasure she had the heart-ache.

Then was there a second dance, and a third and fourth; and at home there came a whole troop of young men in their best apparel to ask of Cousin

Maud, each after his own fashion, to be allowed to pay court to me; but albeit they were all of good family, and to many a one I felt no dislike, I felt nothing at all like love as I imagined it, and I would have nothing to say to any one of them. And all this I took with a light heart, for which Cousin Maud many a time,—and most rightly—reproved me.

But at that time, and yet more as the months went on, I hardly knew my own mind; another fate than my own weighed most on my soul; and I thought so little of my own value that meseemed it could add to no man's happiness to call me his. All else in life passed before my eyes like a shadow; a time came when all joy was gone from me, and my suitors sought me in vain in the dancing-hall, for a great and heavy grief befell me.

All was at an end—even now I scarce can bear to write the words—between Ann and Herdegen; and by no fault of hers, but only and wholly by reason of his great and unpardonable sin.

But I will write down in order how it came about. So early as at Martinmas I heard from Cousin Maud—and my grand-uncle had told her—that Herdegen had quitted Padua and that it was his intent to take the degree of doctor at Paris whither the famous Gerson's great genius was drawing the studious youth of all lands; and his reason for this was that a bloody fray had made the soil of Italy too hot for his feet. "These tidings boded evil; all the more as neither we nor Ann had a word from Herdegen in his own hand to tell us that he had quitted the country and his school. Then, in my fear and grief, I could not help going to my grand-uncle, but he would have nothing to say to me or to Cousin Maud, or else he put us off with impatient answers, or empty words that meant nothing. Thus we lived in dread and sorrow, till at last, a few days before Pernhart was married, a letter came to me from Epplein, and I have it before me now, among other papers all gone yellow.

"From your most duteous and obedient servant Epplein Gockel to the lady Margery Schopper," was the superscription. And he went on to excuse himself in that he knew not the art of writing, and had requested the service of the Magister of the young Count von Solms.

"And inasmuch as I erewhile pledged my word as a man to the illustrious and worshipful Mistress Margery, in her sisterly care, that I would write to her if we at any time needed the favor of her counsel and help, I would ere now have craved for the Magister's aid if the all-merciful Virgin had not succored us in due season.

"Nevertheless my heart was moved to write to you, gracious and worshipful Mistress Margery, inasmuch as I wist you would be in sorrow, and longing for tidings of my gracious master; for it is by this time long since I gave his last letter for the Schopperhof in charge to the German post-runner; and meseems that my gracious master has liked to give his precious time to study and to other pastimes rather than to those who, being his next of kin, are ever ready and willing to be patient with him;

as indeed they could if they pleased enquire of my lord the knight Sebald Im Hoff as to his well-being. My gracious master gave him to know by long letters how matters were speeding with him, and of a certainty told him how that the old Marchese and his nephews, malicious knaves, came to blows with us at Padua by reason of the old Marchese's young and fair lady, who held my gracious master so dear that all Padua talked thereof.

"Nevertheless it was an evil business, inasmuch as three of them fell on us in the darkness of night; and if the merciful Saints had not protected us with their special grace nobler and more honorable blood should have been shed than those rogues. Also we came to Paris in good heart; and safe and sound in body; and this is a city wherein life is far more ravishing than in Nuremberg.

"Whereas I have known full well that you, most illustrious Mistress Margery, have ever vouchsafed your gracious friendship to Mistress Ann Spiesz—and indeed I myself hold her in the highest respect, as a lady rich in all virtue—I would beseech her to put away from her heart all thought of my gracious master as soon as may be, and to strive no more to keep his troth, forasmuch as it can do no good: Better had she look for some other suitor who is more honest in his intent, that so she may not wholly waste her maiden days—which sweet Saint Katharine forbid! Yet, most worshipful Mistress Margery, I entreat you with due submission not to take this amiss in your beloved brother, nor to withdraw from him any share of your precious love, whereas my gracious master may rightly look higher for his future wife. And as touching his doings now in his unmarried state, of us the saying is true: Like master, like man. And whereas I, who am but a poor and simple serving man, have never been fain to set my heart on one only maid, no less is to be looked for in my gracious master, who is rich and of noble birth."

This epistle would of a certainty have moved me to laughter at any other time but, as things stood, the matter and manner of the low varlet's letter in daring to write thus of Ann, roused me to fury. And yet he was a brave fellow, and of rare faithfulness to his master; for when the Marchese's nephew had fallen upon Herdegen, he had wrenched the sword out of the young nobleman's hand at the peril of his own life and had thereafter modestly held his peace as to that brave deed. It was, in truth, hard not to betray the coming of this letter, even by a look; yet did I hide it; but when another letter was brought, not long after, all care and secrecy were vain.

Oh! that dreadful letter. I could not hide the matter of it; but I let pass her mother's wedding before I confessed to Ann what my brother had written to me.

That cruel letter lies before me now. It is longer than any he had written me heretofore, and I will here write it fair, for indeed I could not, an I would, copy the writing, so wild and reckless as it is.

"All must be at an end, Margery, betwixt Ann and me"—and those first words stung me like a whip-lash. "There. 'Tis written, and now you know it. I was never worthy of her, for I have sold my heart's love for money, as Judas sold the Lord.

"Not that my love or longing are dead. Even while I write I feel dragged to her; a thousand voices cry to me that there is but one Ann, and when a few weeks ago the young Sieur de Blonay made so bold as to vaunt of his lady and her rose-red as above all other ladies and colors, my sword compelled him to yield the place of honor to blue—for whose sake you know well.

"And nevertheless I must give her up. Although I fled from temptation, it pursued me, and when it fell upon me, after a short battle I was brought low. The craving for those joys of the world which she tried to teach me to scorn, is strong within me. I was born to sin; and now as matters stand they must remain. A wight such as I am, who shoots through life like a wild hawk, cannot pause nor think until a shaft has broken his wings. The bitter fate which bids me part from Ann has stricken me thus, and now I can only look back and into my own soul; and the fairer, the sweeter, the loftier is she whom I have lost, the darker and more vile, meseemeth, is all I discover in myself.

"Yet, or ever I cast behind me all that was pure and noble, righteous and truly blissful, I hold up the mirror to my own sinful face, and will bring, myself to show to you, my Margery, the hideous countenance I behold therein.

"I will not cloke nor spare myself in anything; and yet, at this hour, which finds me sober and at home, having quitted my fellows betimes this night, I verily believe that I might have done well, and not ill, and what was pleasing in the sight of God, and in yours, my Margery, and in the eyes of Ann and of all righteous folk, if only some other hand had had the steering of my life's bark.

"Margery, we are orphans; and there is nothing a man needs so much, in the years while he is still unripe and unsure of himself, as a master whom he must revere in fear or in love. And we—I—Margery, what was my grand-uncle to me?

"You and I again are of one blood and so near in age that, albeit one may counsel the other, it is scarce to be hoped that I should take your judgment, or you mine, without cavil.

"Then Cousin Maud! With all the mother's love she has ever shown us, all I did was right in her eyes; and herein doubtless lies the difference between a true mother, who brought us with travail into the world, and a loving foster-mother, who fears to turn our hearts from her by harshness; but the true mother punishes her children wherein she deems it good, inasmuch as she is sure of their love. My cousin's love was great

indeed, but her strictness towards me was too small. Out of sheer love, when I went to the High School she kept my purse filled; then, as I grew older, our uncle did likewise, though for other reasons; and now that I have redened Ann, to do his pleasure, I loathe myself. Nay, more and more since I am raised to such fortune as thousands may envy me; inasmuch as my granduncle purposes to make me his heir by form of law. Last night, when I came home with great gains from play in my pocket, I was nigh to put an end to the woes of this life....

"But have no fear, Margery. A light heart soon will bring to the top again what ruth, at this hour, is bearing to the deeps. Of what use is waiting? Am I then the first Junker who has made love to a sweet maid of low birth, only to forget her for a new lady love?

"Sooth to say, Margery, my confessor, to whom—albeit with bitter pains—I am laying open every fold of my heart—yes, Margery, if Ann's cradle had been graced with a coat of arms matters would be otherwise. But to call a copper-smith father-in-law, and little Henneleinlein Madame Aunt! In church, to nod from the old seats of the Schoppers to all those common folk as my nearest kin, to meet the lute-player among my own people, teaching the lads and maids their music, and to greet him as dear grandfather, to see my brethren and sisters-in-law busy in the clerks' chambers or work-shops—all this I say is bitter to the taste; and yet more when the tempter on the other side shows the gaudy young gentleman the very joys dearest to his courtly spirit. And with what eloquence and good cheer has Father Ignatius set all this before mine eyes here in Paris, doubtless with honest intent; and he spoke to my heart soberly and to edification, setting forth all that the precepts of the Lord, and my old and noble family required of me.

"Much less than all this would have overruled so feeble a wight as I am. I promised Father Ignatius to give up Ann, and, on my home-coming, to submit in all things to my uncle and to agree with him as to what each should yield up and renounce to the other—as though it were a matter of merchandise in spices from the Levant, or silk kerchiefs from Florence; and thereupon the holy Friar gave me his benediction, as though my salvation were henceforth sure in this world and the next.

"I rode forth with him even to the gate, firm in the belief that I had thrown the winning number in life's game; but scarce had I turned my horse homeward when I wist that I had cast from me all the peace and joy of my soul.

"It is done. I have denied Ann—given her up forever—and whereas she must one day hear it, be it done at once. You, my poor Margery, I make my messenger. I have tried, in truth, to write to Ann, but it would not do. One thing you must say, and that is that, even when I have sinned most against her, I have never forgotten her; nay, that the memory of that happy time when she was fain to call herself my Laura moved me to ride forth to Treviso, where, in the chapel of the Franciscan Brethren,

there may be seen a head of the true Laura done by the limner Simone di Martino, the friend of Petrarca, a right worthy work of art. Methought she drew me to her with voice and becks. And yet, and yet—woe, woe is me!

”My pen has had a long rest, for meseemed I saw first Petrarca’s lady with her fair braids, and then Ann with her black hair, which shone with such lustrous, soft waves, and lay so nobly on the snow-white brow. Her eyes and mien are verily those of Laura; both alike pure and lofty. But here my full heart over-flows; it cannot forget how far Ann exceeds Laura in sweet woman’s grace.

”Day is breaking, and I can but sigh forth to the morning: ’Lost, lost! I have lost the fairest and the best!’

”Then I sat long, sunk in thought, looking out of window, across the bare tree-tops in the garden, at the grey mist which seems as though it ended only at the edge of the world. It drips from the leafless boughs, and mine eyes—I need not hide it—will not be kept dry. It is as though the leaves from the tree of my life had all dropped on the ground—nay, as though my own guilty hand had torn them from the stem.”

”I have but now come home from a right merry company! It is of a truth a merciful fashion which turns night into day. Yes, Margery, for one whose first desire is to forget many matters, this Paris is a place of delight. I have drunk deep of the wine-cup, but I would call any man villain who should say that I am drunk. Can I not write as well as ever another—and this I know, that if I sold myself it was not cheap. It has cost me my love, and whereas it was great the void is great to fill. Wherefore I say: ’Bring hither all that giveth joy, wine and love-making, torches and the giddy dame in velvet and silk, dice and gaming, and mad rides, the fresh greenwood and bloody frays!’ Is this nothing? Is it even a trivial thing?

”How, when all is said and done, shall we answer the question as to which is the better lot: heavenly love, soaring on white swan’s wings far above all that is common dust, as Ann was wont to sing of it, or earthly joys, bold and free, which we can know only with both feet on the clod?

”I have made choice and can never turn back. Long life to every pleasure, call it by what name you will! You have a gleeful, rich, and magnificent brother, little Margery; and albeit the simple lad of old, who chose to wife the daughter of a poor clerk, may have been dearer to you—as he was to my own heart—yet love him still! Of his love you are ever sure; remember him in your prayers; and as for that you have to say to Ann, say it in such wise that she shall not take it over much to heart. Show her how unworthy of her is this brother of yours, though in your secret soul you shall know that my guardian saint never had, nor ever shall have, any other face than hers.

"Now will I hasten to seal this letter and wake Epplein that he may give it to the post-rider. I am weary of tearing up many sheets of paper, but if I were to read through in all soberness that I have written half drunk, this letter would of a certainty go the way of many others written by me to you, and to my beloved, faithful, only love, my lost Ann."

CHAPTER XIV.

Master Pernhart was wed on Tuesday after Palm Sunday. Ann was wont to come to our house early on Wednesday morning, and this was ever a happy meeting to which we gave the name of "the Italian spinning-hour," by reason that one of us would turn her wheel and draw out the yarn, while the other read aloud from the works of the great Italian poets.

Nor did Ann fail to come on this Wednesday after the wedding; but I had thrust Herdegen's letter into the bosom of my bodice and awaited her with a quaking heart.

Her spirit was heavy; I could see in her eyes that they had shed tears, and at my first question they filled again. Had she not seen her mother this morn beaming with happiness, and then remembered, with new pangs of heartache, the father she had lost scarce a year ago and whose image seemed to have faded out of the mind of the wife he had so truly loved.

When I said to her that I well understood her sorrow, but that I had other matter to lay before her which might bring her yet more cruel grief, she knew that it must be as touching Herdegen; and whereas before I spoke I could only clasp her to me and could not bring out a single word, she thrust me from her and cried: "Herdegen? Speak! Some ill has come upon him! Margery—Merciful Virgin! How you are sobbing!—Dead—is he dead?"

As she said these words her cheeks turned pale and, when I shook my head, she seized my hand and asked sadly: "Worse? Then he has broken faith once more?"

Meseemed I could never speak again; and yet I might not keep silence, and the words broke from my bursting heart: "Ah, worse and far worse; more strange, more terrible! I have it here, in his hand.—Henceforth—my uncle, his rich inheritance.... All is over, Ann, betwixt him and you. And I—oh, that he should have left it to me to tell it!"

She stood in front of me as if rooted to the ground, and it was some time before she could find a word. Then she said in a dull voice: "Where is the letter?"

I snatched it out of the bosom of my dress and was about to rend it as I went towards the hearth, but she stood in my way, snatched the letter violently from me, and cried: "Then if all is at an end, I will at any rate be clear about it. No false comfort, no cloaking of the truth!"

And she strove to wrench Herdegen's letter from me. But my strength was greater than hers, indeed full great for a maid; yet my heart told me that in her case my will would have been the same, so I made no more resistance but yielded up the letter. Then and there she read it; and although she was pale as death and I marked how her lips trembled and every nerve in her body, her eyes were dry, and when she presently folded the letter and held it forth to me, she said with light scorn which cut in-to the heart: "This then is what matters have come to! He has sold his love and his sweetheart! Only her face, it would seem, is not in the bargain by reason that he keeps that to rob his saint of her holiness! Well, he is free, and the wild joys of life in every form are to make up for love; and yet-and yet, Margery, pray that he may not end miserably!"

Gentle pity had sounded in these last words, and I took her hand and besought her right earnestly: "And you, Ann. Do you pray with me." But she shook her head and replied: "Nay, Margery; all is at an end between him and me, even thoughts and yearning. I know him no more-and now let me go." With this she put on her little cloak, and was by the door already when Cousin Maud came in with some sweetmeats, as she was ever wont to do when we thus sat spinning; and as soon as she had set down that which she was carrying she opened her arms to the outcast maid, to clasp her to her bosom and comfort her with good words; but Ann only took her hand, pressed it to her lips, and vanished down the stairs.

At dinner that morning the dishes would have been carried out as full as they were brought in, if Master Peter had not done his best to hinder it; and as soon as the meal was over I could no longer bear myself in the house, but went off straight to the Pernharts'.

There the air seemed warmer and lighter, and Mistress Giovanna welcomed me to her new home right gladly; but she would not suffer me to go to Ann's chamber, forasmuch as that she had a terrible headache and had prayed to see no one, not even me. Yet I felt strongly drawn to her, and as the new-made wife knew that she and I were as one she did not forbid me from going upstairs, where Pernhart had made dead Gertrude's room all clean and fresh for Ann. Now whereas I knew that when her head ached every noise gave her pain, I mounted the steps with great care and opened the door softly without knocking. Also she was not aware of my coming. I would fain have crept away unseen; or even rather would have fallen on my knees by her side to crave her forgiveness for the bitter wrong my brother had done her. She was lying on the bed, her face hidden in the pillows, and her slender body shook as in an ague fit, while she sobbed low but right bitterly. Nor did she mark my presence there till I fell on my knees by the bed and cast my arms about her. Then she suddenly raised herself from the pillows, passed her hand across her wet eyes, and

entreated me to leave her. Yet I did not as she bade me; and when she saw how deeply I took her griefs to heart, she rose from her couch, on which she had lain down with all her clothes on, and only prayed me that this should be the last time I would ever speak with her of Herdegen.

Then she led me to her table and showed me things which she had laid out thereon; poor little gifts which my brother had brought her; every one, except only the Petrarca with the names in gold: Anna-Laura. And she desired that I would take them all and send them back to Herdegen at some fitting time.

As I nodded sadly enough, she must have seen in my face that I missed the little volumes and, ere I was aware, she had taken them out of her chest and thrown them in with the rest.

Then she cried in a changed voice: "That likewise—Ah, no, not that! It is the best gift he ever made me, and he was so good and kind then—You do not know, you do not know!—How I long to keep the books! But away, away with them!"

Then she put everything into a silken kerchief, tied it up with hard knots, pushed the bundle into my hand, and besought me to go home.

I went home, sick at heart, with the bundle in my cold hand, and when the door was opened by Akusch, who, poor wight, bore our bitter winters but ill, I heard from above-stairs loud and right merry laughter and glee; and I knew it for the voice of Cousin Maud who seemed overpowered by sheer mirth. My wrath flared up, for our house this day was of a certainty the last where such merriment was fitting.

My cheeks were red from the snow-storm, yet rage made them even hotter as I hastened up-stairs. But before I could speak a single word Cousin Maud, with whom were the Magister and old Pirkheimer the member of council, cried out as soon as she saw me: "Only imagine, Margery, what rare tidings his Excellency has brought us." And she went on to tell me, with great joy, while his worship added facts now and then, that the Magister had since yestereve become a rich man, inasmuch as his godmother, old Dame Oelhaf, had died, leaving him no small wealth.

This was verily marvellous and joyful hearing, for many had imagined the deceased to be a needy woman who had carried on the business left her by her husband, albeit she had no service but that of an ill-paid shop-lad, who was like one of the lean ears of Pharaoh's dream and moreover blind of one eye. Nevertheless I remembered well that her little shop, which was no greater than a fair-sized closet, had ever been filled with buyers when we had stolen in, against all commands, to buy a few dried figs. I can see the little crippled mistress now as she limped across the shop or along the street, and the boys would call after her: "Hip hop! Lame duck!" and all Nuremberg knew her better by the nickname of the Lame Duck than by her husband's.

That the poor little woman had departed this life we had all heard yestereve; but even the Magister had fully believed that her leavings would scarce be worth the pains of a walk to the town hall. But now the learned advocate told him that by her will, drawn up and attested according to law, she had devised to him all she had to leave as being the only child she had ever been thought worthy to hold at the font.

Then, due inquisition being made in her little place, a goodly number of worn stockings were found in the straw of her bed and other hiding places, and in them, instead of her lean little legs, many a gulden and Hungarian ducat of good gold. Moreover she had a house at Nordlingen and a mill at Schwabach, and thus the inheritance that had come to Magister Peter was altogether no small matter.

The simple man had never hoped for such fortune, and it was in truth laughable to see how he forgot his dignity, and leaped first on one foot and then the other, crying: "No, no! It cannot be true! Then poor Irus is become rich Croesus!"

And thus he went on till he left us with Master Perkheimer. Then I laughed with my cousin; and when I was once more alone I marvelled at the mercy of a benevolent Providence, by whose ruling a small joy makes us to forget our heavy griefs, though it were but for a moment.

At night, to be sure, I could not help thinking with fresh sorrow of that which had come upon us; but then, on the morrow, I saw the Magister again, and would fain have rejoiced in his gladness; but lo, he was now silent and dull, and at the first opening he led me aside and said, right humbly and with downcast eyes: "Think no evil of me, Mistress Margery, in that yestereve my joy in earthly possessions was over much for my wits; believe me, it was not the glitter of mammon, but far other matters that turned my brain." And he confessed to me that he had ever borne Ann in his heart, even when she was but a young maid at school, and had made the winning of her the goal of his life. To this end, and whereas without some means of living he could not hope, he had laid by every penny he had earned by teaching at our house and in the Latin classes, and had foregone the buying of many a fine and learned book, or even of a jar of wine to drink in the company of his fellows. Thus had he saved a goodly sum of money; nay, he had thought himself within reach of his high aim when he had discovered, that Christmas eve before Herdegen's departing, that the Junker had robbed him of his one ewe lamb. There was nought left for him to do but to hold his peace, albeit in bitter sorrow, till within the last few days Heaven had showered its mercies on him. The powerful Junker—for so it was that he ever spoke and thought of my elder brother—had it seemed, released the lamb, and he himself was now in a state of life in which he might right well set up housekeeping. Then he went on to beseech me with all humbleness to speak a word for him to the lady of his choice, and I found it not in my heart to give the death-blow forthwith to his fond and faithful hopes, albeit I wist full

surely that they were all in vain. Thus I bid him to have patience at least till Christmas, inasmuch as he should give Ann time to put away the memory of Herdegen; and he consented with simple kindness, although he had changed much and for the better in these late years, and could boast of good respect among the learned men of our city; and thus, albeit not a wealthy man, and in spite of his mature years, he would be welcomed as a son-in-law by many a mother of daughters.

Thus the Magister, who had waited so long, held back even yet awhile. One week followed another, the third Sunday in Advent went by, and the holy tide was at hand when the delay should end which the patient suitor had allowed.

I had seen Ann less often than in past times. In the coppersmith's great household she commonly had her hands full, and I felt indeed that her face was changed towards me. A kind of fear, which I had not marked in her of old, had come over her of late; meseemed she lived ever in dread of some new insult and hurt; also she had courteously but steadfastly refused to join in the festivities to which she was bidden by Elsa Ebner or others of the upper class, and even said nay to uncle Christian's bidding to a dance, to be given this very day, being his name-day, at his lodgings in the Castle. I likewise was bidden and had accepted my godfather's kindness; but my timid endeavor to move Ann to do his will, as her best and dearest old friend, brought forth the sorrowful answer that I myself must judge how little she was fit for any merry-makings of the kind. My friendship with her, which had once been my highest joy, had thus lost all its lightheartedness, albeit it had not lost all its joys, nor was she therefore the less dear to me though I dealt with her now as with a well-beloved child for whose hurt we are not wholly blameless.

Now it fell that on this day, the 20th December, being my godfather's name-day, I found her not with the rest, but in her own chamber in violent distress. Her cheeks were on fire, and she was in such turmoil as though she had escaped some terrible persecution. Thereupon I questioned her in haste and fear, and she answered me with reserve, till, on a sudden, she cried:

"It is killing me! I will bear it no more!" and hid her face in her hands, I clasped her in my arms, and to soothe her spoke in praise of her stepfather, Master Pernhart, and his high spirit and good heart; then she sobbed aloud and said: "Oh, for that matter! If that were all!"

And suddenly, or even I was aware, she had cast her arms about me and kissed my lips and cheeks with great warmth. Then she cried out: "Oh, Margery! You cannot turn from me! I indeed tried to turn from you; and I could have done it, even if it had cost me my heart's blood! But now and here I ask you: Is it just that I should lay myself on the rack because he has so cruelly hurt me? No, no. And I need your true soul to help me to shake off the burden which is crushing me to the earth and

choking me. Help me to bear it, or I shall come to a bad end—I shall follow her who died here in this very chamber.”

My soul had ever stood open to her and so I told her right heartily, and her face became once more as it had been of old; and albeit those things she had to tell me were not indeed comforting, still I could in all honesty bid her to be of good heart; and I presently felt that to unburden herself of all that had weighed upon her these last few weeks, did her as much good as a bath. For it still was a pain to her to see her mother cooing like a pigeon round her new mate. She herself was full of his praises, albeit this man, well brought up and trained to good manners, would ever abide by the old customs of the old craftsmen, and his venerable mother likewise held fast by them, so that his wife had striven in vain to change the ways of the house. Thus master and mistress, son and daughter, foreman and apprentice, sewing man and maid all ate, as they had ever done, at the same table. And whereas the daughters, by old custom, sat in order on the mother's side, the youngest next to her and the oldest at the end, it thus fell that Ann was placed next to the foreman, who was that very one who had betrayed Gotz Waldstromer to his master because he had himself cast an eye on Gertrude. The young fellow had ere long set his light heart on Ann; and being a fine lad, and the sole son of a well-to-do master in Augsburg, he was likewise a famous wooer and breaker of maiden hearts, and could boast of many a triumphant love affair among the daughters of the simpler class. He was, in his own rank of life, cock of the walk, as such folks say; and I remembered well having seen him at an apprentices' dance at the May merrymakings, whither he had come apparelled in a rose-colored jerkin and light-hued hose, bedecked with flowers and greenery in his cap and belt; he had fooled with the daughters of the master of his guild like the coxcomb he was, and whirled them off to dance as though he did them high honor by paying court to them. It might, to be sure, have given him a lesson to find that his master's fair daughter scorned his suit; yet that sank not deep, inasmuch as it was for the sake of a Junker of high degree. With Ann he might hope for better luck; for although from the first she gave him to wit that he pleased her not, he did not therefore leave her in peace, and this very morning, finding her alone in the hall, he had made so bold as to put forth his hand to clasp her. Albeit she had forthwith set him in his place, and right sharply, it seemed that to protect herself against his advances there was no remedy but a complaint to his master, which would disturb the peace of the household. She was indeed able enough to take care of herself and to ward off any unseemly boldness on his part; but she felt her noble purity soiled by contact with that taint of commonness of which she was conscious in this young fellow's ways, and in many other daily experiences.

Every meal, with the great dish into which the apprentice dipped his spoon next to hers, was a misery to her; and when the master's old mother marked this, and noted also how uneasily she submitted to her new place and part in life, seeing likewise Ann's tear-stained eyes and sorrowful countenance, she conceived that all this was by reason that Ann's pride

could hardly bend to endure life in a craftsman's dwelling. And her heart was turned from her son's step-daughter, whom at first she had welcomed right kindly; she overlooked her as a rule, or if she spoke to her, it was in harsh and ungracious tones. This, as Ann saw its purpose, hurt her all the more, as she saw more clearly that the new grandmother was a warm-hearted and worthy and right-minded woman, from whose lips fell many a wise word, while she was as kind to the younger children as though they had been her own grandchildren. Nay, one had but to look at her to see that she was made of sound stuff, and had head and heart both in the right place.

A few hours since Ann had opened her heart to her Father confessor, the reverend prebendary von Hellfeld; and he had counselled her to take the veil and win heavenly bliss in a convent as the bride of Christ. And whereas all she craved was peace, and a refuge from the world wherein she had suffered so much, and Cousin Maud and I likewise deemed it the better course for her, she would gladly have followed this good counsel, but that her late dear father had ever been strongly averse to the life of the cloister. Self-seeking, he would say, is at the root of all evil, and he who becomes an alien from this world and its duties to seek happiness in a convent—inasmuch as that beatitude for which monks and nuns strive is nothing else than a higher form of happiness, extending beyond the grave to the very end of all things—may indeed intend to pursue the highest aim, and yet it is but self-seeking, although of the loftiest and noblest kind. Also, but a few days ere he died, he had admonished Ann, in whom he had long discerned the true teacher of his younger children, to warn them above all things against self-seeking, inasmuch as now that the hand of death was already on him, he found his chiefest comfort in the assurance of having labored faithfully, trusting in his Redeemer's grace, to do all that in him lay for his own kith and kin, and for other folks' orphans, whether rich or poor.

This discourse had sunk deep into Ann's soul, and had been in her mind when she spoke such brave words to Herdegen, exhorting him to higher aims. Now, again, coming forth from the good priest's door, she had met her grand-uncle the organist, and asking him what he would say if a hapless and forlorn maid should seek the peace she had lost in the silence of the cloister, the simple man looked her full in the eyes and murmured sadly to himself: "Alack! And has it come to this!" Then he went close up to her, raised her drooping head, and cried in a cheering voice:

"In a cloister? You, in a cloister! You, our Ann, who have already learnt to be so good a mother in the Sisters's school? No child, and again and again I say No. Pay heed rather to the saying which your old grand-uncle once heard from the lips of a wise and good man, when in the sorest hour of his life he was about to knock at the gate of a Cistercian convent.—His words were: 'Though thou lose all thou deemest thy happiness, if thou canst but make the happiness of others, thou shalt find it again in thine own heart.'"

And at a later day old Heyden himself told me that he, who while yet but a youth had been the prefectus of the town-pipers, had been nigh to madness when his wife, his Elslein, had been snatched from him after scarce a year and a half of married life. After he had recovered his wits, he had conceived that any balance or peace of mind was only to be found in a convent, near to God; and it was at that time that the wise and excellent Ulman Stromer had spoken the words which had been thenceforth the light and guiding line of his life. He had remained in the world; but he had renounced the more honorable post of prefect of the town-musicians, and taken on him the humble one of organist, in which it had been granted to him to offer up his great gift of music as it were a sacrifice to Heaven. This maxim, which had spared the virtuous old man to the world, made its mark on Ann likewise; and whereas I saw how gladly she had received the doctrine that happiness should be found in making others happy, I prayed her to join me in taking it henceforth as the guiding lamp of our lives. At this she was well pleased; and she went on to point wherein and how we should henceforth strive to forget ourselves for our neighbor's sake, with that soaring flight of soul in which I could scarce follow her but as a child lags after a butterfly or a bird.

Then, when I presently saw that she was in better heart, I took courage, but in jest, being sure of her refusal, to plead the Magister's suit. This, however, was as I was departing; I had already stayed and delayed her over-long, inasmuch as I had yet to array myself for the feast at Uncle Christian's. But, as I was about to speak; a serving man came in with a letter written by the kind old man to Ann herself, his "dear watchman" in which, for the third time, he besought her, with pressing warmth, not to refuse to go to him on his name day and pledge him in the loving cup to his health and happiness.

With the help of this tender appeal I made her say she would go; yet she spoke the words in haste and great agitation.

My uncle's messenger had hindered my suing, so while we hastily looked through Ann's store of holiday raiment, I brought my pleading for Master Peter to an end; and what I looked for came, in truth, to pass: without seeming one whit surprised she steadfastly rejected his suit, saying that he was the poor, good, faithful Magister, and worthy to win a wife whose heart was all his own.

At my uncle's house that night, with the exception of certain learned and reverend gentlemen, Ann alone was not of gentle birth. Yet was she in no wise the least, neither in demeanor nor in attire; and when I beheld her in the ante-chamber, all lighted up with wax tapers, in her sky-blue gown, thanking the master of the house and his sister—who kept house for him—for their condescension, as she upraised her great eyes with loving respect, I could have clasped her in my arms in the face of all the world, and I marvelled how my brother Herdegen could have sinfully cast such a jewel from him.

Then, when we went on together into the guest chamber, it fell that the town-pipers at that minute ceased to play and there was silence on all, as though a flourish of trumpets had warned of the approach of a prince; and yet it was only in honor of Ann and her wondrous beauty. Each and all of the young men there would, meseemed, gladly have stepped into Herdegen's place, and she was so fully taken up with dancing that she could scarce mark how diligently all the mothers and maidens overlooked her. Howbeit, Ursula Tetzl was not content with that, but went up to her and with a sneer enquired whether Junker Schopper at Paris were well.

Ann drew herself up with pride and hastily answered that if any one craved news of him he had best apply to Mistress Ursula Tetzl, inasmuch as she was ever wont to have a keen eye on her dear cousin.

At this Ursula cried out: "How well our old schoolmate remembers the lessons she learnt; even the fable of the Fox and the Grapes!" then, turning to me she added: "Nor has she lost her skill in learning; she has not long been in her stepfather's dwelling and she has already mastered the art of hitting blows as the coppersmiths do." And she turned her back on us both.

And presently, when it came to her turn to join the chain in which Ann was taking part, I marked well that she urged the youth she danced with to stand away from the craftsman's daughter. Howbeit I at once brought her plot to naught and the young gentleman to shame. Not that she needed any such defence, for her beauty led every man to seek her above all others. And when, at supper, Uncle Christian called her to his side and made it fully manifest to all present how dear she was to his faithful heart, I hoped that indeed the day was won for her, and that henceforth our friendship would be regarded as a matter apart from any concern with her step-father the coppersmith. What need she care about those discourteous women, who made it, to be sure, plain enough at their departing, that they took her presence there amiss.

On our way home methought she was in a meditative mood, and as we parted she bid me go to see her early next morning. This I should have done in any case, inasmuch as I knew no greater pleasure, after a feast or dance at which we had been together, than to talk with her of any matter we might each have marked, but there was something more than this in her mind.

Next day, indeed, when I had greeted her, she had lost her cheerful mien of the day before; it was plain to see that she had not slept, and I presently learned that she had been thinking through the night what her life must be, and how she could best fulfill the vow we had both made. The more diligently she had considered of the matter, the more worthy had she deemed our purpose; and the dance at my Uncle Christian's had clearly proven to her that among our class there were few to whom her presence could be welcome, and none to whom it could bring any real pleasure.

In this she was doubtless right; yet was I startled when, with the steadfast will which she ever showed, she said that, after duly weighing the matter, she had made up her mind to accept the Magister.

When she perceived how greatly I was amazed, she besought me, with the same eager haste as I had marvelled at the day before, that I would not contend against a conclusion she had fully weighed; inasmuch as that the Magister was a worthy man whom she could make truly happy. Moreover, his newly-acquired wealth would enable her to help many indigent persons in their need and misery. I enquired of her earnestly how about any love for him, and she broke out with much vehemence, saying that I must know for certain that for her all love and the joys of love were numbered with the dead. She would tell this to Master Peter with all honesty, and she was sure that he would be content with her friendship and warm goodwill.

But all this she poured out as though she could not endure to hear her own words. An inward voice at the same time warned me that she had made up her mind to this step, in order that Herdegen might fully understand that to him she was lost for ever, albeit I had not given up all hope that they might some day come together, and that Ann's noble love of what was best in my brother might thus rescue him from utter ruin. Hence her ill-starred resolve filled me with rage, to such a degree that I railed at it as a mad and sinful deed against her own peace of mind, and indeed against him whom she had once held as dear as her own life.

But Ann cut me short, and bade me sharply to mind my promise, and never speak of Herdegen again. My hot blood rose at this and I made for the door; nay, I had the handle of the latch in my hand when she flew after me, held me back by force, and entreated me with prayers that I would let her do her will, for that she had no choice. She purposed in solemn earnest henceforth at all times to devote herself to the happiness of others, and whereas that demanded heavy sacrifice, she was now ready to make it. If indeed I still refused to carry her answer to the Magister, then would she send it through her step-father or Dame Henneleinlein, who was apt at such errands, and bid her suitor come to see her.

Then I perceived that there was but small hope; with a heavy heart, and, indeed, a secret intent behind, I took the task upon me, for I saw plainly that my refusal would ruin all. All the same, meseemed it was a happy ordering that the Magister should have set forth early that morning to spend a few days at Nordlingen, to take possession of the house he had fallen heir to; for, when a great misfortune lies ahead, a hopeful soul clings to delay as the harbinger of deliverance.

I made my way home full of forebodings, and in front of our door I saw my Forest uncle's horses in waiting. He was above stairs with cousin Maud, and I soon was informed that he had come to bid me and Ann to the great hunt which was to take place at the New Year. His Highness Duke Albrecht of Bavaria, with divers other knights and gentlemen, had promised to take

part in it, and he needed our help for his sick and suffering wife; also, said he, he loved to see "a few smart young maids" at his board. Already he and cousin Maud had discussed at length whether it would be seemly to bring the coppersmith's stepdaughter into the company of such illustrious guests; and the balance in her favor had been struck in his mind by his opinion that a fair young maid must ever be pleasing in the hunter's eyes out in the forest, whatever her rank might be.

He had now but one care, and that was that neither he nor any other man had hitherto dared to utter the name of Master Ulman Pernhart to my aunt Jacoba, and that she therefore knew not of his marriage with her dear Ann's mother. Yet must the lady be informed thereof; so, finding that my cousin Maud made no secret of her will to speed the Magister's wooing, while I weened, with good reason, that my aunt would gladly support me in hindering it, I then and there made up my mind to go back with my uncle, and hold council with his shrewd-witted wife.