

terized the charming little fellow that Stöger involuntarily smiled.

"Then you must be mother's stupid little thin boy," addressing the eldest of the trio, a slender boy who was doing his best not to appear frightened, but who answered with not a little self-consciousness,

"No, sir; I'm mother's sensible boy."

"Zounds! Listen to that. But none of you appear to have a name."

"Mine is Bess," said the girl.

"And mine is Walt," added the little brother.

"Their names are Elizabeth and Walter, broke in the eldest," and mine is John Charles Rudolph Francis König."

"H'm! You seem to be quite a resolute little fellow. What do you intend becoming when you're grown up?"

"I'm going to be a general."

"To do that you must go to war, and you might be killed."

This prospect was not very pleasing to him. He thought a moment and then said: "If I fight bravely, nothing will happen; and do you know what?" he confidently stepped closer, "I'll shut my eyes real tight and then I won't see the shooting."

Stöger laughed out loudly. It was a rough, unmelodious laugh, for laughing, like every other accomplishment, must be practiced if one would not lose it. He shrank at the sound of his own voice.

"What does your mother do?"

"Paints and draws, and sometimes she cries," was the answer.

"Paints and draws," Stöger repeated, pretending to have missed the last words.

"On pusselan," declared Bess.

"On plortslain," corrected Johnnie, and then added, apologetically, "she's too little; she can't say plortslain yet."

"Do you love your mother?"

"Oh, awful much," said Bess.

"And I—I love her like, like—" and here Johnny began seeking a word which would express the magnitude of his love—"like an elephant."

This was apparently the best his imagination could suggest, and Stöger was amazed at the immensity of the idea, when Bess said:

"And we love papa, too."