

HUNTINGDON JOURNAL.

"ONE COUNTRY, ONE CONSTITUTION, ONE DESTINY."

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TERMS

HUNTINGDON JOURNAL.

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THE GARLAND.



"With sweetest flowers enrich'd
From various gardens cull'd with care."

For the Huntingdon Journal.

RAVEN HOLLOW.

Long, long my muse has absent been,
Perhaps a sporting with the Lassies,
By fancy's eye, she still was seen
Upon the top of mount Parnassus.

But lately she has come again,
And smiling bid me, her to follow,
With harp in hand, she now is seen,
Perch'd on a rock, in Raven hollow.

She bade me take a seat, and dip
In liquid black, my pointed feather,
And carefully, these lines to write,
For her, as she put them together.

A mossy hillock is my seat,
A large flat rock, it is my table;
Beneath a lofty jutting crag,
Crown'd by a spreading sugar maple,

A chrysal brook just at my feet,
In gentle murmurs onward moving,
To quench the thirst of bird and beast,
That through the woods are ever roving,

On right and left, and close at hand,
Are piles, on piles, (truly majestic)
Of massive rocks, on rocks, on rocks,
And heaps, on heaps, the most romantic.

And numerous caverns gaping wide,
Amongst the craggy cliffs are yawning,
Whilst flocks of birds on lofty pines,
Upon their tops, do take an awning.

The elm, the ivy and the vine,
They here do stand in rude succession,
The mountain tea, and lofty pine,
Are contrasts grand beyond expression.

Here you may see on hawthorn top,
A yellow pleasant, busy budding,
There starting up, just from his lair,
A coney passes, onward scudding.

Beneath a rock, on yonder side,
A flock of quails, are slyly hiding,
From Reynard who has view'd them o'er,
And through the shrubs, is slyly gliding.

See how the traitor steals along,
With steady step, and stealthy motion,
He fancy's they will soon be his,
To sup on quails, he has a notion.

Just now some strange intruding thoughts,
Rolls o'er my mind in quick succession,
And you may read them if you please,
If you can pardon this digression.

Is not the fox like Martin Van,
The quails the Loco Foco party,
How cunningly his plans are laid,
On them to dine, and sup most hearty.

Can he the purse and sword unite,
And you can but believe a poet,
My word to you I'll freely pledge,
With sack and boots, he'll surely go it.

And as, for our own Davy R.,
In three years hence, when out of power,
Here, he may choose a country seat,
And here, erect a shady bowyer.

Here, he may govern moles and bats.
And blinking night owls in the caverns,
And ruminating on past events,
And purblind Locos in the taverns.

His John B. L., may here remove,
For Davy must have a physician,
To guard his health, both night and day,
Least he should die without contrition.

And now may Davy happy be,
And here in secret do his penance,
Beneath some green and shady tree,
And still escape Masonic vengeance.

Now brave 'Tippo, from Kensington,
If you and your brave boys together,
Print this for me, I'll wish you joy,
As long as I can poise a feather.
NATHANIAL NEWTHINKER.

Select Tale.

THE MAIDSCHENSTEIN.

A TRADITION OF THE SAXON SWISS.

(CONCLUDED.)

CHAPTER III.

Midnight is close at hand, and Franz Brockhaus sits alone in a small arched chamber that is hewn out of the solid rock. To reach that giddy height, he has threaded the mazes of the Kuhnstall forest, and clambered up a rude and steep ladder, which, reared from the extremity of a fissure: conducts Father Ambrose to and fro, alternately abroad and back to his dwelling, on the bald grey hill alluded to in a previous chapter. A small lamp, suspended by an iron chain from the ceiling, renders obscurely visible each object within the compass of that narrow vault. There is a rough deal table, an altar cut in the stone, a crucifix, a skull, an hour glass, a couch (it such it may be termed) composed of untrimmed branches of oak, a rosary, and a pitcher of water. A book of devotions lies upon the altar, fastened with silver clasps, while a large Hebrew Bible, in vellum binding, rests on the log which for fifty years has served Father Ambrose as a pillow. There, then, sits Franz Brockhaus, gazing forth from time to time across the wilderness far, far beneath him; over which the moon sheds her silvery light, unobscured even by a gossamer cloud.

"What have I done?" exclaimed he, at length after a long and anxious silence. "Why took I the oath? Devoted as I am to the service of my Master, and ready, the Lord knoweth, to die for the truth, why oppress my soul with this additional bondage, which neither mine nor the maiden's situation rendered necessary? Is it not written, 'Swear not all?' Yea, and have I ever spoken to her otherwise than as to a sister? Have I ever thought of her except as a friend?—ah! no, no, no! A sister standeth not between a man and his Maker; a friend dwelleth not all day long in a friend's memory. Hath the old man seen further into the state of our souls than our own eyes could penetrate? What said he? and how runs the vow? 'Swear that she shall never be to thee more than she is at this moment, till the tyranny of these evil times be overpast.' Yes, it can even thus, and the meaning is—I cannot tell what. I am deceived, I am lost in uncertainty. Would that the old man were come, that so we might hold communion together; and my mind be set at rest touching the events of the morrow."

Thus mused aloud the Leipzig student, as he sat on the anchorite's couch, and looked through the aperture that served for a door to the cell, across glade and hollow, towards the Lesser Winterberg. His pale face he turned up occasionally towards the heavens; for his faith was strong; nor yet with cheeks flushed, or brow overshadowed, as is apt to be the case when any violent passion has gained the mastery over us; yet there was a restlessness in his eye, which spoke of a spirit by no means at ease with itself; and quick and prompt was his recognition of the form which at length emerged from beneath a thicket; and made for the fissure.

"He comes at last," exclaimed the young man; "my prayer has been heard." "God have the in his keeping, my son!" said Father Ambrose, solemnly, as he gained the little cell; "God have thee in his keeping now and for ever."

"Amen, father," said Franz. "Hath thy journey sped well?"

"Even as we could desire," exclaimed the anchorite; "there will be no wedding to-morrow, nor any talk of such a procedure for some days to come."

"Now the Lord be praised!" replied Franz. "But how didst thou manage this matter?"

"The case was desperate, Franz; and the remedy must needs be desperate also. I have denounced Louise as one whom there is reason to suspect of heresy."

"What!" cried Franz, springing to his feet, "and given her up to persecution. Father Ambrose, I did not expect this at thy hands."

"Have patience, my son, and believe that there are cases in which that which seemeth harsh to the interested and the partial, is merciful in itself. Naught hath been done that it was possible to leave undone. Not yet hath the denunciation

gone further than to the private ear of Gaspar, whose love for Louise, albeit roughly shewn, is still that of a parent for his child. Mine was a visit of professed kindness; and I have consented to the unhappy man's entreaty, to conceal the charge for a space of seven days, during which the maiden shall come to me, that we may converse together on the state of her opinions. Meanwhile, rest thou here to-night; for on the morrow it is necessary that thou betake thee to thy mother's dwelling, there to abide till intelligence reach thee that the Lord hath need of thee. For the hour is near, ay, it is close at hand—when open testimony must be borne against the abominations of the land, and many hearts are prepared to receive the good seed, as soon as the hand shall be stretched forth to scatter it abroad. Hie thee hence, then, betimes in the morning, to the faithful of whom thou wottest in Henschritchen, and give them timely notice, so that he that hath not a sword may sell his garment and buy one."

"I am not, then, to see her, my father?" demanded Franz, mournfully.

"Thou hast sworn, my son, that thou shalt hold with the maiden no further communication till these evil times shall have passed away. I cannot release thee from this vow, for it is registered in Heaven, and may in no wise be broken."

"Nay, father, I swore only that she should not be to me any more than she has heretofore been: I said not that we should hold no further communication."

"Franz Brockhaus," replied the old man laying his hand solemnly on the student's shoulder; "beware how thou tamperest with an oath. It is no more possible for thee to meet Louise again, and to depart from her as thou art at this moment, than it is in my power to call back the years that have rolled over my head, and left me such as thou beholdest. The terms of thy vow may be as thou describest them, but have a care: no mortal never yet presumed to approach the extreme verge of honor or duty, who did not live to mourn that he had overpassed it."

"Father, this is to much," replied the student. "Into thy hands I committed myself, as far only as was consistent with the right of self-regulation which belongs to every freeman; and the pledge thus given I seek not to withdraw. But thou exactest to much from me now. I must and will see Louise again, be the consequences what they may!"

"Thou lovest the maiden with more than a brother's love," said the old man, mournfully.

"And what if I do?" was the reply. "Is there aught in this which can convict me of sin? If she be the best and fairest of God's creatures, may I not love her? But it is not so, father. She is to me a sister and a friend, and so she shall continue—till—these—evil—times—be—overpast."

"Aught than can convict thee of sin, my son," replied the hermit, while his eye glistened, and his cheek lost for a moment its deadly paleness; "far, far be it. Beautiful is love in its first impulses, beautiful and pure, so unearthly, so devoid of selfishness, so much akin to the feelings of angels and of God himself, that to speak of it as sinful, were to utter blasphemy against Him whose goodness is over all his works! Beautiful is love in its first impulses. But go not thou beyond them. One step further, Franz Brockhaus, and there is misery and shame, and is remorse and self-upbraiding, and worse—oh! worse a thousand fold than all!—there is the consciousness that suffering has fallen with accumulated violence, where least it ought, and least we desired it to fall. All this, and more, must be the portion of him who yields himself unwisely to the guidance of a passion that accords not with the high destiny which the Lord hath appointed him to fulfil. Look at me, Franz, and judge whether I speak the truth. Behold the wreck of what was once a man—worn down with humiliation and bitter agony—driven in youth itself from country and kindred—mine active duties neglected—my part not played out where Providence had cast it—a solitary in this howling wilderness—useless for many years, ay, worse than useless—till the light broke in, at last, upon my darkness, and, at the eleventh hour the vineyard gate was opened. Now came I hither. Take heed, then, lest in this, the eventful hour of thy career, thou, too, be turned aside from the path which the finger of Heaven, not mine, hath pointed out, and which thou hast received thy commission to follow. With sin I charge thee not; but for my sake, for thine own sake, for the sake of the great cause to which thou art devoted, read thou thine oath as I have read it; and hie thee to thy mother's dwelling, there to receive the appointed come, and thou shalt receive thy summons. Wilt thou obey me; even in this, oh! my son, cruel as the

wretch may be to thy natural weakness and feelings!"

"Father, I will obey," replied the young man, overawed by the energy of the anchorite's manner, and resolute at least for the moment to adhere to the determination. "I depart forthwith, and oh! let thy prayers ascend for me unceasingly, that I may have strength in this terrible struggle to hold myself upright, so that neither the frailty of the flesh, nor the waywardness of the human spirit, lead me into a forgetfulness of my duty. Father, thy blessing, and I hie me to my home."

"My blessing and my prayers are ever thine," replied the old man as he laid his hand solemnly on the student's head. But he made no effort to detain him; on the contrary, he smiled when the latter looked up from the ladder, as if seeking even then to be accosted. And the student springing down, the cell in the rock was left to the occupation of its lonely owner.

"He is gone, and my spirit goeth with him," said Father Ambrose, as he watched the form of Franz Brockhaus disappear in the depths of the forest. "Oh, highly favoured youth, to have received, in the morning of thy days, a knowledge of the truth, with the power and the will to spread it far around thee! Bright and glorious is thy destiny! Beset it may be with numerous difficulties for a season, but in the end how fertile of honor & of happiness! In thee my eyes behold God's chosen instrument, lifted above the feelings and the passions of the flesh, unencumbered by worldly cares, unshackled by worldly trammels, the preacher of righteousness in a land of sin, the champion of the gospel whose word had ceased to be heard. And it is from me that thou hast received this impulse. Ay, here then, at least, my soul hath found a green spot on which to repose. I have given thee to Heaven; and for this, Heaven will pardon my sin, though it be great. But is all this certain? Yea, verily it is certain. What though the struggle with human weakness with spiritual strength be yet in progress, the strength that cometh from on high shall prevail. He hath sworn and will not deviate from his vow, let the immediate sacrifice be what it may. Ah! sacrifice, said I? A sacrifice now—now, in their altered circumstances, when the maiden's faith is as our faith, and her soul is knitted to his by bonds more delicate than those that belong to earth? Am I justified in exacting such a price? While yet she lay in the depths of corruption, to hinder their union was my duty; for I had trained him up to one end, and the love that existed between them stood opposed to it. Therefore have I encouraged her father to press the match with Carl, brutal though he may be. But now—yea, even now—Franz must yield to no human weakness. Free of soul, he shall go forth to the battle, which already cometh forth with breeze, for all his energies will be needed to carry him through triumphantly. And the girl, what is to become of her? For seven days she is to be at my disposal. There is time enough in six days, and it shall be done. My sister, my dear sister, will afford her an asylum, and then when the evil days are gone—Well, well man seeth but a brief space before him, and the issues are in the hand of Heaven. Therefore bend I my knee, and pray that over the fearful past the pall of oblivion may be thrown, and that the future may redound to His glory, in the well-being of fellow creatures."

The old man knelt before the altar, and bowed himself devoutly to the crucifix; but he prayed only with his mind. His lips moved not at all, yet the lamp grew pale in the growing light of the morning, ere he rose from his knees, and lay upon his couch.

CHAPTER IV.

Two days had elapsed since the occurrence of the event described in the preceding chapter; and the night was closing on the evening of the third, when Franz Brockhaus quitted his seat in the garret at Henschritchen, which served him as a study, and threw his mantle over his shoulder. He turned towards the door as if to quit the apartment, when suddenly his father's sword, which hung upon a peg in the wall attracted his attention, and he took it down.

"The soldier's hand hath wielded thee in a cause that was not holy," said he, addressing the weapon, "why then should I hesitate to gird thee on? Come thou to my side. He that goeth forth in defence of his plighted troth, had best go armed, for where the conscience is clouded dangers seem ever present, even in situations less perilous by far than mine."

So saying the young man drew the belt around his waist, and descended the stairs. But he did not pass forth unobserved; his mother met him with extended arms; and he leaned upon her shoulder.

"What seekest thou abroad at this hour

my son? The faithful hold no meeting to-night; whether goest thou?"

"Do not ask me my mother," replied Franz. "I have business in hand to-night which concerns myself alone; yet it is important business too, and may not be impeded. I pray thee let me go, for the time wears apace."

"Thou hast been restless and uneasy these two days, Franz; more restless and uneasy than is thy wont. Do not conceal the cause of this from thy mother?"

"I have nothing to disclose, mother; nothing to hide. Let me pass, and I will return to thee ere long."

She did let him pass. The widow gazed in her son's face with a full eye, till the tear breaking loose, rolled over her cheek. He kissed it off affectionately, and was gone.

"The path is steep, the night is dark, & the wind means heavily among the trees. So much the better. Every thing in outward nature corresponds with the state of my own mind. Every thing around me is gloomy and sad, as my own prospects. That cruel path, why was it taken? It hangs like lead upon my heart, and presses it in the dust. Nay, nay, let me not reason thus. The oath, whether kindly meant or not, was spoken in the confidence and to one on whom, from boyhood, I have leaned, as on my guardian angel. Ay, and it was meant in kindness. He would not wondrously inflict pain; his objects to avert an imaginary evil. Moreover he mistakes my character entirely. Shall I be less zealous in the mighty cause, after my anxiety on this score has been allayed? Will not the opposite result ensue? As the case stands, my thoughts are all abroad. I know not what his views in reference to Louise may be, I am ignorant of her existing state, whether it be one of contentment or of misery. How is it possible, a devil cares so instant and so pressing, to devote my energies to the work for which I am destined? Besides, I did not understand the vow as debarring me from the degree of intercourse which used, in former times to subsist between us. It is a forced interpretation that would carry it thus far, and based, too, on words altogether delusive. Not safe! Wherefore not safe? Am I not master of myself? Is not she pure and holy, and confiding? What evil can possibly result from such communications as alone we seek to hold? I acted weakly in assenting to his view of the matter at all; I would be weaker still, were I to adhere to a promise that never ought to have been made. Besides, I will see her only once, merely to assure her that by my appeal has not been neglected; and that come what will, there is at least one heart among men that beats in unison with her—one arm that will defend her. I am right! I am right! and the moaning breeze and the darkening sky are omens not of ill, for they tend to cast around us a deeper shade, and to assure us of a blessed meeting and a happy parting."

Thus reasoned with himself a youth whose faculties were too acute, whose principles were too correct, and his love of truth too well grounded, not to be conscious all the while that his reasoning was unsound. For good or for evil he had pronounced a vow which he was now about deliberately to violate; and not all the sophisms to which strong inclination gave birth sufficed to assure him that he could do so and be innocent. Alas! is it not always thus when passion and principle stand opposite to one another? Always so, at least, during that perilous season when passion is to the human heart the mainspring of its movements. Who that has passed that season would desire to live it over again? For though the joy be intense, intense is likewise the suffering; and joy, as all experience proves, is but a fleeting treasure, whereas suffering abides with us forever. Therefore were Franz's efforts unavailing to silence the still small voice which spoke unceasingly, though it spoke in vain. He could not even withdraw from it entirely his attention, and he pressed forward, therefore, the slave of feelings too much at variance among themselves to leave so much as the semblance of peace within his bosom.

The night was considerably advanced when he gained the ridge, and began to descend into the forest ravine which interposes between the hills of Henschritchen and the Kuhnstall. Long before he reached the latter point, darkness had covered earth's surface; and it was of the most sable kind, for neither moon nor stars could penetrate the curtain of dense clouds by which the entire face of the sky was overspread. It would be hard to say how far the wanderer's spirits were or were not operated upon by the impenetrable gloom that was around him. Probably such gloom was not without its effect; for when our minds are ill at ease, and especially if conscience be our tormentor, total darkness has sometimes a strange effect upon the light shot from the cell of Father Ambrose he started as if a spirit had spoken to him.

How strange that a circumstance, in itself so unimportant, should have caused his breath to come thick, and his pulse to cease! Yet so it was: he gazed for an instant and then he sprang forward at an accelerated pace, as if he had been fleeing from a mortal enemy.

The clouds have rolled partly away, & the dark blue sky shines out here and there, thickly bespangled with stars, over which, however, the breeze carries, from time to time, a fresh though not so dense a covering. The boughs are waving with a melancholy sound, and the rush of the Kirmitsch, as it breaks over the mill-race, speaks to the ear of the listener in tones of the deepest sadness. And there is one who listens to the natural music of stream and breeze, in a frame of mind well fitted to drink in their saddest melody. From her lattice Louise looks forth, gazing with upturned eye to upon the heaven, which seems to have forsaken her, and casting many a bitter thought past and future, that are to her at this moment alike barren of comfort.

"Oh, that I may cease to be!" cried the broken hearted girl. "Forgotten in my hour of need by him whom my soul trusted; my prayers unanswered, my cry disregarded; why is life prolonged to one for whom it has no blessings in store? Why may I not lay down my head and die?"

"Louise, mine own Louise," replied a voice, the tones of which sunk like a well known melody into her heart.

She started to her feet. Thrust her swan-like neck from the window and there beneath the shelter of a spreading oak stood one whom, even in the gloom of mid night, she could not for a moment mistake.

"Gracious God! is it thou!" exclaimed she, in an audible whisper.

"It is even so, Louise," answered Franz. "Come to me if it be possible, only for one moment. Let me speak but one sentence in thine ear. I have much to say and thou to hear. Come to me if it be possible."

She has withdrawn from the lattice, and for an instant or two all around the mill is silent. Franz holds his breath to listen, and strains his eyeballs now accustomed to the darkness, till presently a light foot fall sounds upon the sward and a form passes like a shadow of a dream, from the cottage. In an instant the lovers are locked in the embrace which transitory though its rapture be, repays them for days and weeks of suffering. No word is spoken; no ejaculation is uttered; but in silence the spirit of each holds commune with the spirit of the other. At length the faculty of speech returns, and such questions are put, and such replies made as those alone could value, were they recorded, by whom the record is least needed, perhaps least desired.

"Mine own Louise, mine own, my beautiful!"

What music in the intonation that gave these simple words their being! what deep, deep meaning in their simplicity! Yet they called forth for a time no reply. Her forehead was upon his shoulders her eyes were closed, her lips moved not, but her soul was in heaven.

They rouse them from this trance of trust and tenderest affection. They glide slowly from beneath the oak, and passing over the intervening space of meadow, are overshadowed by the pine forest.

A little further still, a few paces on, and our old trysting place, the rock upon which we have so often sat, is won. There we may venture to unbuckle our hearts to each other. There you will tell me all that has befallen or threatens, and there I will show you that not by me has mine own Louise forgotten, albeit was a sense may have given pain to more than thyself."

They gained the well-known spot. It is a flat stone, a sort of natural couch, over-canopied by the tall rock into which it is indented, with a sort of verdure of green sward spread out before it, and a screen of birch and pine trees enclosed it on every side. They sat down; his arms around her waist, her hand locked in his; and knew not that minutes were growing into hours, while yet the ostensible business which they proposed to settle had been left untouched. There was indeed, the outpouring of pure and delicate minds. What were vows to Franz at this moment or the import they bore either on his own mind or that of another? Of what thought Louise, but the blessed consciousness that once again the arm supported her, while grasping which she knew neither fear nor sorrow? Alas, alas, that moments such as these should pass so readily from us. Yet so it was. They told a thousand tales of tenderness; they no longer professed to feel as brother and sister; the truth, long known to each was now the common property of both, and they were happy; when a low rustling in the under-wood startled them.

"Hush!" whispered Louise, "heard you not something move?"