UNCLE TITUS
AND HIS VISIT TO THE COUNTRY

A STORY FOR CHILDREN

AND FOR THOSE WHO LOVE CHILDREN

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

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CHAPTER I.

UNDER THE LINDENS.

The daily promenaders who moved slowly back and forth every afternoon under the shade of the lindens on the eastern side of the pretty town of Karlsruhe were very much interested in the appearance of two persons who had lately joined their ranks. It was beyond doubt that the man was very ill. He could only move slowly and it was touching to see the care with which his little companion tried to make herself useful to him. He supported himself with his right hand on a stout stick, and rested his left upon the the shoulder of the child at his side, and one could see that he needed the assistance of both. From time to time he would lift his left hand and say gently,

"Tell me, my child, if I press too heavily upon you."

Instantly, however, the child would catch his hand and press it down again, assuring him,

"No, no, certainly not, Papa, lean upon me still more: I do not even notice it at all."

After they had walked back and forth for a while, they seated themselves upon one of the benches that were placed at convenient distances under the trees, and rested a little.

The sick man was Major Falk, who had been in Karlsruhe only a short time. He lived before that in Hamburg with his daughter Dora, whose mother died soon after the little girl came into the world, so that Dora had never known any parent but her father. Naturally, therefore, the child's whole affection was centred upon Major Falk, who had always devoted himself to his little motherless girl with such tenderness that she had scarcely felt the want of a mother, until the war with France broke out, and he was obliged to go with the Army. He was away for a long time, and when at last he returned, it was with a dangerous wound in his breast. The Major had no near relatives in Hamburg, and he therefore lived a very retired life with his little daughter as his only companion, but in Karlsruhe he had an elder half-sister, married to a literary man, Mr. Titus Ehrenreich.

When Major Falk was fully convinced that his wound was incurable, he decided to remove to Karlsruhe, in order not to be quite without help when his increasing illness should make it necessary for him to have some aid in the care of his eleven-year-old daughter. It did not take long to make the move. He rented a few rooms in the neighborhood of his sister, and spent the warm spring afternoons enjoying his regular walk under the shade of the lindens with his little daughter as his supporter and loving companion.

When he grew weary of walking and they sat down on a bench to rest, the Major had always some interesting story to tell, to beguile the time, and Dora was certain that no one in the whole world could tell such delightful stories as her father, who was indeed in her opinion the most agreeable and lovable of men. Her favorite tales, and those which the Major himself took most pleasure in relating, were little incidents in the life of Dora's

mother, who was now is heaven. He loved to tell the child how affectionate and happy her mother had always been, and how many friends she had won for herself, and how she always brought sunshine with her wherever she went, and how nobody ever saw her who did not feel at once attracted to her, and how she was even now remembered by those who had known and loved her during life.

When Major Falk once began to talk about his dearly-beloved wife, he was apt to forget the flight of time, and often the cool evening wind first aroused him with its chilly breath to the fact that he was lingering too long in the outer air. Then he and his little Dora would rise from the bench in the shade of the lindens, and slowly wander back into town, until they stopped before a many-storied house in a narrow street, and the Major would generally say,

"We must go up to see Uncle Titus and Aunt Ninette this afternoon, Dora." And as they slowly climbed the steep staircase, he would add, "Softly now, little Dora, you know your Uncle is always writing very learned books, and we must not disturb him by any unnecessary noise, and indeed, Dora, I do not think your Aunt is any more fond of noise than he is." So Dora went up upon the tips of her toes as quietly as a mouse, and the Major's ring could scarcely be heard, he pulled the bell so gently! Generally Aunt Ninette opened the door herself, saying, "Come in, come in, dear brother! Very softly, if you please, for you know your brother-in-law is busy at work."

So the three moved noiselessly along the corridor and crept into the sitting room. Uncle Titus' study was the very next room, so that the conversation was carried on almost in whispers, but it must be said Major Falk was less liable to forget the necessary caution against disturbing the learned writer than Aunt Ninette herself, for that lady being oppressed with many cares and troubles had always to break into frequent lamentation.

When June came, it was safe and pleasant to linger late under the shade of the lindens, but the pair in whom we are interested often turned their steps homeward earlier than they wished, in order not to arouse Aunt Ninette's ever-ready reproaches. But one warm evening when the sky was covered with rosy and golden sunset clouds, the Major and Dora lingered watching the lovely sight longer than was their wont. They sat silent hand in hand on the bench by the side of the promenade, and Dora could not take her eyes from her father's face as he sat with upturned look gazing into the sky. At last she exclaimed: "I wish you could see yourself, papa, you look all golden and beautiful. I am sure the angels in heaven look just as you do now."

Her father smiled. "It will soon pass away from me, Dora, but I can imagine your mother standing behind those lovely clouds and smiling down upon us with this golden glory always upon her face."

As the Major said, it did pass away very soon; his face grew pale, and shone no longer; the golden light faded from the sky and the shades of night stole on. The Major rose, and Dora followed him rather sadly. The beautiful illumination had passed too quickly.

"We shall stand again in this glory, my child, nay, in a far more beautiful one," said her father consolingly, "when we are all together again, your mother and you and I, where there will be no more parting and the glory will be everlasting." As they climbed up the high staircase to say good night to Uncle and Aunt, the latter awaited them on the landing, making all sorts of silent signs of alarm and distress, but she did not utter a sound until she had them safely within the sitting room. Then, having softly closed the door, she broke forth complainingly,

"How can you make me so uneasy, dear brother? I have been dreadfully anxious about you. I imagined all kinds of shocking accidents that might have happened, and made you so late in returning home! How can you be so heedless as to forget that it is not safe for you to stay out after sunset. Now I am sure that you have taken cold. And what will happen, who can tell? Something dreadful, I am certain." "Calm yourself, I beg you, dear Ninette," said the Major soothingly, as soon as he could get in a word. "The air is so mild, so very warm, that it could not possibly harm anybody, and the evening was glorious, perfectly wonderful. Let me enjoy these lovely summer evenings on earth as long as I can; it will not be very long at the farthest. What is sure to come, can be neither delayed nor hastened much by anything I may do." These words, however, although they were spoken in the quietest possible tone, called forth another torrent of reproach and lamentation.

"How can you allow yourself to speak in that way? How can you say such dreadful things?" cried the excited woman over and over again. "It will not happen. What will become of us all; what will become of—you know what I mean," and she cast a meaning glance at Dora. "No, Karl, it would be more than I could bear, and we never have more trouble sent to us than we can bear; I do not know how I should live; I could not possibly endure it." "My dear Ninette" said her brother quietly, "Do not forget one thing, "'Thou art not in command,

Thou canst not shape the end;

God holds us in his hand:

God knows the best to send.'"

"Oh, of course, I know all that well enough. I know that is all true," assented Aunt Ninette, "but when one cannot see the end nor the help, it is enough to kill one with anxiety. And then you have such a way of speaking of terrible things as if they were certain to come, and I cannot bear it, I tell you; I cannot."

"Now we will say good-night and not stand and dispute any longer, my dear sister," said the Major, holding out his hand, "we will both try to remember the words of the verse—'God knows the best to send.'"

"Yes, yes, I'll remember. Only don't take cold going across the street, and step very softly as you go down the stairs, and Dora, do you hear! Close the door very gently, and Karl, be careful of the draught, as you cross the street!"

While the good irritating Aunt was calling after them all these unnecessary cautions, Dora and her father had gone down the stairs and had softly closed the house-door. They had only a narrow alley to cross to reach their own rooms opposite.

The next afternoon, as Dora and her father seated themselves on their favorite bench under the lindens, the child asked,

"Papa, is it possible that Aunt Ninette never knew the verse you repeated to her last night?"

"Oh yes, my child, she has always known the lines," replied the Major. "It is only for the moment that your good aunt allows herself to be so overwhelmed with care and worry as to forget who governs all wisely. She is a good woman, and in her heart she places her trust in God's goodness. She soon comes to herself again."

Dora was silent for a while, and then she said thoughtfully,

"Papa, how can we help being 'overwhelmed with care and worry?' and 'killed with anxiety,' as Aunt Ninette said."

"By always remembering that everything comes to us from the good God, my dear child. When we are happy, we must think of Him and thank Him; when sorrow comes we must not be frightened and distressed, for we know that the good God sends it, and that it will be for our good. So we shall never be 'overwhelmed with care and worry,' for even when some bitter trouble comes, in which we can see no help nor escape, we know that God can bring good out of what seems to us wholly evil. Will you try to think of this, my child? for sorrow comes to all, and you will not escape it more than another. But God will help you if you put your trust in Him."

"Yes, I understand you, papa, and I will try to do as you say. It is far better to trust in God, than to let one's self be overwhelmed with care and worry.'"

"But we must not forget," continued her father, after a pause, "that we must not only think of God, when something special happens, but in everything that we do, we must strive to act according to His holy will. If we never think of Him, except when we are unhappy, we shall not then be able easily to find the way to him, and that is the greatest grief of all."

Dora repeated that she would ask God to keep her in the right way, and as she spoke, her father softly stroked her hand, as it lay in his. He did not speak again for a long time, but his eyes rested so lovingly and protectingly on his little girl, that she felt as if folded in a tender and strengthening embrace.

The sun sank in golden radiance behind the green lindens, and slowly the father and child wended their way towards the high house in the narrow street.

CHAPTER II.

LONG, LONG DAYS.

It was not many days after the events mentioned in the last chapter. Dora sat by her father's bedside, her head buried in the pillows, vainly striving to choke down her tears and sobs. It seemed as if her heart must break. The Major lay back on his pillow, white and still, with a peaceful smile on his calm face. Dora could not understand it, could not take it in, but she knew it. Her father was gone to join her mother in heaven.

In the morning her father had not come as usual to her bedside to awaken her, so when at last she opened her eyes, she went to seek him, and she found him still in bed, and lying so quiet that she seated herself quite softly by his side, that she might not disturb him.

Presently the servant came up with the breakfast, and looking through the open door into the bed-room where Dora sat by her father's bed-side, she called out in terror,

"Oh God, he is dead! I will call your aunt, child," and hurried away.

Dora's heart seemed cut in two by these words. She put her head upon the pillow and sobbed and wept. Presently she heard her aunt come into the room, and she raised her head and tried to control herself, for she dreaded the scene that she knew was coming. And it came—cries and sobs, loud groans and lamentations. Aunt Ninette declared that she could never bear this terrible blow; she did not know which way to turn, nor what to do first.

In the open drawer of the table by the side of the bed, lay several papers, and as she laid them together, meaning to lock them up, she saw a letter addressed to herself. She opened it and read as follows:

"Dear

Sister Ninette,

"I feel that I shall shall soon leave you, but I will not talk to you about it, for the sad time will come only too quickly. One only wish that I have greatly at heart I now lay before you, and that is, that you will take my child under your protection for as long as she may need your care. I shall leave very little money behind me, but I beg you to employ this little in teaching Dora something that will enable her, with God's help, to support herself when she is old enough.

"Do not, my dear sister, give way to your grief; try to believe as I believe, that God will always take our children under his care, when we are obliged to leave them and can no longer provide for them ourselves. Receive my heartfelt thanks for all the kindness you have shown to me and my child. God will reward you for it all."

Aunt Ninette read and re-read these touching lines, and could not help growing calmer as she read. She turned to the silently weeping Dora with these words,

"Come, my child, your home henceforth will be with us. You and I will try to remember that all is well with your father; otherwise we shall break down under our sorrow."

Dora arose at once and prepared to follow her aunt, but her heart was heavy within her; she felt as if all was over and she could not live much longer.

As she came up the stairs behind her aunt, Aunt Ninette omitted for the first time to caution her to step lightly, and indeed there was no need now of the usual warning when they approached Uncle Titus' room, for the little girl was so sad, so weighed down with her sorrow as she entered her new home, that it seemed as if she could never again utter a sound of childish merriment. A little room under the roof, hitherto used as a store-room, was changed into a bed-room for Dora, though not without some complainings from Aunt Ninette. However, the furniture was brought over from the Major's rooms, and after a slight delay, all was comfortably arranged for the child.

When supper-time came, Dora followed her aunt, without a word, into the dining-room, where they were joined by Uncle Titus, who however seldom spoke, so deeply was he absorbed in his own thoughts. After supper, Dora went up to her little room under the roof, and with her face buried in her pillow, cried herself softly to sleep.

On the following morning she begged to be allowed to go over to look once again at her father, and after some objection, her aunt agreed to go with her, and they crossed the narrow street. Dora took a silent farewell of her dear father, weeping all the time but making no disturbance. Only when she again reached her little bed-room, did she at last give way to her sobs without restraint, for she knew that soon her good father would be carried away, and that she could never, never see him again on earth.

And now began a new order of life for Dora. She had not been to school, during the short time that she and her father had lived together in Karlsruhe. Her father went over with her the lessons she had learned in Hamburg, but he did not seem to care to begin any new study, preferring to leave everything for her aunt to arrange.

It happened that one of Aunt Ninette's friends was the teacher of a private school for girls, so that it was soon settled that Dora was to go to her every morning to learn what she could. Also a seamstress was engaged to teach her the art of shirt-making in the afternoon, for it was a theory of Aunt Ninette's that the construction of shirts of all kinds was a most useful branch of knowledge, and she proposed that Dora should learn this art, with a view of being able to support herself with her needle. She argued that since the shirt is the first garment to be put on in dressing, it should be the first that one should learn to make, and with this as a foundation, Dora could go on through the whole art of sewing, till in time she might even arrive at the mighty feat of making dresses! With which achievement Aunt

Ninette would feel more than satisfied, but this great end would never be reached, unless the first steps were taken in the right direction.

So every morning Dora sat on the school-bench studying diligently, and every afternoon on a little chair close to the seamstress' knee, sewing on a big shirt that made her very warm and uncomfortable. The mornings were not unpleasant; for she was in the company of other children who were
all studying, and Dora was ambitious and willing to learn. So the hours flew quickly, for she was too busy to dwell much on the loss of her dear father, and to think that he was gone forever. But the afternoons were truly dreadful. She must sit through the long hot hours, close by the seamstress, almost smothered by the big piece of cotton cloth, which her little fingers could hardly manage, and she grew restless and irritable, for her hands were moist, and the needle refused to be driven through the thick cloth. How often she glanced up at the clock on the wall during those long hours, when the minute hand was surely stuck at half-past three, and the regular tic-tac seemed to fill the quiet room with its sleepy droning. So hot, so still, so long were the hours of those summer afternoons!

The silence was broken now and then by the sounds of a distant piano. "What a happy child that must be!" thought little Dora, "who can sit at the piano and practise exercises, and all sorts of pretty tunes!" She could think of nothing more delightful; she listened with hungry ears, and drank in every note that reached her. In the narrow street where the seamstress lived she could hear the music distinctly, for no wagons passed, and the voices of foot-passengers did not reach up so high as to her room. So Dora listened to the sweet melodies which were her only refreshment during those hot long hours, and even the running scales were a pleasure to her ear. But then the thought of her father came back to her, and she felt bitterly the terrible contrast between these hot lonely afternoons and those which she used to spend with him under the cool shade of the lindens. Then she thought of that glorious sunset, and of her father, as he stood transfigured in the golden light. She remembered his comforting words, his assurance that some day they two and the mother would stand thus together, shining in the eternal light of Heaven. But Dora sighed at the thought of the long weary time before she should join them, unless indeed some accident should happen to her, or she should fall ill and die, from this too heavy task of shirt-making. After all, her best consolation was her father's verse; and then too, he had been so sure of its truth:

"God holds us in his hand,

God knows the best to send."

She believed it too; and as she repeated the lines to herself, her heart grew lighter, and even her needle moved more easily, as if inspired by the cheering thoughts. Yet the days were long and wearisome, and their stillness followed her when she went home to her uncle and aunt.

She reached home just in time for supper. Uncle Titus always held the newspaper before his face, and read and ate behind its ample shelter. Aunt Ninette spoke in whispers all the while, and asked only the most necessary questions, in order not to disturb her husband.

Dora said little; and less every day, as she grew accustomed to this silent life. Even when she came home from school at noon for the short interval before the time for her sewing lessons, there was no need to caution her against noise; for the child moved ever less and less like a living being, and grew more like a shadow day by day.

Yet by nature she was a lively little maiden, and took so keen an interest in all about her, that her father often used joyfully to observe it, saying,

"That child is exactly like her dear mother; just the same movements, the same indomitable spirit and enjoyment of life!"

But now all this vivacity seemed extinguished. Dora was very careful never to provoke her aunt to complaints, which she dreaded exceedingly. Yet for all her pains it would happen sometimes, most unexpectedly and when she was least looking for a storm, that one would break over her head, and frighten all her thoughts and words back into her childish heart; nay, almost check the flow of youth in her veins. One evening, she came home from her work filled with enthusiasm, by a song she had been listening to, played by her unseen musician. Dora knew the words well:

"Live your life merrily

While the lamp glows,

Ere it can fade and die,

Gather the rose."

Dora had often sung this song, but she had never dreamed that it could be played on the piano, and it sounded so beautiful, so wonderful to her, that she said to her aunt, as she entered the dining-room, "Oh, Aunt Ninette, how delightful it must be to know how to play on the piano! Do you think that I can ever learn it in my life?"

"Oh, in heaven's name, how can you ask me such a thing? How can you worry me so? How could you do anything of the kind in our house? Think of the terrible din that a piano makes! And where would the money come from if you could find the time? Oh, Dora, where did you get hold of that unfortunate idea? I should think I had enough to worry me already, without your asking me such a thing as this into the bargain." Dora hastened to assure her aunt that she had no intention of asking for any thing, and the storm blew over. But never again did she dare even to speak of music, no matter how eagerly she had listened to the piano, during her long sewing lessons. Every evening after Dora had learned all her lessons for school, while her aunt in utter silence knitted or nodded, the child climbed up to her little attic room; and before she closed her tiny window, she leaned out into the night to see whether the stars were shining, and looking down upon her from the high heavens. Five there were always up there just

above her head; they stood close together and Dora looked at them so often and so steadily, that she began to consider them as her own special property—or rather as friends who came every night and twinkled down into her heart, to tell her that she was not utterly alone. One night the idea came to her that these bright stars were loving messengers, who brought her kisses and caresses from her dear parents. And from these heavenly messengers the lonely child gained nightly comfort when she climbed to her little chamber in the roof, with her feeble candle for her only companion. She sent her prayers up to heaven through the tiny window, and received full assurance in return, that her Father in heaven saw her, and would not forsake her. Her father had told her that God would always help those who trusted him and prayed to him, and she had no fear.

And so the long hot summer passed, and Autumn came. Then followed a long, long winter with its cold and darkness; such cold that Dora often thought that even the hot summer days were better, for she no longer dared to open the window to look for her friends the stars, and often she could hardly get to sleep, it was so cold in the little room, under the roof. At last the Spring rolled round again, and the days passed one like another, in the quiet dwelling of Uncle Titus. Dora worked harder than ever on the big shirts, for she had learned to sew so well, that she had to help the seamstress in earnest now. When the hot days came again, something happened; and now Aunt Ninette had reason enough to lament. Uncle Titus had an attack of dizziness, and the doctor was sent for. "I suppose it is thirty years since you went beyond the limits of the town of Karlsruhe, and in all that time you have never left your desk except to eat and sleep. Am I right?" asked the physician, after he had looked steadily at Uncle Titus and tapped him a little here and there.

There was no denying that the doctor had stated the case truly. "Very well," he said, "now off with you! go away at once; to-day rather than to-morrow. Go to Switzerland. Go to the fresh mountain air; that is all the medicine you need. Don't go too high up, but stay there six weeks at least. Have you any preference as to the place? No? Well, set yourself to thinking and I will do the same, and to-morrow I shall call again to find you ready for the journey." With this off started the doctor, but Aunt Ninette would not let him escape so easily. She followed close at his heels with a whole torrent of questions, which she asked over and over again, and she would have an answer. The doctor had fairly deserved this attack, by his astounding prescription. His little game of snapping it suddenly upon them, and then quickly making his escape, had not succeeded; he lost three times as much time outside the door as if he had staid quietly in the room. When at last Aunt Ninette returned to her husband, there he sat at his desk again, writing as usual! "My dear Titus," cried the good woman really in great astonishment, "is it possible that you did not hear what we are ordered to do? To drop everything and go away at once, and stay away for six weeks! And where? We have not an idea where! And there's no way of knowing who our neighbors will be! It is terrible, and there you sit and write as if there were nothing else to be done in the world!"

"My love, it is exactly because I must go away so soon, that I wish to make the most of the little time I have left," said Uncle Titus, and he went on with his writing.

"My dear Titus, your way of accepting the unexpected is most admirable, but this must be talked over, I assure you. The consequences may be very serious, and the matter must not be lightly treated. Do think at once where we are to go! Aunt Ninette spoke very impressively.

"Oh, it makes no difference where we go, if it is only quiet, and out in the country some where," said the good man, as he calmly continued his writing.

"Of course, that is the very thing" said his wife, "to find a quiet house, not full of people nor in a noisy neighborhood. We might happen on a school close by, or a mill, or a waterfall. There are so many of those dreadful things in Switzerland. Or some noisy factory, or a market place, always full of country folk, all the people of the whole canton pouring in there together and making a terrible uproar. But I have an idea, my dearest Titus, I have thought of a way to settle it. I shall write to an old uncle of my brother's wife. You remember the family used to live in Switzerland; I am sure I can find out from him just what it is best for us to do."

"That seems to me rather a round-about way," said her husband, "and if I remember right the family had some unpleasant experiences in Switzerland, and are not likely to have kept up any connection with it." "Oh, let me see to that; I will take care that all is as it should be, my dear Titus," said aunt
Ninette decidedly, and off she went, and without more delay wrote and dispatched a letter to her brother's wife's uncle. This done, she hurried away to Dora's sewing teacher, who was a most respectable woman, and arranged that while they were in Switzerland, Dora should spend the days with her, going to school as usual in the morning and sewing all the afternoon, and that the woman should go home with Dora to pass the nights.

Dora was informed of this plan when she came home that evening. She received the news in silence, and after supper in silence went to her little attic room. There as she sat upon her little bed, she realized fully what her life would be when her uncle and aunt had gone away, and as she compared it sadly with the happy companionship of her dear father, her sorrow and solitude seemed too terrible to bear, and she hid her face in her hands and gave way to bitter tears. Her uncle and aunt might die too, she thought, and she should be left alone with no one to care for her, no one in the world to whom she belonged, and nothing to do but to sit forever sewing on endless shirts. For ever and ever! for she knew she must earn her living by sewing. Well, she was quite willing to do that; but oh! not to be left all alone.

The poor child was so wholly absorbed in these painful thoughts, as they passed again and again through her mind, that she lost all sense of time, till at last she was aroused, by the clock on the neighboring tower striking so many times that she was frightened. She raised her head. It was perfectly dark. Her little candle had burned out, and not a glimmer of light came from the street. But the stars; yes, there were the five stars above still shining so

joyfully, that it seemed to Dora as if her father were looking down upon her with loving eyes, and saying cheeringly,

"God holds us in his hand

God knows the best to send."

The sparkling starlight sank deep into her heart, and made it lighter. She grew calmer. Her father knew, she said to herself, she would trust his knowledge, and not fear what the future might hold in store. And after she laid her head on her pillow, she kept her eyes fixed upon the beautiful stars until they closed in sleep.

On the following evening the doctor came as he had promised. He began to suggest various places to Uncle Titus, but Aunt Ninette assured him rather curtly, that she was already on the track of something that promised to be satisfactory. There were a great many things to be taken into consideration, she said, since Uncle Titus was to make so vast a change in his habits. The utmost prudence must be exercised in the selection of the situation, and of the house also. This was her present business, and when everything was settled she would inform the doctor of her arrangements. "Very well, only don't be long about it; be off as soon as you can, the quicker the better,"
said the physician warningly, and he was making a hasty retreat, when he almost fell over little Dora who had stolen so quietly into the room that he had not seen her. "There, there, I hope I did not hurt you," he said, tapping the frightened child upon the
shoulder. "It will do this thin little creature a world of good too, this trip to Switzerland," he continued. "She must drink plenty of milk,—lots of milk." "We have decided to leave Dora behind," remarked Aunt Ninette drily. "As you please; it is your affair, Mrs. Ehrenreich; but you must let me observe that if you do
not look out, you will have another case on your hands, as bad as your husband's, if not worse. Good-morning madam," and he vanished. "Doctor, doctor! what do you mean? What did you say?" cried Aunt Ninette in her most
plaintive tone, running down the stairs to overtake him.

"I mean that the little person up there has quite too little good blood in her veins, and that she cannot last long, unless she gets more and better nourishment."

"For heaven's sake! What unfortunate people we are!" cried Mrs. Ehrenreich, wringing her hands in distress, as she came back into her husband's room. "My dearest Titus, just lay down your pen for one moment. You did not hear the dreadful things the doctor said would happen to Dora, if she did not have more and better blood?"

"Oh, take her with us to Switzerland. She never makes any noise," and Uncle Titus went on with his writing.

"My dearest Titus, how can you decide such a thing in one second? To be sure she never makes any noise, and that is the most important thing. But there are so many other things to consider, and arrange for, and think over! Oh dear! Oh dear me!"

But Uncle Titus was again absorbed in his work, and paid not the slightest heed to his wife's lamentations. So, seeing that she could expect no help from him, she went into her own room, thought everything over carefully again and again, and at last decided that it was best to follow the doctor's advice, and take Dora with them.

In a day or two the expected letter came from Hamburg. It was very short. The old uncle knew nothing about his brother's residence in Switzerland, now thirty years back. Tannenburg was certainly quiet enough, for his brother had always complained of the want of society there, and that was all he knew about it. But this was satisfactory so far, and Aunt Ninette decided at once to write to the clergyman at Tannenburg for farther particulars. Solitude and quiet! this was just what Uncle Titus needed.

This second letter brought an immediate answer which confirmed her hopes. "Tannenburg is a small place, with scattered houses," wrote the clergyman. "There is just such a dwelling as you describe, now ready for lodgers. It is occupied by the widow of the school-teacher, an elderly and very worthy woman, who has two good-sized rooms and a little bed-room which she will be glad to let." And the widow's address was added, in case Mrs. Ehrenreich should wish farther information.

Mrs. Ehrenreich wrote immediately, setting forth her wishes at full length and in great detail. She expressed her satisfaction that the houses in Tannenburg were so far apart, and she hoped that the one in question was not situated in such a way as to be undesirable for the residence of an invalid. She wished to make sure that there was in the vicinity no smithy, no locksmith, no stables, no stone-breaker's yard, no slaughter-house nor mill, no school, and particularly no waterfall.

The answer from the widow, very prettily expressed, contained the agreeable assurance, that not one of these dreaded nuisances was to be found in her neighborhood. The school and the mill were so far away that not a sound could reach her dwelling from either, and there was no waterfall in that part of the country. Also there was not a house to be seen far or near, except the large residence of Mr. Birkenfeld, standing surrounded by beautiful gardens, fields and meadows. The Birkenfelds were the most respected family in the neighborhood. He was a member of every committee, and was a most benevolent man, and his wife was full of good works. The widow added that she herself owed a great deal to the kindness of this family, particularly with regard to her little house which was their property, and which Mr. Birkenfeld had allowed her to occupy ever since her husband's death. He had proved to be the kindest of landlords. After a letter like this there was no need for farther delay; everything had been provided
for. Dora now heard for the first time that she was to go with them, and with a light heart and a willing hand, she packed the heavy materials for six large shirts, which she was to make while they were in Switzerland. The prospect of sewing on the shirts in a new place, and with different surroundings, excited her so much that she looked on it all as a holiday.

At last all was ready. The trunks and chests were carried down to the street door, and the servant-girl was sent out for a cabman with a hand-cart, to take them away.

Dora had been ready for a long time, and stood at the head of the stairs with beating heart filled with expectations of all the new things that she was to see for the next six weeks. The idea of this coming freedom almost overcame her with its bewildering delight, after all those long, long days in the seamstress' little, stifling room.

At last her uncle and aunt came from their room laden with innumerable umbrellas and parasols, baskets and bundles, got down stairs with some difficulty, and mounted the carriage that was waiting below. And they were fairly off for the country,—and quiet.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HEDGE.

Mr. Birkenfeld's large house was situated on the summit of a green hill with a lovely view across a lake to a richly-wooded valley beyond. From early spring to the end of autumn, flowers of every hue glistened and glowed in the bright sunshine that seemed always to lie on those lovely meadows. Near the house was the stable, in which stamped four spirited horses, and there, also, many shining cows stood at their cribs, peacefully chewing the fragrant grass with which they were well-supplied by the careful Battiste, an old servant who had served the family for many years. When Hans, the stable-boy, and all the other servants were away, busy on the estate, it was Battiste's habit to walk round from time to time through the stalls, to make sure that all was as it should be. For he knew all about the right management of horses and cattle, having been in the service of Mr. Birkenfeld's father when he was a mere lad. Now that he was well on in years, he had been advanced to the position of house-servant, but he still had an eye upon the stable and over the whole farm. The mows were neatly filled with sweet-smelling hay, and the bins were piled full of wheat and oats and barley, all the product of the farm, which extended over the hill-side far away into the valley below. On the side of the house opposite the barnyards stood the wash-house with its spacious drying-ground, and not far away, but quite concealed by a high hedge from the house and garden, was the tiny cottage which the owner had kindly allowed the school-master's widow to occupy for several years past.

On the evening of which we write, the warm sunlight lay softly on the hillside, revealing the red and white daisies which nestled everywhere in the rich green grass. A shaggy dog was basking in the open space before the house door, lazily glancing about now and then to see what was stirring. All was quiet, however, and he peacefully dozed again after each survey. Occasionally a young, gray cat peeped slily forth from beneath the door-step, stared at the motionless sleeper and cautiously withdrew again. Everything denoted peace and quiet except certain sounds of voices and of great activity which proceeded from the back of the house, where the door leading into the garden, stood open.

Presently wheels were heard, and a wagon drove up and stopped before the door of the widow's cottage. The dog opened his eyes and pointed his ears, but it was evidently not worth while to growl at something in the next place, so he dozed off again at once. The newly-arrived guests descended from the carriage, and entered the cottage in silence.
There they were cordially welcomed by Mrs. Kurd, and shown to the rooms reserved for them, and soon Aunt Ninette was busy in the large chamber unpacking her big trunk, while Dora in her little bedroom soon emptied her little box and put her clothes in the other room, which was to be his study, Uncle Titus also sat at a square table, busy placing his writing materials in readiness for work. Dora ran again and again to the window, whence she saw very different sights from any she had ever looked upon before. Green fields sprinkled with many-colored flowers, the blue lake, the snow-capped mountains in the

distance, and over all, the enchantment of the golden-green light from the setting sun. The child could scarcely tear herself away from the window. She did not know that the world could be so beautiful. But her aunt soon recalled her from her wonderment, for there were still things to be put away which belonged to her, but had been brought in her aunt's trunk.

"Oh, Aunt Ninette," cried the child, "Isn't it perfectly beautiful?"

She spoke louder than she had ever thought of speaking in Uncle Titus' house, for the new scenes had aroused her natural sprightliness, and she was herself once more.

"Hush, hush Dora! Why, I don't know what to make of you, child! Don't you know that your uncle is in the next room, and is already at work?"

Dora took her things from her aunt's hands, but while passing the window, she asked softly,

"May I just look out of these windows a minute now, Aunt? I want to see what there is on every side of the house."

"Yes, yes, you may look out for a moment. There is nobody about. A quiet garden lies beyond the hedge. From the other window you see the big open space in front of the great house. Nothing else but the sleeping watch-dog before the door. I hope he is always as quiet. You may look out there too, if you like."

Dora first opened the window towards the garden; a delicious odor of jasmine and mignonette was wafted into the room from the flower-beds below. The high green hedge stretched away for a long distance, and beyond it she could see green sward and flower-beds and shady bowers. How lovely it must be over there! There was no one in sight, but some one certainly must have been there, for by the door of the house rose a wonderful triumphal arch, made of two tall bean-poles tied together at the top, and thickly covered with fir-branches. A large piece of card-board hung down from the arch, and swung back and forth in the wind, and something was written on it in big letters.

Suddenly a noise resounded from the open space in front of the great house. Dora ran to the other window and peeped out. A carriage stood there and two brown horses there stamping impatiently in their traces. A crowd of children came bursting out of the door of the house, all together; one, two, three, four, five, six, both boys and girls. "I, I, I must get upon the box," cried each one, and all together, louder and louder at every word; while in the midst of the crowd, the great dog began to jump upon first one child and then another, barking joyfully in his excitement. Such a noise had probably not greeted Aunt Ninette's ears within the memory of man.

"What is the matter, in heaven's name," cried she, almost beside herself. "What sort of a place have we come to?"

"Oh Aunty, look! see; they are all getting into the carriage," cried Dora, who was enchanted at the sight. Such a merry party she had never seen before.

One lad jumped upon the wheel, and clambered nimbly to a seat on the box beside the driver, from which he reached down his hand towards the dog, who was jumping and barking with delight.

"Come Schnurri, you can come too," cried the boy at the top of his lungs, at the same time catching at the dog, now by his tail, now by his paw, and again by his thick hair, until the driver leaned down and pulled the creature up beside them, with a strong swing. Meantime the eldest boy lifted a little girl from the ground, and jumped her into the carriage, and two younger boys, one slender, the other round as a ball, began to clamor, "Me too, Jule, me too, a big high one! me higher still!" and they shouted with glee, as they too were lifted up and deposited on the seat. Then Jule helped the older girl into the carriage, jumped in himself, and gave the door a good smart bang, for "big Jule" had strong muscles. The horses started; but now another cry arose. "If Schnurri is going, I can take Philomele with me. Trine! Trine! bring me Philomele, I want to take Philomele!" shouted the little girl as loud as she could call.

The young, strong-fisted servant-maid who now appeared in the door-way, grasped the situation at once. She seized the gray cat that stood on the stone step casting angry looks at Schnurri, and flung her into the carriage. The whip cracked, and off they rolled. Aunt Ninette hastened into her husband's room in great alarm, not knowing what effect all this disturbance would have upon him. He was sitting calmly at his table, with all the windows in the room closed and fastened. "My dear Titus! who could have foreseen this? What shall we do?" she called out in tones of despair.

"It strikes me that the next house has a great wealth of children. We cannot help that, but we can keep the windows shut," replied her husband resignedly.

"But, my dearest Titus, only remember that you have come here expressly to breathe the healthy mountain air! As you never go out, you must let the air come in to you. But what will be the end if this is the beginning? What will become of us if this goes on?" "We must go home again," said Uncle Titus, continuing to write. Somewhat calmed by this proposition, Aunt Ninette returned to her room. Dora had been very busy, putting her little room in perfect order, for she had formed a plan, which she meant to carry out as soon as this was done. The happy noise of the six children had so excited the lonely little girl that she was filled with the strongest desire to see them come back again, to see them get out of the carriage, and to see what would happen next; whether they wouldn't perhaps come into the garden where the triumphal arch stood, and then she could have a nearer view. She had made a little plan for watching them if they came into the garden. She thought that she might perhaps find a hole in the hedge that divided Mrs. Kurd's little garden from the large grounds next door, through which she could get a good view of what the children were doing, and how they looked. The child did

not know what Aunt Ninette would say to this, but she determined to ask directly. At the door of her aunt's room she met Mrs. Kurd, who had come to call them to supper. Dora made her request then and there, to be allowed to go into the little garden, but her aunt said that it was now supper time, and after supper it would be quite too late. Mrs. Kurd put in a word in Dora's favor, saying that no one would be out there, and it would be safe for Dora to run about there as much as she chose, and at last Aunt Ninette consented to allow her to go out for a while after supper. The child could scarcely eat, so great was her excitement. She listened all the while for the sound of the returning wheels and the children's voices, but nothing was to be heard. When supper was over, her aunt said,

"You may go out now for a little while, but don't go far from the house."

Dora promised not to leave the garden, and ran off to search the hedge for the opening she wanted. It was a white-thorn hedge, and so high and thick that the child could see neither through it nor over it, but down near the ground were here and there thin places, where one could look into the next garden; but only by lying close on the ground. Little did Dora mind that; her one idea was to see the children. She had never seen so large a family, boys and girls, big and little, and all so happy and merry. And to have seen them all climbing into the carriage and driving off together! What a jolly party! She lay down on the ground in a little heap, and peered through the hedge. There was nothing to be heard; the garden beyond was still; the odor of the flowers was wafted to her on the cool, evening air, and she felt as if she could not get enough of it into her lungs. How beautiful it must be in there, she thought; to be able to walk about among the flower-beds! to sit under the tree where the red apples were hanging! And there under the thick branches stood a table, covered with all sorts of things which she could not see plainly, but which shimmered white as snow in the evening light. She was quite absorbed in wonder and curiosity, when—there—that was the carriage, and all the merry voices talking together. The children had returned. Dora could hear very plainly. Now all was still again; they had gone into the house. Now they were coming out again; now they were in the garden.

Mr. Birkenfeld had just returned from a long journey. The children had all gone down to the lake, to meet him at the landing when the steamboat came in. Their mother had remained at home to complete the preparations for the grand reception and the feast in the garden under the big apple-tree. The father's home-coming after so long an absence was a very joyful occasion for the family, and must be celebrated as such. As soon as the carriage stopped at the door, the mother came running out to meet her husband. All the children jumped down, one after another, and the cat and the dog too, and they all crowded into the large hall, where the welcomings and greetings grew so loud and so violent that the father hardly knew where he was, nor which way to turn as they all pressed about him. "Now one at a time, my children, and then I can give you each a good kiss," he said at last, when he succeeded in making himself heard through the tumult, "first the youngest, and then the others according to age. Now, my little Hunne, what have you to tell me?"

So saying, Mr. Birkenfeld drew his chubby five-year old boy to his knees. The child's name was Hulreich, but as he had always called himself Hunne, the other children and the parents had adopted the nick-name. Moreover, Julius, the eldest brother, declared that the baby's little stumpy nose made him look like a Hun, and so the name was very appropriate. But his mother would not admit the resemblance.

The little one had so much to tell his father, that there was not time to wait for the end of his story, and it had to be cut short.

"Bye and bye, little Hunne, you shall tell me all about it. Now it is time for Wili and Lili." And giving the twins each a kiss he asked them, "Well now, have you been very good and happy? and obedient, too, all this long time?" "Almost always," replied Wili rather timidly, while Lili, recalling certain deviations from perfect obedience during her father's absence, thought it best not to make any answer. The twins were eight years old, and perfectly inseparable, never more so than in planning and carrying out various delightful plans, of whose mischievousness they were really only half conscious. "And you, Rolf, how is it with you?" said the father, turning to a twelve-year old lad with a high forehead, and a strong, firm neck. "Plenty of Latin learned? More new puzzles ready?"

"I have been doing both, father," said the boy. "But the children will not guess my riddles, and my mother has not time to try."

"That is too bad," said his father, kindly and turning to the eldest daughter, a girl of nearly thirteen, he drew her to his side and said tenderly,

"And you Paula, are you still alone in your garden walks? have you no dear friend with you yet?"

"No, of course not, father, but it is beautiful to have you at home again," she answered as she embraced him."

"And I hope my 'big Jule,' is using his vacation in some sensible way?"

"I combine the agreeable with the useful," said Julius gaily, returning his father's embrace. "You must know, father, that the hazel-nuts are almost ripe and I am watching them carefully, and meantime I am riding Castor a good deal, so that he may not grow too lazy."

Julius was at home now only for the summer holidays, his school being in a distant town. He was seventeen, and tall, even too tall for his years so that in the family he was generally called "Big Jule." Mr. Birkenfeld now turned to shake hands with the children's governess and the dear friend of the family, Miss Hanenwinkel, when Jule interrupted him.

"Come papa, I beg that you will do the rest of your greetings in the garden, where a most astonishing reception awaits you."

But his words cost him dear, for Wili and Lili sprang upon him as he spoke, pinching, pounding and thumping him to give him to understand that the "surprise" was not a thing to be talked about beforehand. He defended himself to the best of his ability.

"Lili, you little gad-fly, you, stop, stop, I tell you. I will make it all right," and he shouted to his father,

"I mean you are to go into the garden where my mother has prepared all sorts of delicious things for your supper, to celebrate your return."

"That is delightful. We shall find a big table spread under my favorite apple-tree. That is a surprise worth having. Come then let us all go into the garden."

He drew his wife's arm in his, and they walked out to the garden, the whole swarm following, Wili and Lili capering about in most noisy delight that their father should suppose that he knew what the "surprise" was already. As they passed out into the garden they passed under the great triumphal arch, with red lanterns hung on each side, lighting up the large tablet, on which was an inscription in big letters. "Oh, oh, how splendid!" cried the father, now really surprised, "a beautiful arch and a poem of welcome. I must read them aloud:"

"Here we stand in welcome

Beside the garden door,

How glad we are that you're at home!

We feared you'd come no more,

So long you've stayed—but now to-day

Forgot is all our pain.

The whole world now is glad and gay,

Papa is here again!"

"That is fine—Rolf must have been the author of that, was he not?" and Wili and Lili jumped about more than ever, crying out,

"Yes, yes, Rolf wrote it, but we planned it all out and he made the verses, and Jule put up the poles and then we fetched the fir twigs."

"That was a delightful surprise, my children," said their father, much gratified. "How pretty the garden looks, all lighted up with red and blue and yellow lanterns. It looks like an enchanted spot, and now for my favorite apple-tree."

The garden did look very pretty. The little paper lanterns had been made up a long time before, and this very morning Jule had fastened them about on all the trees and high bushes, and while the hand-shaking and kissing had been going on in the house, Battiste and Trine had lighted the candles. The big apple-tree was dotted all over with them, so that it looked like a huge out-of-doors Christmas tree, and the red apples shone so prettily in the flickering light, that altogether it would have been difficult to imagine a more charming scene.

The table, spread with a white cloth and loaded with all sorts of nice dishes, looked irresistibly attractive.

"What a beautiful banquet-hall," cried the delighted father, "and how good the feast will taste! But what is this? Another poem?" and to be sure, a large white placard hung by two cords from the high bushes behind the apple-tree, and on it were the following lines: "My first is good for man to be—

Better than wealth.

My second we have longed to see

Our father do in health.

My whole with merry hearts we cry

Today, and shout it to the sky."

"A riddle! Rolf made this too, I am sure," said he, clapping the boy kindly on the shoulder. "I will begin to guess it as soon as I can. Now we must sit down and enjoy these good things before us, and the pleasure of being all together again." So they all took their places at the table, and each had his or her own story to tell of what had happened, and what had been done during the separation. There was so much to say that there seemed no chance for a pause. At last however, came a silence, when lo! Mr. Birkenfeld drew a huge bundle from beneath his chair, and began to open the wrapper, while the children looked on with the greatest interest, knowing very well that that bundle held some gift for each one of them. First came a pair of shining spurs for "big Jule," then a lovely book with blue covers for Paula. Next a long bow with a quiver and two feather arrows. "This is for Rolf," said the father, adding as he showed the boy the sharp points of the arrows, "and for Rolf only, for he knows how to use it properly. It is not a plaything, and Wili and Lili must never dream of playing with it, for they might easily hurt themselves and others with it."

There was a beautiful Noah's Ark for the twins, with fine large animals all in pairs, and Noah's family, all the men with walking-sticks and all the women with parasols, all ready for use whenever they should leave the ark.

Last of all, little Hunne had a wonderfully constructed nutcracker, that made a strange grimace as if he were lamenting all the sins of the world. He opened his big jaws as if he were howling, and when they were snapped together, he gnashed his teeth as if in despair, and cracked a nut in two without the slightest trouble so that the kernel fell right out from the shell.

The children were full of admiration over both their own and each others' presents, and their joy and gratitude broke out afresh at every new inspection of each.

At last the mother stood up and said that they must all go into the house, for it was long after the children's usual bed-time. At this their father arose, and called out,

"Who has guessed the charade?"

Not one had even thought of it, except to be sure, the author.

"Well, I have guessed it myself," said their father, as no one spoke. "It must be 'welcome,' is it not, Rolf? I will touch glasses with you, my boy, and thank you very much for your charade." Just as Rolf was raising his glass towards his father's to drink his health, a terrible shriek arose, "It is burning, it is burning!" Everybody ran from under the apple-tree; Battiste and Trine came from the house with tubs and buckets, Hans from the stable with a pail in each hand; all screaming and shouting together.

"The bush is on fire! the hedge is on fire!" There was terrible noise and confusion.

"Dora! Dora!" cried a voice of distress from the cottage behind the hedge, and Dora rose from her hiding place and hurried into the house. She had been so completely absorbed by what had been taking place under the apple-tree, though indeed she saw and heard but imperfectly, that she had entirely forgotten everything else, and it was full two hours that she had been lying all doubled up in the gap under the hedge.

Her aunt was flying back and forth, complaining and scolding. She had collected all her things from the drawers and the presses, and heaped them together, ready for flight.

"Aunt Ninette," said the little girl timidly, for she knew she had staid out too long, "you need not be frightened; it is all dark again in the garden; the fire is all out."

Her aunt cast a rapid glance from the window, and saw that this was true; everything was dark, even the last lantern extinguished. Some one was moving about among the trees, evidently to make sure that all was safe. "This is too terrible! Who would have believed that such things could happen?" said Aunt Ninette, half scolding, half-whimpering. "Go to bed now Dora. To-morrow we will move away, and find another house, or leave the place altogether." The child obeyed quickly, and went up to her little bedroom, but it was long, very long, before she could sleep. She still saw the illuminated garden, the sparkling apple tree, and

the father and mother with their happy children gathered about them. She thought of the time when she too could tell her father everything, and the thought doubled her sense of her own loneliness, and of the happiness of those other children.

And the child had become so much interested in the life beyond the hedge, and so almost fond of that good father and mother, whom she had been watching, that the thought of going away again as her aunt threatened, was a very sad one. She could not go to sleep. Presently she seemed to see the children with their kind father again, and her own father was standing with them, and she heard these words, "God holds us in his hand, God knows the best to send." And so she fell asleep, and in her dreams she again saw the shining apple-tree, and the
merry group under its branches.

On investigating the cause of the fire, it was discovered that Wili and Lili had conceived the happy thought of turning the riddle into a transparency, so that suddenly the company might see it shining with red light behind it, like the motto behind the Christmas tree, "Glory to God in the highest."

So they withdrew silently from the company, fetched two candles, climbed upon some high steps, which had been brought when the placard was put in place, and held the candles as near as possible to the card. As they did not perceive any expression of surprise on the faces of the company at the table, they raised their candles higher and higher, nearer and nearer, until the paste-board suddenly took fire, and the flame quickly spread to the bushes above.

The twins readily confessed themselves the cause of the mischief, and were sent to bed with but a gentle reproof, so as not to spoil the general effect of the festivity, but they were seriously warned never to play with fire again as long as they lived. Soon all was quiet in the great house, and the moon looked peacefully down on the trees
and the sleeping flowers in the silent garden.

CHAPTER IV.

ALL SIX.

"We shall not be able to remain here; Mrs. Kurd," were the first words spoken by Mrs. Ehrenreich when she came to breakfast the next morning. "We have come into such an objectionable neighborhood that we must move away today."

Mrs. Kurd stood still in the middle of the room, quite speechless, and stared at the lady as if unable to grasp her meaning.

"I am fully convinced of the absolute necessity of our immediate departure," said Aunt Ninette, with emphasis.

"But indeed no more respectable, no quieter spot can be found in all Tannenburg than this. You cannot hope to be more comfortable anywhere else; either you or the gentleman," asserted the good widow as soon as she had recovered from her surprise.

"How can you say so, Mrs. Kurd, after hearing that intolerable uproar last evening? noises far surpassing anything that I described to you in my letters as 'absolutely to be avoided.'"

"Oh, my dear lady, that was only the children! You know they were having a family festival, and they were of course unusually lively."

"Indeed! if this is your method of celebrating family festivals in these parts, first a tempest of shouts and cries and then a fire with all its accompanying noise and hubbub, I can only say that such a neighborhood seems to me not only undesirable for an invalid, but positively dangerous."

"I do not think you can call the fire a part of the celebration," said Mrs. Kurd gently. "It was an accident, and it was very quickly extinguished, you must admit. A more orderly and well regulated family is nowhere to be found, and I cannot understand how the lady and gentleman can seriously think of leaving. I can assure you that no other such spot is to be found in all Tannenburg! If the gentleman needs quiet he will do well to walk into the wood, where it is healthful and quiet too."

After talking awhile, Mrs. Ehrenreich became more composed, and seated herself at the breakfast table, where Mr. Titus and Dora also took their places.

At the other house, breakfast had long been finished. The father had gone about his business, and the mother was occupied with her household affairs. Rolf was off to his early recitations in Latin, with the pastor of a neighboring parish. Paula was taking her music-lesson of the governess, and Wili and Lili took this opportunity to look over their lessons once more. Little Hunne sat in the corner with his newly-acquired nut-cracker before him, gravely studying its grotesque face.

Presently 'big Jule' came in, whip in hand, all booted and spurred from his morning ride.

"Who will pull off my riding boots?" he asked, throwing himself into a chair, stretching out his legs, and gazing admiringly at his new spurs. Wili and Lili sprang quickly from their seats, delighted at the chance of doing something that was not a lesson, and each seized a foot and began to pull with such force that before Jule knew what they were about he found himself slipping from his chair. In the next second he had grasped the side of his chair with the result that that also was pulled along the floor. He called out hastily "Stop! Stop!" while little Hunne, who saw the situation from his corner, now flew to his elder brother's assistance, hung on to the chair from behind, planting his little feet firmly on the ground, and throwing his weight backward as well as he knew how. His efforts were insufficient, however, and he was dragged along the floor as if he were on a coast. Wili and Lili were determined to finish their undertaking, and kept on pulling and pulling. "Stop! Stop! Wiling

and Liling

You terrible twinning"

cried Jule, while little Hunne added his voice to swell the tumult. At this the mother made her

appearance upon the scene, and the uproar was stilled at once.
Jule swung himself panting back into his chair, and Hunne slowly regained his equilibrium.
"My dear Jule, why do you make the children behave so badly? You ought to know better at your age," said his mother reprovingly.
"Certainly, mother, certainly, in future I will do better, but if you will look at it from another side, I am doing something, in affording the twins an opportunity to be of use, instead of carrying on their usual mischievous pranks." "Jule, Jule, that does not look like doing better,"

said his mother warningly. "Lili, go down
stairs and practise your exercises until Miss Hanenwinkel has finished Paula's music lesson. Wili, go on with your studying, and the best thing you can do, Jule, to help me, is to amuse the little one until I am at leisure."
The "big Jule" was ready to help to restore order after his bit of fun, and Lili ran down stairs to the piano as she was bidden. She found herself too much excited after the exertion of playing boot-jack for her brother, and her exercises did not run smoothly, so she took up one of her "pieces" to work off her superfluous energy upon, and began to play with great emphasis, "Live your life merrily,

While the lamp glows,

Ere it can fade and die,

Gather the rose."

Uncle Titus and his wife were just finishing their breakfast in a neighboring house when the affair of the boots began. Uncle Titus hastened to his room, closing the windows and fastening them against the noise. His wife summoned their hostess rather peremptorily, and asked her "just to listen to that" for herself. It did not seem to make much impression upon Mrs. Kurd however, who only said smilingly,

"Oh, how merry the dear children are, to be sure," and when Aunt Ninette went on to explain that such disturbances were the very worst thing for her poor invalid, the hostess only again recommended the walk in the woods for quiet and fresh air! The noise in the next house would not last long, she said, the young gentleman would soon return to college, and it would be much more quiet then. As she spoke, the sound of Lili's merry music came across through the open window on the morning breeze.

"And that too, is that the work of the young gentleman, who will soon return to college?" asked Mrs. Ehrenreich excitedly. "It is unendurable; continually some new noise or tumult or uproar. What do you say to this last, Mrs. Kurd?" "I never have thought of it as noise," said the good woman simply, "the dear child is making such progress with her music, it is a pleasure to hear her."

"And Dora, where can Dora be? Is she bewitched too? It is time for her to begin her sewing; where can she be? Dora! Dora! Have you gone into the garden again?"

Aunt Ninette's voice was querulous and excited. To be sure, Dora had crept down again to peer through her opening in the hedge, and she was now listening as if enchanted, to Lili's gay music. She came back at once at the sound of her aunt's voice, and took her appointed place at the window where she was to sit and sew all day.

"Well, we cannot stay here, that is certain," said Mrs. Ehrenreich as she left the room.

The tears started to Dora's eyes at these words. She did so long to remain here, where she could hear and partly see now and then, the merry healthy life of these children in the beautiful garden beyond the hedge. It was her only knowledge of true child-life. As she sewed, she was planning and puzzling her brain with plans for prolonging their stay, but could think of nothing that seemed likely to be of use.

It was now eleven o'clock. Rolf came scampering home from his recitations, and catching sight of his mother through the open door of the kitchen, he ran to her, calling out before he reached the threshold, "Mamma, mamma, now guess. My first—" "My dear Rolf" interrupted his mother, "I beg of you to find some one else to guess. I have not time now, truly. Go find Paula, she has just gone into the sitting-room."

Rolf obeyed.

"Paula," he called out, "My first—"

"No, Rolf, please, not just now, I am looking for my blank-book to write my French translation in. There is Miss Hanenwinkel, she is good at guessing, ask her."

"Miss Hanenwinkel," cried poor Rolf, pouncing upon her, "My first—" "Not a moment, not a second, Rolf," said the governess hastily. "There is Mr. Julius over there in the corner, letting the little one crack nuts for him. He is not busy; I am. Good-bye, I'll see you again." Miss Hanenwinkel had been in England, and had taken a great fancy to this form of expression much in vogue there, and she constantly used it as a form of farewell, whether it was apropos or not. Thus she would say to the persistent scissors-grinder, who came to the door,

"Have you come back so soon? Do go where you are wanted if there is any such place. Good-bye. I'll see you again," and shut the door with a slam.

Or to the traveling agent who brought his wares to show, if asked to dismiss him, she would say,

"We want nothing; you know very well. Don't come here again. Good-bye. I'll see you again," and shut the door in his face. This was a peculiarity of Miss Hanenwinkel.

Julius was quietly seated in a corner of the sitting-room, while Hunne stood before him watching with grave attention his nut-cracker's desperate grimaces as he gave him nut after nut to crack in his powerful jaws. Hunne carefully divided each kernel, giving one half to Jule, while he popped the other into his own little mouth.

Rolf approached them, repeating his question, "Will you guess, Jule? You are not busy."

"My first in France, applaudingly

The people to the actors cry:

With steady aim full in the eye,

To hit my second you must try;

My whole's a prince of prowess high,

Who fought the fight for Germany."

"That is Bismarck, of course," said the quick-witted lad.

"O, O, how quickly you guessed it," said Rolf, quite taken aback.

"Now it is my turn; pay attention. You must try hard for this now. I have just made it up." And Jule declaimed with emphasis:

"My first transforms the night,

And puts its peace to flight.

My second should you now become,

You scarce will move, for fife or drum.

My whole hath power to soothe you all,

Be your delight in church, or camp, or ball."

"That is hard," said Rolf, who was rather a slow thinker. "Wait a moment, Jule, I shall get it soon." So Rolf sat down on an ottoman to think it over at his ease.

The big Jule and the little Hunne in the mean time pursued their occupation without interruption. As an extra proof of his skill, Julius practised with the shells at hitting different objects in the room, to his little brother's delight and admiration. "I have it," cried Rolf at last, much delighted. "It is Cat-nip!" "O, O, what a guess! what are you thinking of? It is something very different, entirely different. It is music. Mew—sick—music, don't you see?"

"Oh, yes," said Rolf rather abashed. "Now wait Jule, here's another. What is this?"

"My first sings by the water side,

My next is Heidelberg's great pride,

My whole was a blind poet, who

In England lived and suffered too."

"Shakspere," said Julius, whose pride it was to answer instantly.

"Wrong," cried Rolf, delighted. "How could a *shake* sing by the water side, Jule?"

"Oh, I supposed you meant a shake in somebody's voice, as he was riding or driving along," said Jule, to justify himself. "Now what are you laughing at?"

"Because you have made such a wrong guess. It is some one 'very different, entirely different,' Jule. It is Milton, the blind poet Milton. Now try another because you failed in this. My first"— "No, no, I must beg for a rest. It is too much brain work for vacation. I am going now to see how Castor is after my ride this morning." And Julius dashed off to the stable.

"Oh, what a shame!" cried Rolf, "what a pity! Now there is no one to guess, and I made four splendid charades on my way home. It is too bad that you are not old enough to guess, Hunne." "But I can guess; I am old enough," said the little fellow rather vexed. "Well, then try this one, try hard. Stop playing with the nuts and I will crack some more for you bye and bye. Now listen:

"My first conceals from light of day

The wanderer on his final way;

My second sizzling in the pan,

Makes hungrier still the hungry man;

My whole, bedecked in trappings gay,

Goes ambling on the livelong day."

"A nutcracker," said Hunne without hesitation. Julius was his beau-ideal of all that was best, and he thought that if he imitated Jule, and answered quickly the first thing that came into his head, that was guessing. But Rolf was angry. "How can you be so stupid, Hunne? Just think about it a little, can a nut cover some one on his last way?"

"Why, it can cover—well—the shell covers it."

"Nonsense! and a nutcracker can not go ambling all day, can it, you stupid child."

"Now see, mine can," said the little boy, who did not like to be called stupid, and he tied his handkerchief round the neck of the long suffering nutcracker and dragged it after him up and down the room, lifting it up now and then at regular intervals. "Oh well, yes, you think you're right; and I can't explain it because you don't understand anything about it. Just try to think a little; can you hear a cracker sizzling as its cooks, and will it make you hungry to hear it?" "If I throw a cracker into the fire, won't it burn?" said the child, planting himself before Rolf and holding his nutcracker saucily before his eyes.

"Oh, there is no use talking to you," said Rolf, and was just about leaving the room, but this was not so easily done, for now Hunne was bitten with the mania for riddle-making himself. "Stop, Rolf," he cried and grasped his brother by the jacket to hold him. "My first is not good to drink but to eat—"

"Oh dear, well, that must be 'nutcracker' again," and Rolf ran off, wrenching himself from his tormentor's hands. But the boy followed him, crying, "Wrong, wrong! you are wrong. Try again, try again!" Moreover, Wili and Lili came scampering in from the other side, crying out, "Rolf, Rolf, a riddle! guess! try!" and Lili held up a strip of paper and rattled it before Rolfs eyes, repeating, "Guess, guess, Rolf."

So the riddle-maker was now caught in his own meshes. "Well, at least leave me room to guess in," cried he, striking about him with his arms to make room.

"You can't guess anything," cried little Hunne contemptuously, "I am going to Jule—he knows."

Rolf took the little slip of yellowish paper that Lili was waving back and forth, and looked at it in surprise. In a childish hand-writing that he had never seen before, were written the following words,

"Come lay your hand

Joined thus we

Each the other

That our union

But behold the

That our future

We will cut our

Half for you and

But we still will

That our halves

And with us

Our friendship."

"It is probably a rebus," said Rolf thoughtfully. "I shall guess it after a little while. Just let me stay alone long enough to think it out."

There was not much time left for this however, for the dinner-bell sounded and all the family assembled in the large hall for the mid-day meal.

"What nice thing has my little Hunne done to-day?" asked the father, when they were at last all busy over their plates.

"I made a splendid riddle, Papa, but Rolf never tries to guess my riddles, and I couldn't find Jule, and the rest would not listen to me at all."

"Yes, Papa," interrupted Rolf! "and I too have made three or four splendid ones, but no one has time to guess them, and those who have time enough are so stupid that there is no use

in trying to get any answer from them. When Jule has guessed one he thinks he has done enough, and I can make at least six in a day."

"Yes, yes, Papa"—it was now Wili's and Lili's turn—"and we have found such a hard riddle, so hard that even Rolf couldn't guess it. It is really a rebus."

"If you will wait long enough I can get it, I am sure," said Rolf.

"We seem to have a riddle in every comer," said their father. "I believe we have a riddle-fever, and one catches it from another. We really need a regular guesser in the house, to do nothing but guess riddles."

"I wish I could find such a person," said Rolf, sighing, for to be forever making riddles for somebody who would listen with interest and guess with intelligence, seemed to him the most desirable thing in the world.

When dinner was over, the family went merrily into the garden under the apple-tree, and seated themselves in a circle. The mother and Miss Hanenwinkel and the girls were armed with sewing and knitting work. Little Hunne also had a queer-looking bit of stuff in his hand upon which he was trying to work with some red worsted. He said he wanted to embroider a horse-blanket for Jule. Jule had brought a book at his mother's request, to read aloud to them.

Rolf sat a little way off under the ash-tree, and studied his Latin lesson. Wili sat by his side, meaning to study his little piece, but first he looked at the birds in the branches, and then at the laborers in the field, and then at the red apples upon the tree, for Wili loved visible things, and it was only with the greatest difficulty, and generally with Lili's assistance, that he could get the invisible into his little head. Consequently, his afternoon study usually turned to a continuous observation of the surrounding landscape.

Jule also seemed inclined to pass his time in looking about him instead of reading aloud, for he did not open his book, but allowed his eyes to wander in all directions, particularly towards his sister.

"Paula," he said at last, "the expression of your countenance to-day is as if you were a wandering collection of vexations."

"Oh, do read to us, Jule; then we shall have something more agreeable than these similes which nobody can understand the meaning of."

"It would be nicer if you would read, Jule," added her mother, "but I must say too, Paula, that you have been for the last few days so short and snappish that I should really like to know what is amiss with you. You seem out of sorts with every one about you."

"But mamma, with whom can I have any real companionship? I have not a single friend in all Tannenburg. I have nobody in all the world with whom I can be intimate."

The mother suggested that Paula might be a little more friendly with her sister Lili, and also with Miss Hanenwinkel. But Paula declared, that Lili was much too young, and the

governess much too old. The latter was really only twenty, but to Paula she seemed very old indeed. For girls to be intimate, she declared they must be of the same age, so that they could thoroughly understand each other's feelings, and they must be always together. Without such a friend Paula said there was no real pleasure in life, for a girl needed some one to whom she could confide her secrets, and who would tell her own in return.

"Yes, Paula is at the romantic age," said her brother. "I am sure that for a long time she has peeped into every field flower to see if it would not suddenly unfurl a hidden banner, and turn into a Joan of Arc. Every little mole that she sees in the fields, she half suspects may wear a seal-ring on his little finger, and be a Gustavus Vasa in disguise, searching amid the mole-hills for his lost kingdom." "Do not be so teasing, Jule," said his mother reprovingly. "There is certainly something very delightful in such an intimacy as Paula describes. I had such an experience myself, and the memory of that happy time is dear to me even now!" "Oh, do tell us again about your dear friend Lili, mamma," exclaimed Paula, who had often heard her mother speak of this intimate friendship, and had indeed formed her own ideal upon that model. Lili also joined her sister in begging for the story, and even more urgently, for she knew nothing about this friend, although she bore the same name.

"Was not I named for her, mamma?" she asked, and her mother assented. "You all know the long manufactory under the hill," continued Mrs. Birkenfeld, "with the large house surrounded by a beautiful garden. Lili, my friend, lived there, and I remember very well the first time I ever saw her.

"I was about six years old, and I was playing one day in the parsonage garden with my simple dolls, which I set up on flat stones, that I always collected for seats for my children, whenever and wherever I found them. For I had no such outfit for my dolls as you children have now, no sofas and chairs and other furniture. You all know that your grandfather was the pastor in Tannenburg, and we led a very simple life at the parsonage. My playmates, two of the neighbors' children, were standing as usual by me and staring at me while I played, without saying one word. They never seemed to take the interest in my plays that I thought they deserved. They stood and looked at me with their big eyes, no matter what I did, and it was very annoying to me. "Well, this evening, I was sitting there, on the ground, with my dolls all placed in a circle, when a lady came into the garden and asked to see my father. Before I could reply, a child whom she was leading by the hand, came running to my side, squatted down by me, and began to examine everything. I had so arranged my stones that each flat one had another stuck into the ground edgewise behind it, so that the doll could be placed leaning back against it as if it were a chair. The child was delighted with this arrangement, and joined in my play at once with the liveliest interest, while on my side I was so charmed with the little stranger's looks and ways, with her pretty floating curls and her sweet voice that I forgot everything else, and looked on bewitched, while she made the dolls say and do all sorts of things that I had never thought of before. I was quite startled when the lady again asked where she could find my father.

"From that day forth Lili and I were inseparable friends, and a rich and happy life was opened to me in her lovely home, such as I had never known nor thought of. I shall never forget the delightful, untroubled days which I spent in that beautiful house. I was almost as much loved and petted as if I had been Lili's own sister. Her parents had come from North Germany. Her father had been induced to buy the factory by the advice of an acquaintance, and they expected to remain permanently in our neighborhood. Lili was an only child, and having been hitherto without companionship of her own age, she clung to me very closely, and I returned her affection with equal fervor.

"What good, kind people her parents were! They asked as a great favor that I might make long visits at their house, and my parents allowed me to pass weeks at a time with my newly found friends. Those visits seemed to me like prolonged festivals. Such lovely toys and playthings as Lili had! I had never even dreamed of anything like them. I shall never forget the innumerable figures cut from fashion plates which we used for paper dolls! We each had a large family of them, with all their kindred and relatives, each one fitted with a name, a character and a story of its own. We almost, nay quite, lived in their imaginary lives, and we shared their joys and sorrows as if they had been real.

"I always returned home laden with gifts, and I was scarcely settled there, when new requests came that I would repeat the visit. When we were a little older we had lessons together, both from a regular teacher and from my father, and when we began to read together, the heroes and heroines of our books were as real to us as our dolls had been, and we lived over their lives and histories again and again. What life and energy Lili had; what freshness and vivacity; my charming Lili, with her flowing brown curls and her laughing eyes! "So the years passed, and no thought of coming sorrow and separation crossed our young
lives, until one day, when we were nearly twelve years old, my father told me—I remember the very spot in the garden where we were standing at that moment—that Mr. Blank, Lili's father, was about to give up his factory and return to Germany. As I understood, Mr. Blank had been deceived from the very beginning; the business was not in the prosperous condition that had been represented to him, and now he was obliged to give it up, to his great loss. My father was very much disturbed, and he declared that Mr. Blank had been very badly treated, and was consequently ruined.

"I was broken-hearted. To lose Lili, and to have her lose all her property, were two things which made my life unhappy for a long, long time. The very next day she came to say good-bye. We cried bitterly, for we could not bear to think of living apart, we were so necessary to each other's happiness. We promised to be always true to each other, and to use every effort to meet again; and then we sat down together and composed a last poem, for we had often written verses together. We cut the poem in halves, and took each a half to keep as a token of our lasting union, and as a sign of recognition when we should some day meet again.

"Lili went away. We wrote to each other for several years, and our friendship continued as fervent as ever. These letters were the only drops of comfort in the monotonous loneliness

of my life after I lost Lili. When I was about seventeen, I received a letter which told me that her father had decided to go to America. She promised to write again as soon as they were settled in their new life. I never heard from her again. Whether her letters were lost, or whether the family never staid long enough in one place for her to be able to give me an address, or whether Lili thought that our lives were now so irrevocably separated that we could never hope to resume our intimacy—these are questions that I have often asked myself, but that of course I have had no means of deciding. Perhaps Lili is no longer living; she may have died soon after that very time—I cannot tell. I have mourned her as an irreparable loss, for she was my first, my only intimate girl-friend, and nothing can efface from my mind the memory of her friendship, and of the vast goodness and affection which her family showered upon me. I have inquired for them in every direction, but have never discovered any clue to their existence far or near."

The mother was silent; a very sad expression rested upon her face. The children sympathized with her and said one after the other, sorrowfully, "What a pity, what a pity!" Little Hunne, however, who had listened very attentively to his mother's story, put his arms lovingly around her, and said,

"Don't be so sad, mamma dear! I will go to America as soon as I am big enough, and bring your Lili back with me; that I will!"

Rolf and Wili had drawn near, to hear the story, and presently Rolf said, looking thoughtfully at a strip of paper which he held in his hand,

"Did your piece of paper with the poem look like a rebus, after you had cut it in two, Mamma?"

"Perhaps so, Rolf. I should think it might look like one. Why do you ask?"

"Look here! is this it?" replied the boy, holding up his strip of paper.

"Yes, yes, it certainly is it," cried the mother in great excitement. "I thought it had been lost long ago. I kept it carefully put away for many years, and then in some way I lost sight of it. I thought it was lost forever. Lately I have not thought of it at all, but telling you the story of my early friendship, brought it again to my mind. Where did you find it, my son?"

"We found it!" cried Wili and Lili triumphantly. "It was in the old bible with the queer pictures. We thought we would look at Eve, again, to see whether her face was scratched as it used to be." The twins talked both together as usual. "Yes, that is another thing that brings my Lili to mind," said their mother, smiling. "She scratched that picture once when we were saying how lovely it would be if we were in Paradise together, and suddenly she felt so furious with Eve because she ate the apple, that she scribbled all over her face with a pencil, 'to punish her,' she said. My old verses! I cannot recall the other half, it is so long ago, over thirty years! only think, children, thirty years ago!"

She laid the paper carefully away in her work-basket, and bade the children put their things together and come into the house, for it was almost supper-time, and their father approved of punctuality above all things.

They gathered up their work and books, and returned slowly to the house under the triumphal arch that still spanned the garden-door of the house.

Dora had been peeping at them as they sat clustered about their mother in an attentive group under the apple-tree. She had now a good chance to examine each child, as they walked slowly back to the house, and as the last one disappeared, she said, softly sighing, "Oh, if I could sit only just once with them under the apple-tree!"

At supper that evening Aunt Ninette said, "We have really had a few hours of quiet. If it goes on so, we shall be able to stay here after all. Don't you think so, dear Titus?"

Dora listened breathlessly for the answer.

"The air in my room is very close, and I suffer more from giddiness than I did at home," was the uncle's reply.

Dora gazed at her plate despondently, and lost her appetite for that supper. Mrs.

Ehrenreich broke out into lamentations It was provoking to have made this journey without its being of any use to her husband after all! If they had only moved away at once! However, perhaps there would be less noise over the hedge after this, and the windows could be opened! Dora's hopes rose again, for as long as they staid, there was always a chance that she might go into that garden once, at least once.

CHAPTER V.

BEFORE AND AFTER THE FLOOD.

There were times when it seemed as if little Hunne could find no resting-place for the sole of his foot, when he wandered restlessly back and forth through the house incessantly. No one would pay any attention to him, he was sent from one person to another, and even his mother only bade him sit quietly at his own little table until she was at liberty to come to him. Of course Hunne's restless moments were just those when everybody was particularly busy, such as Saturday morning when no one had a moment to spare. And on this particular Saturday, the child had been wandering about the passages among the sofas and chairs which, having been put out there during the weekly sweeping, looked as restless and out-of-place as Hunne himself.

He spent a long time looking for his mother and he found her at last up-stairs in the attic, but she sent him down at once, for she was busy with the clothes for the wash. "There, dear, go and find Paula; perhaps she is not busy just now." Hunne found Paula at the piano.

"Go away, Hunne, I must practise," said she. "I have not time to guess your riddles; there comes Miss Hanenwinkel; ask her."

"Miss Hanenwinkel," cried the little boy, "my first you can eat but not drink."

"O spare me, Hunne" interrupted the governess, who seemed in a hurry. "If you break out into charades too, what will become of us? I have not a moment to waste. See, there is Mr. Julius just getting off his horse; ask him."

Off ran Hunne.

"Jule, nobody will guess my riddle, and even Miss Hanenwinkel is too busy, so she sent me to ask you."

"Well, what is it, my little man? out with it," said Jule good-humoredly.

So the child repeated his "you can eat but not drink," and then stopped short.

"Well, go on! What comes next?" said his brother, "what is the rest?"

"You must make the rest, Jule; the whole is nut-cracker."

"Oh yes, I see; that is all right. Now look here; since Miss Hanenwinkel sent you to me to guess for her, I will send one to her by you. Now say it over and over until you have learned it. It is rather long:"

"First cut short your laughter for me,

Then spell me a *nun* with an *e*,

Shut quickly with meaning, one eye,

Then add me an *el*, and—good-bye—

Good-bye till I meet you again."

It did not take Hunne long to learn the lines, and he started off at once to find the governess. She was sitting with Wili and Lili in the school room, patiently trying to get them to finish their examples; but they were both so absent-minded, that she was sure that they were planning something extraordinarily mischievous. In rushed the little Hunne:

"A riddle, Miss Han—"

"No, positively no! This is not the proper time to bring me things to guess."

The voice was very firm, almost severe, but Hunne had Jule to back him, so he was full of courage, and he kept repeating;

"Jule told me to."

"Well, say it then quickly," said the governess, relenting a little.

And Hunne repeated the riddle very slowly but correctly.

Now Miss Hanenwinkel was a native of Bremen, and therefore very quick at repartee, and she never hesitated for an answer. She seated herself directly at a table, and dashed off the following in reply:

"In the long hot hours that mark my first,

My whole my second did invite

Together gaily to unite.

When the ripe nuts their coverings burst,

They did the work—he ate his share,

Then tossed the nut-shells everywhere."

"There, take this back to Mr. Julius," she said, handing the paper to Hunne, "and tell him that as he made such a fine charade on my name, I do not wish to be behind-hand with him. Now, after this, stay away, little one, for we have our examples to do, and we cannot be interrupted again."

Wili and Lili for their part, did not seem to care if the examples were interrupted. It was only too evident that they had something in their minds; and that it disturbed their little brains to such an extent, that work was almost impossible for them. While their teacher was busy with the charade and little Hunne, the twins had drawn their chairs nearer and nearer, and laid their two heads together over some very important plans—so very

important and engrossing that Miss Hanenwinkel soon closed the book, with the remark that if the arithmetic were only some foolish nonsensical trick or other, there might be some chance of their being willing to work over it and understand it. She was probably right, for the twins had certainly an unusual talent for tricks of all kinds. No sooner was the lesson-hour over, than they rushed forth, and betook themselves to the wash-house, where they stood gazing at the tubs of various sizes, and whispering mysteriously.

At dinner-time, Julius taking out a paper, asked,

"Who can guess this excellent charade, composed by Miss Hanenwinkel?" and he read it aloud.

He had scarcely finished when Rolf called out the answer, "July-us!"

Miss Hanenwinkel however said nothing about the lines which Julius had composed on her name, for she was rather shy about the little slap at her peculiarity of speech, that appeared in the last line.

As soon as dinner was over, Wili and Lili ran off to the wash-house again. Saturday afternoon they had no lessons. So they had a beautiful time all to themselves. To be sure, it was understood that the governess should look after them a little. But when she saw the children go into the wash-house, she took it for granted that they were going to have a grand wash of doll's clothes, such as they often had. She was very glad that they would be safely occupied for a few hours at least.

But the twins, be it known, had far greater aspirations this afternoon, than for a simple doll's-wash. They had been playing with the Noah's ark, which their father had brought them, and had thought a great deal about the peculiar and wonderful life those people must have led in the ark at the time of the Flood. It occurred to Lili that she should like to try what it was like, to live in an ark, and even to take a voyage in one, and of course Wili, as usual, agreed with her enthusiastically. Lili's plans were all made; she had thought out all the details, for she was an observing little maiden, and knew the uses of many things and how to turn them to her own purposes. She chose one of the middle-sized wash-tubs for an ark. There would be room enough for all the animals, if they would sit quietly in their places.

Of course the animals were Schnurri and Philomele. The twins tried to coax them to take their parts in the play. Schnurri came growling at their call, but Philomele purred and rubbed back and forth against Lili's legs, till the little girl took her up in her arms, and said,

"Ah, my dear little Philomele, you are a great deal nicer than that old Schnurri." This was the way it always was with these two creatures. The cat was called Philomele or *nightingale*, because she purred in such a melodious manner. The dog was named Schnurri, which means *growler*, because he had a habit of constant growling; though he always had good reason of his own for it. They had both been taught to live peaceably with each other, and to do each other no mischief of any kind. Schnurri was very good about it; followed the rule most punctiliously, and treated Philomele with great consideration. When they ate

their dinner from the same dish, he ate slowly, because with her smaller mouth she could not take in as much at a time as he did. But it was quite different with the cat. One moment she seemed as friendly as possible with Schnurri, and rubbed up against him and was playful and kind; especially if any one of the family was looking; then suddenly, without warning, she would raise her little paw and give him a sharp scratch behind the ear. Then he growled of course, and as this behavior of Philomele's was very frequent, it followed that he seemed to be constantly growling. So he got his name of Schnurri, though really quite unjustly, for by nature he was most friendly and peaceable.

The first thing needed for the ark-voyage was water. Lili knew how the water was brought into the wash-house when the clothes were ready for the wash. There was a spring just opposite, with a log through which the water flowed freely; and when they wanted to fill the tubs, they placed a long wooden spout under the log, and let the water run through. That was simple enough. Now Lili thought that if she could arrange the spout, so as to lead the water to the floor of the wash-house, it would soon make a pond, on which the tub-ark would float, all ready for the voyage. How to get the long spout in place; that was the question.

The children debated for a while whether to ask Battiste or Trine to help them carry out their plan. Between old Battiste and young Trine, there were very much the same relations as between Schnurri and Philomele. The man had been a servant in the Birkenfeld family for many years, and his knowledge of all departments of work, in house and stable and farm caused him to be consulted on every occasion. It must be confessed that Trine was rather jealous of Battiste's influence, because though she had not been very long in Mr. Birkenfeld's service herself, she had an aunt who had lived in the family many years; indeed until she grew too old to work. When this aunt had to give up, Trine had succeeded to her place; and so it was that she felt that she had long established rights in the house, and that Battiste took more upon himself than was quite fair. When any of the family were about, she was very civil to her fellow servant, but behind their backs she gave many a saucy word, and played tricks upon him now and then. Just the dog and cat again!

The children understood pretty well how things stood between the two, and profited by their petty quarrels and jealousy. Wili and Lili really would rather have asked Trine than Battiste, for they had more hope of getting what they wanted from her, as she took new ideas more readily than the man, who did not like to be put out of his usual ways. But unluckily, what they wanted was under Battiste's charge. So it was settled that Lili should ask him to help them, while Wili held on to the cat and dog, lest they should run away.

Battiste was out on the barn floor, arranging a collection of seeds. Here Lili found him, and she planted herself before him with her hands behind her back, just as she had seen her papa stand, when giving orders. "Battiste," she said very firmly, "where is the spout that is used to fill the tubs in the wash-house?"

Battiste lifted his face from his seeds, and looked curiously at Lili as she stood there, as if he were waiting to hear the question again; for he always took things moderately. At last he replied with a question in his turn:

"Did your mamma send you to ask me?"

"No, I came of my own self."

"Then I don't know where the spout is."

"But, Battiste, I only want a little water from the spring; why can't I have just that?"

"I know that kind of a little bird," said Battiste, grumblingly, "now a little water, and now a little fire, and always mischief. Can't have it. Can't give it to you."

"Oh well, I don't care," said Lili, and went straight to the kitchen, where Trine was scouring pans.

"Trine, dear," said she coaxingly, "come and give me the water-spout. Battiste won't let us have it. You 'll get it for us, won't you?"

"Of course I will," said the maid, "a little water you might be allowed, I'm sure. But you must wait till the old bear is out of the way; and then I'll go and get you what you want."

After a while Trine saw Battiste coming from the barn; he went past the house, down toward the meadows.

"Come along now," she said, and taking Lili's hand, she ran with her to the wash-house, lifted the long wooden spout from its hiding-place, put one end into the log, and the other into a small tub. Then she explained to Lili that when they had enough water, they could push the spout away from the log, and when they wanted it again, they could lift it up and put it into the log themselves. But now she must go back to her work. Away went Trine, and now the preparations for the voyage could begin. The children took

the lower end of the spout out of the tub, and put it down upon the floor. Lili got into the new ark, and then Wili, and then they lifted in the cat and the dog. Noah and his wife sat side by side, and rejoiced over their safety and over the delightful voyage they should make on the rising waters of the flood, as the stream from the spout flowed merrily in upon the wash-house floor. The water rose very fast. Now, yes, now the ark fairly floated, and Noah and his wife shouted for joy! The flood had begun, and they were floating backward and forth upon the surface of the water!

The wash-house floor was lower by several steps than the level of the ground outside. The water rose and rose, and the children began to be frightened.

"Look, Wili, we can't get out again, and it is getting very deep."

Wili gazed thoughtfully over the edge of the tub, and said, "If it gets much deeper we shall be drowned."

And it went on getting deeper and deeper.

Pretty soon Schnurri grew restless, and sprang up, making the tub roll so frightfully as almost to upset it. The water was now so deep that the children could not get out without danger, and they became dreadfully frightened, and began to cry out as loud as they could,

"We are drowning! Mamma! Battiste! Trine! We are drowning!" Then they no longer used any words, but simply screamed, quite beside themselves with terror. Schnurri barked and howled in sympathy, but Philomele scratched and bit at everything within reach. Now the true character of the two animals showed itself. The cat would not go out of the tub into the water, and would not stay quietly in it, either, but fought like a mad creature. But when the faithful dog found that, in spite of all the screams and howls, no one came to their aid, he jumped into the water, swam to the door, shook himself vigorously, and ran away. The children screamed louder than ever, for the dog's movements had made the tub tip back and forth, and they were well scared.

Dora had run down from her room, and was peeping through her opening in the hedge, to try to find out the cause of these terrible cries. The wash-house stood quite near the hedge, but she could not see anything except the logs that carried the water to it from the spring. She heard the cry "We are drowning!" and she ran back up-stairs, calling out, breathless with fright,

"Aunt, aunt! two children are drowning over there! don't you hear them call?"

Her aunt had closed all the windows, but the screams penetrated even to her ears.

"Oh dear, what can that be?" she exclaimed, in the greatest alarm. "I hear a terrible cry; but who says they are drowning? Mrs. Kurd! Mrs. Kurd! Mrs. Kurd!"

Meantime, Schnurri, all dripping-wet, ran to the shed where Battiste was shaping bean-poles for the kitchen garden. The dog rushed at Battiste, barking furiously, seized him by the trousers, and tried to pull him along.

"Something is amiss," said the man to himself; and taking a long bean-pole on his shoulder, in case it should be needed, he followed Schnurri to the wash-house. By this time the whole family had assembled there—the mother, the governess, Julius, Paula, Rolf, Hunne, and last of all Trine; for the cries had reached every corner of house and garden. Battiste stretched his long pole across the water to the floating tub.

"Now, catch hold of that, and hold on tight, very tight," he said, and pulled the ark and its occupants towards dry land. Wili and Lili were as white as chalk from their long fright.

It was no time to question the children about this new mishap, for they were in no condition to talk about it; so the mother wisely took each by the hand, and led them to the seat under the apple-tree, to recover themselves. Julius followed with little Hunne, saying, "Oh Wili and Lili, you terrible twins, you will come to some dreadful end before long."

Old Battiste rolled up his trousers and stepped into the water in the wash-house, to pull out the stopper from the waste pipe so that the flood could subside from the land of Noah. Trine stood looking on. Battiste growled at her.

"You have no more sense than the seven-year-old babies! But that is the way things go!" for he had seen at once, who must have given them the water-spout. Trine did not think it best to reply at that moment, as she had been fairly caught in the wrong, but she secretly got her claws ready to scratch when her chance came—just like Philomele. When the little party under the apple-tree were somewhat tranquillized again, the cat came purring and rubbing herself fawningly about Lili's feet. The child only gave her an angry push, and turned to caress old Schnurri, who lay, still wet, on the ground near by; while Wili patted him affectionately, saying softly,

"You shall have all my supper to-night, old fellow."

"Mine too," said Lili, and they both understood now the real characters of the two pets.

Hunne sat looking thoughtfully at the rescued party, and at last accosted Jule, who was walking back and forth on the gravel path:

"Look here, Jule, what will the 'dreadful end' be like?"

"Oh it may be anything, Hunne. You see they have tried fire and water, and next they will pull the house down about our ears, I dare say. Then we shall lie under the ruins, and it will be all over with us."

"Shan't we be able to jump up quick, and get out of the way?" asked Hunne, anxiously.

"We may; unless the twins should be seized with their great idea in the middle of the night."

"You'll wake me up then Jule, won't you?" asked the little fellow pleadingly.

Mrs. Kurd had come running at the repeated summons of Aunt Ninette, just as Battiste had gone to save the patriarchs of the flood with his bean-pole; and when she reached her, the tumult was stilled.

"Did you hear that, Mrs. Kurd? It was frightful! Everything is quiet now, and I hope they are saved!"

"Oh yes, of course," said Mrs. Kurd, quite unconcernedly, "it is only the little ones. They are always crying out about something. There isn't really anything the matter."

"No; but children's cries are so shrill; I am shivering all over. How will my husband stand it? No; this settles it, Mrs. Kurd. We shall go away. This is the last drop."

With these words Mrs. Ehrenreich hurried into her husband's room to see how he had borne the shock. He was sitting at his table, with his ears stopped with cotton wool, and he did not hear his wife come in. He had stuffed his ears when the first cry came, and had therefore escaped the rest of the hubbub.

"Oh, that is very unhealthy, it is so heating for the head;" cried Aunt Ninette, much distressed. She pulled the wool from his ears, and announced that she should go directly after the church-service on the morrow, and ask the pastor where they could move to, since this place was unendurable.

This plan suited Uncle Titus as well as any other; all he wanted was quiet. Aunt Ninette, thinking over her plans, went back to her own room.

Dora stood waiting for her aunt in the passage-way. "Are we really going away, Aunt?" she asked anxiously.

"Yes, decidedly;" replied Mrs. Ehrenreich, "we shall move on Monday."

Poor little Dora! it was a sad trial to her, to have to go away without once having a chance to make the acquaintance of the other family; to go into the beautiful garden, to smell those delicious flowers, and to join the merry child-life that she had watched so closely, and yet from which she was so entirely separated. Her future seemed swallowed up in those stifling cotton shirts that were her fate in dull Karlsruhe. As she sat on the side of her little bed, that night, sadly cast down by these melancholy thoughts, she forgot the five friendly stars in the sky above. Yet there they were, sparkling as ever, as if they were trying to speak to their child and say, "Dora, Dora! have you quite forgotten your father's verses?"

CHAPTER VI.

A FRIGHTFUL DEED.

It was a beautiful, bright Sunday morning. In the garden all was peaceful and lovely. No sound broke the perfect stillness, save when now and then a rosy-cheeked apple fell to the ground, for the apples were ripening fast in the autumn sun.

Mr. and Mrs. Birkenfeld had gone to church, and with them Paula and Miss Hanenwinkel. In the sitting-room, Jule and Hunne were harmoniously discussing over a big dish of hazel-nuts, in how many different ways they could make the nutcracker crack a nut. The twins, since the lesson they had had in the wash-house, had returned contented to the mimic ark, with its wooden men and women, and they were now playing with it on the school-room table, which they had all to themselves to-day. Rolf had early betaken himself to the garden, and had settled down in a sequestered summer-house, where he could think over all sorts of things, without fear of being disturbed.

After the flood had subsided (a flood this time without water), and when the dove had returned with the olive-branch, and quiet was restored in the land, new schemes began to work in Lili's busy little head.

"What do you say, Wili, to coming down-stairs to look at Rolf's new bow; he left it in the passage-way last evening."

Wili was all agog at the idea, and they both scampered down-stairs. Lili knew the corner where Rolf had placed the bow, and there too was the quiver, with its two feathered arrows.

"Just see how jolly this is;" said Lili, "you pull this string back, and put the arrow here, and then let the string fly, and off goes the arrow like anything. I saw just how Rolf did it; and suppose we try to see how it works!"

"But we must not shoot with it; don't you remember that papa said so, Lili?"

"I don't mean to shoot, but only to try it. I just want to see how it is done; don't you understand?"

This explanation satisfied Wili.

"Where shall we try it? There is not room in this passage."

"No, no; I know where, in the garden. Come along;" and Lili ran off with the quiver, while Wili followed with the bow. They chose a nice open space near the hedge.

"Here now, we will both try together, and see if we can do it," said Lili.

Wili brought up his bow, and they pressed it against the ground, and then both took the cord in their hands, and tugged away till they had snapped it into place. Lili shouted with delight.

"Now, we must lift it up," she said, "so; and put the arrow in here, Wili, do you see? and now you pull back that thing underneath, and you will see how it will go off. There, just try."

Wili tried; pulled back the "thing," and the arrow whistled through the hedge. Instantly a cry of anguish sounded from the other side, and then all was silent. They looked at each other in great fright. "Do you think that was a rabbit?" asked Wili. "I thought it sounded like a hen;" said Lili. Their consciences were troubled, and their hearts were filled with fear, for they knew they had done wrong to take the bow, and they each had the impression that the cry of pain came from a child, though each hoped that the other thought it was really only an animal. They carried the bow back to its place in silence. Suddenly a new fear seized them. One arrow was gone from the quiver; what if Rolf should miss it! The sound of the family coming back from church, added to their embarrassment. It was not possible now to go to look for the arrow, for that would lead to immediate discovery. Rolf did not yet know that they had been shooting, but if he should begin to question them! They had got themselves into a fine box, through their disobedience; and they had no idea how they should ever get out of it, for they felt sure that they should never dare to tell the truth, if the arrow were asked for. Silent, and covered with confusion from their consciousness of wrong-doing, the twins crept back to the school-room, and there they sat without stirring or speaking, until they were called to dinner. They did not dare lift their eyes to the table, to see what dainty Sunday-dish had been prepared, but slipped into their seats and felt almost choked even by the soup; for something seemed to lie like a lump in their throats, and prevent them from swallowing. They did not look up once during the whole of dinner-time, and although their father spoke to them several times, they could not find voice to answer. "What have you two been about this time?" he said at last; for he knew very well that this depression was not the result of yesterday's performance; their contrition never lasted over night; that was not the way with the twins. There was no answer. They sat as if nailed to their seats, and stared into their plates. Their mother shook her head thoughtfully. Little Hunne kept a watchful eye on them, for he had observed from the first, that something was amiss. Presently a delicious pudding with wine sauce was brought in, and their mother helped each one to a good big slice. At that moment their father exclaimed, "What is that? Is there any one very ill in the next house? There goes the doctor, hurrying along as if some one were in great danger."

"I do not know of any one's being ill there," said the mother. "Mrs. Kurd has let her rooms to some strangers. It may be one of them."

The twins were by turns as red as fire and as white as chalk. A secret voice cried out in each little palpitating heart, "Now it is coming! it is coming!" They were almost paralyzed with fright; the delicious pudding lay untouched on their plates, though it was full of raisins and looked unusually tempting. But even Hunne, the pudding-eater of the family, neglected his plate today, and suddenly jumping down from his chair, he began to shout like a crazy creature,

"Mama! Papa! come away! the house is going to fall down! everything is going to pieces!" In his excitement he almost pulled Jule off his seat, to make him come with him, as he ran out of the door. Presently they heard him outside repeating, "The house will tumble down; Jule said it would!"

"Some evil spirit has certainly taken possession of the children," said the astonished father, "The twins look as if they were sitting on pins, and little Hunne is acting like a mad-man."

At these words Julius broke out into inextinguishable laughter; for it suddenly dawned upon him what the little boy had in his mind. The unusual timidity and silence of the twins was caused, no doubt, by their having already begun in secret the work of destruction; and at any moment now the house might fall in ruins upon the assembled family. Jule explained with repeated outbursts of laughter, the meaning of Hunne's fright. In vain the mother called the little boy to come in; he was jumping up and down before the house door, stamping, and calling to his father and mother and Jule and everyone to come out. At last his father lost patience, and said decidedly that the door must be closed, and that the dinner should be ended in peace. After dinner they all went into the garden, where Hunne joined them. When he saw them all seated in safety under the apple-tree, he said with a sigh, "I wish some one would bring me my pudding, before the house falls down." His mother drew him to her, and explained to him that big Jule and little Hunne, were two very foolish fellows; the first to invent such silly stuff, and the second to believe it. She begged him to think a bit how impossible it would be for two children like Wili and Lili to pull down a great strong stone house like theirs. But it was a long time before the impression was effaced from the child's imagination. Dora had been standing by the hedge, as usual, hoping that the children would come into the garden, when Wili and Lili appeared with the bow. She had watched the progress of their undertaking with the greatest interest. At last, off flew the arrow; and in a second, the sharp point pierced the little girl's bare arm. Dora groaned aloud with pain. The arrow fell to the ground; it had not penetrated deep enough to hold at all; but the blood followed, and trickled along her arm and hand, and down upon her dress. At this sight Dora forgot her pain in her fear. Her first thought was, "How Aunt Ninette will scold!" She tried to hide what had happened. She twisted her handkerchief about the wounded arm, and she ran to the spring before the house, to wash out all signs of blood. It was useless; the blood flowed out under the bandage in a stream, and soon her dress was spotted all over with the red drops.

"Dora! Dora!" called some one from above. It was her aunt; there was no help for it; she must show herself. In fear and trembling, she mounted the stairs and stood before her aunt, hiding the bandaged arm behind her. Her pretty Sunday dress was stained with blood, and her face too; for in her eagerness to wash it off she had spread it everywhere.

"Merciful Heaven!" cried her aunt, "what is the matter? Speak, child, did you fall down? How you look! You are as pale as death, and all smeared with blood! Dora, for heaven's sake, do speak!" Dora had been trying to speak, but she could not get in a word edgewise. At last she said timidly,

"It was an arrow!"

A flood of lamentations followed. Aunt Ninette flew up and down the room wringing her hands and crying, "An arrow! an arrow! You have been shot! Shot in the arm! You will have a stiff arm all your life! You will be a cripple! You can never sew any more, nor do anything else! You will come to want! We shall all have to suffer for it! How unlucky we are! How are we to live, how can we ever get along, if your arm is lame?"

"Oh, Aunty dear, perhaps it will not be as bad as all that;" said the child sobbing, "did not papa tell us to remember:

"God holds us in his hand

God knows the best to send."

"Certainly, of course that's true; but if you are lame, you will be lame;" said Mrs. Ehrenreich, whimpering, "it makes me perfectly desperate. But go—no—come here to the water. Where is Mrs. Kurd? Somebody must go for the doctor." Dora went to the wash-basin, while her aunt ran for Mrs. Kurd, and begged her to send for the doctor to come immediately; it was a case of shooting, and no one could tell how dangerous it might prove. The doctor came as quickly as possible. He examined the wound, stopped the bleeding, bound it up without a word, in spite of Aunt Ninette's pertinacious attempts to make him express an opinion. He then took his hat and made for the door. But Aunt Ninette followed him up before he could make good his retreat. "Do tell me, doctor, will her arm be lame? Stiff all the rest of her life?"

"Oh, I trust not. I will call again to-morrow;" and the doctor was gone.

"'Oh I trust not,'" repeated Aunt Ninette in a despairing tone, "that's a doctor's way of saying 'yes, of course.' I understand perfectly. What will become of us? How shall we ever live through this misfortune?"

And she kept on fretting in this way until late into the evening.

When Wili's mother went in to hear her little boy's prayers that night, she did not find him as usual, cheerfully sitting up in bed, ready for a good chat with her, if she would stay. He was crouched down all in a heap, and did not even look up at her, nor speak to her, when she sat down by him.

"What is the matter with my little boy?" said she gently, "have you something wrong in your heart? have you been doing what you ought not?"

The child made an unintelligible sound, neither yes nor no.

"Well, say your evening hymn, Wili; perhaps that will make you feel better," said his mother.

Wili began:

"The moon climbs up the sky,

The stars shine out on high,

Shine sparkling, bright and clear"—

and so on, but his thoughts were not on what he was saying; he was listening to every sound outside the room, and he kept looking towards the door as if he expected something terrible to come in at any moment; and in his restless movements it was plain to see what a state of fear he was in. When he had reached the end of his hymn,

"Oh Father, spare thy rod;

Send us sweet sleep, Oh God;

Let our sick neighbor slumber, too"—

he suddenly burst into tears, and clinging tight to his mother he sobbed out,

"The child will not be able to sleep, and God will punish us dreadfully."

"What are you talking about, dear Wili?" asked his mother tenderly. "Come, tell me what has happened. I have seen all day that something was the matter, and feared that you had been doing something wrong. What is it? Tell me."

"We, we—perhaps we have shot a child!"

"What do you mean?" cried his mother, now thoroughly alarmed, for she instantly recalled having seen the doctor hurry by to the cottage when they were at dinner.

"It cannot be! Do tell me all about it, clearly, so that I can understand."

And Wili gave as good an account as he could, of what he and Lili had been about that morning, and of their being so frightened at the cry of pain which followed the shooting of the arrow, that they had run away as fast as possible. And now they were so very miserable, that they did not want to live any longer, and both wanted to die, and to be done with it all.

"Now you see, my Wili, what disobedience leads to," were the mother's serious words after she had listened to the boy's sad story. "You did not mean to do anything but play a little while with the bow, but your father knew very well when he forbade your touching it, how great the danger was. We do not know what evil consequences may follow your disobedience, but we will pray the dear Father in heaven to avert the evil, and turn it to good if possible."

Then Wili repeated after his mother a short prayer, and never had he prayed so earnestly as now, with his heart full of dread for the results of his naughty conduct. Indeed he could scarcely stop praying; it seemed to relieve his heart to lay all his sorrow before his Heavenly Father, and beg his forgiveness and help.

And now he could look in his mother's eyes again as he bade her good-night.

Lili was waiting in the next room, for her turn to talk to this same good mother. "Are you ready to say your prayers, Lili?" The little girl began, paused, began again and stopped in the middle. Presently she stammered out,

"Mamma I cannot pray, for God is angry with me."

"What have you done, Lili, to make him angry?"

Lili was silent, and sat pulling at the sheet, for she was naturally obstinate, and found it hard to own a fault.

"If the good God is not pleased with you, I certainly cannot be. Good night, my child, sleep well—that is if you can."

"Mamma, do not go away, I will tell you everything; only stay with me."

Her mother gladly turned back.

"We were shooting with the bow, though papa told us not to touch it, and we hit something and it cried out; and we were so frightened that we could not be happy any more at all." Lili's voice was hurried, and full of distress. "I don't wonder that you could not feel happy, and you cannot yet. Because of your disobedience, a poor little child is lying suffering in the next house, perhaps without its mother to comfort it, for it is a stranger here. Think of it there in a strange house, away from home, crying in pain all night long."

"I will go right over there and stay with it," said Lili dolefully, and she began to cry again. "I cannot sleep either mamma; I am so worried." "We are always worried, my dear child, when we have done wrong. I will go now and find out whether the child is in need of help; and you will pray to God to give you an obedient spirit, and to turn aside the evil that your naughtiness may have caused an innocent child to suffer." Lili followed her mother's advice.

She could pray, now that she had confessed her fault; as she felt that she might now be forgiven. She prayed heartily for the recovery of the wounded child, and for forgiveness for herself. Trine was sent over to the widow's house, to inquire whether it was really a child that had been hit by the arrow, and whether it was badly hurt. Mrs. Kurd told Trine the whole story, and that the doctor had said, "We trust no serious harm is done," and that he would come again the next day. Trine carried this report back to her mistress, and Mrs. Birkenfeld was very much relieved; for her first fear had been that the child's eye might have been hit, even if no mortal wound had been inflicted, and she was thankful to find that things were no worse.

CHAPTER VII.

LONG-WISHED-FOR HAPPINESS.

The next morning, Mrs. Birkenfeld went early to the widow's house, where she was most cordially received; for she as well as her friend Lili had been a favorite pupil of Mrs. Kurd's husband. What pleasure the ardent teacher had taken in these pupils, and what success he had had in teaching them! He had never been tired of talking about it, and his wife had never forgotten it.

Mrs. Birkenfeld was shown into the sitting-room, where Mrs. Kurd insisted on her taking a seat, saying that she had much to tell her, for she had not seen her before since she had had the strangers from Karlsruhe in her house. There was a great deal to say about them and especially about the accident of the day before. When the widow had talked herself out, Mrs. Birkenfeld asked if she could speak to the lady, and to the little girl who had been hurt.

Mrs. Kurd carried the message to Mrs. Ehrenreich, who came directly, followed by Dora, who wore a thick bandage upon her arm, and looked very pale and delicate. After the first greetings, Mrs. Birkenfeld took Dora's hand tenderly in her own, and inquired with sympathy about the wound. She then turned to Aunt Ninette and told her how deeply she regretted the accident, and inquired in a friendly way after her health and that of Mr. Ehrenreich. Aunt Ninette lost no time in giving her full particulars of her husband's illness; how he had sadly needed fresh country air, and how she had made inquiries for a quiet secluded spot, and had at last chosen this very place; how he had to keep the windows shut tight, because he could not bear the least sound when he was writing, and therefore he never got any fresh air after all; and how anxious she was all the time, lest the vertigo instead of being cured by his being here, should come on worse than ever.

"I am very sorry indeed, that Mr. Ehrenreich should suffer from my children's noise;" said Mrs. Birkenfeld, understanding at once the state of the case, "if Mr. Ehrenreich does not walk out at all, he certainly ought to have an unusually airy place to work in. I have an idea; quite at the farthest end of our garden, away from the house, and from the frequented part of the grounds, stands a cool summer house, with seats and a table. If Mr. Ehrenreich would use that for his study, I would direct the children to keep entirely away from that part of the garden."

Aunt Ninette was delighted with this proposal; she said she would suggest it to her husband, and she was sure that he would accept it with many thanks.

"And you, my dear little girl, I hope your Aunt will allow you to come to see us to-day and every day. You shall get well in our garden; my children have much to make up to you for."

"Can I really go into that beautiful garden where the children are?" asked little Dora, who could scarcely believe in her good fortune; and such a look of gladness shot from her eyes at the thought, that her aunt looked at her with surprise, for she had never seen an

expression like that in them before. This beam of delight that transfigured the child's face, spoke so directly to Mrs. Birkenfeld's heart, that tears came to her eyes, and she loved the child from that moment. She did not know why or wherefore; yet these joyfully-beaming eyes had stirred a whole world of slumbering recollections in her heart.

It was arranged that directly after dinner Dora should go over into the garden, and stay there till late in the evening. Thereupon Mrs. Birkenfeld took her leave.

Aunt Ninette hastened at once to her husband's study, and laid the new plan before him.

Uncle Titus received it with pleasure, for although the want of fresh air was becoming very trying to him, yet taking a walk for air and exercise was something he had never been accustomed to, and he could not make up his mind to the loss of so much valuable time. The offer was therefore very seasonable. He even proposed to go to the summer-house directly, and his wife accompanied him. They took the longest way, round the outside of the garden, so as to avoid meeting any one. At the farthest end they came to a little garden-gate which led directly to the secluded summer-house. Close to the little house were two old nut-trees and a weeping willow, with thick pendent branches, and behind, far away into the distance, stretched the soft green meadows. Far and near, all was perfectly still. Uncle Titus had brought several thick books with him, under each arm, for he thought he should like to take possession at once, if he found it to his mind. Aunt Ninette carried the inkstand and paper, and Dora brought up the rear, with cigars and the wax-taper. Mr. Ehrenreich was well pleased with the place; he settled himself at once, took his seat at the table, drew in a long breath of the pure air which blew in through the open doors and windows, and softly rubbed his hands with satisfaction. He began to write directly, and Aunt Ninette and Dora withdrew, and left him alone to his work.

By this time the news of the twins' exploit of yesterday, had spread through the house. For when Rolf returned from his morning lessons, he went straight for his bow, and of course discovered at once the loss of one arrow. Very much incensed, he ran about the house to find out who had been meddling with his property. He had little trouble in discovering the offenders, for the twins were so broken down by the suffering they had been through, that they confessed at once, and told him the whole story, including their horror at the cry of pain, and adding that their mother had now gone to the cottage, to inquire who had been hit. Then they showed Rolf where they had fired the arrow through the hedge, and to be sure there it was, lying on the ground, in Mrs. Kurd's garden. The recovery of his treasure put Rolf again in good-humor. He rushed back to the house, calling out, "Jule, Paula, did you know that the twins shot a child yesterday?" And so it came about that all six of the children, and Miss Hanenwinkel, besides, stood on the stone steps, on tip-toe with excitement, awaiting the mother's return from the cottage. The moment she appeared, Hunne called out, "Where was it hit?" and then each one asked a different question, and all at once: "Is it a child?" "Is it a boy?" "How big is it?" "What is its name?" "Is it much hurt?"

"Come into the house, first," said the mother, turning a deaf ear to the shower of questions; and when they were clustered about her in the house, she told them about the pale, delicate

little maiden, with a bandage upon her arm, so tight that she could scarcely use it. She said that the child was apparently about Paula's age; that she spoke excellent German, and looked very nice and well-bred; that her name was Dora, and last of all, that she was to come into the garden after dinner, and then they could make her acquaintance. All was now curiosity and excitement; how did the child look—what would she say? And each began to speculate what his own particular relation would be to the new-comer.

Paula stood still in intense delight; and only said, "Oh, if she is so nice, and just my age, too, mamma, how happy I shall be!" She had visions of a great, indissoluble friendship, and she could hardly wait till afternoon. Rolf was sure that Dora was just the right age to guess his charades, and that he should make friends with her at once on that ground. The twins had a feeling that Dora belonged especially to them, because they had shot her; and they thought she would be the very one to help them in carrying out their schemes; for they often needed a third person, and Paula was never in the mood. "Well, I am glad that Dora is coming," said Hunne, "for I can go to her Saturdays, when all the chairs are standing on their heads, and no one else will have me."

Last of all Jule asked, "Hunne, I want to get some good out of Dora, too, what shall it be?"

"I know," said the child, after thinking awhile, "she can help you get off your riding-boots—you know there weren't enough of us, last time."

"The very thing," said Jule, laughing.

Dora was also greatly excited—she fairly trembled. One moment she did not know what to do for joy that the longed-for happiness had come, and she was to go into the garden, among the lovely, sweet-smelling flowers, and all those merry children. But the next moment she was afraid. She had watched the children from a distance, and she knew them all by sight; she already felt partly acquainted with them, and each one had excited an individual interest in her mind. But they had not even seen her, at all; she was a perfectly strange child to them. And then she said to herself with real distress, that she was so ignorant and awkward, and they knew so much, and were so clever, that they would certainly despise her, and would want to have nothing to do with her. She kept running it all over and over in her mind during dinner, and could scarcely eat a mouthful, in her excitement. Before she knew it, the time had come, and her aunt said,

"Now, Dora, you can go!"

So Dora put on her hat and went over to the next house. She went in at the front door, and passed through the long entry, at the other end of which the door into the garden stood open. Going out of this door she found herself in full view of the whole family. Directly in front of her, under the apple-tree, sat Mr. and Mrs. Birkenfeld, and round about them were the six children. Her timidity came back again, at seeing the parents, for she had expected to see only the children. She stood hesitating, and glanced shyly at the company. Little Hunne caught sight of her, and slipping down from his seat, ran toward her with outstretched arms, crying out,

"Come, Dora, there is room here on my seat; Come!" and seizing her hand, he pulled her along toward the others, who all came eagerly to meet her, and welcomed her as cordially as if she were an old friend. So, occupied with questions and greetings, she came to where the parents sat, and they were so friendly and kind, that all her shyness passed away, and she was soon sitting on the same seat with Hunne, in the midst of the circle, as much at home as if she belonged there.

Mr. and Mrs. Birkenfeld soon left their seats and walked up and down the garden; and then the children pressed round Dora, and each had some particular thing to say to her. Paula spoke least; but she looked at the new acquaintance, as if she were making a study of her. Rolf, Wili and Lili stood as near Dora as they could squeeze, to make her hear what they were saying, and Hunne kept fast hold of her, as if afraid that she would vanish away. "If you squeeze Dora to death the first time she makes us a visit, she will not come a second time;" remarked Julius, who sat stretched out at full length on a garden-bench; "so take my advice, and give her room to breathe." "How old are you, Dora? Not much older than I am?" asked Lili eagerly. "I am just twelve." "Oh, what a shame! then you are as old as Paula;" said Lili regretfully, who had hoped that Dora would belong to her in every respect, even in age.

"No, no," cried Rolf, "Dora is my age; at least nearer mine than Paula's, if she is only just twelve."

Rolf thought this opened a favorable prospect for special companionship. "Are you good at guessing riddles? And are you fond of them?"

"Yes, yes, and I have made a riddle;" cried Hunne, putting in his oar, "Now guess mine, Dora. My first you can eat but not drink"—

Rolf cut the little boy's charade ruthlessly in two with,

"Oh, get away with your old riddle, Hunne; it is no riddle at all! Now listen, Dora;

"My first conceals from light of day—" But Rolf was not destined to finish his verses, for Lili had seized Dora's hand and was pulling her with all her might, saying,

"Come, Dora, I will play you everything I know." Dora had asked her if she was the one who played on the piano, and Lili thought this a good excuse for stealing the new friend for herself. Lili had her way, for Dora really wanted to hear the piano, though she did not like to disappoint Rolf.

"You must not take it amiss," she said, turning back to speak to him, as Lili drew her away, "I am not good at guessing, and I should only bother you with my stupidity."

"Won't you try just one?" asked Rolf, rather disappointed.

"Oh, yes, if you want me to. I will try bye and bye," she called back, for Lili was fairly dragging her towards the house. Hunne had not let go his hold of Dora, and was pulled along too. He kept calling out, "Mine too, guess mine too," and she promised that she would do her best. Wili also went with them, and all four betook themselves to the school-room where the piano stood. The twins had been taking music lessons from Miss Hanenwinkel for more than a year, not so much because their parents cared about having them learn to play on the piano, as because they thought the lessons would be a pleasant occupation, and the music would have a soothing effect on the children's somewhat restless dispositions; and moreover, last but by no means least, the twins could not be up to any mischievous pranks, while they were busy practising.

Now that they stood before the piano, Lili's ardor for playing it somewhat cooled, and she reverted to her usual point of view with regard to it.

"You know, Dora, of course," she said, "that playing on the piano is the most tedious thing in the world. Why, when I have to practise, I get perfectly tired to death, don't you, Wili?" Wili assented emphatically. "How can you feel so?" asked Dora, casting a longing look at the piano,

"Oh, if I could only
sit down there and play as you do, Lili, I should be perfectly happy."

"Do you really think so?" said Lili, struck with the expression of Dora's eyes. She opened the piano quickly, and began to play a little melody. Dora sat by, thirstily drinking in the sounds, and looking as charmed as if Lili were conferring some substantial benefit upon her. The sight of her pleasure was very inspiriting to Lili, who kept on playing better and better, and when Wili saw the impression produced, he wanted to take his share. "Now let me

play, Lili," he said, as she came to the end; but Lili was now quite in the spirit
of it, and did not stop for an instant, but began to repeat the piece from the beginning.

"Do you know any other tune?" asked Dora.

"No; Miss Hanenwinkel will not teach me another till I have learned my exercises better; but I know what I will do, Dora, just wait till to-morrow, and then I will give you music lessons, and we will learn ever so many tunes. Should you like that?"

"Will you really?" asked Dora, and she looked so overjoyed at the bare idea, that Lili at once decided to begin the lessons on the very next day.

"But my arm!" exclaimed Dora. They had forgotten that. But Lili did not give up her plans so easily.

"Oh, your arm will soon be better," she said, "and meantime I will learn ever so many pieces, and be all the more able to teach you."

At this moment the big bell rang for supper. Hunne grasped Dora's hand, declaring that there was no time to lose, for his father always came punctually to his meals, and Hunne liked to do the same. The table was spread under the apple-tree, and covered with a great variety of good things. As she sat there looking about at these new acquaintances who

already seemed like old friends, Dora felt as if she were dreaming; it was so much more delightful even than she had hoped; and she was almost afraid that she should wake up all at once, and find it only a dream. But she did not wake up, except to find that her plate had been loaded with good things, so very real, that all anxiety passed away, and she realized that she was living, and living remarkably well, into the bargain.

"Do eat your cake, or you will be the last to get through," said Hunne, "see, Dora, Jule and I have eaten four. Jule and I can do a great many things; only we can't pull the riding-boots off very well. You'll help about that, won't you, Dora?" "Eat your cakes, and be quiet, Hunne," said Jule, in a warning tone; and Dora did not answer about the boots, for Mr. Birkenfeld was asking her questions, and she began to tell him about her father, and of their life together in Hamburg and Karlsruhe.

Up to this time, Paula had not made any attempt to talk with Dora; but when supper was over, she came up to her, and said, softly,

"Will you come with me a little while now?"

Dora was delighted with the invitation, for she had begun to be afraid that Paula did not mean to have anything to say to her, and yet she had been particularly attracted toward this quiet girl, so near her own age. Paula had wanted to see what sort of a girl Dora was, before she made advances, and she was evidently well pleased with what she saw, for she now took her new friend by the hand, and led her away down the garden path. The twins and Hunne, and even Rolf, were soon tired of waiting for Dora to come back, and went calling and searching everywhere for her; but they could not find her; she had quite disappeared. In fact, Paula had taken her all round the garden, and then up to her own room. There the two girls sat and talked, and talked, about all sorts of things. They told each other their thoughts and feelings on various subjects, and found themselves in perfect sympathy. It was a great happiness to both, for neither had ever had an intimate friend, of her own age, one whose tastes, purposes and ideals were like her own.

"Now we will be 'best friends' forever," they said, and sat, forgetful of all the world besides, till the stars stood shining in the heavens above, and all the earth was bathed in shadow.

The mother found them at last; she had suspected that they had taken refuge in Paula's room. Dora sprang up hastily when she noticed how dark it had grown, and recollected that her aunt would be expecting her. The other children were waiting below, rather a dissatisfied little party at Dora's disappearance; for they all wanted to talk to her. Rolf was particularly annoyed. "Why Dora," he said, "I thought you were going to guess my charade; will you try now?" But Dora said it was really time for her to go home; so Mrs. Birkenfeld told them that they
must wait till to-morrow for all they had to say, and that Dora would come every day to see them and would take lessons with them too. This satisfied them, and they charged Dora to come very early and stay very late, for there was a great deal to do and a great deal to show her. The leave taking lasted a long time, but Rolf suddenly cut the thing short.

He was going to have the last word with Dora, for he was to walk home with her. As they crossed the grass plot towards the cottage, the stars were shining so brightly overhead, that Dora stood still.

"Look up, Rolf;" she said, "do you see those five twinkling stars up there? I know them very well; they were my own stars in Karlsruhe, and they are here with me too."

"Oh yes, I've seen those; they are on our map of the Heavens. Do you know their names, Dora?"

"No, indeed; can you tell the names of the stars Rolf? How much you do know!" said Dora admiringly. "Don't those five all belong together, and have one name? There are others too that look as if they belonged together. Do you know them all? How I should like to learn them from you!"

Rolf was much pleased with the idea of giving lessons in astronomy, to one so eager to learn.

"Let us begin now," said he enthusiastically; "I will tell them all to you one after another, even if it takes till midnight."

This reminded Dora how late it was.

"No, Rolf" she said quickly, "thank you very much, but no more to-night. To-morrow; will you tell me to-morrow?"

"Well, to-morrow then, Dora, don't forget. Good-night."

"Good-night, Rolf;" and Dora hurried into the house. She was so brimming over with happiness and the many pleasures of the day, that she sprang up-stairs to Aunt Ninette, and began to tell her everything all mixed up together, with such astonishing vivacity, that her aunt drew back rather startled.

"Dora! Dora! think a minute! this excitement may go to your arm! Go to sleep as quick as you can; that is the best thing you can do."

Dora went to her bed-room, but sleep was impossible. She knelt down at her bed-side and gave heart-felt thanks to God for sending her all this happiness; she resolved that when these holidays were over she would go back to her work again without complaint; no matter how long the hours might be, and she would never forget these happy days that the good God had sent her now. It was long before she could close her eyes for very bliss.

CHAPTER VIII.

MORE CHARADES.

Early the next day, as Julius was clattering along the passage with his big riding-boots and spurs, he heard the sounds of practising in the school-room, and knowing that Miss Hanenwinkel did not give lessons at this hour, he pushed open the door to see what was going on. There sat Lili at the piano, and Wili stood by, looking as if he were impatiently counting every minute till he could have his turn.

"What are you two about?" he called out, "is this the beginning of some mischievous prank?"

"Be quiet, Jule, we haven't a minute to lose," said Lili seriously. Jule laughed aloud and went on his way. Going down stairs, he met Miss Hanenwinkel.

"What has got into the twins now?" he asked. "Have they taken the notion of being virtuous, into their small noddles?"

"That is more likely at seven than at seventeen;" was all the answer he got.

He went on down stairs still laughing, and just at the front door met his mother. She was starting at that early hour to try to see the doctor before he went from home, to ask him exactly the state of Dora's arm, and whether there was any danger for the child. Aunt Ninette's anxiety had infected her, and she could not rest until she knew the probabilities of the case.

"Do I hear some one playing on the piano, Jule?" she asked. "It is an unusual sound for this time of day."

"Mother dear, I do believe that the end of the world is coming," replied Julius;

"Lili is up there hurrying from one finger-exercise to another as if she could not get enough of that exquisite amusement, and Wili is seated at her side in a similar condition of nervous industry, waiting for his turn at the piano."

"A strange state of things, to be sure, Jule," said his mother; "for it was only yesterday that Miss Hanenwinkel was complaining to me that Lili did not show the slightest interest in her music, and that she would not even play her piece, much less her exercises."

"It's just as I said; the end of the world is coming," said Jule, turning towards the stable.

"Let us hope rather the beginning," replied Mrs. Birkenfeld, starting in the other direction to go down the hill towards the village. When she reached the doctor's house, she was so fortunate as to find him at home, and she asked him the question that so greatly disquieted her. He assured her that the wound was doing perfectly well, and that there was not the slightest danger of any permanent stiffness of the arm; though he laughingly owned that he

had made the worst of it to Dora, in order to impress her with caution for the future. It would be all over in a day or two at farthest. Mrs. Birkenfeld was much relieved, for besides her sympathy for Dora, she had felt keenly her children's responsibility for the misfortune.

On her way home Mrs. Birkenfeld stopped to speak to Aunt Ninette; not only to carry her the doctor's favorable verdict, but also to talk with her about Dora. She now learned for the first time, that Dora was to earn her living by sewing; and that for this reason her aunt felt obliged to keep her so closely to her shirt-making.

Mrs. Birkenfeld took a warm interest in Dora. She thought the little girl very delicate for such heavy work, and she was glad that there was still some time left for her to grow stronger before she had to go back to Karlsruhe, and settle down to regular work again. She begged Aunt Ninette to let the child, during the rest of their stay, give up the sewing entirely, and she offered to let her own seamstress make the shirts, that Dora might be free to amuse herself with the children, and gain strength by play in the open air.

The self-possessed, quiet manner of Mrs. Birkenfeld had an excellent effect on Mrs. Ehrenreich, and she acquiesced in this proposal without the slightest demur. Indeed the path of the future, that had looked so beset with difficulties, seemed now to lie smooth before her, and all her prospects were brightened. She spoke with great thankfulness on her husband's account; for he already found himself so improved by the fresh air and quiet of the summer house, and he was so thoroughly comfortable and contented there, that he could hardly bear to leave it, even to come in at night. When Mrs. Birkenfeld rose to go, she cordially invited Aunt Ninette to come often to see her in the garden, saying that she must find it lonely in the cottage, and that the open air would be good for her also. Aunt Ninette was much gratified by this courtesy, and accepted it with pleasure; quite forgetting the noise of the children, which had been so great a bugbear to her. Dora had sprung out of bed that morning as soon as she opened her eyes, for the thought of the pleasure before her made her heart dance for joy. She had to curb her impatience however for a time, for Mrs. Ehrenreich did not approve of imposing upon people who were inclined to be neighborly. It was not till Mrs. Birkenfeld had come over to the cottage, and after talking some time with the aunt had asked after Dora and repeated her invitation, that the little girl was allowed to go. This time she did not stand still and look shyly about; with a few springing steps she reached the house, and at the door of the sitting-room she was received with a chorus of welcoming voices; while Wili and Lili and little Hunne and Paula all ran out to meet her, and draw her in among them. Julius, just returned from his ride, had thrown himself as usual into an arm-chair, stretching out his legs, as an intimation that he should like to have his boots pulled off. Dora ran forward and offered her services, frankly desirous of making herself useful. But Jule instantly drew in his long legs.

"No, no, Dora; not for the world; what are you thinking about?" he cried, jumping up and very politely offering Dora his chair. Before she could take it, the twins pulled her away; saying "Come with us!" and Hunne tugged at her dress behind, calling loud, "Come with me!" while Paula reaching over him, whispered softly in her ear, "Go first with the twins; or

they will keep this up all day; bye and bye I will come to you, and then we can have some comfort together."

"Dora," said Jule, waving off the three noisy creatures, "I advise you to stay by me; it is your only hope of a happy existence in this house-hold; for I can tell you if you go with Paula, you will grow too romantic; you will scarcely breathe the fresh air, and will lose your appetite completely. If you take Rolf for your companion, your whole existence will become one great perpetual riddle." "That it will be at any rate," remarked Miss Hanenwinkel, who was passing through the room at that moment.

"If you prefer to go with Miss Hanenwinkel," said Jule quickly, so that the governess might be sure to hear what he said; "you will be preserved in salt; quite the opposite you see to plums, which are done in sugar! If your choice falls on the twins, you will be torn in two, and as to little Hunne; if you go with him he will talk you deaf!"

In spite of this melancholy prediction, Dora allowed herself to be carried off by the twins, and Hunne ran after them. When they reached the piano, Lili began to play her one piece, and when she came to the end, she glanced at Dora who nodded so pleasantly that Lili, thus encouraged, began again at the beginning. Presently Dora began to sing the words; Wili, who was waiting in vain for his chance to play, joined her; then Hunne too; so that a loud chorus rang out cheerily from the school-room—

"Live your life merrily

While the lamp glows;

Ere it can fade and die,

Gather the rose."

They were so carried away by their own music that the voices rose louder and louder, and Hunne's out-screamed them all. Presently Lili twirled round on her stool, and said, her eyes shining with joyful expectation: "Just wait till to-morrow, Dora, and then you'll see!" for the child had worked so diligently at her exercises that morning that she felt that she had a right to claim at least half a dozen new pieces from Miss Hanenwinkel to-morrow. At this moment the bell rang for the twins to go to their lessons; a sound that Hunne was well-pleased to hear, for now he could have Dora to himself till dinner-time; and the little girl gave herself up to him so cheerfully and with such warm interest in the artistic performances of his nut-cracker, that he made a firm resolution then and there never to let her go again. But no sooner was dinner over, than his plan was completely upset. Paula had finished her French lessons, and with her mother's leave, she now took possession of Dora. As for Dora, she asked nothing better; she would have been glad to spend whole days and nights talking with Paula, telling all the secrets of her heart, and hearing in return all her friend's thoughts and wishes, hopes and fears. They both felt sure that they could never be

tired of being together, and of sharing each other's memories of the past and plans for the future. A long life-time would not be enough for them. It was seven o'clock before they again joined the family group which was gathered under the apple-tree; and being late they slipped into their places very quickly, for the father had begun to cough significantly, to show that things were not just as they should be. During the meal, Rolf cast meaning looks across to Dora, that seemed to say,

"We two have a plan together next; don't forget!"

While they all sat chatting merrily after supper was over, Rolf was watching the sky, to see when the first pale star should peep through the twilight amid the twigs of the apple-tree; and as soon as he spied one, he came to Dora, saying

"Now, Dora, look, up there!" and he carried her off to the very farthest corner of the garden, to make sure that none of his brothers or sisters should interfere with them. He felt quite securely hidden under protecting nut-trees, and placing himself in the right position, he began his lesson.

"Do you see, there, your five stars—one two three, and then two more. Do you see them distinctly?"

"Oh yes; I know them so well, so well," said Dora.

"Well, that constellation is Cassiopeia. And now just wait a moment, Dora. I've just thought of a riddle that is very appropriate. You can guess it easily, if you try."

"I will if I can, but I am afraid your riddles are too hard for me:"

"My first's a most delicious drink,

But best of all when fresh, I think.

Add then my second, and you make

An adjective, small pains to take!

My third must strait and narrow prove

Or 'twill not lead to heaven above.

Now for my whole—a countless host

In which each separate light is lost.

"Have you guessed it, Dora?"

"No, and I'm sure I cannot guess it. I am terribly dull at such things. I am sorry; for it makes it stupid for you, but I can't help it," said Dora dolefully.

"Of course you can't help it now, because you are not used to them," said the boy consolingly. "I will give you an easier one to begin with:

"For full enjoyment of our youth

My first is needful as the truth, And at man's very farthest end My second comes—and now attend, Master of Greek Philosophy My whole, its shining crown you see."

"I cannot, I cannot, you are only losing time and trouble, Rolf, I do not know the least bit about Greek things," said Dora sighing.

"Never mind, I will try another country; how is this?" and before Dora could protest, the indefatigable riddle-maker declaimed:

"My fickle first is said to be

England's high-road of industry;

But Germany denies the same

And with a *Key* she makes her claim.

In Russia, nihilistic power

Threatens my second, every hour.

But Rome, Imperial Rome, to you,

My whole was pride and terror too!"

"That's true!" It was a deep voice that echoed in the surrounding darkness, and the startled children clung to each other for a moment in terror. Then Dora began to laugh.

"It is Uncle Titus," she said, "he is sitting there in the summer-house. Come, Rolf, let us go in and see him."

Rolf assented; and they found Uncle Titus sitting there with his chair tipped back against the wall, looking very much pleased to see them. Rolf returned his greeting very cordially, and inquired quite casually whether he had guessed the riddle. "I think it must be 'Caesar,' is it not, my son?" said Uncle Titus tapping the lad kindly on the shoulder.

"Yes, that's right; and did you hear the others I was saying, and did you guess them?"

"Possibly, possibly, my son," replied the good man. "I am much mistaken if the first is not 'Milky-way,' and the second, 'Plato.'"

"Both right!" cried Rolf, highly delighted. "It is the greatest fun to make riddles and have them guessed so quickly. I have another, and another, and one more. May I give you another, Mr. Ehrenreich?"

"Certainly, my dear boy, why not? out with them, all three, and we will try to guess them all."

Rolf was enchanted, and set about recalling them. "I will take the shortest first," he said:

"My first implies strength and grace;

In all things my second finds place;

My whole was the scourge of the race."

"Have you guessed that?"

"Very likely, very likely, my son; now the next:"

"Take all that the senses attest

Add the sign of the beast for the rest,

And my glorious whole stands confessed."

"And now another," said Uncle Titus, nodding.

"And now I have a very long one, and rather harder," said the lad:

"A thrill through all the nations ran,

When he, my whole, the grand old man,

Spoke words that e'en my second turn

My first, with hopes that glow and burn.

But now are hearts to anger spurred;

Nations are sick with hope deferred,

Alas! small chance for Ireland we know!

My first my second at my whole we throw."

Rolf stopped, quite excited with the declamation of his favorite charade.

"Now we will begin to guess, my son," said Uncle Titus, with a pleased expression: "First, Bonaparte. Second, Matterhorn. Third, Gladstone."

"Every one right!" cried Rolf, exultantly. "This is splendid! I have always wanted to do this with my riddles; that is, find some one who could guess them all. Before this, I've always

had a heap of unguessed riddles. Now they are all guessed, and I can begin again with a new set!" Rolf was full of satisfaction.

"I will make you a proposal, my son," said Uncle Titus, as he rose from his seat, and prepared to return to the cottage; "Come to me here every evening, and bring me the fresh set. Who knows but that I may have a few to give you in return?" By this time it was rather too late for the study of the stars, and that had to be postponed;
so Dora and Rolf returned to the rest of the family; Rolf quite overjoyed with the pleasant interview he had had, and with the prospect of its repetition; while on his side Uncle Titus wended his way to the cottage, filled with quiet satisfaction at the thought of his new friend; for he had always wanted a son, a twelve year old son, who should have left behind the noise and follies of childhood, and have become old enough to be an intelligent and agreeable companion. Now Rolf fulfilled these conditions; and moreover displayed a decided predilection for Uncle Titus, who began to feel a most paternal interest spring up in his heart towards the lad. So gladly did he feel it, that as he strode through the garden, in the light of the shining, starry host, he broke out with,

"Live your life merrily

While the lamp glows;

Ere it can fade and die,

Gather the rose."

For the tune was floating in his memory as he had heard it sung that morning by the fresh young voices, and out came the joyous notes under the peaceful heavens.
At the cottage window, Aunt Ninette stood looking out for her husband; and as she heard his voice singing this merry melody, it was with nothing short of amazement that she said to herself, "Can that be Uncle Titus?"

CHAPTER IX.

"WHAT MUST BE, MUST BE."

Time passed quickly at the two houses, in this new and happy companionship. "Another week gone already!" and "Sunday again so soon!" were the exclamations heard on every side, as each week went by. And Dora was the happiest of all; the days fairly danced with her: they certainly had not more than half as many hours as they had had in Karlsruhe, and every evening she was sorry to have to go to bed, and lose in sleep so much of the little time that remained of her visit. If she could only have passed the whole night at the piano, practising while the others were sleeping, she thought she could have nothing more to desire. Her arm was now wholly healed, and she was taking music-lessons with a kind of furor; and in Lili she had a teacher whose zeal equaled her own. A most agreeable teacher too, who did not trouble her pupil with finger-exercises and scales, but gave her tunes at once without more ado; and first of course the favorite, "Live thy life merrily." Dora learned the air very quickly with the right hand, and Lili did not require her to learn the left hand yet; declaring that it was quite too difficult to play both together. All this playing-teacher was so improving to Lili, that she began to make wonderful progress herself, so that Miss Hanenwinkel was equally surprised and pleased at her improvement, and her mother often paused outside of the school-room door to listen to the firm but lively touch with which her little daughter rendered her studies; for Lili had really great talent for music, and now that a sufficient motive had been applied, she advanced rapidly. Paula was in a state of tranquil blessedness all day long. She had found a friend, and such a friend! The reality of this friendship far surpassed her imagination and her hopes, for such a one as Dora she could not have conceived of; one who was so attractive not only to her, but to every member of the family. Like Dora, Paula grudged the hours passed in sleep, now that there were so few left that they could spend together. Rolf had abandoned his old plan of charade-making, and had started on an entirely new system, and he spent his leisure hours striding up and down certain of the garden-walks, sunk in thought with his hands clasped behind his back, and so lost to outward things that Hunne was charged to keep away from these paths; for more than once he was almost run down by his brother. A new set of riddles was now ready every evening for Uncle Titus, who was always waiting for his young friend in the summer-house, prepared to guess, and showing remarkable skill in finding out even the most intricate puzzles; and as a natural result, Rolf grew more and more clever in making them. Before long, Uncle Titus began to give riddles himself in return, and his were carefully written out; for they required serious study, as they were in Latin. Rolf carried these home to his father and Jule, but they would not even try to guess them. Mr. Ehrenreich declared that his Latin was quite too rusty for such work as this, and Jule maintained that during vacation he did not dare to tax his brain unnecessarily; he needed all his wits for his serious work next term. So Rolf worked away by himself, dictionary in hand, and twisted and turned the words till he wrung out their

meaning. Then he showed them with triumph to his father and brother, and in the evening carried them to Uncle Titus. The pleasure which his kind old friend took in his success spurred the boy on to greater activity. He studied not only the riddles themselves, but his Latin lessons more earnestly, and he took to early rising, and every morning before breakfast he worked with his Lexicon in the garden, as if his livelihood depended on the solution of Latin puzzles.

Hunne too was a lucky boy in these days, for no matter how often or how long he hung upon Dora, and claimed her as his own property, never once did the good-natured girl avoid or repulse her little friend; but always lent herself to his wishes, and took so much pains to amuse him, that it seemed as if she found her own pleasure in pleasing him. Mrs. Birkenfeld had persuaded Aunt Ninette to leave Dora entirely at liberty both morning and evening, and when in the afternoon she took her sewing and sat with the family under the apple-tree, she found that even shirt-making might be an agreeable occupation, under such favorable circumstances as these.

One day Dora made a new riddle for Hunne; for indeed his "nut-cracker" one had become rather an old story; yet he couldn't bear to give up riddle-giving. To his unspeakable joy this new riddle had a triumphant experience, quite unprecedented in the family annals—no one could guess it. This time nobody could turn him off with, "Oh, go away with that same old charade." For as no one knew the answer, no one could laugh at the little questioner, and he and Dora agreed not to give the slightest hint that might lead to the right guess, and so put an end to this delightful state of things. The riddle was this: "My first makes you cry—

not for sorrow,

For my second a spoon you may borrow,

To my whole, you say, 'thank you—to-morrow.'"

What could it be? Julius said it was "Hot-tea, because if the tea is very hot and you try to drink it, the tears start to your eyes, and then you cool it with a spoon, and you would like to let it stand till to-morrow."

Hunne jumped for joy, crying "Wrong, wrong!"

Miss Hanenwinkel suggested "Plum-jam," because Hunne often cried when he couldn't have plums, and everybody ate jam with a spoon, and if plum-jam was not on the supper-table to-night, it was sure to be, to-morrow.

"Wrong! wrong!" cried Hunne again.

"Well, I guess Tear-ful," said Rolf; but that was even worse than the others.

"I think it may be Snow-drop," said the mother. "The sight of the snow makes you cry for joy, and a spoon is used for your drops if you are ill, and you always want snowdrops to-morrow."

Mamma had failed! "Not Snowdrops; no!" screamed Hunne, almost beside himself with delight.

"I guess it is *ice-cream*," said Mr. Birkenfeld. "Ice makes me cry sometimes, it is so cold. Cream certainly needs a spoon, and I have often heard the cry, 'To-morrow please,' when ice-cream has been mentioned." Hunne spun round with delight. "No, no!" he shouted. It was almost too good to be true, that his father should have missed it too. He scampered about crying out to everyone, "Guess! guess!" Rolf was really vexed not to be able to see through this simple little "Hunne riddle" as he called it; and was mortified to perceive that he had made a worse guess than any one.

Meantime the days were passing. One morning at breakfast Uncle Titus said,

"My dear Ninette, our last week is drawing near. What should you say if we put off going home, another fortnight? I feel remarkably well here, no dizziness at all, and an extraordinary increase of strength in my legs!"

"You show it in your looks, my dear Titus—" said his wife tenderly, "you look ten years younger, at the very least, than when we came here."

"And to my mind, this way of living has done you a world of good too, my dear Ninette;" replied he, "It seems to me that you find much less to lament over of late."

"Everything is so different," she answered; "It seems to me that everything has changed. The noise of the children even doesn't seem the same, now that I know each one of them. I must say that I am very glad that we didn't leave here that first week; I feel the loss of something pleasant now when I do not hear the children's voices, and I am always a little uneasy if it is perfectly quiet in the garden." "It is just so with me," said Uncle Titus, "and I cannot get through an evening with any satisfaction unless that bright boy has been in to see me, full of impatience to tell me what he has been about during the day, and eager to hear the enigmas I have to give him. It is a perfect pleasure to have such a young fellow about one."

"My dear Titus, you are growing younger every day. We will certainly stay longer," said Aunt Ninette decidedly, "just as long as we conveniently can. I'm sure even the doctor did not expect such good results from one country visit; it is almost miraculous!" Dora lost no time in carrying the enchanting news of this decision to Paula, for in her inmost heart she had been very unhappy at the thought of going away so soon. How could she live, away from all this dear family with whom she had learned to feel so entirely at home? She thought that when the day of separation came her heart would surely break.

When the good news of Dora's longer stay among them spread through the family, there was general rejoicing, and the little girl was in danger of being fairly hugged to death by her friends.

That evening after the children were all safely in bed, and Miss Hanenwinkel had withdrawn to her own room, Mr. and Mrs. Birkenfeld sat together upon the sofa, talking. This was the only quiet time that they could count upon in the course of the day, when they could talk over the needs, the pleasures and the pains, of their large and busy family. They were talking now about the decision of their new friends, and Mrs. Birkenfeld expressed her great satisfaction with it, adding,

"I cannot bear to think of losing Dora. She has grown very dear to me. What a real blessing that child has been in the family! She leaves her mark wherever she goes, and always for good. Wherever I turn I find some new evidence of her beneficial influence. And to me personally she is particularly attractive; I can't understand exactly why, but whenever I look into her eyes, I feel as if I had known her for a long time, and as if we had been sympathetic friends in days gone by."

"Ah, my dear wife, how often I have heard you say that whenever you feel a particular friendship for any one. I recollect perfectly that after we had known each other a little while, you said it seemed to you as if we had been intimately acquainted some time before."

"Well, suppose I did, you most incorrigible tease," said his wife, "you cannot convince me to the contrary, nor can you take away the fact that Dora is dear and delightful, not only to me, but to all the family besides. Paula goes about beaming like the sunshine, and with no trace of her usual discontent. Jule pulls off his own riding-boots without stirring up the whole house about it; Rolf is so full of interest in his pursuits that he has not a moment of idleness all day long; Lili has developed a love for music and a talent for playing the piano, that we never dreamed she possessed; and little Hunne has become so gentle and so contented at his games, that it is a pleasure just to look at the child."

"I think too," said Mr. Birkenfeld, "that it is because of Dora's being with us, that there has been a cessation of those mischievous pranks that the twins were always at, and that kept the house in a constant state of excitement." "I have not the least doubt of it;" said his wife, "Dora has aroused in Lili an enthusiasm for music, and all the child's lively energy is turned into that channel. Wili follows his sister's lead, and they are both therefore so busy that they have not even a thought for mischief."

"Dora is certainly an uncommon child and I am very sorry she is to leave us so soon;" said Mr. Birkenfeld regretfully.

"That is what is weighing upon my mind," said his wife, "I am constantly trying to devise some plan for prolonging her stay still farther."

"No, no;" said her husband, decidedly, "we can't do anything about that. We don't know these people well enough to try to influence their movements. They must go away now, but perhaps next year we may see them here again." Mrs. Birkenfeld sighed; there was a long winter to come, and there seemed to her to be but little chance of the visit being repeated.

The day fixed for the departure was Monday, and on the day before there was to be a grand feast, a farewell festival; though to tell the truth, none of them felt much like making a jubilee. Rolf alone was in the mood, and he took charge of the preparations, as an important part of which, a number of choice riddles were to be hung about the summer-house as transparencies: in honor of his patron.

On Saturday Dora took her seat, as usual, with the family at dinner, but no one had any appetite; the coming separation was too much in their thoughts. As the mother was helping to soup, one after another exclaimed, "Very little for me," "Please only a little," "I really don't care for any to-day," "Scarcely any for me, thank you," "And less for me, to-day."

"I should like to ask—" said their father, amid this shower of "No, thank yous;" "I can't help wondering whether this 'thank you, to-morrow,' style of thing is caused by grief at parting, or by a general dislike for onion-soup."

"Onion-soup! onion-soup! that is the answer to Hunne's riddle!" cried Rolf with a cry of victory, for he had really taken it seriously to heart, that Hunne's charade had been so long unguessed. The answer was right. Poor Hunne was quite depressed at this unexpected blow, and in a moment he said somewhat pitifully,

"Oh dear! papa, if you had not said that about 'thank you, to-morrow,' for the soup, then no one would ever have found it out. Now I shall have no more fun with it."

But Dora had a comforting word for him, even now, and whispered softly, "Yes, Hunne dear, you shall have some more fun with it, for I will bring over my album this afternoon, and I will guide your hand while you write the charade in it, and then I will take it to Karlsruhe, and show it to all the people I know there, and they will all try to guess it."

So Hunne was comforted, and was able to finish his dinner happily. But under the apple-tree where they were assembled for the last time, the family were in very low spirits. For the next day Dora must stay with her aunt to help her, and could not join them until the evening, in time for the good-bye feast. Paula sat with her eyes full of tears, and did not speak one word. Lili had already given signs of her state of mind, by all sorts of restless movements, and at last she exclaimed,

"Mamma, I wish I never need touch the piano again; it will be terribly tiresome without Dora, and Miss Hanenwinkel will find fault again and say I am 'not progressing,' and I don't want to 'progress' when Dora is not here!"

"Oh dear!" sighed Jule, "what terrible days are before us, with danger to life and limb, when the twins begin again to find their time hang heavy on their hands. It is a very stupid arrangement anyway," he went on quite excitedly; "it would be far better for Dora to pass the winter with us. Her aunt and uncle could go on in their quiet way in Karlsruhe all the same without her."

The mother sympathized entirely in the children's regret at the separation and said she hoped to persuade Mr. Ehrenreich to bring his wife and Dora back for another summer.

Hunne was the only one more interested in the present than in the future, and he kept pulling Dora's dress and saying,

"Go get your book, Dora! get the book!"

So Dora went to get her album, and brought it over for each one of her friends, in the good old fashion, to write a verse or a motto in it, by way of remembrance. It was no new, elegant, gilded affair. It was an old book, faded and worn, and much of the writing in it was pale with age. Here and there had been pasted on, tiny bunches of flowers and leaves all of which had lost their color, and many of which had fallen off. The album had belonged to Dora's mother, and the verses were all written in unformed, childish characters. There were also some drawings, and among these one of a small house and a well, with a man standing near it, particularly attracted Hunne's attention, and he took the book in his own hands, and began turning the leaves.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed with a knowing look, as he took out a piece of paper that lay folded between the leaves; "Mamma has one like this; it belongs to Lili; the one I am going to America to find." Julius laughed aloud. "What in the world are you chattering to Dora about now, Hunne?"

But his mother glanced, quickly at the little boy as she caught his words, took the paper from his hand and read what was written there. Great tears fell from her eyes as she read; the memory of long past hours of her happy childhood rose before her, clear and distinct, and almost overpowered her, Her own mother's face, and all the sights and sounds of childhood! It was the other half of her own poem that she held in her hand, the half that had been kept by her dearly loved friend. She gave it silently to her husband; she could not trust her voice to read it aloud. The children watched her curiously as she took the other half from her notebook, and laid the two bits of yellow faded paper side by side. They made a sheet of the usual size of old-fashioned letter paper. The writing was the same on both, and as the lines were joined, their meaning became plain. Mr. Birkenfeld read the verses aloud:

"Lay your hand in mine dear,

Joined thus we need not fear,

Each the other clasping fast,

That our union should not last,

But behold, the fates decree

That our future severed be.

We will cut our verse in two,

Half for me and half for you.

But we still will hope forever

That the halves may come together,

And with no loss to deplore.

Our friendship be as 'twas before."

The mother had taken Dora's hand in hers. "Where did you get this paper, Dora?" she asked, much moved.

"It has always been in my mother's album," replied the child with surprise.

"Then you are my Lili's child!" cried Mrs. Birkenfeld, "and that is what your eyes always said to me, when I looked into them;" and she folded Dora softly to her heart.

The children were intensely excited, but seeing how much moved their mother was, they restrained themselves, and sat very still, watching Dora and their mother with eager looks. But little Hunne broke the spell. "Then I sha'n't have to go to America, shall I, mamma?" he said gaily, for since he had given his word to go to find the lost Lili, he had often thought with alarm of the long journey that he must take alone. "No, dear child, we will all stay here together," said his mother, turning towards the children with Dora's hand fast in hers; "Dora is the Lili you were to seek, and we have found her." "Oh, mamma," cried Paula, "Dora and I will be what you and her mother were; we will carry out the verses. We will say:

"'But we still will hope forever

Now the halves have come together

No farther losses to deplore,

Our friendship prove as yours before.'"

"Oh yes, and ours," "me too," "so will I," and all the children joined in promising eternal friendship with Dora. But the mother had taken her husband's hand and had drawn him away down the shady walk. "All right, I agree to it all," said Mr. Birkenfeld over and over again, as his wife talked eagerly, while they walked back and forth. Presently Mrs. Birkenfeld left him and crossed over to the next house. She asked for Mrs. Ehrenreich, and now as they sat together by the window, she told Aunt Ninette in words that came from her heart, with what delight she had discovered that Dora was the daughter of her earliest and dearest friend; that friend from whom she had been so long separated, but whose memory was still green in her

heart. She wanted to learn all that could be told of her friend's life and death, but Aunt Ninette had little to tell. She had never known Dora's mother; her brother had spent several years in America where he had married, and his wife had died in Hamburg shortly after Dora's birth. That was all she knew. Then Mrs. Birkenfeld went directly to the point. She explained to Mrs. Ehrenreich how much she had enjoyed and profited by, her long visits at her friend's father's house, and how deeply she felt that she owed these kind friends a debt of gratitude which she now saw an opportunity partly to repay, by doing what she could for Dora. In short, if Aunt Ninette and her husband would consent, her most fervent wish would be to take Dora and bring her up as her own child.

She met with none of the opposition which she had feared. Aunt Ninette said frankly that Dora had not a cent of property, and that she would be entirely dependent on her own work as a seamstress; as neither her aunt nor her uncle could afford to spend anything on her farther education. She considered it a great blessing that the child should have found such a friend, and she heartily rejoiced in her good fortune; and was sure that her husband would fully agree with her. So there was nothing farther for Mrs. Birkenfeld to do, but to embrace Mrs. Ehrenreich most cordially, and then to hasten home to tell the children the happy news. She knew how they would take it.

There they were all under the apple-tree, all looking towards their mother and impatient for what she might have to tell them; hoping that it might be some plan for prolonging Dora's stay. But when the mother told them that from that day forward Dora was to belong to them, forever, as their sister and a child of the family, then a shout of joy arose that made the welkin ring again and awoke the echoes in the farthest corner of the garden. It aroused Uncle Titus and brought him from his distant summer-house with a gentle smile, saying half to himself and half aloud, "It is a pity it will soon be over." Aunt Ninette was standing at an open window, looking down into the garden, and as she heard the shouts of joy that rose again and again from under the apple-tree, she said to herself, smiling "How we shall miss all this cheerful noise when we are far away." The children were indeed jubilant, and they decided to organize a feast in honor of Uncle Titus and Aunt Ninette, a feast more brilliant than any that had ever before made the shades of the garden glow with splendor. That night Dora went up to her little room for the last time, for the next morning she was to move over to the other house. The happy family of children whom she had secretly watched with longing heart, were now to be her brothers and sisters; the lovely garden into which she had gazed with hopeless eyes was henceforth to be her home; she was to have parents who would surround her always with their protecting love. She was to learn what the others learned; yes, to have regular studies with them, as well as music-lessons. Dora's heart was flooded with the thoughts that welled up within her. One thing she was sure of; that her father was looking down at her, and rejoicing with her. She stood at the window and gazed up at the sparkling stars, and recalled the sad hours of depression that she had known, when these stars did not seem to bring her comfort, and when she had almost lost

faith in that kind heavenly Father, who nevertheless had now brought all this happiness to her.

She fell on her knees and thanked God for his goodness, and prayed that she might never again doubt Him, but that even in times of sorrow, she might be able to say, with heart-felt trust in the words of her father's verse: "God holds us in his hand,

God knows the best to send."

Uncle Titus and Aunt Ninette engaged their rooms with Mrs. Kurd for the following summer; Uncle Titus even went farther still, and begged Mrs. Kurd, no matter what happened, never to promise them to any one else; for he left her house now with keen regret, and hoped to return to it every summer as long as he lived.

When Monday morning came, the whole family were on hand before the cottage, to wish the departing guests good-speed. Rolf drew the uncle aside, and asked if he might venture to send a charade to Karlsruhe, now and then; to which Uncle Titus kindly replied that he should receive any such with pleasure, and answer them with punctuality.

Sly little Hunne, when he overheard these remarks, declared at once, "I will also send mine;" for he did not doubt that his would be equally acceptable to Uncle Titus, if not more so. He thought also that the quiet people of Karlsruhe would never be able to guess such charades as he would make, and his heart was filled with pride. Dora and Paula wandered arm in arm into the garden, singing gaily, "No farther losses to deplore

In friendship live for evermore."