

But Anne never moved from the chair in which she had seated herself. Rudolf, seeing that entreaty was useless, drew off his sword-belt and laid it across a chair. Then he crossed to a cupboard in the wall and opened it. Anne's eyes followed his every movement, but she made no remonstrance against his forwardness. In the cupboard he found some butter, a half loaf of bread and a bit of broiled pork. These he drew forth and placed upon the table. Next he brought out two plates and a pair of knives and forks. Then having placed two chairs he turned to Anne, and with a low bow, said,—

"The feast is spread. Come, you shall preside," at the same time offering his arm.

Anne pretended neither to see nor to hear, and looked steadfastly out of the window opposite. Rudolf, nothing daunted, however, stooped quickly and gathered her in his arms. In vain did she struggle, for his embrace was like steel, and a moment later he had deposited her, breathless and blushing, in one of the chairs at the table. Then with much dignity he took the other.

"Thou'rt very rude, Sir Rudolf," pouted the lass, "to take such unseemly advantage of a forlorn maiden. Is that the gallantry of thy country?"

"Nay, be fair, Mistress Anne. You would not come willingly, even though I asked you in the politest manner I knew how. I humbly crave your pardon."

"'Tis granted. But I shall not eat with thee. 'Thou canst drive a horse to water but thou canst not make him drink,'" quoted Anne.

Rudolf sprang to his feet.

"Ah, I forgot," he cried,— "the water. Where is it, Mistress Anne?"

The remembrance of his sorry plight at the window sent her into a paroxysm of laughter.

"Methinks thou mayest find some in thy doublet," she said, still laughing.

"Indeed, that I might," he replied, somewhat nettled at the manner in which she had turned the laugh on him. "But I want the pail," he continued.

"Oh," she answered innocently, "that stands just outside the door."

Rudolf took two tumblers from the shelf and stepped outside, returning in a moment, having each filled with clear water.